

October 7, 2007

I'm sending out another email because so much has been happening and I want to make sure that I don't forget anything. September was a very busy month – my son Keith and his wife Alanna came to visit. Alanna's brother Edmund had arrived a few weeks before them – Edmund is volunteering with ZAPHA+ for the next few months. It was great that they could all visit together here in Zanzibar!!! Two other students came, Nicole and Katelin, who are doing a body mapping project with ZAPHA+. And then Jane, who is a student at Tufts, came to study Kiswahili before she goes to the mainland to do some volunteer work. So – September was a month of visitors and I enjoyed myself but it's now October and time to get back to work. I had said that I was taking a few months to explore all of my options for my future and would make my decision by my birthday on October 15. I have been doing lots of talking, writing and meditating and I'll be very excited to tell you about it in another email.



Keith, Alanna, Edmund and I went on safari to Selous which is a game reserve rather than a park. It's not quite as crowded as the Serengeti and Ngorongo Crater often are. I think there were about 4 or 5 other Land Cruisers and many times we were the first ones to find the animals. If you ever decide to book a safari don't just discard one that say "tent camping" – these are luxurious beyond belief!!! And they even have environmentally friendly flush toilets!!



I've decided to put more photos of me in this newsletter. The sunsets in Africa feed my soul – we were on the river safari when I took this. When Denny and I traveled from Cairo to Capetown for a year in 1974 we went to lots of game parks but we never did a river safari so this was a great treat for me. I love the way that Keith takes his photos – there I am with the lions!!! And here we are with our guide, Dunstan, at the air strip. It's in the bush and yes the elephants were walking across the airstrip – when a plane is ready to land the guys on the ground have to make sure that there are no animals in the way.



Because I am who I am I never stop working. I wanted to know what it was like for the locals to work at the safari camps and I wanted to know about the small business and HIV situation in the

local villages. Chloe, the camp manger, and Dunstan drove me into Mloka the closest village. As in every village there are always little kids running out to say hello to the “mzungu” (white person). In the center is Dunstan and Mama Saidi. She has a small juice and candy duka (store). Her son Saidi works at the camp as a carpenter and he set her up in this shop. He’s saving part of his salary and the very small profit that his mom makes and he has built a very nice small duka where he hopes to sell local crafts. But the village isn’t yet a “tourist attraction” for the safari guests and personally I always question whether or not that’s a good idea. But that’s another entire email. We were driving down the road and happened to see Mzee Hussein riding his bike – he put the bike in the back of our car and we went off to the clinic. Mzee is working with the Ministry of Social Welfare and his job is to test as many people as possible for HIV. In two weeks he had tested 118 and found 4 who were positive and he knows of 6 others. He said that they do know that there are ARVs (anti-retrovirals) available but they have to travel 100km to the hospital in Utete to get them. So instead many people just go to the local traditional healer and they die. I asked him if he thought that maybe the 10 people who are positive might want to meet with each other once a week to support each other and he got very excited. That’s one of the things that I’m pursuing to see if we can get funding to send some members from ZAPHA+ to talk with the villagers in Mloka about setting up a good support group. It would be nice if donors or the government would just set up a clinic with a doctor, nurse and the drugs but that’s just not going to happen. So – we have to come up with other solutions so that PLHAS (people living with HIV/AIDS) are not left all alone to suffer and die. Okay – enough – I’ll send out more emails later about my work.



How can I possibly tell you what a great life I have – I never know who will cross my path next!!! Okay – so then we flew from Selous back to Dar and then Dar to Zanzibar. Tyler, on the left, is one of my Clinton puppies – he was with the advance team in 2005. Actually I would call him my lead puppy because he jamboed everyone and talked and played with all the kids along the streets – he has incredible energy. He is now working for Bono’s organization [www.data.org](http://www.data.org). He had emailed me before we went on safari and told me that he was planning on coming to Zanzibar for dinner that Friday night and asked if I would be around. Now – we are an island – you don’t just come to dinner for the evening and then fly away – unless if you have your own plane. Tyler is working with a team that brings attention to successful projects in Africa. They use well known people who really care – people who will take time out of their lives to come to Africa and learn about what is really going on here. So – we got back to Stonetown and Tyler called. He and the team had been visiting some projects in Tanzania and come for dinner to have a debriefing session. And yes – Matt Damon and Ben Affleck were with them!!! Both of them are very nice and it is wonderful that they care enough to be the voice for people who cannot be their own advocates. And they were very kind to take a photograph with me – sometimes I almost think that if I don’t have the photo I wonder if it really happened. But for me the best part was seeing Tyler – he is a very special man and does such great work. We were able to catch up on our “puppy news” – all the guys are doing so well. I don’t know if they were just a very special group of people who were working with President Clinton at the time or if they are typical of young American politicians who want to help America to change and become strong again. All I know is that through my personal experience with them – I am definitely praying that Hillary becomes president. She will have a hard road ahead of her with all of the current problems but I have faith knowing that there are so many dedicated young people who believe in her and believe in her vision for the US. Okay – and that’s the end of my political statement.



Ramadhan is a holy month for Muslims – it is a month of fasting during the day. A friend of mine said that one of the reasons they fast during the day is so that they will experience what it is like to be hungry as many people in the world are. They also try to observe the teachings of the Koran more closely – one of them being to not get angry with other people. So there may be traffic jams but you won't hear the horns honking or people yelling at each other. The breaking of the fast every night at sundown is called futari and we were invited to my friend Seif's house. He's our coordinator at ZAPHA+ and he is my gift from Allah – he and I work well together and he is always very kind and patient when I act very American and want to hurry hurry. He is married with 4 children who I adore. He has a 14 year old son Saleh who reminds me of my youngest son JD – Saleh spent a good part of the time that we were there playing a video game (kids!). Moza, Seif's wife is a fabulous cook and we had meat, rice, fish, bananas and lots of other things. The futari is served after sunset prayers and then there is daku, which is the meal that is eaten around midnight. Some people will then get up at 4:00am and eat their last meal of the night. Seif tells me that he often cooks that meal – he's such a good husband and father. It sounds very strange to Westerners but I have to say that I like Ramadhan – there is a different rhythm to life. I was fasting the other day – only because I was in shamba (a rural village) all day and it wasn't easy. I am not a Muslim so I don't feel that it's necessary for me to consider fasting but I can certainly respect and learn from others. Also during Ramadhan it's good to be covered when out in public and I bought a bui bui just for Ramadhan. I cover my head with an mtandio (long scarf) but I don't tighten it around my face like the other women do only because I think I look terrible. Seif says that I look like a Saudi woman – they cover their heads loosely. My Zanzibari friends like that I've worn the bui bui out of respect and I have to say it's comfortable to wear but my head scarf falls off all the time – that drives me crazy. The wanzungu (foreigners) in the center are Keith, Alanna and Edmund – Edmund has been wearing a kofia (the hat) during Ramadhan and everyone appreciates that. As you can see there is a tourist walking down the street in shorts and little top. I don't think that I can explain it very well but although Zanzibar is a tourist destination it is primarily a Muslim country and there are traditions that are very important here.

So – it was a busy September. I am going to Arusha to visit the Int'l War Tribunal on Rwanda. I have a friend who's a lawyer working there. I visited the village in Zanzibar where we built the well last year and took lots of photos so that will also be included in the next email. I have a good life and I'm content. I often feel that I'm still a student living in the most incredible classroom of life. Someone asked me last week if there was a defining moment that changed my life – and yes there was. When I traveled from Cairo to Capetown in 1974 we stayed with the Samburus in northern Kenya. They were very poor yet they shared their food and water with us. I left there feeling that there is so much that Westerners have to learn from Africans, yet often Westerners assume that the Africans know very little and need to become more like Westerners to be "developed". I still fall into the trap of thinking that I have the answers of how to "help" people yet each day what I find is that my friends here teach me about the important things in life – being kind, taking time to share, shaking hands and greeting people and smiling. Lots of smiles – and so much to learn.

Enjoy the fall colors and smells in New England. Take time to look at the clouds and the trees – life is good.

Kathryn

