



# The Lies Mks Believe: #1 America the . . . Stupid?

Those who have spent significant portions of their lives immersed in a unique culture often develop common traits. Often. Not always. Therefore, a blanket statement about MKs should always be prefaced by a disclaimer that clearly states that the point being made is not necessarily true of the entire population described. Most MKs speak multiple languages. Some don't. Most MKs have deep spiritual roots. Some don't. Please bear that in mind as you read "The Lies MKs Believe."

I'd like to begin this series by addressing one cultural lie most MKs seem to believe, either consciously or subconsciously. In a majority of cases, the lie will eventually cede to a more rational assessment of the culture that is supposed to feel like home to them. In some cases, sadly, it becomes so deeply engrained that it impacts MKs for the rest of their lives.

Lie #1: All Americans are stupid.  
Now there's a statement that'll raise

hackles across the fruited plain! I know it will because I made the mistake of uttering a similar statement during my first year of college, which caused my American peers to jump to the obvious conclusion that all MKs are condescending bigots. Strike one for cross-cultural understanding.

You may wonder how so many Missionaries' Kids of American origin could reach this dubious conclusion. Although they might have met one or two Americans who displayed offensive behaviors, thus convincing them of the lie's verity, I believe the greater culprit is one or more of the following factors.

Reason #1: International media coverage of the American culture. If the only source of information a person absorbs on a regular basis is foreign news coverage and poorly dubbed American TV shows, words like egocentric, materialistic, vain, depraved and arrogant will seem like appropriate descriptors. Watching the news

in France is witnessing America-bashing on a national level. Watching reruns of "Gossip Girl" and "Dynasty" (yup, it's still on in some parts of the world!) reduces an entire culture to its Hollywoodian figureheads. Bear in mind that most MKs return to the States for "furlough" only every two or four years, and then for a limited, very mobile stay. The majority of the information they gather about their "home" culture comes while they're abroad. That can seriously skew their opinion of North America.

Reason #2: Parental distancing from their own home culture. Sometimes it's easier for missionary parents to completely separate themselves from their North American culture in order to better engage with their mission field's culture. Straddling worlds is uncomfortable and feels unsettled, so they more or less consciously choose to disown that part of themselves that keeps them intimately connected to the U.S. In order

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to create that distance, they might begin to focus on their home culture's shortcomings, thus making it easier for them to live away from it. Unfortunately, this approach, when verbalized, can indelibly mark their children's opinion of a culture to which they will most likely return for college and their adult lives. Sadly, the majority of missionaries with whom I've discussed this have been completely unaware of the influence their words might have on their children's opinion of America. (I believe one of a missionary's greatest parental responsibilities is to keep his/her children connected to and reasonably appreciative of their "passport country.")

Reason #3: Rebellion. If you're forced to go to the grocery store when you'd rather stay home, you're going to hate the grocery store. If you're forced to go out and shovel snow when there's a fire in the fireplace and your favorite show on TV, you're going to hate the driveway. If you're forced to move to the States for college and there are no other options, you're going to hate the States. Period.

Reason #4: Self-protection. Most MKs know that they'll end up studying in the U.S. What they don't know is whether or not they'll fit in. They have two options: enter the American culture with insecurity and trepidation or storm it with the certainty that they neither resemble it nor need it. The latter approach involves much less risk and puts the MK on a superior footing. It may alienate them—and usually does—but that very alienation will spare them from attempting to fit in and finding themselves rebuffed. To an MK, rejection is kryptonite, and we'd rather use superiority to maintain our distance than risk not being good enough or normal enough to belong.

Reason #5: Arrogance, an arrogance that incenses me because it once defined me. I'm ashamed of it. We MKs expect so much understanding and leeway from our North American peers, yet we show them none. We demand that they accept us, yet we dismiss them with a superior sneer. We extend infinite grace and patience to the mission-field cultures in which our parents serve, yet we refuse to relent when it comes to North America's quirks. It's time we realize the vast array of goodness displayed in this country and judge our own shortcomings as viciously as we judge the flaws in others.

When speaking with MKs who profess a disdain for America, I'm quick to point out that the "egocentric, materialistic and arrogant cowboys" they so despise are the people who give generously enough for their families to enjoy the international life that is so precious to them. Those Americans who have (horrors!) never set foot outside of their state donate sacrificially to missionaries they barely know—it's real money that could be spent in countless other ways, particularly in today's struggling economy. How dare we belittle and condescend to those very people who pay for the platform from which we judge them? Nothing makes me happier than hearing MKs finally realize how misplaced their disdain was and how much there is to be valued in this, granted, imperfect culture!



Michèle Phoenix

In my adult years, I've discovered that this country, despite its well-documented flaws, is a place where generosity is prized, difference is generally celebrated, ambition is rewarded and faith is valued. This is a country where arrogant MKs can flourish and retired missionaries can find a home. My prayer is that the Missionaries' Kids I love and serve will

lay down their arms and discard their arrogance at a younger age than I did, before they've sacrificed relationships and belonging to the comfort of superiority.

Thank you, American Church, for the sacrifices you make to support missionaries and MKs who are deeply human, imperfect and fallible. Thank you for believing that God can use our feeble efforts to perform miracles in cultures that despise you. Thank you for a generosity we don't acknowledge enough and a loyalty we don't honor enough. I am humbled to be your missionary and proud to be a fellow-American.

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*Michèle Phoenix was born in France to missionary parents. After attending French schools for 8 years, she transferred to Black Forest Academy (Germany) for high school, then went on to earn a degree in Communications from Wheaton College. For the past 19 years, Michèle has been a teacher at Black Forest Academy, using that platform to weave relationships with her cross-cultural students and mentor them into adulthood. Having recently relocated to Wheaton, IL, Michèle is launching a new ministry aimed at educating North American churches/missions about the TCK identity, helping TCKs to find multi-cultural wholeness, preparing missionary families for cross-cultural living and transition, and developing new materials to aid in all these areas. She serves with Global Outreach Mission and is an author and public speaker. For more on her MK/TCK ministry or to request her assistance, please visit [www.michelephoenix.com/mk-tck-resources](http://www.michelephoenix.com/mk-tck-resources) or contact her at [shellphoenix@gmail.com](mailto:shellphoenix@gmail.com).*

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<b>EDITOR</b> Karen Keegan 222 Hyle Avenue Murfreesboro, TN 37128 (615) 895-9011 <a href="mailto:simroots@sim.org">simroots@sim.org</a>	<b>LAYOUT</b> Grace Swanson 1565 Gascony Road Encinitas, CA 92024 (760) 942-6109 <a href="mailto:swanson121@cox.net">swanson121@cox.net</a>
<b>ASSISTANT EDITOR</b> Dan Elyea <a href="mailto:wyrmail@yahoo.com">wyrmail@yahoo.com</a>	<b>PROMOTION</b> Deborah Turner PO Box 273 Greenbank, WA 98253 (360) 678-3214 <a href="mailto:ethiopia@greenbank.net">ethiopia@greenbank.net</a>
<b>WEBSITE</b> Minna Kayser <a href="mailto:Simroots.webmaster@sim.org">Simroots.webmaster@sim.org</a>	

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## The Power of One *By Linda Crouch (KA, HC 69, KA Staff)*

October 30, 2010. Wearing their distinctive, matching wrappers and singing enthusiastically, ladies streamed down the Miango road yesterday like a giant, colorful caterpillar. As they walked, making a statement to all who saw them, they met other groups of women coming from their respective homes and churches. Most carried on their heads gifts to share: grains, plastic bowls, clothing, cooking pots, fruits and vegetables. These women were on a mission of mercy, culminating their week of ECWA Women's Fellowship meetings. I was humbled to be among them.

Four nights previously, around 11 p.m. the night of Monday, October 25, a band of youth indiscriminately attacked the small village of Rengwenku, five miles from KA. Randomly and maliciously, they burned homes and attacked people as they slept. Men from Miango, including several from KA, heard the shots and went to help. The attackers had fled into the surrounding woods, leaving behind them a wake of destruction: 21 houses burned and 6 women and children killed, 5 from one home.

Aching with the news, we wondered and prayed how the Body of Christ in this community could respond. Church, village, and government leaders met together to discuss how others could help. True to form, women in the 40 churches of the surrounding community took initiative and stepped forward to address the issue. They encouraged women to convene early Friday morning and walk together to Rengwenku bringing with them what they could to help the affected villagers.

I arranged to drive out to the site with missionary co-worker Jinsook Kang, and David Rabwo, a long-time Nigerian friend. On the way, we filled the van with other ladies heading to the same place. Women coming from miles away had



already been walking since 6 a.m. Their antiphonal singing was unifying and uplifting. The number alone, around 800 women, was staggering. As often happens when I join God where He's already at work, I began to feel part of something far bigger than I'd imagined!

Veering off the main road and continuing two more miles on a rutted, dirt road, we stopped to pray as a large group before entering the village. One lady reminded us that when a member of the Body suffers, we are all affected. We could also, together, be part of the healing. "True courage (I'd read recently) is manifest when people choose to take a difficult or dangerous course of action because it is the right thing to do. It is looking beyond yourselves to what is best for another."

Arriving at the village, we walked

around in smaller groups to view the damage and greet the families who'd lost loved ones. Though a sober stoicism seemed to pervade the area, we prayed and offered comfort and encouragement. Women gradually gathered together in a large central area close to the burned homes and piled up the bags of goods they had brought. More singing and prayer was offered while women sat quietly on grassy areas. People's prayers reflected a simple, uncluttered faith that God was still in control:

"Even rich people would not have been able to pay to save these lives; you who are still alive today are here to give you another chance to make your way right with God or because your life and ministry for Christ's purposes has not been completed."

"Those personally affected may ask, 'WHY US?' I pray God will open your eyes like He did to Elisha's servant so you will see how He is at work and praise Him."

"May God bring beauty out of the ashes of these homes. May God restore what has been lost like He did for Job. Where there were grass roofs before, now may they have zinc."

Sitting among them, I was struck by the incredible power of these sincere women:

With ONE MIND they quickly rose to the occasion and mobilized action.

With ONE HEART they compassionately, generously gave what they had.

With ONE VOICE they sang in praise, believing God would bring good out of evil.

With ONE GOAL in mind, they shared the love and hope they had in Christ.

May God turn the tragedy of Rengwenku into testimonies of His saving grace and power.

*Crouch.jim@gmail.com*

# Making peace with the past

By Terri Finch Hamilton

Catherine Frerichs grew up as the child of missionaries, and her childhood memories include living among cannibals in Papua, New Guinea.

She can tell you how a child might be fed the brain of his grandfather, so the grandson could inherit his elder's wisdom.

But she can't tell you much about her birthday celebrations for eight of her young years. There weren't any.

Back then, the kids of missionaries in New Guinea were sent away to boarding school. Family visits were rare.

When Catherine turned 6, she essentially lost her family. But her parents were doing God's work, so her isolation was God's will.

Right?

Frerichs, 64, is an accomplished educator, a self-assured, calm, independent woman who loves adventure and isn't satisfied hanging out with only middle-class white people like her.

She's all of these things, in part, because she was on her own as a child, living with students at boarding school during the school year and taken in by host families during summer vacation.

When she delved into her past to write a book about her life as the child of missionaries and the God-driven lives of her late parents, she rediscovered the conflict that has been with her since childhood.

"A big part of the motivation for my book was, 'Why would two very good people make choices that put their children in distinct second place?'" she says at the kitchen table of her East Grand Rapids home.

"The minimum that happens is emotional withering," she says. "You have to shut down. What else can you do? And then to know it's all sanctioned by God?"

She has had a lot to work through. The culmination is her new book, "Desires of the Heart: A Daughter Remembers Her Missionary Parents."

Frerichs knows something about writing. She's a professor of writing at Grand Valley State University. For 12 years, she was director of the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center at GVSU, dedicated to improving the teaching skills of its

teachers. She stepped down in 2009, on the road to retirement, and now teaches half-time in the writing department.

As an educator, her mission is to improve lives. It's the same mission her parents had.

Her father, Albert, was a Lutheran pastor in Nebraska, with an itch for adventure. When a missionary friend in New Guinea died, she says, Albert felt called to replace him.

Frerichs was 1 and her brother, David, 2 when they moved to New Guinea. Five other siblings would come later—Angela, Jonathan, Paul, Ruth and Peter.

"Many people in New Guinea had never seen a white person," she says. "They thought we were ghosts."

Her mom, Sylvia, ran a well-baby clinic for the village women. Catherine was 4 or 5 when, one day at the clinic, a native woman ran up, covered with blood from multiple cuts. Another village woman had attacked her with a machete after a dispute over the husband they shared.

Frerichs' most defining memories are of being sent away.

Her parents sent them to the mission boarding school in Wau, 50 miles away, then to high school in Australia. When Catherine left for school at age 6, she never again would live with her family for any significant amount of time. Her parents visited once a year.

"I know they loved us," she says of her parents. "But what does that say to a child? That they're not important. That they chose the native people over us."

Decades later, Frerichs was compelled to ask her mom why. Her mom had Alzheimer's the last 15 years of her life.

"It made it difficult to talk about things," Frerichs says. "I would ask her, 'How did it feel to send us away?' She'd say, 'I cried myself to sleep many nights.'

"Then, she'd cry. And who wants to make their mother cry? So you don't talk about it anymore. She'd say, 'Sometimes, it's easier to forget.'

"That's a sadness for me."

## A quiet force

Frerichs has been a quiet force at GVSU since she arrived 12 years ago, says Di-

ana Pace, associate dean of students.

She was hired to head the university's faculty development center, then in its infant stages.

"At first, people were saying, 'Why do we need that? We know how to teach,'" Pace says. "Catherine made it a positive thing—that we all need to be constantly learning, not just hauling out our yellowed old lecture notes. Soon, faculty were seeking her out.

"She herself is an outstanding teacher, so she's believable," Pace says. "When she tells you that you can do something, you believe it."

Before coming to GVSU, Frerichs taught at Albion College, where she was associate provost and founded and directed a women's center.

Pace has watched, over the past decade, as Frerichs doggedly worked on her book, sharing parts of her very soul.

"It's taking what has been inside her for years and putting it out there," she says. "It's transformational for her, really."

## Looking for adventure

Poised and stylish, Frerichs knows how to toss on a scarf with flair and make it look effortless. She takes salsa dancing lessons. Friends gush how she turns lentils and root vegetables into gourmet fare.

"At the same time, she's fearless," says Pace, who once watched Frerichs take off from a conference they attended in Utah to climb a mountain.

"She'll take on anything."

Frerichs' biggest adventure was taking in three teen refugees from Sudan, as a single working woman.

"Nobody would tell me that I was crazy," she says with a smile, "so I took them."

Deng is now 22; Mach 24 and Debora 26. They were 12, 14 and 16 on that snowy December day right before Christmas 2000, when Frerichs became a foster mother.

"There was a foot of snow on the ground," Frerichs recalls. "They were so thin. They had dull skin. They were haggard looking.

"I knew it would be hard," she says. "It turned out to be really hard. They brought

all of who they were and I brought all of who I was. The house couldn't hold us. It was like being shot out of a cannon."

They were strangers, but Frerichs says she felt a kind of kinship with these ill-prepared teens embarking on an overwhelming new life.

"When we came back to the U.S., we didn't belong here," she says of her and her siblings. "We talked funny. We didn't have the right clothes. We didn't know how to stay warm in winter."

The teens spoke little English, so communication was challenging.

"I felt in many ways I didn't know what was happening," Frerichs recalls. "What they were thinking and feeling. For months, at dinner they sat here chattering away and I couldn't understand them. I would invite people to dinner just so I wouldn't be a minority.

"Then, one day, they suddenly started talking in English. And, as time went on, when I could see they were comfortable and happy, I thought, 'I'm part of that.'"

Their biological mother, who lost track of her children when their village was invaded, has moved to Grand Rapids, but they still call Frerichs "mom."

"I thought I had a full and interesting life before them," Frerichs says. She smiles. "It burst open my world."

### 'Huge respect'

Her foster daughter, Debora Makuei, now 26, says she's astonished at Frerichs' fortitude.

"I have huge respect for her," says Debora, studying for her master's degree in counseling at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. "She was teaching full-time at Grand Valley, and here we were, needing so much. Every time I looked at her I thought, 'Wow—how many people would do this?' No words can describe it.

"At first, it was really hard," Debora says in her melodic accent. "I know she felt left out. We tried so hard to speak English. I hoped she didn't think we were being rude."

Then she laughs. Her mom, she notes, would have said so.

"She's the kind of person who always speaks up," Debora says. "She's independent. She's open-minded. She's confident, for sure.

"She told me that nothing is impossible," Debora says. "Then, there I was at Albion. I had only been in the U.S. for four years. I thought, 'I guess Mom is right. Nothing is impossible.' I'll always remember that."

Frerichs has a lot of wisdom to share, she says.

"She told me that some people say God has a plan, but that you should make a plan for yourself and God will help you," she says. "So that's what I do."

Frerichs was married for 23 years, but the marriage ended in divorce in 1993. It was her husband's second marriage. He didn't want more children.

"It was hard to accept that I wouldn't have kids," she says. Only three of the seven Frerichs siblings went on to have children, she says.

"It's as if we needed all we had for ourselves," she notes.

But she wanted a child, and the couple adopted a 6-year-old boy, Jim, in 1975. He already had led a hard life. Frerichs was his fifth mother.

Her son lives in Fort Wayne, newly divorced. He has no job, three kids. He has struggled.

"It was difficult for us to accept that we couldn't make more of a difference than we did," she says.

### A sense of God

Making a difference is a big thing with Frerichs. Twice, she returned to New Guinea, in 1999 and 2000, and found comfort in the fact her parents had made one.

"The work of my parents wasn't in vain," she says. She saw schools and hospitals—results of their work.

You have to ask how all this has affected her faith.

At one point, Frerichs says, "I decided I would not be a Christian. I would stop believing. But I couldn't do it. My faith was not like a coat I could take off and hang in a closet.

"I have a sense of God as a presence in the world," she says. "But it's not a sense of God leading my every step. I would never say God led me to Grand Rapids. I worked hard. I was the best person for the job."

When her brother, David—her closest sibling—died at age 30 in a plane crash, "I did not believe it was God's will that our family, already emotionally crippled from all the separations, would now have an even greater loss to absorb.

"When I was growing up, it was all about The Call," she says. "My father had a call. It was a real call. I felt called to be a teacher. That doesn't give anybody carte blanche.

"I love and respect my parents," Frerichs says. "I'm not trying to trash them. My parents helped thousands of people. Do you say, 'Well, thousands are much more than seven, so suck it in?'"

Some do.

When she read from her book to a group of former missionaries, "one woman was critical because I said anything bad," Frerichs says. "There's more than one truth. My parents did a huge amount of good. That didn't wipe out what it did to their children. Both truths are there."

She tells of the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, when God, testing Abraham's faith, asked him to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering. Obediently, Abraham prepared the fire. But at the last minute, God stopped him.

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram in the thicket, caught by its horns. He sacrificed the ram as a burnt offering instead of his son.

"In the end," Frerichs says, "he can honor God and keep his son. My parents went to their deathbeds thinking they could honor God and have their children.

"There has not been a ram in the thicket for us.

"But there are ways of redeeming it," she says. "Part of it is telling my story."

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# Mother and Me

By Beryl Kirk (GH, 1950 - 1963)

This is a story about my family, but actually mostly about only Mother and me. My father died when I was three, so I don't remember him. It's not timely to write about my sister, my mother substitute. And my son—well, he is too busy with his life right now to share in his mother's adventures or to want to read about growing up with his not-so-proper mother.

Mother and Father arrived in Nigeria in 1931, engaged but not married. Mother was the first to call Dadiya home. She arrived by horseback as a single worker to the newly created station in Bauchi Province, Northern Nigeria. Father followed after their marriage in Dadiya when they took over the station. For almost 20 years, Dadiya was their life until that last furlough together.

I was born at Vom, five years after my sister's birth and spent my first birthday at Dadiya. But after Father died in Canada, Mother returned to her beloved Africa relying on Matthew 10:37, leaving her two daughters behind. I lived with Mother again during Grade 3, Grade 8 and Grade 12 with intervening stints at the Gowans Home for Missionary Children, Collingwood, Ontario.

Grade 3 was at Prairie Bible Institute. I remember very little except getting the strap for being lippy at school, coming home and telling mother I felt sick and being pampered with tea until Big Sister returned and tattled. At the start of the next furlough, in great anticipation of things to come, I talked of being able to wear slacks, only for her to bring out the Bible and point to the verse about men and women dressing alike. I can still feel the let down in my stomach. And the year in Calgary for Grade 8 never got better. But the Grade 12 year was worse. I was angry at her coming home early and interrupting my high school at Collingwood. At a big city school, I was a fish out of water, but thankfully had the smarts to succeed academically. And after graduation, there was the no-contest choice—either Bible School at Prairie, or start at university at Trinity Western in British Columbia. And that was the last time I lived under my

mother's roof. I was adult, independent, and alone at age 18.

If furlough years were hard for me, I can image how hard they were for Mother—picking up parenting responsibility for two girls every four years, and not really knowing how to handle them, as her Canadian daughters were quite different from her African "sons." And feeling hurt seeing her younger daughter gravitate to her sister rather than to herself. My older sister—my mother substitute—was more or less a model daughter, but I caused Mother much grief throughout her life. I wonder what she would make of my current life.

I was somewhat shy and quite socially awkward. And I was also a cusp Scorpio—just don't rile me! But it was in university where shyness and awkwardness may have been understated. I scheduled my courses to spend as little time there as possible. Ate my bagged lunch in the toilet stall. Had my first dissociation experience. And then at Sister Dear's wedding, stood as maid of honour while tears streamed down my face the entire time. She was moving to Chicago. I was really alone.

And life continued. I finished university, did the Europe thing, went back to university twice, got good jobs, lived in sin, got married, got a kid, got divorced, got remarried and re-divorced, and then took an early retirement. Mother told me once that my living in sin was harder on her than my father's death. My thought: she must not have loved him very much.

During that having-a-kid period, I learned about love between children and mothers. I began to understand how my mother could love me while I had to learn to love her. Crash courses on loving every four years didn't really do it for most children, and they didn't do it for me.

And I experienced that well of sadness within myself on a family trip to Nigeria with Mother in 1981. I left my son at home and joined my sister's family, husband, and two daughters. While approaching Dadiya, the silent tears started and continued throughout most of the trip. And it was the same when I returned

in 2002. I would go up to the \*Bariki and sit on the concrete pad where my first home was, and the tears would start. I don't remember which trip it was when they stopped, but I know now I can go to the Bariki and sense my parents without a single tear drop.

And all along, there were the anxiety attacks, the depressions, the sadness. I remember once someone accusing me of crocodile tears. I didn't know what that meant. Now I think they were referring to those tear drops that came too readily to my eyes. Thanks to the great Canadian health system, I saw psychiatrists and psychologists and went to group therapy to help me cope. My will was strong and still is, but from time to time my mind would say, "No," and slide into illness. One divorce was very costly and raw with mortgage foreclosure attempts. And the work battles . . . a boss once said I was an "acquired taste like an oyster" and some bosses, who acquired me, never did acquire the taste.

Mother moved to Calgary when she retired and I was living elsewhere. It was the visits and the holidays that were difficult, especially Christmas. The memory of a Collingwood Christmas still makes me sad—the buns with peanut butter and honey, the Queen's speech, the singing around the piano, the ritual of the gifts opening, and for some reason, Uncle Stan. I loved him. He used to tease me about being a little girl with a curl in the middle of her forehead. I remember coming home from work at Dr. Harvey's office and hearing that Uncle Stan had had a stroke, and Collingwood was no longer Collingwood. But Collingwood was okay for me. I didn't know anything else, and it was better than furlough years, and I was savvy enough to get by, and I had a Big Sister who would protect me when I was little. But Mother. . . .

I worked hard to overcome my "issue" with my mother. (I don't like that word, but I can't think of another word to describe it.) I knew that without working it out, I would continue to live with the scars, the anger, sadness, depression. I wanted to become a whole person. When

people said how remarkable my mother was, my response would be to agree—if only she hadn't also been my mother. And when people told me that they became missionaries because they were at chapel when my father collapsed, I wasn't impressed. That wasn't a good thing; I had lost my father.

As mother aged, living in Calgary by herself became a problem, and the family decided that she should live close to one of her daughters. And guess what . . . my sister lived in the States, no medical care . . . so where else could she live than close to me—White Rock, BC. It was close-to-her-youngest-daughter-and-grandson time! The weekly visits, the shopping, the phone calls, the doctor visits, the second marriage she wasn't even invited to. Didn't I owe her time and support? After all, she was my mother.

She hid her advancing dementia rather well—but her phone call about the conference being over and all the missionaries having gone home and who was coming to get her—caught my attention. She couldn't stay by herself, but with whom and where? Where was her “Mission Family” in this her time of need? I wrote the Mission and asked. There were no facilities in Canada, as the government looked after its people. And, no, there was no one who could come and stay with her. And there was no additional money for her care. And they would like to help, but how?

Luckily, or not, my work situation came to the rescue. I was ordered home on sick leave, not to return to work until I had a doctor's certificate. And I had a full year of sick leave to use up. I would make a suite for her in my house, and she would come and live with my son and me until a spot in a care home could be found for her.

My son moved out shortly after that. And there was just Mother and I.

Mother was a keeper of lists, sermons, Bible School notes, and especially letters. And when she moved in, so did all her papers! She had them all, the ones she wrote home to her family, and the ones she wrote to her daughters—I guess Gowans Home saved them—and the ones her daughters wrote to her. That biweekly duty of trying to fill the space on an airform. Big letters

and lots of “X”s and “O”s worked. She had tried to get me to look at the letters and my father's diaries, to become interested in her life, but that had to wait, until I was encouraged to read them as a part of my therapy.

I sorted the letters out—her history—PBI graduation from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class; her acceptance by the Mission; her letter from the boat off the coast of Africa describing her passion to save the black souls; the description of her first trip to Dadiya on horseback; her embarrassment of having to serve the District Officer a fallen soufflé. Her letters would be a story in their own right.

And then 1950, the furlough, health reports from the Mayo Clinic; the funeral transcript; Mr. Maxwell describing how my father had fought the good fight; the letter to family, friends, and supporters that she was going to return to Africa and leave her daughters at Gowans Home. Her letter included a line about hoping it wouldn't affect her three-year-old as they had already planned to leave the eight-year-old at Gowans Home. Kent Academy was not quite an item yet. That line let me know that she was torn, but out of duty to a deeper belief, hoped the best for me.

And the first letter she received in Africa from her daughters included a short, scribbled line from a little girl whose hand was helped by someone else. “She was being good, but her dolly was bad and wet her bed.” Another from an older eight-year-old, “Mother, if you don't come home soon, I will never remember you.” I can imagine how those letters must have tugged at her heart. And I am surprised that some of them got through the Gowans Home censors.

A spot finally came open for her in a care home, and she moved out of my house. By that time, I was actually becoming interested in her life. And during her last year in the care home, she came to rely on me and seemed to feel safer when I was around—and I really didn't mind being around. Now that was progress! And I was with her when she died. So peacefully, death didn't look bad at all. The last breath and that was it. I sat with her for an hour or so. Touched her hair, her face. I still listen to the music that played while

she died. It's the beautiful Cambridge Singers *Sing ye Heavens, Hymns for All Times*. My son came. I don't remember crying then, but while I write this, tears are flowing down my face.

The Rev. Dr. Simon Ibrahim, a Secretary General of ECWA was Mother's favourite “son.” She taught him at Biliri and at Kagoro, got in trouble with the Mission for encouraging him to type, paid school fees, and paid the dowry so he could get married and become a pastor. He had recently visited her during a trip to the U.S., and I was in contact with him. I emailed him about her death and posed a question about my coming out to Africa. I had been discussing with my psychologist, the wish, the need, the what? of going to Africa to see what it was all about. Why did it seem my mother loved the Africans more than her children? The arbitration of my work battle had left me nicely sidelined, kept my position and pay, but no real duties. So now that she was gone, I could actually travel to Africa.

I think the possibility of my coming out increased the scope of the memorial service which the people of Dadiya held for my parents, March 2002. ECWA sent the invitation letter for the visa. How long?—what, about six weeks?—got the visa, the ticket, leave slip, the shots, did the packing with no idea as to what I would be doing. That was trip Number 1.

The memorial service, the music, the dancing, the heat, the where-was-the-toilet?, the I-am-hungry-what-can-I-eat?, and the people—seemed like more than a thousand, and mine was the only white face. My son on seeing the video of the day decided that Africa wasn't for him; too many people would be looking at him. And then the request at the conclusion of the day—Would I please come back and continue the work of my parents?

Well, that was an interesting, out-of-the-blue idea. And what a challenge it could be! I was bored at home with no cause to work on. And I thought: couldn't do the missionary bit, but the development business—now that would be a challenge, and why not give it a try? I had some of my parents' passion for the less fortunate in me, being a Tommy-Douglas-type social democrat. (Tommy Douglas, a socialist, a minister, premier of Saskatch-

ewan, brought socialized medicine to Canada. We voted him Number 1.)

And so I became a development worker. I researched at home, used my leave time to take yearly trips to try out ideas, and when the leave time was used up, retired early—same time, but with 36% less salary. Now I am spending nine months in Gombe State and return to Canada in the summer to regroup.

And returning to Africa, trip after trip (now on my 11<sup>th</sup> trip) has helped me more than just survive. I have gained an understanding of my mother's decision, my parents' lives and hers in Nigeria, about children's need for love and nurturing. The sadness, the dissociations and tears come much less frequently, and I am less harsh about her life and the religion that guided her. I have a fine son, my most successful achievement. I have health and wealth in the form of a house and a pension, and curiosity and spirit that propel me just to do it. What more could one ask for? So I have done okay—but the struggle!

#### **Addendum**

*Upon reflection and rereading, I realize that people may criticise my mother's decision and feel sorry for me. Please don't. My mother was a remarkable person loved by the Africans and many others. And she did what she thought best in the circumstances.*

*I have had a very good life, full of challenges which I simply took head on due to my parents' gift to me, my genes, and the coping I learned at Collingwood. I was more fortunate than some of the other kids. We work with the cards that are dealt to us. Sometimes I wonder, though, about the different "self" which may have been formed had I been nurtured and guided by a mother and had been privileged to grow up with a father.*

*\*The nationals called the higher land (where the British and missionaries set their compound) the Bariki. In Dadiya's instance, it is a plateau up from the village where the nationals lived. (Maybe it means barracks.)*

*kirkberyl@gmail.com*

## **Forgiveness from Another Perspective**

*This is an excerpt from the final report of the Independent Committee of Inquiry, Presbyterian Church (USA), printed in September 2002. The authors are Howard Beardslee, Lois Edmund, James Evinger, Nancy Poling, Geoffrey Stearns, and Carolyn Whitfield. This excerpt is used with permission. The ICI was charged with investigating reports of sexual abuse of MKs attending American Presbyterian Congo Mission between 1945 and 1978. You can read the full report at [www.pcusa.org/resource/icireport](http://www.pcusa.org/resource/icireport).*

### **Why can't they all just forgive and forget?**

As victims begin the long, painful road to healing, many among their friends and family urge them to "forgive and forget." Why is this so important? For those who served as missionaries to the Congo, it may be related to their desire to hold on to fond memories of their years on the field. It may be because they don't want to be reminded that a colleague they respected engaged in such destructive behavior.

There is perhaps another reason. Often we call upon people to forgive and forget because we are uncomfortable with anger, particularly if it is directed at someone we care about. Or if we ourselves feel some responsibility. Anger, however, is an appropriate response to abuse. Some women the ICI interviewed have spent a lifetime coping with eating disorders, alcoholism, low self-esteem, and depression because a person they dearly loved and trusted sexually abused them. He betrayed them, and they are furious. The missionary community did not protect them, and they are furious. Their anger is appropriate. Sexual abuse is a traumatic blow to the God-given human dignity with which every person is born. In awakening to the abuse, anger and rage are a first step toward regaining that dignity and self-esteem. Anger is an important step toward healing.

Of course, a third reason why a Christian community would admonish victims to forgive is because it is what Jesus taught. Believers, of course, cannot discount the biblical imperative. However, Christian advocates for the abused have been engaged in biblical study related to forgiveness.

Many have concluded that while Jesus taught forgiveness, he also taught that we must confront evil and commit ourselves to justice, especially when the poor and vulnerable are concerned. Careful reading reveals, too, that on the cross Jesus did not directly forgive the people who were crucifying him; he left that up to God. "Father, forgive them," he said.

An Old Testament story can further guide our understanding of forgiveness. At the end of the narrative about Joseph and his brothers, after Jacob's death, Joseph meets with his brothers, who sold him into slavery. When they beseech him to forgive them, he does not say he will; rather he asks them, "Am I in place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me. . . . I will provide for you and your little ones" (Gen. 50:19-20). He made no statement of forgiveness or of love; rather he pledged not to let them starve.

Confession, too, is an important part of the Christian tradition. Confession precedes forgiveness. How does one forgive an abuser who never admitted wrong? How does one forgive a person who is no longer living? When there is no admittance of guilt or when a face-to-face encounter is not possible, the victim may have to reach a point of acceptance rather than forgiveness. Acceptance is not resignation. It implies a state of inner peace. Whether the end is forgiveness or acceptance, the journey is painful, tedious, and long.

When victims hear their parents, "aunts," and "uncles" tell them they should forgive and forget, they may feel re-victimized. The request tells them that their "family" does not understand the trauma they have had to live with. Those who call for forgiving and forgetting are saying that they would feel more comfortable if the wrong done was covered up or if the victim would at least pretend it was forgotten. Hearing people they love tell them to forgive and forget can also add to victims' feelings of guilt. If they are unable to forgive, then something must be wrong with them.

Those who work in the field of abuse speak of "cheap grace," that is forgiveness that is offered too quickly and easily. Cheap grace is forgiveness that is extended even when there has been no remorse or



compensation for the harm that was done. Cheap grace is phony reconciliation that would require victims to forget what happened to them, even when the scars of abuse are daily reminders.

Marie Fortune, a noted advocate for those who have been abused, speaks of forgiveness as “the last step.” A precondition for forgiveness, she says, is justice for the victim. This inquiry is a step toward justice, but only a step.

Working through the wounds of abuse is for many a lifetime endeavor, which means that arriving at the last step, “forgiveness,” may take years. Through therapy, accompanied by family and friends, victims take the long journey toward wholeness and a renewed relationship with God. At the same time family and friends pursue the causes of justice and restitution.

The pressure exerted on victims to “forgive and forget” is healthful neither for them nor for the church. Forgiveness can not be mandated; one who has suffered cannot simply be told to forgive.

Neither is it a theological rule to be followed; it is a gift. Forgiveness is a gift that comes as a part of the healing journey.

*Forwarded by Elizabeth (Jackson) Quinn  
(KA, HC 78)*

[elizabatu@african Chop.com](mailto:elizabatu@african Chop.com)

# MINISTRY OPS



## Seeds of Hope

*Submitted by Mark Driediger (KA 71)*

**S**eeds of Hope is a small interdenominational mission headquartered in Canada. It is concerned mainly with the care and education of children infected/affected by HIV/AIDS. I am involved in managing construction of a third phase. The phase is projected to take about five years and will consist of a nursery, dorms for students, and a staff residence building. The mission here in Zambia is managed and staffed by Zambians with the exception of, for the time being, three Canadians. Teams come from Canada and the U.S. frequently for short-term work/visits. They do a variety of things in and outside the mission de-

pending on their skills and interests: construction, pastoral work, health, education, community development. The children are individually sponsored, and so sponsors come to see their kids. There is also now interest in enabling the mission to become less dependent on outside help; and so research is being done about farming, income generation, and working with our neighbors to promote work and business opportunities. I would be happy to hear from MKs who might be interested in working in or revisiting Africa.

More information can be found at [www.seedsofhopecm.com](http://www.seedsofhopecm.com) or you can contact me at [mldriediger@gmail.com](mailto:mldriediger@gmail.com).

## A Man of God

*By Andrew (Drew) Mitchell (KA 69)*

A man of God I used to think  
Did holy works that touched the brink  
He was a man above the crowd  
His song and praise they came out loud  
He cast prayers as if a spell  
Sending demons back to hell  
Words of knowledge freely spoken  
Gifts of healing more than token  
Appearing holy, strong and firm  
Others in his presence squirm

Doctrine and rules they filled his day  
While joy and love got pushed away  
His work for God was never done  
There was no rest while on the run  
The church was where you found him  
most  
Time spent in scripture was his boast  
Mighty preaching in God's own name  
His words brought fear and even shame  
His truth was always straight and clear  
The God he knew was one to fear

That he knew the one true God  
Who would question, but a fraud  
His gospel told to all he sees  
Decisions urged on bended knees  
Take salvation and don't delay  
Or burn in hell; forever pay  
Counting numbers in the fold  
Reflect this God-man's worth like gold  
A man of God is not this way  
She walks in peace her groom's her stay  
The love and weakness in her life  
Reflect the beauty of this wife  
Although her ego strains within  
Her heart will lead and then will win  
Her heart is free not set in stone  
The one she loves is on the throne  
The loved ones throne is in her life  
The man of God, God's holy wife

From this time forth I am quite sure  
I have no work that will endure  
In peace and rest I'll hear the voice  
That knows the way and leaves no  
choice

The way is love, it's full of life  
The truth sets free and there's no strife  
To rest and dwell in freedom's peace  
The groom will give me my release  
For many years into my heart  
These things were set to not depart  
A long time spent to find this place  
The Kingdom's here in time and space  
The King is more than on the throne  
I'm in his arms and he's my own

*I was born in Jos, Nigeria in 1951 and went to Kent Academy for 1st and 2nd grades (1957-1959). As with many MKs my life both on the mission field and after has been an interesting journey. My experience with God has been filled with highs and lows. I wrote a poem for a friend of mine who recently had his 50th birthday. After writing it, I realized it was a statement of my spiritual journey—where I was and where I presently am on that journey.*

[grandrew@comcast.net](mailto:grandrew@comcast.net)

# BULLETIN BOARD

## SIM CHILD SAFETY

Have a question? Contact Marge Prince, Director of Administration for the SIM International Office and International Child Safety Coordinator, with responsibility for child safety training and keeping child safety policies and procedures up to date. She also works with the International Personnel Director to facilitate any investigative process when reports are received, and follow up on child safety issues, as needed.

[marge.prince@sim.org](mailto:marge.prince@sim.org)

## SCHOOLS NEED STAFF

Sahel, Hillcrest, and Bingham Academy are all looking for teachers, dorm parents, and various other staffing roles. Anyone interested?

## SIM INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES

<http://archives.sim.org>

A growing collection of publications, theses, manuscripts and books. Check it out!

## BOARDING BUST: SCHOOLS FOR MISSIONARY KIDS

[www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/january/3.12.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/january/3.12.html)

A report on the latest trends and statistics on boarding schools today

## LOOKING FOR DENVER SEMINARY GRADS

If you attended Denver Seminary, please contact us to get on the alumni list and let us know what you've been doing. Mark is the new president, and we are very interested in getting to know our grads! Mark & Priscilla (Chapman) Young (BA, GS 75)

[priscilla.young@denverseminary.edu](mailto:priscilla.young@denverseminary.edu)

## WANT TO HEAR SOME HAUSA, OR AMHARIC, OR ...?

[www.mylanguage.net.au](http://www.mylanguage.net.au)

Hear, read, or study the Bible in your native language. Not only are there many languages available, but sometimes even different dialects and sometimes with a choice of either child or adult versions. Great website!

## SIM KIDS

[www.simkids.org](http://www.simkids.org)

Loads of stories and activities for kids on missions in South America, Africa, and Asia

## SIMROOTS IS ON FACEBOOK

Simroots now has a FB page where you may submit articles, News Updates, and photos to be printed in a future issue. Check it out!

## HISTORY OF KA

Over 3500 photographs, countless memories, personal diaries, KA School Board Minutes, book excerpts and more all on one CD! KA movies on DVD.

Will send to you when you send a donation to Simroots, c/o Deb Turner, PO Box 273, Greenbank, WA 98253.

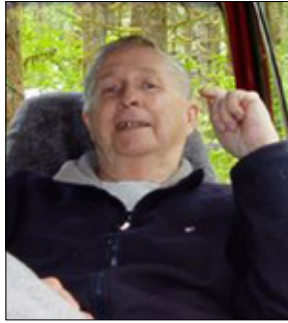




## Just one SIMAIR Story

By Rich Schaffer

Anyone who contacts me I will send them the email version of my book *Just one SIMAIR Story*. I have also posted a photo album on-line of some of our SIMAIR planes. [simairich@gmail.com](mailto:simairich@gmail.com)  
Ph: 503-363-7051



82-year-old SIMAIR pilot Rich Schaffer taking a break in his camper van.

## In Japan the Crickets Cry

By Ronald Clements, Steve Metcalf

**P**romo Blurb: In a WWII POW camp the dying Olympic runner, Eric Liddell, gave Steve his running shoes and challenged him to pray for the Japanese. But how could he? Steve and his classmates at the Chefoo school in China—for the most part the children of missionaries—were interned in 1942. Resentment of the Japanese, particularly the brutal prison guards, became a way of life. Eric Liddell, by then a missionary and fellow internee, and a hero to the boy, charged him with an impossible challenge—pray for his enemies. But was it really possible to pray for the men who stood guard over them with guns?

Painfully, reluctantly, Steve began to pray and as he continued to pray, his heart was profoundly changed. At the end of the war the China Inland Mission (now OMF International) was seeking young men willing to go to Japan. Steve trained, packed, and went. Thus began Steve's lifelong love of Japan. Over the years he would tussle with a culture where courtesy wins over truth; where suicide is an honorable choice; where to be foreign is to be forever alien. Time after time he would encounter miracles of healing, provision, and protection as God looked after him, his wife, Evelyn, and their growing family. In a resistant culture—that at the time had been recently bombed by the Christian nation of America—he would see many come to Christ. This is the story of how a boy's grudging prayers were remarkably answered.

## Sun Like Thunder

By Harold Fuller

I hope that my book *Sun Like Thunder*, is a blessing to MKs. A particularly touching MK account is that of one who ministered to Wing Commander Fuchida—the pilot who dropped the

bomb on Pearl Harbor. Her kindness led to the salvation of Fuchida! When the war prisoners asked why she was so kind to them, she replied that it was because they had killed her missionary parents in the Philippines! Another interesting MK story is about the son of CIGM/SIM missionaries (the Bennetts) who was captured on his way back to his MK school, but was later released by Saddam Husein (pp. 140-141). Would MKs be interested to read these stories—and a lot more about missionary life?

Go to [SIMUSA.org](http://SIMUSA.org) and then to *SIM Bookstore*. The book can be ordered and paid for by PayPal.

## Land of a Thousand Hills — My Life in Rwanda

By Rosamond Halsey Carr

**P**romo Blurb: While working as a fashion illustrator in New York City, Rosamond Halsey met her husband-to-be, Kenneth Carr, a hunter-explorer, and he persuaded Roz to marry him and return with him to the Belgian Congo in 1949. Their marriage did not last, but Roz's love of Africa had already taken hold. Determined to make a go of it on her own, she moved to neighboring Rwanda where, eventually, she became the manager of a flower farm that grew Pyrethrum, which was widely

used as source of an insecticide. It was in Rwanda that she spent the next 50 years of her life; she was witness to the end of colonialism as well as the unrest between the Hutu and the Tutsi, but her passion and devotion for this beautiful country and its people never wavered.



Jean Denis & Elizabeth Marcellin

## Element Keepers: Whispers of the Wind

By Elizabeth Marcellin (HC 04)

I am an SIM MK who grew up in Nigeria and Senegal. My husband Jean Denis is also an SIM MK. I just published my first book—a piece of fantasy (not about growing up in Africa). One reader's review: "It has been a long time since I've delved into this genre, but was caught by surprise this time; expecting something along the lines of a Tolkien or Lewis was somewhat accurate but it moves at a much faster pace. The brevity is quite refreshing as E.P. Marcellin writes, descriptively, just what is needed and nothing more, allowing the story to unfold quickly as each page turns. The characters' adventures will stimulate your imagination and leave you wondering..." Mark (Hamilton, Ontario) The book is available on my website <http://elementkeepers.tateauthor.com> as a paperback or an e-book. Another option is to purchase directly from me. [elizabeth.marcellin@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.marcellin@gmail.com)

# Our Home in Africa

By Deb (Corey) Schneider (BA, EL, IC 89)  
[debishereno@juno.com](mailto:debishereno@juno.com)

Digging in the mud, deluxe pie galore  
Cocking our pellet gun, rice birds no more  
Sitting by the screens, watching storms move in  
Far and wide not seen, heavy rains are pourin'  
Swingin' our hammock, the scent of the storm  
Sweet wafts of wet dirt, an enjoyed summer norm  
Listening to insects, 'squitoes buzzing sound  
Dripping humidity, a sauna all around  
This was our home, our home in Africa

Shooting nasty snakes, no time to see their kind  
Seven and then eight shots as we're shooting blind  
Hot summer days and lazy afternoons  
Reading books and playin' off-tuned tunes  
Turn the generator on, we need to beat the eggs  
Laundry's all been done we pinned 'em up with pegs  
How oft' the rains returned to sun-baked land  
We prayed and we received by His mighty hand  
This was our home, our home in Africa

Down to market—Monday's come 'round  
Peanut butter by the glop, oh the pleasant sound  
Our hair, our skin, so different to see  
We became the newest novelty  
William Mahe, dust and broom came he  
Cleaning dishes, sweeping floors, a smile for even me  
Our friend, he's gone ahead  
He is alive, he is not dead  
This was our home, our home in Africa

We washed our hair—water off the tin  
Traveled o'er muddy passages where we have been  
Oh, the ocean, the breeze, we cannot forget  
The smell of salt, the burning sand as yet  
With palm trees swaying in the breeze  
And peddlers selling carvings by the seas  
Out to the reef as tides are low  
Beware the urchins; to the feet they go  
This was our home, our home in Africa

On the bus, sweaty bodies, traveling up  
We meet with friends and laughters soon erupt  
Back to the dorm, with whom will I room?  
Treasures, my sisters as semesters loom  
Commissary is open, time for a treat  
Orangina would help to ward off this heavy heat  
Never alone, but alone at times  
Careful we are to not transgress the lines  
This was our home, our home in Africa

Many an airplane, paper bag in hand  
Singing beyond the noise 'til we land  
Flying o'er the jungle, elephants out there?  
A grassy landing, land with care  
We made it again, home for the time,  
Christmas is here, a treasure sublime,  
Silly Goose Lady, you've done it again  
Boxed up wonders, your heart you send  
This was our home, our home in Africa

Off to the village, the meeting will start  
Stumps for our seats, singing our part  
"Halla chanya benya" rings true  
What does it mean? "How do you do?"  
Rhythm of shakers, drums, how they sing  
Opposites sides the traditional thing  
Oh, how I wish I knew the shakers to use  
Instead I just tap my old tennis shoes  
This was our home, our home in Africa

Watching live bugs, in mouth and on string  
Soon we will eat, be it that squirmy thing?  
The chicken's been caught, de-feathering is done  
Or would it bony, bush rat or snake to come?  
Our eyes burn with tears, the pepper it lingers  
When we get home—to ice cream, licked fingers  
Tomorrow or the next we'll celebrate Jesus' birth  
From heaven, Savior God, came He to earth  
This was our home, our home in Africa

We cannot imagine life without "home"  
So privileged we were, the world to roam  
Mr. Coley and Ma Jena, so true to us all  
Africa, Greece, Israel, Egypt we saw  
Tromping the jungle new species to find  
Each plant brought home, a variant kind  
Did we actually swing from the vines?  
Who would believe our crazy, magnificent times  
This was our home, our home in Africa

It matters not how our lives have changed  
Experiences differently arranged  
Jesus showed himself in that land  
Over jungle, monkey bridges and sands  
He gave us so many memories and treats  
To think on, to learn from, to hold 'til we meet  
Telling thoughts, kindness won  
You are a treasure to me never gone  
My sisters . . . this was our home, our home in Africa

## KA/HC REUNION 2012

**When:** Thursday through Sunday, July 5 – 8, 2012

**Where:** Dallas. The exact location is not contracted yet, but we will do everything we can to secure the same venue, as we have gotten positive reviews from people that have attended past reunions in Dallas.

**Speaker:** Danny McCain—which according to reliable sources (Dick & Meg Ackley) should be FANTASTIC as he currently serves in Jos and will be great with all generations. Our goal is greater participation.

**Website:** [www.hillcrest.myevent.com](http://www.hillcrest.myevent.com) for current information regarding reunion information

**Contact:** Steve Ackley, [steve@ackleys.us](mailto:steve@ackleys.us), 214-536-5458 (cell)



## Women of the KA Class of '77

By Rebecca (Fuller) Millican (KA, HC 77) and Debbie (Jones) Warren (KA, HC 77)

As I joined the line waiting at the gate for my connecting flight from Minnesota to Salt Lake City, I scanned each lady's face who looked my age, looking for Annegret whom I had not seen for at least 30 years. No one fit my expectation of my childhood friend as I put my bag into the overhead compartment. I was about to take my seat when a lady came rushing down the aisle, took one look at me and said, "Hi! I almost didn't make the flight." Realizing that no one except Annegret would know me, I verified that this friendly person was indeed my former classmate! And that's how Friday afternoon, October 8, 2010, began as nine of us reconnected from the KA class of '77.

Joyce (Lees) Nickel prepared an astounding *tuwo-da-miya* dinner for us Friday as the tears and laughter of shared memories began. Saturday we found and climbed a "Mt. Sanderson" on Antelope Island in the middle of the Great Salt Lake, happily explaining to passers-by that we were enjoying a reunion from our boarding school days in Africa. On Sunday morning Heidi (Zobrist) Guzman brought out an authentic KA Song Book, and we sang old favorites such as "In God's Green Pastures Feeding," "Follow Him," "For Those Tears I Died," and a number of others. Then our hostess, Pamela (Long) Daroff, led us in a devotional thought about Esther, with the encouragement to trust that God always has our best at heart, and a challenge

to let the Lord work through us as He wishes. So many moments were unforgettable about our weekend in Utah, but the most heart-warming was Sunday evening when we spent four hours as sisters, praying for each other one at a time, until we had nothing left to say. During the prayer time I opened my eyes more than once, looking around the circle of faces in wonder and thanking God for bringing us together.

had all matured and "grown into" ourselves!

Somehow the few short days in Utah validated the first 17 years of our lives. The shared stories of loneliness, homesickness, fear, as well as camaraderie, laughter, and friendship were healing. Yes, we had lived in Africa and it was not our imagination. For many of us, boarding school was really difficult; and healing came as we realized that others had found it difficult too.

It wasn't that we were weak or unspiritual or too sensitive—we were children. At Pamela's we were comforted as we cried, and we were understood—not as children but as sisters. It meant so much to be able to hug each one, to reconnect, and to piece together a few more aspects of our childhoods that had been vague or confusing. The sharing was deep and heartfelt and there was no condemnation. I am quite certain I have never been part of a group that was as accepting and caring as this one. We enjoyed the concrete remind-

ers that the whole "childhood-at-boarding-school-in-Africa" thing had not been a figment of our imaginations.

Thank you, Pamela, for putting us up this year—you and David are gracious hosts! We hope to reunite again in 2012 . . . a chance for even more Women of KA '77 to join us!

[rmillican@sympatico.ca](mailto:rmillican@sympatico.ca)  
[debbiencj@aim.com](mailto:debbiencj@aim.com)



*Patty (Warkentin) Coster, Rebecca (Fuller) Millican, BK [Barbara] (Steely) Ford, Heidi (Zobrist) Guzman, Becki (Anderson) Nelson, Debbie (Jones) Warren, Annegret (Schalm) Horton, Joyce (Lees) Nickel, Pamela (Long) Daroff*

While we were together, the years of separation vanished, although throughout the weekend we found ourselves trying to match the little girl in our memories with one of the eight ladies (with an occasional grey hair) we were speaking with. Of course we had changed since we had last seen each other, yet our spirits were essentially the same. As we talked and shared we found that we recognized the main characteristics in each other, yet we

# REMEMBER WHEN



## Still Seen: Remembered Views *By Dan Elyea (KA, HC 59)*

Each of us can recall favorite or otherwise intense images from our MK youth. Maybe brilliantly-flowered trees or shrubs. Or something that really scared us—like the horrible face a monkey makes just before it bites. Brush fires at night at the end of the dry season, especially those burning in the hills. Bats swarming out of the trees at twilight. Pagan villages clustered here and there. Hills, rocks, mountains, and valleys.

Two scenes in particular rank high in my memory.

The Jos Plateau, around 4000 feet in elevation, falls off very rapidly in some directions. The view—near the escarpment—of the high plains some 2000 feet below always gave me a pleasurable, wistful feeling. Almost like distilled nostalgia.

Another intense image of Nigerian terrain rather scared me. Maybe partly because I was only six or seven at the time. We were taking our annual leave at Zagan or K'woi. Somewhere in the general vicinity of which ever place it was (we vacationed at both), we looked way down on what seemed like an abyss to me. Water thundered and crashed through a tumble of huge boulders. The immense and seemingly uncontrolled power of the surging water frightened me a lot and left an after-image burned forever in my mind.

### London Town

Back when the trip between America and Africa (in whole or in part) often took place by ship, a stopover in London might well show up on the itinerary. If a few days fell between the travel connections, it gave opportunity to visit some of the well-known historic attractions there. (Think: Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, etcetera.)

However, I also remember some of the more mundane aspects: cold, damp rooms warmed slightly by a gas-fired space heater as long as you had the proper



coins to feed into its greedy slot; the incredibly delicious milk contrasted to four years of boiled Fulani milk choked down under duress; and coins still in circulation with minting dates going back to the middle-1800s. I talked a newsstand vendor into going through his till and picking out some of the really old pennies for me in

exchange for some newer shillings. I've given many of those away over the years.

Rationing continued in England a number of years after WWII ended. We passed through there once around 1949. We were staying in sort of a boarding house where everyone ate together at a long table. I asked someone sitting near me, "Please pass the butter." My parents protested that I didn't need any and looked daggers at me. But the person insisted that it was fine, and passed the butter over to me. Imagine my chagrin when—after the meal was over—I learned that this person had kindly shared his personal butter ration with me!

Many of the children there sported very rosy cheeks. But I don't know whether that showed good health or bad health or maybe just the effects of the weather and not much heating in the buildings.

While out exploring on our own, my brother Tom and I managed to wander into someone's yard. He yelled at us, "I say, what are you doing in my garden?" (Try your best British accent with this one!) At first I didn't know what to reply because it appeared that we were just standing on regular yard grass. (Looking around the grounds of an old church, we had apparently strayed across some invisible property line.) Shortly, I figured out that what I called a "yard" or "lawn," he called a "garden." So I stammered out an apology and we drifted back onto the church compound. The Ugly Americans strike again!

### Swimming Holes—Use At Your Own Risk

Like the gravitational tug of the moon on the earth's oceans, swimming and otherwise romping in water of suitable depth and breadth pulls powerfully at a boy. Back in my late grade school years in early 1950s Nigeria, authorized opportunities for outdoor water activity came very rarely. In fact, I could easily count them on the fingers of one hand. So we opportunistically evaluated every likely



prospect to indulge the hankering.

Yes, we knew about the disgusting parasites that lurked in many of Nigeria's waters. And unhygienic practices upstream could well pollute the makeshift swimming holes. To top it off, such activities were strictly verboten. But we developed powerful rationalizations for some occasions; other times, we just pushed the scary knowledge to somewhere in the back of our minds. Science class gave us some mental leverage. We learned that, as water passes over rocks, exposure to oxygen and sunlight kills bacteria. We stretched this concept to its furthest extreme to convince ourselves that some streams might be safe for a plunge.

Boyce Beacham and I found a seemingly good location a few miles from my folks' station. We used it a number of times. One day as we were noisily dog-paddling in the stream, Boyce let out a terrified shriek. Out of the blue, a barrage of mud balls descended upon us, and one of the first missiles to arrive had caught him squarely in the middle of his back. Splat! Because the banks were wooded and rose quite high on both sides, the attackers seemed invisible. Then laughter broke out, and we sighted the hostile forces. We yelled threats at our tormentors, a bunch of Nigerian boys. But we felt inhibited to go to the muddy banks for retaliatory ammunition because we were skinny-dipping and felt very vulnerable. So that place came off our "A" list pronto! In the rainy season, deep water abounded, but the muddiness and swift flow deterred us. So most swimming took place in the dry season.

The stream that supplied the water for KA and the Miango Rest Home formed almost-usable pools downstream of The Dam. We'd pile rocks across a pool outlet to bring the level up a foot or two so we could sort of swim in it.



A few times on a Saturday, some of us made our way over to the big pool below The Falls. These were the locally famous falls several miles away that you could hear all the way from KA after heavy rains upstream. This was extra scary, because we saw what we believed to be crocodile tracks on the bank. Though we never actually sighted a croc there, we tended not to linger in the water, but to dash in, paddle a little, and dash back out!

A little stream paralleling the road out by the Jos reservoir provided David and

Bill John and me some nice clear pools in which to swim. Clearness implied purity to our rationalistic mindsets. And, as a bonus, this stream featured a series of short falls upstream of our swimming place. Also, we thought it to be spring-fed from not too far away. We so convinced ourselves of the purifying efficacy of oxygen and sunlight, along with the other favorable factors in this case, that we drank from this stream in addition to swimming in it.

Thanks to God for guardian angels!

### **That Creepy Feeling**

One fine day David and Bill John and I hiked out to the Jos reservoir. Something a couple hundred yards off the road caught our interest—probably an unusual formation of rocks. We struck out through the tall grass to get a closer look. As we were walking through the field, we all simultaneously started to feel kind of

funny—sort of an indefinable sensation, definitely weird. When we looked at each other, we saw that we were covered with ticks. The grass was just loaded with them. Bad, bad choice of side-trip! We got back to the road as fast as we could and picked ticks off each other. Where's a good monkey when you need one?! (For you who never saw monkeys in

action, they love to groom and pick pests off themselves or others.) Never did get that closer look.

[wjfrmail@yahoo.com](mailto:wjfrmail@yahoo.com)

# Gourds By Grace By Grace Anne (Seeger) Swanson (KA, HC 69)

If you lived most anywhere overseas, chances are you have seen the people there use gourds for just about everything—as containers for milk, water, grain, and even as spoons.

Two years ago I took a one-day Gourd Art workshop offered at San Diego Botanic Garden. Remembering the gourds I had seen as a child and recalling the ones that I had brought back to the USA as souvenirs, I was intrigued and decided to give it a try. I remembered the intricate geometric burned designs in the African gourds. I remembered how the Nigerian people had to heat spears in the fire to make them hot enough to burn the designs in the gourds. How as the spear cooled it had to be exchanged for a red-hot one.

On the day of the Gourd Art workshop the teacher put a cleaned gourd and a burning tool in my hands, and it was “love at first burn.” The smell of that burning gourd just took me home. I was hooked. The paints, watercolor paper, and canvases that had kept me busy for the last 10 years have been pushed aside and the gourds have taken over.

The surface of the gourd is a wonderful thing. Almost as hard as wood, it can be carved, burned, sanded, dyed, and painted. Because the gourd is a natural material, no two gourds are alike. The texture differs, the size and shape differ, and the softness or hardness of each gourd is different. Sometimes I really do not know what I have in a gourd until I start working on it. Beads, stones, feathers, metal bits, and all sorts of things can be added to the design. Pine needles or other natural materials may be sewn along the tops. Some gourds can be made into vessels with lids, some can become bowls, and some are simply objects of art to be admired for their own sake.

My first gourd—naturally—was an African design. But because my gourds are shown and sold at a gallery near the coast in southern California, where tourists make up a good percentage of the customers, I quickly switched to an ocean theme. From that I progressed to geometric, floral or free-form themes. Some-



*Grace Anne and Paul Seeger Nigeria c. 1954*



*Gourds in a Nigerian market*



times I have a very good idea of how I want that particular gourd to end up looking. Other times I just start in and let the gourd take control and guide me. In any case, each gourd is unique. I never make the same exact design again. The fun is

trying something new and seeing how a new idea will (or will not) work.

I love every facet of my new art form—even the cleaning and scrubbing of the dirty gourds straight from the farm. The whole process is very tactile. It is a great challenge to be working in 3-D instead of 2-D as I was required to do in my watercolor and acrylic paintings. And then there are the power tools: drills, dremels, burners, dremel bits, sanders, saws. Quite a change from a paint brush and a tube of paint.

The only thing that I wish I knew earlier was the potential health hazards. When cleaning out a gourd or carving into a gourd, a full-face respirator must be worn. All work must be done outside with good ventilation. Care must be taken not to bring gourd dust or mold back into the home. The gourd dust is by no means toxic, just irritating to the lungs. If you can “taste” the gourd dust in the back of your throat, that is not good. That means you have breathed it in. I wonder if the Africans figured this out. Fortunately they were most likely always working outside.

At various shows and at the gallery, people are intrigued by the gourd art. They ask, “Is it pottery?” No, it may look like pottery or ceramic, but that is because there is a glossy spray finish on each gourd to protect the dyes. “Is it like a pumpkin?” Well, it is in the same family, but it is not edible and not soft like a pumpkin and will not rot. “What’s inside?” Not too much. A few seeds and membranes that are sometimes easy to clean out and sometimes not. “Where do you get them? Do you grow your own?” No, although gourds will grow here on the coast, the gourds that I use are the high-quality, hard-shelled gourds from a gourd farm inland where the weather gets very hot in the summer months.

I wonder who else in our group has a hobby or vocation that was greatly influenced by our time overseas. I suspect quite a few.

You can view my work at [GourdsByGrace.com](http://GourdsByGrace.com)  
[swanson121@cox.net](mailto:swanson121@cox.net)



# I Know You're From . . . Because

## BINGHAM ACADEMY

I Know you're from **Bingham Academy** because . . .

- ???

## GOWANS HOME

I Know you're from **Gowans Home** because . . .

- It has become a habit to memorize a new Bible verse each day (King James Version) in order to qualify for breakfast!
- You hide small amounts of food (such as cheese) on the ledge under the dinner table, for future use.
- Any coin you get from the birthday cake goes right into the Leprosy Mission bronze pig on the mantelpiece.
- You are carrying on your parents' work of the Kingdom of God.

## KENT ACADEMY

I Know you're from **Kent Academy** because . . .

- You still change sheets religiously once a week.
- You instruct your kids to place one sock inside the other before tossing them in the wash.
- You've tried teaching your kids table manners using Tag Day.
- You wear your clothes two days in a row before throwing them in the wash.
- You insist on weekly room inspection for your kids.
- You cringe at the sound of a siren.
- You still love/hate porridge.
- You open the fridge door quickly and shut it quickly so the cold won't escape.
- You still wash your hair in the sink.
- You'll never take a group shower again.
- You still have to stop and think . . . what did my teacher say? Is it practice/practise, pajamas/pyjamas, tire/tyre, or honor/honour?

## ELWA ACADEMY

I Know you're from **ELWA** because . . .

- You think everyone grew up on a beach and . . . subsequently you think that it's normal to brush sand out of your sheets every night before going to bed.
- You know how to walk on the reef without stepping on any sea urchins.

- Christmas Eve traditions include a cookout on the beach.
- A full lagoon is made for "letting it out," and you know how to ride the rapids into the ocean.
- You can spot an agate through the breaking waves, grabbing it before it's gone.
- You can tell how long a Portuguese man-of-war's tentacles are by the size of the bubble above water.
- You don't think it's really raining until it comes down in sheets. 200 inches of rain per year is normal.
- You know how to bust a dry coconut with your bare hands in less than 2 minutes.
- You know what "pekin" means and now know that, in truth, you really were a pekin.
- You've bartered for sugar so you could make coconut candy.
- You remember what green worm medicine tastes like.
- You've made your own Barbie doll houses out of boxes, with shells for food and magazine pictures for windows.
- You knew how to drive a Vespa scooter by the age of 10.
- You've watched nightly sunsets at dinner over the ocean, and you have never seen sunsets like that again.
- You know how to build a fort in the bush.
- You've climbed the mangroves in the lagoon.
- You've paid 5 cents for a frozen Kool-Aid in a plastic baggie.
- You can name all the rocks, swim to Naff's rock or Thompson's rock, and of course you can dive off the Diving Rock (at high tide).
- You've had jellyfish fights.
- You still find it difficult to memorize Bible verses in anything but the KJV thanks to JPQ Nash.
- You get sleepy in the afternoons between 1:00 and 2:00.
- You've climbed any tree imaginable: coconut, palm, mango, pine, almond . . .
- Your teachers were also some of your best friend's parents!
- You took a plane to visit the eye and medical doctor without your parents and had to fly 2 countries away.

- You could eat a whole pineapple all by yourself if you wanted.
- You grew up thinking all doctors' voices sounded like Dr Schindler's.
- Kerosene was always on your back porch (to scrub off the tar from the beach).
- You've seen crocodiles in the lagoon and your mom still let you go back there. (What was she thinking?!)
- Kick the Can was an every-night event in the summer (when it wasn't raining!)
- You got out of school at 12:30 every day.
- July 4th celebrations with the U.S. Embassy were always held in February (due to the heavy rain in July).
- You think anything over 25 miles is a long trip—long enough to bring along a cooler of water and a couple rolls of toilet paper (one for each side of the road).

## SAKEJI

I know you're from **Sakeji** because . . .

- You squirrel away sweets and the famed Sunday fudge for a later date of naptime hunger. And then you barter with fellow sweets-bearers to select that perfect bit of bounty.
- You know what a loquat tree is and what happens under it [place where hair cuts were given by a Zambian; sheer torture!]
- You know what happens at "half term" [no classes and you pig out on well rationed sweets down by the river].
- You know what comes in a "brown bag" [like a sack lunch; the bags were brown; the lunches tasted brown!]
- You know what will take place when someone says "Go to my office!" [for the proverbial "hiding"].
- You know the what-and-why of "marching" [laps around the playground, either for PE or for punishment].
- You know what a "tiki" is and where it can be found at Christmas [the old British 3-penny coin wrapped in waxed paper and cooked inside the Christmas pudding].
- You know what a "moosh" is and when especially to listen for one [a vehicle; at the end of term, assuming it was your parents coming to take you home for the holidays].

# RETURN TO HOME



## Back to Nigeria *Photos submitted by Melissa (Sawyer) Mukkara (HC 99)*



Last summer, June-July 2010, I traveled back to Nigeria to visit my parents, John and Nancy Sawyer, in Jos. What a wonderful trip it was! I took over 1000 photos! It was totally packed with trips here and there to see all the old favorite spots, and I was inconsolable the day we had to fly out.

[lifestorming@yahoo.com](mailto:lifestorming@yahoo.com)



*No let MALARIA thief your pikin!*

*Niger Creek Hostel, with a couple of security changes, but otherwise all the same*



*Gog & Magog (that's me)*



*MRH (and Dad enjoying a book)*



*KA and that rock where we ALWAYS took the conference photo!*



*Hillcrest 3rd & 4th grade building... the rooms are not used for classrooms much anymore.*

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Hi Karen,

I enjoyed the article on airforms. It brought back some memories, one of them rather recent.

Before going to Liberia, my dad promised his mother that he would write to her every week, and to that end we went through a lot of airforms (the official name was aerogrammes, but what did we care about British spelling). The section on the back, coming and going, was often reserved for us children to communicate with our grandmother. She always wrote that section going across the narrow way.

Recently I came across some aerogrammes being thrown out in the trash at the ministry where I work. This would not do! It happens that I sometimes get letters from overseas that I have to respond to, but often I never hear back from the correspondent again (it may have something to do with the fact that we never send money overseas). I looked up USPS online and discovered that an aerogramme still goes for the price of a postcard—quite a savings over a 1-ounce letter! Of course, I did have to add a few stamps to

bring it up even to that price. Now I was prepared to communicate. Never mind that the entire inside of the airform was pre-printed with an obsolete message—I just crossed that part out. I was used to only using the back quarter section. Only an MK would think of such a thing! I even figured a way to run it through my laser printer with the tabs tucked in so I could add a new and improved stock message. You know you are an MK (from the old days) when you re-use an airform!

*Dan Buck (EL, IC 82)*

Dear Karen,

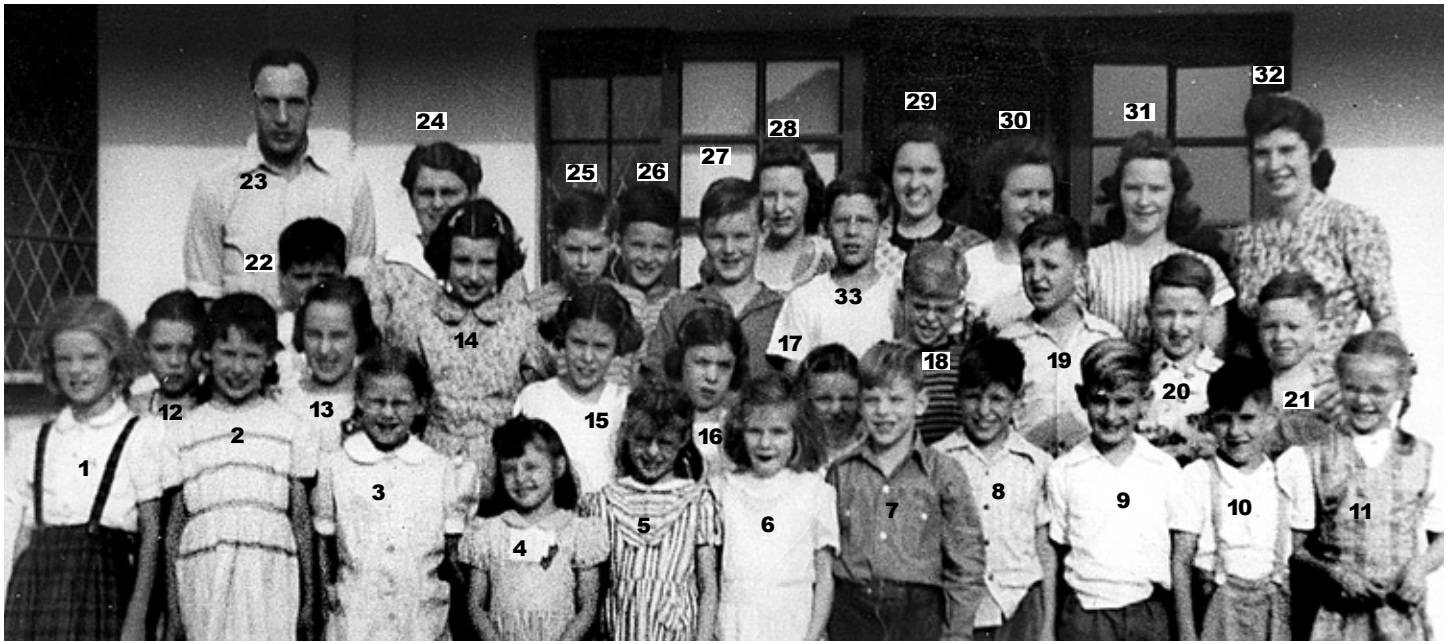
In the last issue, Vol. 27, Number 2, Ray Jones from Ethiopia wrote two stories. The second was “The Trumpet Trio Tryouts.” The story was about the new music teacher and the apparent gaffe of her trumpet playing. He said at the end of the article, “Someone may remember the name of the lady.” So I want to tell “the rest of the story.”

The teacher was my sister, Miss Gladys Douglas. She taught music at Bingham Academy from September 1963 to Janu-

ary 1965. I asked her about that incident when she visited me at Christmas. She couldn’t recall everything about it. One possibility was that “she had not practiced for some time” and her “lip” was not in good condition (necessary for playing brass instruments). Another possibility was that she was really goofing off! That would not surprise me at all, as she often acted really crazy to get big laughs! If that were the case in this instance, she really got the laughs! By the way, Gladys is retired from teaching but very involved in music: directing a senior choir at her church and organist at her church in York, PA. I don’t think she’s done any trumpet playing recently, though!

I enjoy *Simroots*. Although I was never connected with any MK school, I have come to know many of the parents who have lived here in Sebring, in the 32 years that I have been here. And because of that, I’ve gotten to know many MKs. It’s been a blessing all the way around.

*Elaine Douglas*



1. Hope VanderSchie 2. Elsie Kirk 3. Barbara Davis 4. Ruth Grant 5. Clara Grant 6. Eleanor Worling 7. Bob TerMeer, 8. Peter Cox 9. Ian Cairns 10. David Williams 11. Betsy Ostien 12. Ruth Eitzen 13. Ann Williams 14. Estelle Morris (?) 15. Betty Ter Meer 16. Dorothy Ter Meer 17. Carol Davis (?) 18. David Hursh 19. Clinton Beckett 20. Walter Morris 21. Bob Morris 22. \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Charlie Rhine 24. Irene Rhine 25. Don Ter Meer 26. Angus Kirk (?) 27. Marvin McEltheran 28. Jane Legg (?) 29. Marcia Mowatt 30. Lucille Jacobson 31. Jean Legg (?) 32. Grace Archibald 33. Boyce Beacham



## Charlie (C) and Irene (I) Rhine Diaries (KA Staff) . . .

*Continued from last Simroots*

1948

Sat. January 31

C: Paul [Craig] and I worked on installing new stove. Had to make new stove pipe as none obtainable in Jos.

Mon. February 2

I: Got to work on the rooms and had all the mattresses taken out. Found a rat in one with some of the stuffing fallen out. Gerry [Craig] and I tried patching them out in the sun, but it was too hard on our eyes. We had the boys brush them. Then in the afternoon had them carried into the rooms and placed around on the beds.

C: Paul went to Jos today; worked around moving beds, mattresses, etc.

Tues. February 3

I: Lined the drawers with paper. When that was done, we found there wasn't much more we could do right then. I mended some socks. In the evening put the hems down on two dresses.  
C: Paul and I finished putting stove together; hooked up 50-gallon drum to make hot water off of stove.

Wed. February 4

I: Cleaned kapok practically all day. We got about 6 pillows stuffed. It is terrible stuff to work with. From about 4 o'clock on had 6 native helpers. Several were laborers and they were pretty grumpy about it. Had the tailor make one cushion cover today and he did a nice job of it.

C: Paul and I worked all day on urinal in boys' BG. [bathroom]. Decided on making big funnel and running into a cast iron sewage pipe which goes out through the wall. Added to mother's letter.

Thurs. February 5

I: I baked pie in the morning, and after I was finished with that helped with kapok. By the help of native women we were able to finish. Right after dinner Gerry pinned the pillows shut and I brushed them off. After tea we sewed them up.

C: In the a.m. Paul and I finished the boys' BG urinal.

Fri. February 6

I: Charlie went into Jos today and didn't get

back till almost 5:30. Gerry and I cleaned the pantry. We were almost finished by lunchtime. Then in the afternoon we took the silverware and linens out. The boys polished the silverware.

C: After dinner had talk with the **Coens** up until teatime. They are leaving on furlough next week. Gave the school the loan of their radio and 35 mm projector until they return. All that we must do is to get 6-volt battery, plus get radio fixed. Left after tea (had to leave Leslie back for lack of space), stopped at C.B.M. school [Hillcrest] in order to get **Roughs'** boys. Was taken through school. Surely is lovely. Gerry and Paul spent evening with us.

Sat. February 7

C: After breakfast we prepared our camera ready to take pictures in town. Paul, Gerry and I along with Rege went to the town to take pictures. Was certainly surprised to see the size of the place; never dreamed it was so large; however, it is so spread out among the rocks and hills. The chief's compound is very large. Is at the base of the sacred hill. Wanted to climb hill to take picture from it but was not allowed. Saw *tsafi* [juju] stones which were sitting near the car. Gray stones sitting up with red and white paint (or other substance) marks. Also saw *tsafi* hut in chief's compound. Above entrance were heads and bones of all sorts of creatures: on side were designs in mud wall of heads, etc. also white and red; saw taking grain out of one *rumbu* [corn bin] through hole in side and putting it in bigger one through hole in top; saw several smoke pipes such as I bought this week from the pipe maker. Saw him but he would not let me take his picture. They are afraid of camera while others of this tribe do not seem to mind. When ready to return let chief get in car and brought him up to the market. Took several shots in market. After teatime worked on something to put on our bathroom door to keep it locked with.

Mon. February 9

I: Spent the day getting **Dorothy Krell's** place ready as she was supposed to arrive in the station wagon, but when the station wagon came back, she wasn't in it, and they said she was

coming Wednesday.

C: Continued to work around school to get it ready.

Tues. February 10

C: Beginning to see things getting done.

Wed. February 11

I: Scrubbed W5 and W1 in the morning [West Wing?]. They surely were dirty. In the afternoon put up curtains in a couple of rooms, etc. Dorothy Krell came out today.

C: Worked around school. Worked on beds most of day.

Thurs. February 12

C: Paul and I painted BGs.

Fri. February 13

I: The three **Morris** children (**Estelle, Joan, Wally**) arrived in the afternoon. We had the native boys scrub the porch, and in order to do it we had the women fill a couple of tubs with water. When the Morris arrived, the last bit of the porch was being scrubbed, so we felt that we were really ready for the children. **Audrey Abernethy** arrived with them also.

C: Went to Jos with Mr. Rough. Hired big Jos station wagon to bring out Morris with loads and Audrey. 4 now at school.

Sat. February 14

I: The **McElherans** arrived just before dinner. **Hope VanderSchie** and **Teddy de la Hay** arrived with them also. Were they ever dirty from the trip! That evening **Mr. Eitzen** came, and he brought **Ruth** and the **Legg twins (Jane and Jean)**, and **Barbara Wiebe**. They arrived at about 8:30 so it was quite late before we got to bed.

Sun. February 15

I: We took all the children to church with us. **Thurza Leunk** gave them a little talk. We had a long rest hour. In the evening we all went to bed fairly early.

C: Took walk with children in p.m. after tea. Saw fire in Hausa part of town. Really did a lot of damage when thinking of financial standing of natives. Several compounds destroyed by fire. Just walls of huts standing—looks strange.

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### 1967 or '68 at Bingham Academy LAC Sunday service

*Submitted by Mari Dye Tyson and Rudy Estelle*

**Left side, Class of 79. Front row:** Karen Brooks (?), Mari Dye, Sharon Rogers, ? , Ruth Cumbers

**Row 2:** Dan Coleman, ? , Lisa Piercy or Kathy Klassen, Beverly Radach, Margaret Neal or Marion Entz,  
Lowell Bergen, Kenny Veer

**Row 3:** Tim Bascom, ? , Phillip Jackson, David Iwan, Greg Giles (?), Philip Neville

**Back row:** Kathy Klassen (?), Brenda Creighton (?), ?

**Right side, Class of 80. Front row:** Julie Koop, Rudy Estelle, Daniel Johnson, Esther Atkins, Carolyn Smith

**Back row:** Tim Maxon, Doug Stinson, Dale Adams, Sarah Yarnell, Janna Wright