

Greetings from Kenya!

Our 4-week school break in August offered me the delightful opportunity to spend time as a tourist. My brother Billy and his grandson Eli flew into Kisumu on the 7th. We first visited my home and school, emptied of students and teachers who had all gone away for the holidays. We did take a hike/ nature walk through the nearby Kakamega Forest, and I introduced Bill and Eli to my school principal.

From there we traveled to central Kenya and met our guide for a 4-day safari. The first activity was a drive to picturesque Lake Nakuru and the surrounding state park, in which we saw and photographed lions, buffalo, rhinos, hippos, baboons, monkeys, and giraffes, as well as many varieties of birds. The next morning, our guide drove us to the edge of the Maasai Mara game reserve, where we toured a Maasai village and saw local dancers perform, entered one of the houses constructed of sticks and mud, and learned about their animal herds and semi-nomadic way of life. Every nine years the villagers build new houses on a nearby plot of land and burn down the old ones, by then infested with termites. The next day we spent inside the game park. It is a beautiful land of rolling hills, tall grasses, thickets of trees and bushes, and meandering streams and rivers. In addition to the animals mentioned above, we saw impalas, elands, wildebeests, gazelles, zebras, mongoose, ostriches, cheetahs, and hyenas, among others. The next several newsletters will feature photos I took in the two parks. Our final safari destination was Lake Naivasha, where I walked a trail while Bill and Eli took a ride around the lake in a small, rocking boat.

After a drive back through wheat and rice fields and huge tea plantations, we stayed a few days in Kisumu, where I took my visitors to the Peace Corps office to meet some of the staff. Later we shared meals with my PCV buddy Laurel and her sister's family (also visiting), toured the local museum and lakeside zoo/ park, and took a 3-hour boat ride on Lake Victoria, viewing hippos swimming in the lake, many bird species, and a fishing village on market day.

An update on our school library project: Things are moving along! Billy brought the first installment of donated books, a couple dozen really excellent selections that are a testimony to the good choices made by contributors, and we presented them to the principal. Also it appears that our project is a candidate for two grants that would help immensely in reaching our fund-raising goals for shipping a container-load of books and paying import duties and taxes.

Finally, I am requesting that anyone who sends "snail mail" to me please use the address: c/o Peace Corps Kenya, P.O. Box 1544-40100, Kisumu, KENYA. At least three items mailed to me at the Kakamega post office (as early as last January) have not arrived.

Much love to all, M/M

