

Kenya Journal

June 29- July 1, 2005



The Palace in Korea

Hi everyone:

I had some time to kill in between flights, so I thought I would send off a quick message to everyone.

Got to Seoul, Korea safely. Flight was 12 hours, but didn't seem like it! My doctor was kind enough to prescribe Ambien (a sweet sleeping pill). I can never sleep on planes and I actually zonked out and missed dinner. I shared an Ambien with my friend Mike, who fell asleep midway through a Snickers bar and couldn't figure out why he was chewing peanuts when he woke up...yikes!

We had an awesome day in Seoul today - it was perfect!! We booked a private tour just for our 12-person team and our tour guide, Annie, was a delight! She took us to the main palace and then for an amazing Korean meal at the coolest restaurant, then we shopped and are now back at the airport.

Off to Bangkok, Thailand now then onto Nairobi. Hope you all are doing well!

Love,
Marci



Starbucks In Korea



Annie & the Gals in Korea



The Palace in Korea

Kenya Journal

July 1- July 4, 2005

Hi all:

So I arrived in Kenya safely. I have very limited email and phone access, but I thought when I get moments on the internet I would fill you in on the goings on over here, in hopes that it might be of interest and edify you in some way.



Nairobi



1st Day in Kenya

We are staying outside of Nairobi in a country-type area called Karen, interesting since that's my mom's name. Anyone seen the movie "Out of Africa"? Well, I'm told that Karen is either named after Karen Blixen, the real name of author Isak Dinesen who wrote the book...or it's some sort of Swahili word...been getting mixed reports on that. You might recall the first line of the movie/book is "I had a farm in Africa at the foot of the Ngong Hills). Well, I haven't seen the hills, but we are staying right off of Ngong Road and the Blixen farm is apparently right near here.

We are staying at the African Enterprise compound (yes, it's a compound), much more than any of us expected. They are housing over 140 people there. We have people who clean our rooms and make

our beds everyday, and we have hot showers...but make no mistake, it's not luxury, just much more than we expected. The area is quite secure and we have two nice men that guard the compound with bows and arrows (yes, indeed) at night along with their German shepherd. We have some neighboring children that come over to play in the compound and an adorable little neighbor dog that visits us, that's we've named "Cootie Dog" (the Irish call him "Rabies") - who is quite dirty and scabby. We've observed him contorting himself into various yoga positions in order to scratch himself. A few of us are determined to find the owner of Cootie (or Rabies) before we leave and ask permission to bathe the dog.



Cootie Dog

There are many countries represented here: South Africa, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Norway, Belgium, U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Switzerland...and everyone speaks English. It's so cool to walk the halls and see two Kenyans talking to a person from the U.K. and then walk in another room and talk to some Irish folks. The Irish are particularly impressed at how many stars have attended our church and that we have someone who was on "Average Joe" and someone who was on "Desperate Housewives" on our team.



At Church - Sarah in front

Yesterday we visited a church in the slums of Nairobi, it was an amazing experience! These people are so devoted to God and so thankful for what they have. They have such a pure faith and they know how to worship! It is truly astonishing and makes it very real to me how much more I have to grow in my faith. They were so incredibly thankful for us to be there. We went and sat in on a Sunday school for 6 year-olds and sang for them. They were adorable and sweet! I made friends with a 7 year-old named Sarah who practically cuddled with me during church. Her Mom was sick that day and so she walked to church all by herself. The kids were fascinated with my camcorder and mobbed me until I put it away, and then they disappeared. They kept thinking it was my monitor that was filming them and they wanted to see themselves on the screen. They were so cute!

Last night we went out to a restaurant for a welcome dinner and saw some Masai dancers and were able to meet (or at least see) the WHOLE lot of us - the entire international mission team. We filled a rather large restaurant. Today they put us all in buses that had signs announcing the mission "2005 Nairobi International Youth Mission" -posters all over the buses. They gave us a tour of the city through some of the areas we will be working in. We then went to a park, where they had a flat bed truck with a P.A. sound system and a rap band



Truck at Jevangee Gardens

playing and preaching in the park. Jamie and I were asked to go up on the truck and basically were dancing for Jesus in the middle of Nairobi to announce the mission. Hard to describe, but pretty darn cool! Several people came to Christ today and it was very moving!

The poverty here is astonishing! I had actually thought Nairobi was more modern than it is. Busing the group around has been a little frustrating because getting 140 people around the city can be difficult. Hopefully it will get better as the trip goes on...but we are on "Africa time" and it's a lot of hurry up and wait...but once we get to where we are going it's been awesome.

Went to the National Museum today too and also went to a snake zoo, where we saw black mambas

and cobras! Apparently they are arranging a special trip for our team to go to Lake Victoria for two days next week. Lake Victoria is the source of the Nile and a HUGE lake - we're very excited! Some people went and fed monkeys today at a Tree Park, but we didn't get to do that.



The Black Mamba

I came home this evening and as I was walking up the guard handed me his flashlight and said "Shine the light, shine the light...snake, snake." I shined my light on a black mamba that was crawling toward the door where we are staying and only about 10 meters away. I held the light as the guard clubbed the snake to death. Black mambas are among the most poisonous and aggressive snakes in the world and I helped kill one today...OMG!

Tomorrow we will be meeting up with tons of churches in Nairobi and start recruiting Kenyan Christian youth to join the missions, then we start training. We have locals escorting us around everywhere and when we go into the slums, we will have a full-on police escort. This is truly a massive undertaking to make some real change in this city and in Africa.

Love you all and miss you, Marci



U.S. Gals on the way to Church



Scott & Jamie at Sunday School



Jevangee Gardens

Kenya Journal

July 5 - July 11, 2005

Hello all:

Greetings from Kenya!!! Here's another installment of my travelogue. I basically wrote a book here as much has happened in the last few days. I know you all have busy lives, but I would encourage you all to read this, as I think it will find it interesting and perhaps convicting about our need to help the poor. I will probably be so overwhelmed when I get back after a month here, that I might forget some of these details, so this may be your only chance to read about some of the things we have been doing.



Nairobi Trash



Section of Korogocho Slum

We have been doing some amazing and VERY intense work over the last few days. After 3 days of training, they sent us into the field. We first worked two days in Korogocho slums. This is basically a shanty town of tin shacks that were built on a land fill - thus the name which means something like "garbage." There, I saw things I never thought I would see and did things I never thought I would do.

Korogocho is one of the worst slums in Africa. About 80-90 percent of the people there are HIV positive, the streets are lined with raw sewage, the streets are basically dirt upon garbage. I have never seen this kind of poverty. Despite their poverty, though, they do not seem bitter and in fact were so appreciative and welcoming.

There are TONS of kids, many of whom are heads of their households (about one in three homes). Their parents have all died of AIDS. The kids don't see white people and they are fascinated by us. When our bus pulled into the slums, we passed a school and all the kids in the yard came running toward to our bus and were screaming "How are you?" in their distinctly African accents -- all the kids know this greeting, even one year olds who will come over and say "how are you?" and want to shake your hand. As we walk down the streets, kids will grab your hands and link hands with other kids, so that you have like 10 kids holding on to you just to touch you. They are fascinated with the color of my hair and that it is straight and soft and they like to touch it. They also like the "moons" in my fingernails. The kids are AMAZING! They are so loving and just desire to be held, touched and played with. You just smile at them and they blush and smile broadly.



Kids in Slums



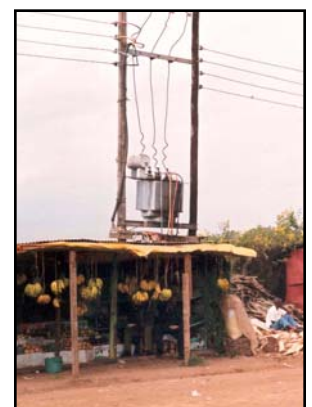
Kids in Slums

The first day in Korogocho, we cleaned the gutters African Enterprise had put in a few months back. Basically, we were shoveling raw sewage and cleaning up their living area and also trying to teach the kids how to do it. As Todd as been talking about the upside down kingdom that Jesus taught -- we raised \$3,000 to come over here and shovel raw sewage for people who couldn't do it themselves -- and I wouldn't trade the experience for the world. We know their streets and gutters will be dirty again the next day, but what we are doing is not really cleaning up their neighborhood, but showing them that they are loved and valued. Despite their circumstances, they matter in this world.

The second day, we just played with the kids as the guys were building public toilets. We brought toys to give the parents and we brought soccer balls and jump ropes for them. We were surrounded by kids all day and it was awesome!!! I brought baby wipes for myself, but I started breaking them out to clean the faces of the some of the kids. They liked the feel and smell of them, and suddenly I was mobbed by kids all pushing to get at them...it also started a riot, so Johnny (from Ireland) helped me put them away.

It's amazing in such a short time how much courage one is able to muster. First of all to go into such a place. From the outside it would look so dangerous, but once you interact with the people, you realize what an amazing place it is. Also, some teenage boys got into a fight and two us jumped into right away to separate them, not sure we would have done that back in the states.

That same day we also went on two home visits to AIDS patients. The first house was unbelievably bad circumstances. It was so dark in their house that it took 10 minutes for my eyes to adjust to see the two people in the bed. Their bed was so small, their laundry was hanging over their heads. They had bugs crawling in their food. The



Nairobi suburb



Kenyan "Budget Driving School"

stench of urine was everywhere. I feel certain they had T.B. from their coughs and that is usually what AIDS patients die of here. I was there with 3 Kenyans from our volunteer team and just me and they basically let me lead the visit, which was surprising. I felt so unprepared, but the African so much value any advice, encouragement that we "musungus" (white people) give that it perks them up quite a bit. They said they had been waiting for our visit for a week and were very excited. They told me about their and asked that I pass along the info to people back in America to see if they can help. I prayed over them and offered what encouragement I could. Please pray for them is you can, their names are Able and Margaret - they are very sick and could be on their last legs.

The second house I went to was a single mother, Mary, of 5 who had HIV. Despite what it might seem listening to the AIDS statistics, AIDS is often not passed through rampant promiscuity, but rather people in marriages who are unfaithful and they give it to their spouse and then their children. Mary didn't speak much English, but when I prayed over her and said her named she collapsed to the floor sobbing. They all want to know what I can do to help them...and I feel so helpless to help them.

Yesterday we went to the center of Kenya to attend a church for the street boys and homeless mothers. This was probably the most intense day yet. We arrived in an area that did not feel particularly safe (although in hindsight I think we were). Our "Matatu" (mini-van) immediately got surrounded my teenage street boys who were all high on glue (the drug of choice here). They were banging on the windows and trying to say hello. At one point, about 10 feet from our van a woman with a baby on her back, took a rock and was beating one of the boys over the head with it and cracked his head open. We were unable to get out of the van too split it up before it was over. The boy was bleeding pretty badly, but he had lesions on his face (clearly had AIDS) and we did not have any surgical gloves to assist him, but our driver helped out with some first aid.



"Texas" Butchery

After crying for a bit, he seemed okay, despite the large gash in his head. Things like that happen all the time there, which is apparent from all of the scars on their faces.



Community Phone

We started singing songs in the van, hoping to calm the savage beast so to speak...and amazingly ALL the boys new the songs we were singing both in English and Kiswahili. After that, we went to the church. A local church leads a worship service on the hill right in the middle of town for all the homeless people, about 200 people attend (although there were only 100 on Sunday, because 1/2 had been arrested). Our team sang songs, shared testimonies and scriptures with them and we did a skit or "drama" as they call it (which are very popular here in

churches). We also helped distribute food to all of them. NOT one of them did not have a bottle of glue -- it is worse than heroine...homeless mothers with breast feed their babies while sniffing glue. There was one woman who was 6 mos. pregnant and sniffing glue and ALL the street boys over the age of 5 had the glue. It is a rampant problem here. It was so sad to see, but I am so proud of the church here for ministering to these forgotten people.



Kenyan Woman

Today, we went to another slum, not quite as bad as Korogocho. It is called Soweto (like in South Africa). We did home visits to AIDS patients. The church in Soweto does amazing things, they feed them, they bathe them, they massage them and basically do what Jesus calls us to do...feed the hungry, clothe the poor and take care of the sick. We could learn a huge lesson from them.



Mary in Soweto

The first person we visited was Redempter, who is extremely ill. Please pray for her. She looked about 12 because of how skinny she was, but she was 30 and got AIDS from her husband. He left her after they had a child who died at 3 mos. We prayed over here and listened to her and encouraged her as much as we could. The second lady we visited was Mary, who was a grandmother, taking care of 5 kids and 3 grandchildren. She is not working, but she goes out to lecture on the prevention of AIDS to young people. She seemed to be doing well. Visiting the AIDS patients was an amazing experience and they were so thankful for our visit. Phil, my Australian partner today, and I were able to buy some medicine that Redempter needed today, which felt good...if only we could do more.

I wish you all could see things as they are here. It will truly make you soooo incredibly thankful for what we all have in America. I think it would also make all of us so much more convicted about helping people.



Our Disco Matatu

It is amazing how quickly we are adjusting to things here...we are tired but feel really alive. Our international teams are filled with amazing people!!! Our buses are a riot!!! Imagine large buses off-roading it -- feels like a roller coaster ride all the time -- always an adventure!!! We have a lot of fun in the buses. The other night one driver was spinning doughnuts in a matatu in a roundabout...thought we going to tip over, but we were all fine and it was fun. Our "boot" the back door flipped open and wouldn't shut, the people in the back seat were basically looking at the tail lights the whole way home and holding the "boot" shut -- it was surreal.

I hope all is well with everyone at home! I love you and miss you all!!!

Love,
Marci

Kenya Journal

July 12 - 18, 2005

Hello all...



My International Team



Great Rift Valley

I miss you all and hope all is well with all of you!!! Just wanted to give you an update on the happening in Kenya. Last Tuesday we had our day off. The mission has been a little disorganized at times, so given it was was of one of our only days off, our team decided to take issues into our own hands and we arranged for a special safari matatu (mini-bus) and 8 of us went on a one day to safari to Lake Nakuru (about 3 hours from Nairobi) in the Great Rift Valley. IT WAS AMAZING!!!

Lake Nakuru is known because it has the largest amount (by far) of flamingos in the world -- about 5 MILLION of them line shores of the lake, which isn't very big. We also saw a leopard, about 7 rhinos, tons of zebras, several baboons, a flock of giraffes (which

were adorable), tons of water buffalo, some monkeys and a bunch of huge birds. The birds in Africa are HUGE! It was a great day of bonding with our team -- we really have an awesome team and I am very thankful for that! We are all getting along well, and the other teams seem to really enjoy hanging out with us, because we have a blast together. I truly love these people here!!!

Also last week, we went into the schools, to share some gospel messages and also some subjects that they had requested that we address. On very little notice, I was asked to teach in the schools, but it ended up very well. I taught on Leadership in an 8th grade class. I used Jesus' model of leadership to teach them and also talked about Nelson Mandela, Ghandi, Kofie Anan, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc. It was fun!

I also taught all 4 grades in a Christian High School separately, which was tiring but cool. At the high school I taught about time management. I think it went over well. Who knew I would be teaching school when I came here?! It was weird having the kids taking notes on what I was saying. The kids here are great!!!!

Last Friday, I spent the day with Stephen Lungu (the guy from Malawi that taught at Bel Air -- Mom that's the one I played the CD for you).



Flamingos at Lake Nakuru



Monkey at Lake Nakuru



Water Buffalo at Lake Nakuru



Rhinos at Lake Nakuru



Me & Stephen Lungu



Juvenile Remand Center

Clearly it was for animals, but all the Africans were amused that it cracked me up so much!

It was an awesome day!!! We first went to a children's remand home -- a juvenile prison. I shared some scriptures with them and Steven Lungu shared his testimony. The kids were awesome, but they have a deep sadness within them...many of them have not had their court date yet, as they do not have speedy trials in Kenya...they do not know what lies ahead of them. Some are in there for murder...BUT in Kenya they do not have a manslaughter charge -- so if a kid or adult accidentally kills someone (like in a car or playing or some other accident), it is considered murder. It was awesome to spend some time with them.

The remand center was in a rural area and we passed a sign that said "Artificial Insemination Center - Pure Kenyan Genetics - Sales Office" - I had to take a picture!



Artificial Insemination Station



Girl at Remand Center

After that, we went to an adult male prison, which was amazing. Quite scary at first as they lead into the open section of convicted murderers and no guard with us. They didn't even search our bags, which was weird. The prisoners were cool and did not seem violent at all. WHO KNEW, that little ol' me would be going into a 3rd world prison and working with convicted murderers. Wow!!! I didn't do much, Steven Lungu shared his testimony, which impacted the prisoners greatly, because he used to be a terrorist in Zimbabwe and committed many crimes in his youth, but changed his life around entirely. It was pretty cool to see! We then were escorted to go see the prison school that the prisoners have put together. I was very impressed, the ones that have gone to school are teaching the ones that haven't gone to school. We got a list of needs from them as far as what they needed and hope to be able to rustle up some supplies for them. We prayed over the school headmaster who is also a prisoner, as he is very committed to what he is doing. The prisoners only have one ball in the whole prison, so we're hoping to provide them with some balls to play soccer, volleyball, etc.

I wish I had been able to take some pictures of the prison for you...it was built during British colonial times and is basically probably what you would expect of a 3rd world prison. However, the men seem to care about each other and do not seem violent, they are generally polite -- although of course as women (there were only 2 of us), many of the prisoners were looking at us amorously, which was to be expected as they don't get to see women often. They had their own society in the prison and wash their own dishes in the courtyard and wash their own clothes and hang in on the prison barb wire at the top of the walls. It was definitely an interesting experience that I actually enjoyed after the first few scary moments.

I was put in charge of organizing a "crusade" type thing for today back at the prison for the whole prison population. I arranged for the Bel Air band to come and I got most of the supplies sorted out for the schools, as well as the soccer balls and a team of about 20 people...but ALAS, the Kenyans didn't think about getting the proper approval for us to go back in, even though they had told us they had, so it got cancelled. They do things a bit different here, they could use some lessons on organization. It's the one big downfall of the mission and is providing frustration for all the teams, particularly the ones from the West, who are used to being on time and knowing what they are going to be doing for the day. Please pray for that as we go through our last week. Also, please continue to pray for our safety as there have been some violent things going on in Kenya. We have not been around it, but please pray for that anyway.



Kids at Remand Center



Another Sign

Saturday I went to all day retreat for college students on relationships at the local Arboretum. The Arboretum was truly beautiful. The talk was good, and I love how the Kenyans are addressing relationships, we could use some talks like that back home. It was weird though, we were sitting on the grass and listening to the speaker and in the background all these monkeys came through and were playing in the trees and stuff. The Kenyans didn't think anything of it, but I was so distracted and fascinated with the monkeys. At lunch I got some bananas and oranges and as soon as the monkeys saw them in my hands they came running toward me. I sat on the ground and fed them by hand. They were very gentle and totally cool. Funny enough, the Kenyans don't think anything of it, but when I started feeding them

by hand, they all came over, because none of them had done that before. The Kenyans were fascinated, but the monkeys wouldn't come to them, they would only come to the white people, WEIRD!!! It was pretty cool, the details in their faces and hands are so amazing when you get up close to them...I took video so I can show all of you.

Sunday I went to a school for girls in a really rural area of coffee plantations, which was beautiful. Julie Ruff from our group talked for the Sunday service and then we were each put into classrooms to talk with the girls. None of us were prepared for this, but it went over very well. I had a classroom of about 40 sophomores and I shared a bit about what were doing and then it turned to many many questions about America, they all want to go there. They asked some pretty astute questions...they were so loving of me and gentle and caring of each other. They were surrounding me and playing with my hair, they like to touch soft straight hair because it's so different then theirs. They all handed me their emails and addresses, not sure if I can write them all, but I think I will try to send them a postcard from the U.S.



Me & the Girls at the School



Kenya Strip Mall

As for this week, we will be going back into schools and colleges, and doing some sports ministry...just playing sports with kids and showing them God's love. At the end of the week, we will be seeing our street boys again and playing soccer with them and they are bringing in a dentist to help with there teeth...I am wishing those dentists good luck, because the kids teeth are riddled with cavities...poor things. Then at the end of the week, we have an all night Youth Concert where Bel Air Band will will play along with some local christian groups. I doubt I'll stay out all night as our days have been quite long, but it should be cool!

Next week we go to Masai Mara on safari for 2 days with the whole 150 international group, them 5 of us from our team go on our own safari and then we are back home.

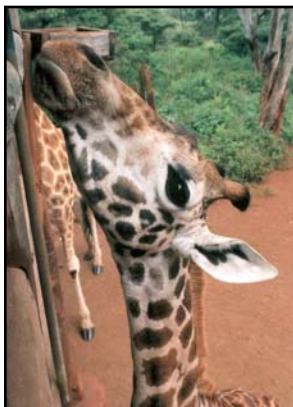
Hope you all are doing GREAT!!!! I miss you all and can't wait to see you all when I get back!

Love,
Marci



"Choo" - a Bathroom

Kenya Journal July 19 - 21, 2005



Baby Giraffe

Hey all:

Just updating you on Kenya stuff. Not sure if it has hit the news in the U.S. yet, but there have been riots here in Nairobi about a new constitutional amendment - 3 people have been killed. We were near where it happened yesterday, but I did not see it and we are all safe. We are not staying in the city, we only go in during the day times. There was also an attack in Northern Kenya from Ethiopian bandits. Got some messages people thought it was near Nairobi -- it was way north in the country and was a tribal issue. I just want to assure you that we are all safe from these happenings, but please do continue to pray for our safety.

A few days ago, I had another day off. I went to the Karen Blixen house (i.e. "Out of Africa") and then watched the movie that night, which was cool to be sitting where it happened. Also, went to the Giraffe center and was kissed by a giraffe, it was cool feeding them by hand.

I spoke at a christian university yesterday...first time ever I have "preached" on a message...they seemed to like it and invited me back.

And guess what?!!! I am helping them organize the tent situation for our safari...big surprise, eh? We have 175 people going and they were not going to assign the tents prior to going, so I offered my services :)...as I thought it might be a bit chaotic if we didn't do it beforehand.

Also, one cool thing...our team saw the kid who got beaten over the head with a rock last



At the Giraffe Center



Wart Hog at the Giraffe Center



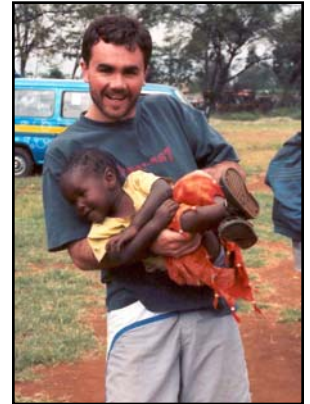
Martin

week. His name is Martin and he is doing amazingly well and his head is healing. And he was not high on glue...he was a totally different kid when we saw him. We bought him some food and invited him to a soccer match we are having with the street kids this weekend.

All is well...hope all is well with you at home. I missing you all and appreciate all the supportive messages I have been getting and am very thankful for all the prayers.

Be well and god bless. Love you!!!

Marci



Pete & a Homeless Girl

Kenya Journal

July 22 - 28, 2005



Kenyan Men

Hi all:

As I am winding down my trip here, you all are very much in my thoughts and I eager to see you all. Some truly amazing things have been happening over the last week and because I have such affection for all of you, I am feeling the overwhelming desire to share it all with you. This is once again a book on my adventures in Africa...feel free to read if you have the time.

Since my last email, the official mission has finished. Last Friday I went back to the University where I had given a talk last Wednesday. I had skipped their Thursday meeting to plan the tent situation for the safari and I found out that they had been eagerly awaiting a

return engagement for me to speak. I felt bad for having missed the meeting as I did have another talk prepared, but I also felt really flattered that they wanted me to speak again. I had never given a spiritual talk in front of people in my life. The church here in Kenya is very legalistic, and while I admire a lot of that, I feel like they miss certain parts of the Bible. When I spoke I spoke on Isaiah (yes, Bible study girls, having our workbook here was a big help) about different kinds of spiritual and physical imprisonment...then I talked about Galatians 5:1 "It is Freedom sake that Christ made us free...etc."...so it was a talk that the Kenyans rarely get (which I didn't actually know at the time).

After the University, we went across the street to the big round about where our street kids hang out. I met a 14 year old girl who is living on the streets named Louisa....and something about her just really touched my heart. Her mother was hit by a car and killed and she doesn't where her father is and she doesn't know how to get into an orphanage. I only spoke with her briefly, but she just really touched my heart. The next day our team, along with the church that works with the street kids, arranged to spend the whole day with them. The church bused them to a field outside the city and we had music, face painting, sports - we fed them...and just hung out with them and loved them. Louisa came to that and we spent most of the day together. She does get high on glue, but not like the other kids. Often, they just sniff the glue to quell their appetite when they are hungry. Louisa braided and played with my hair and drew pictures with a pen on my hand and we talked about stuff. She really wants to go to school so that she can help her country, but she's 14 and hasn't gone to school since she was 5 years old. I am not sure how, but when I get home I am going to contact my resources there and see if I can send her to boarding school, which isn't that expensive in Africa. My mind was racing as far as how I could help her...I thought about what it would be like to bring her to America just for a week. To give her a roof over her head, running water that was drinkable, a hot shower (with actual water pressure). I was looking at her feet at one point - she just wears flip-flops and her feet are fry and cracked like that of an old woman...and I was thinking for less than \$20 I could treat her to a manicure and pedicure -- I know sounds weird, but it's a girl thing. But then of course, I was thinking that all that luxury to her would not be worth it if she had to go back to the streets. I am hoping that somehow, though, I can help her to get off the streets.



Me & Louisa



Me & Kenyan kids

Sunday, I spent with Stephen Lungu, the preacher from Malawi, who once a street kid himself and then a Zimbabwe freedom fighter/terrorist and then converted to Christianity. He is a great guy, met him in the states. So it was great to hang out with him some more. On Sunday we had a closing rally in the park we started the mission in. Louisa was nearby and heard the music and thought I might be there, so came with her friend Purity to find me, which they did. I had also made friends that day with two younger street girls who about 8 or 10...and after our closing rally, Stephen Lungu and I prayed over the girls and hoped that they will somehow get lifted out of their situation. Even though, they are street girls and have nothing...all that the girls asked for was that I remember them...they didn't ask for money or food or anything else.



Louisa & Purity



U.S. Team at The Carnivore

On a brighter note, on Sunday night we went to the Carnivore Restaurant, known as one of the top 50 restaurants in the world. They serve rare meats and it was really cool. You sit at your table and waiters come by with various meats on sticks and you try all kinds of things...I tried camel, ostrich, and crocodile (everything else I had before)...the ostrich was the best. There was a dance floor in the restaurant and I am glad to say that team America started UP that African dance floor that was empty and got the whole place going, then we all played in the playground behind the restaurant, which was a much needed break.

Monday was left for Masai Mara with about 175 people. Team America had our own matatu and our matatu broke down in the middle of nowhere Kenya in small town called Suswa Center...but it created a rather cool adventure for us. Jamie and I went walking and met a Maasai shepherd and his flock of sheep. The locals who were fascinated with us musungus...let us borrow their bicycles and went riding up and down the dirt

roads and hung out with the kids in town while we were waiting for a new matatu. Not to be gross, but we happened upon two dogs that were mating and when they were done, they actually got stuck together butt to butt...yeah, stuck together, which none of us have ever seen before, but apparently is quite common in Kenya. It provided about 45 minutes of hilarity for us watching them trying to get unstuck. We finally arrived at the Mara at 11:30PM after leaving our compound at 7AM...whew.



Dogs Stuck Together



Suswa Center Girl

We went on two game drives that were amazing....the Mara is huge MASSIVE plains of tall grass....probably much like you would expect the Serengeti to be....and it is part of the Great Rift Valley. In the Mara we caught the beginnings of the wildebeest migration...I think we saw thousands, it was amazing! We happened upon a pride of 7-8 lions that were feeding and our matatu driver drove right into where they were about 5 feet from them. We also saw more giraffes, elephants, a whole

bunch of hippos...and a very cool cheetah.



Broken Down in Suswa Center



The Masai

We also visited a Masai village, where they did their tribal dances for us...and showed us about their diet. They live off their cattle, but they rarely if ever kill them...their diet consists of blood from the cow (which they get while it's alive) and milk. They demonstrated their blood-letting technique for us and several people from our team drank the blood/milk concoction (which was rather gross but also pretty fascinating). They had a whole bunch of baby goats and I was trying to pet them, until a Masai warrior just handed me a baby goat to hold, which just went limp as soon as it was in my arms...there is nothing more peaceful than holding a baby animal, it was adorable.

Our Team America guys slept outside on top of a huge safari bus and from there they saw that we had one lion and several hyenas in camp that night. Kinda scary but cool...the lion and hyenas were fighting with each other. We also had monkeys in the trees by where we slept.



Me & Baby Goat



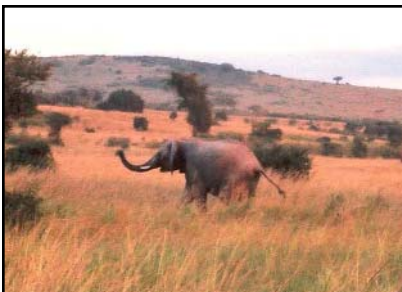
Wild Lions at Masai Mara



Wild Lion at Masai Mara



Wildebeest Migration at the Mara



Elephant at Masai Mara



Baboons at Amboseli

Okay, this is turning in to a long travelogue, but it's been a few cool days and I thought you guys may want to here about it.

Wednesday, we set out early because we had to catch our personal safari that I had put together for 5 of our team. Two of the girls that were supposed to go with us had decided not to go last minute, but a South African couple replaced them on the trip and this safari is OUTSTANDING!!! I had been apprehensive about the safari, as I didn't know anything about the company, but it has turned out to be so much more than we expected.

We set out for Amboseli National Park on Wed...it is at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Unfortunately, Mt. Kili was being "shy" as our driver would say and was totally covered in clouds the whole time we were there...BUT the game viewing was amazing. Our lodge was first-class amazing! It was surrounding by green lawns and electric fences, but just right outside that, about 20 meters from our rooms you would see whole herds of elephant, zebras, water buffalo, wildebeest, impala...all day and all night. A baboon was within 5 feet from me as I went into our room yesterday. Last night there was a small herd of water buffalo right outside the electric fence...Mike and Scott and I went over to look at them, but they started to get agitated and one started a small mock charge at us, so needless to say, we backed up as they (along with hippos) are the most dangerous animals to humans in Africa because of their humongous horns. In the morning we went on a game drive and saw two very rare sights...a hippo out of water grazing in the open and 4 full-grown cheetahs that were hunting. Cheetahs are usually found alone and usually are not traveling much (you usually just see them lying around). We also saw more elephants and other antelope-type animals. Amboseli is very different that the Mara. Although, it has large plains...the grass is very low to the ground and there are several swamps, which make game viewing very easy.

From there we went to Tsavo National Park. Ever heard of the "Man-eaters of Tsavo" or the movie "The Ghost and Darkness"? Well, that happened here. In the beginning of the 20th Century when they were making the railroad from Mombasa to Nairobi, two elderly male lions began attacking the train workers, killing more a hundred...females usually hunt, not males, and they were hunting day and night and pulling people out of tents and off trains, etc. After that, Kenya created it's first National Park - Tsavo (the largest in all of Africa). This is where I am emailing you from now. Tsavo is very arid with beautiful red dirt and dried up trees. I feel totally privileged to have traveled across this country which varies so much in its landscape.



Sunset at Masai Mara



Cheetah at Masai Mara



Zebras on the Mara



The Mara

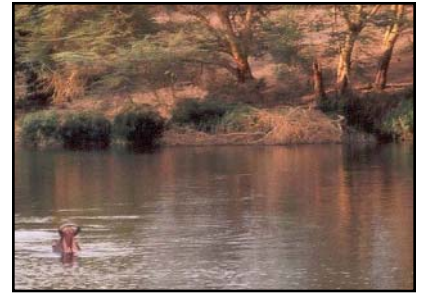


Hyena Pups at Amboseli



The Plains of Amboseli

We visited Mzimi Springs, which is a fresh water springs with snow water from Mt. Kili that comes across the country underneath old lava flow on the ground to create this amazing beautiful oasis-like springs in the middle of this arid area. Unfortunately, you cannot swim in the springs because you would almost assuredly be killed by their large population of hippos and crocodiles, which we saw...Mike also saw a small cobra, but I missed it.

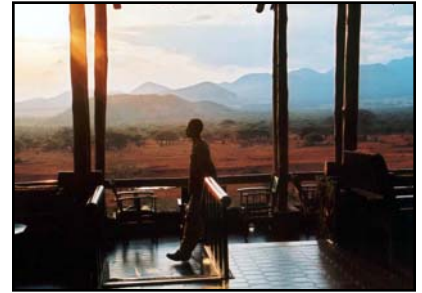


Hippo at Mzima Springs



Mzima Springs

We arrived at our lodge called Kilaguni and were greeted with warm moist towels and fruit juice and I walked into A LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN. I am not exaggerating!!! What I saw took my breath away, literally and figuratively. Kilaguni is situated about 100 ft. from the only 3 watering holes in this arid land. We arrived just before dusk to see the sun setting over the mountains and a large area of red dirt and beautiful trees and animals grazing in and out of the water hole. It was so vast & expansive. The dining area and all the rooms have verandas facing this water hole that is just STUNNING. I don't think any pictures that we could take will correctly show what this place is like. God originally created the animals to be companions to man and seeing these free animals coming in such close proximity to us and behaving as they do in the wild is amazing.



The view from Kilaguni Lodge



View from our room in Tsavo

Just as the sun set, a family of about 20 baboons came to the watering hole and babies were playing and wrestling with each other. Then a herd of impala came, then a herd of zebra came. Then a herd of elephants came as we were having a drink on the veranda. The herd consist of a matriarch, which was very easy to determine in this group, several teenage elephants and two baby elephants...they stayed quite some time. Later as we were eating, 3 amazingly large bull male elephants came and stayed over an hour drinking water, playing in it and scratching themselves on the rocks about 15 meters from where we were eating dinner. Then about 300 water buffalo came and stayed another 1/2 hour along with the elephants...we just couldn't take our eyes off them...as we were chowing down on our amazing dinner.

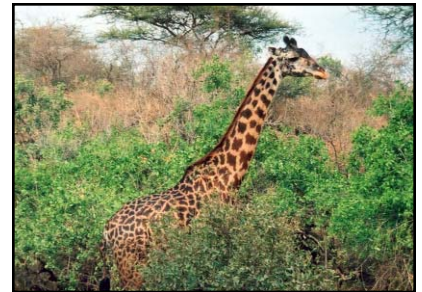


Sunset in Tsavo



Zebras on the road in Tsavo

It was truly an amazing day and I just wanted to share it with you all...but words cannot describe what we have just been seeing. It has basically been a spiritual experience watching all of this.



Giraffe in Tsavo



Impala in Tsavo

From here, we are on to Mombasa for a day and half tomorrow and then home...but it will take about 3 days for us to get home. I'll be back on August 2nd...after spending some time in Hong Kong and a long layover in Seoul, Korea. The homesickness is really kicking in. You are all in my thoughts...I miss you very much and hope all is going well with you!



Wart Hogs & Guinea Fowl

Love,
Marci

Kenya Journal

July 29 - 31, 2005

Hello everyone...

This is my last email from Africa as we are leaving in a few hours.

We arrived in Mombasa on Friday and we've had some time to reflect as we are staying at a luxurious hotel right on the beach - called the Indian Ocean Beach Club. It is a truly stunning hotel...a big thank you to Michelle Karume for hooking us up here!



Nairobi Slums



In the City

than the people. We were warned by the mission planners that we would feel this way when we got home, but it was actually in some ways nice to be HERE and going through this withdrawal period. The bad feeling did pass as we were consumed with the "spiritualness" of seeing God's creations here, but hopefully the experience will not fade with time. I hope that the passion we gained here in desiring to serve and help those less fortunate than us will stay.

The first night when we went on safari, Mike, Scott and I experience a bit of culture shock. We had been in the slums of Africa, the bustling city of Nairobi and had been taking care of street kids (and adults). As we arrived at the luxurious Ol Tukai Lodge in Amboseli, we looked around and saw all these rich white people. As we overheard their conversations, it was so apparent to us that they had no clue whatsoever about the "real" Africa...they only know the safari Africa. We also were experiencing our own bad feelings, for treating ourselves to this safari and for the money that we were spending, when we knew how far it would go to help someone else. It's amazing to me that for Westerners, the animals of Africa are often given more consideration



In the Country



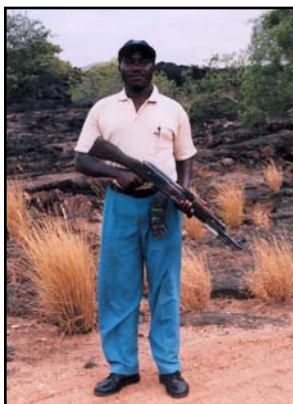
Hindu Girls

for our safety (although rare), but mainly just because we never knew what new situation we were going to be put into. We just had to let the Lord stretch us and know that we had some back-up. We did many things we never would have done before and I feel so much more well-equipped to handle certain situations in my life. While I am still going to be me and I have the same struggles as always, I know this experience will change me.

I think the biggest thing that I have learned here is courage. To some that may sound weird, because I would have thought before I came here that I was a person who had a lot of courage, but I have gained so much more. Having to visit dying A.I.D.S. patients in their slum homes, and having to lead the situation and pray over them and find ways to encourage them - has stretched me immensely. Over the last few years, I had had some very sick and dying friends and I have wanted to visit them, but didn't know what to say or what to do, and I feel like I have gained the courage to do that now. I have always admired my friend Taylor in this way. As hard as it is for her to make these types of visits, I always feel like she knows what to do and always says the right things. I hope I can be that kind of person. Also, we experienced almost constant fear when we were here, sometime

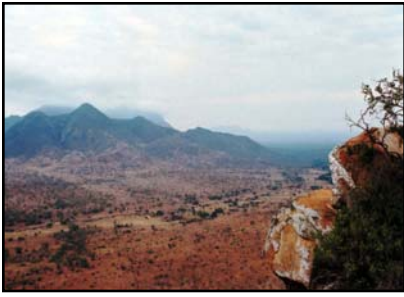


Cheetah



Joseph, Our Protection

A few things I forgot to mention in my last email about our safari. One the way to Amboseli, we almost ran over an ostrich and a hyena - road kill is a little different here, eh? We had an amazing cheetah sighting in Amboseli...4 full-grown cheetahs that seemed to be hunting together. Frank, one of the South Africans we were traveling with, has been visiting Game Parks for 23 years and said this was the best sighting he had ever seen. Cheetahs usually hunt alone and usually are not seen moving about, only resting on some high spot seeking out their prey. Also, on the way from Amboseli to Tsavo, our driver picked up a passenger - our "protection." We had Joseph join us, who was a non-English speaking AK47 machine-gun holding African. Mind you, the gun had 3 clips in it, two of which were taped on. We kept trying to figure out why we needed protection, but never got a straight answer. We think it was for the animals in case we had a flat or something. Although, we went through Masai territory - not the touristy Masai villages (like in Masai Mara) - but the real villages where people lived like they have for centuries. The Masai have always been known to be a "warrior" people, but



View from Hilltop in Tsavo

all the ones we met were way cool. On the morning we left for Tsavo, our driver George, took us to one of the only hiking trails there...where we had an AMAZING view of the valleys and mountains. Scott stayed a little longer at the top taking pictures and turned to find a lioness looking straight at him about 50 yards away and he was all alone. Needless to say, he booked it back to the matatu pretty fast, because the lions of Tsavo are still known to be man-eaters.



The Indian Ocean, Mombasa



A Dhow

Now we are in Mombasa at this incredible 5-star hotel right on the beach. The Indian Ocean is beautiful with its light sea foam green color. It's a little weird, though, to watch the sun rise over the ocean as opposed to set over the ocean as it does in California - it's another reminder that we are far from home. The first night, we met up with two Australian couples that were also here from our mission and we had a wonderful 8 course meal in the restaurant here. The next day, I had a massage in the morning, which one of the best I have ever had (for the equivalent of \$20). Then I strolled down to the beach for a morning camel ride on a beautiful 4 year-old camel names Samol (who loves being scratched behind the ears). Then Mike and I went out on centuries-old-style sailboat called a "dhow" - which is a tree trunk hollowed out with a sail and a tree trunk stabilizer added onto it. We jumped off the dhow and went snorkeling with our African guides and saw all sorts of fish. They also caught an octopus which we played with and tried to avoid all the numerous sea urchins. All and all it was one of the best days I've ever had!



Samol, the Camel



A Crab in the Pool

Today we leave to go back home, although it will take us three days. We have a 16-hour layover in Seoul, so we reconnected with our new Korean friend Annie (who guided our last tour) and we arranged to go to a theme-spa in Seoul. The rest of our team went here on their way back and apparently had a great time.



Hammock at the Hotel



Beach in Front of Hotel

Please pray for our safety and that we make all of our 4 connections on the way back. I hope all is well with all of you. I love you and miss you and can't wait to see you when I get back. At some point, I would love to share my photos with you, although with about 20 rolls to develop, it might take me a while to get around to developing them.

Love,
Marci



Mike Relaxing on the Beach



The Indian Ocean Beach Club



Mombasa



Beach in Mombasa

Kenya Journal

August 1 - 2, 2005

Hi everyone:

I'm on my way home now, I'm in Korea now...one last leg to go -- yeah! It's been long traveling time, but we got to see Hong Kong at night last night. It's a stunning city and especially beautiful all lit up at night. We walked the streets and it's so clean and is so modern it actually seems futuristic. It reminds me of my hometown San Francisco as it has a suspension bridge and bay similar to the Golden Gate Bridge. The people were really nice too - I wish our long layover had been there instead of Seoul...we went to a Korean spa all day -- an interesting experience.



Korea



Mathilde (left) & a Masai

I didn't expect to send another email, but I am missing everyone and I forgot to fill you in on one aspect of the trip that was significant (to me at least). I want to be able to share this experience with you while it is still fresh. I thought some of you might be interested in this important aspect of my trip here. For several days of the trip I was paired with Mathilde from Rwanda, who experienced the 1994 genocide there first-hand. It took me until the end of the mission to ask her about it as I was afraid it would be a tough issue for her to talk about. She was born of a Hutu father and Tutsi mother, which prior to the genocide already made her an outcast. Her uncle on her father's side had made it very known that if her father ever died, he would want to kill her mother as a Tutsi. Her mother ended up getting ill and died prior to the genocide. During the genocide, her father got ill

and because of all the craziness in the country was not able to get medication and he also died. She was in hiding in the mountains because she was a target of the genocide and her own uncles were trying to kill her. Her brother and sister were given to her aunt on her mother's side for protection as she was only a teenager and they were quite young. Her uncle on her father's side, ended up personally participating in the slaughter of her entire family on her mother's side...but luckily her brother and sister survived. Now the only family she has left (besides her siblings) are the family members that killed the other side of her family. She is going to school to work on conflict resolution in the country and is also the only supporter of her brother and sister. She says she has actually gone to her uncle and told him that she

forgives him, even though he has not asked for her forgiveness. I certainly do not think I could ever do that. But she says that when the genocide happened the whole country just went absolutely CRAZY!!! She said it had been building for years and years and the Hutus had basically been brain-washed since birth to hate Tutsis. She said some Hutu parents even killed their own children because they looked like Tutsis. Can you imagine? She understands that it all makes no logical sense whatsoever other than that the nation basically was gripped by pure evil for 3 months. I also spoke with another Rwandan named Asnath who was Hutu. Her whole family participated in the slaughter of Tutsis, but not her and she said it shocked her to the core to watch her family do this. You can see movies like "Hotel Rwanda," but listening to this first-hand account was truly amazing. I cannot imagine anything like this - especially in our century. And it is still going on around



TV on the Train in Hong Kong



Part of our U.S. Team

the world. One can only wish that one day we all see that there are not a combination of peoples and races, nations and countries, but one world with one people.

Love you and miss you, Marci