

March 25, 2026

Greetings from Kenya!

This month has gone by rather quickly. After the mid-term break there remained only three weeks of classroom teaching, followed by a week of exams, a few days of grading, and another week-long math camp. For the camp I am trying something new – each day we are tackling one difficult problem that actually appeared on a national exam. (I have a book of such problems spanning the last 25 years.)

To give students a boost, I am focusing on topics they studied this year. During Term 2, I will offer one class a week (outside of regular classroom hours) to continue these sessions. Naturally, it is a fairly small self-selected group that is willing to take up the extra challenge.

All in all I would say my teaching is going better this year than last, and I am enjoying it more. Last year I learned a great deal about my students and how to motivate them. While I take delight in the small group who are working hard to understand difficult mathematical concepts, I also worry less about those who do poorly. Many of these kids are not motivated in school because they know their lives will be patterned after their parents and grandparents, scraping by as subsistence farmers, perhaps earning a little on the side by the skills they develop. This is not to say that I have given up on anyone – I am still trying to reach every one of them in whatever ways I can. But at the same time I can appreciate that the kids are fun and funny, always eager to help carry my bags or sweep the floor in my office, or just to greet me in the morning.

During the weekend of March 14-15, I spent about six hours reorganizing the Peace Corps library at the office in Kisumu. The single tall bookcase was packed to overflowing, in random fashion. The office staff found funding to buy a second bookcase, so I labeled the shelves according to category (fiction, African history and culture, language study, biography, travel, etc.) and rearranged. It was very satisfying work – maybe I should have been a librarian! This project was part of a larger effort by the Service Improvement Committee, on which I serve, to make the Volunteer Resource Center more useful and convenient.

Next week I will again travel north to visit my American “age-mates” in Kitale. I’m looking forward to attending an Easter service at the Anglican cathedral (my fourth cathedral service after Mombasa, Kakamega, and Kisumu). The next day one of my elderly friends and I plan to hike around the base (but not to the top) of Mount Elgon. It will be a welcome break from work.

(continues)

The photographs this month feature flowering plants of Kenya. With the never-ending growing season and the plentiful rainfall (too much sometimes!), we fill our stomachs with fresh vegetables and feast our eyes on blooming trees, shrubs, crops, and flowers all year long.

**Love to all,
M/M**

