Greetings from Kenya! **January 25, 2026**

Secondary schools here are facing major organizational challenges. A nationwide transition to the new “Competency Based Curriculum” is underway and has already been successfully implemented at the primary and junior secondary (middle school) levels. It is scheduled to include Grade 10 this year; however, students are not showing up! We have only 26 students at that grade level out of a projected 120, and the numbers are similar for most rural schools across the country. Two reasons have been given: The paperwork to enter Grade 10 is confusing, and (as usual) many parents cannot scrape together the money to pay school fees. A separate problem is that the new textbooks have not yet been distributed. As one of my colleagues said, “The country is not ready for this.”

The good news for me is that all my classes are Forms 3 and 4 in the old curriculum (which will eventually become Grades 11 and 12). Those students are coming to school. I am already hard at work teaching different ways to solve quadratic equations, and so far things are going well. Another item of good news: When I checked my P.O. box after returning home from holiday travels, I found five mailings from American friends! Thanks to those who sent Christmas cards – it was a real treat for me. Emails are much appreciated as well. The last and best news to report is that students are eager to read books from the Lirhanda Little Library – on the first day 18 patrons came to check out one book each. All but two of those books were returned by the due date.

Backing up in time, I will say a few words about my son John’s visit, spanning 10 days in Dec/Jan. We split the time between the city of Kisumu, the Masai Mara National Reserve, and my village. In Kisumu we did “touristy” activities, like a boat tour of Lake Victoria and a visit to the local craft market. In the wildlife park we photographed many animals, even some I had not seen on my previous visit. And during our time in the village we took long walks, visited the nearby town on market day, and attended the local Catholic church, where John “con-celebrated, ” or helped lead the service alongside the local clergy. The music was outstanding and a troop of girls in matching bright-colored skirts danced up the aisles. John made an interesting observation about our hotel in Kisumu when we returned for one night before his flight home. He said at first the hotel seemed like an adequate mid-level establishment, but after returning from life in the village, it seemed like luxury accommodations!

The photos this month show recent renovations and additions at the school: a raised walkway to prevent muddy shoes, a bright classroom after installation of transparent roof panels, and the new bookshelf in my office to accommodate the “Lirhanda Little Library,” as well as scenes from John’s visit: a picnic in the wildlife park, lions circling the safari vehicles, and tea with the archbishop of Kisumu.

Love to all,
M/M











