

"OUT OF AFRICA"—OUR TANZANIA TRIP -FEBRUARY 8-24, 1999



Tarangire River Valley as seen from the lodge

The first day: Monday, February 8, 1999

Dick & Gary arrived at the house and to get in the mood, we watched “Out of Africa”—A beautiful movie which put us in the right frame of mind for our great adventure. At 4:00 on the dot a beautiful white stretch limo arrived to pick us up and we had a very pleasant trip into Boston with champagne.



We had a very easy check-in and the lady who checked us in was very pleasant—she loved our hats and asked if we were from the Discovery Channel. I told her that we were wildlife photographers from National Geographic. Our flight to Amsterdam was uneventful, but long. Of course, Eddie slept the whole way. We had a 2 hour layover in Amsterdam during which all of our fellow adventurers arrived. (We had met 3 of them at the airport in Boston—Kay, Carol, and Susan.) In Amsterdam, the others showed up—Bob & Mary, Dick & Nancy, and Andy and Brian. The trip from Amsterdam to Kilimanjaro was an

exceptional flight on KLM. A great airline, they gave us free drinks the whole trip and lots of food. They also had the cutest steward I ever saw!! This was an extremely long flight—we were certainly tired when it finally arrived in Africa. By the time it arrived, it was now –

Tuesday, February 9, 1999

We arrived at the airport in Tanzania—dark, hot, and humid. As usual, there were long lines to stand in to clear customs, etc. The man at the counter was very impressed and happy that I tried to speak Swahili to him. After getting our luggage, we waited a while for Eddie and Dick to get some money changed into Tanzanian shillings (about 680 shillings to the \$). Then on to the bus for our trip to our hotel. We arrived at Novotel Mt. Meru at 11:00 PM (8 hours difference in time). Our total travel

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time had been about 17 hours. Of course, while the other passengers checked into their rooms and got some sleep, we first checked out the lounge. Just had to have some cold Safari beers. The waitress was very nice and taught us a toast in Swahili—"Kwa Afya", and a song about Kilimanjaro. They finally kicked us out and we went to our rooms for some much-needed sleep. I was awakened by some very loud Moslem prayer chants in the middle of the night. Of course there were also the barking dogs. I lie in bed thinking that I will be in Africa on my 50th birthday. Eddie sleeps soundly.



Wednesday, 2/10/99

A very nice breakfast in Novotel restaurant, which would have cost us \$10 US each if we were not on the OAT tour. We had a short orientation meeting with Yusef who explained our itinerary and then we were off on our first great adventure. Our driver-He was a very nice man and very knowledgeable. He has been doing this for 23 years. He autographed my safari guidebook, since he was mentioned in it as the driver-guide for the author. Today's tour took us to Arusha National Park. The roads were incredible, some areas were all washed out rocks and very steep. They were just like logging roads in northern Maine that we explore during the summer. But Moses did a great job with our little 4-cylinder diesel land rover with a 20 gallon gas tank. The number and variety of animals we saw on this first day was incredible! In our land rover with us were Kay, Carol, and Susan. Kay is 77 years old and brought her two daughters with her on this trip. Carol is from Cape Cod and manages an animal hospital. Susan is from California and a teacher. We asked Kay if she would like to adopt us to take us on any of her trips. Today is my birthday and I turn 50 years old while in Africa. Somehow that seems very fitting to me. Tomorrow Carol turns 49 and on 2/14 Susan turns 53. I also found out that Bob just had a recent birthday. There are 4 Aquarians on this trip, but no fish... 😊



Very soon we saw zebras, giraffes, and cape buffaloes. We saw warthogs and Defassa waterbuck, and bushbuck. The first sightings were very exciting to us and of course, we all took too many



pictures of giraffes in the distance. Moses gently reminded us that there would be many more giraffes, so not to worry. We saw one Sykes/Blue monkey in a tree right beside the road. We stopped at the rest house—"Choo iko wapi". The toilet was very interesting—just a hole in the floor—your aim had to be very good. Now we met our guide who took us on a hike. He took his rifle along just in case. To get to the beginning of the hike the land rover had to drive through a river. I was very impressed. We hiked through an area that had been used to film the movie "Hatari" with

John Wayne. It reminded me of Jurassic Park. We were right out there with the giraffes and cape buffaloes. We came to within 10-15' of the giraffes and they didn't seem to mind us at all. Mt.

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Kilimanjaro was in the distance and we hiked up to a beautiful waterfall. Our guide told us about the “fever” tree—the yellow barked acacia trees that we see everywhere. The day was absolutely perfect.

The weather was beautiful, Mt. Kilimanjaro was in view in the background, and I just can't get over the giraffes—they seemed to be posing for us. This is perhaps the neatest way to spend a birthday that I can think of!! We couldn't get quite as close to the cape buffaloes—they are pretty mean creatures and could easily charge. Our guide told us of his having to kill one when he was charged. He took it down with one shot from his rifle—a good thing, since his rifle only seemed to have one bullet!! Back to our land rovers. We drove through the



park and saw warthogs, lots of bushbuck, and a single dikdik. He was very cute—the smallest of the antelope-type animals. We drove through more of the park past the Momela Lakes. We saw lots of flamingos, Egyptian geese, and Sacred Ibis, and other birds. We had a picnic lunch at a high overlook—a very beautiful spot!! After lunch, more driving through the park. We went through several different areas with different vegetation. Lots of rain forest areas where we saw black and white Colobus monkeys, lots more bushbuck and Defassa waterbuck—these have beautiful horns! We drove up to Ngurdoto Crater. Here we were over 6000' high—as high as the top of Mt. Washington! The animals were at the base of the crater and very, very far away, but with our binoculars you could see lots of buffaloes. Then I spotted the first baboon. We finally saw lots of them—they looked like very small moving dots, since they were so far away. On our way back down the road we saw more Colobus monkeys. These are very rare and sort of hard to spot in the tops of the trees. It was very hot today. Moses did a great job. He was so nice. He lives in Kilimanjaro and has grown kids and 2 grandchildren. We arrived back at the hotel and got cleaned up and hit the bar again. We were ready for “mbili bier baridi”. It was fun sitting around the bar reminiscing about all the animals we had seen on our first day “in the bush”. There was a very nice buffet dinner and we sat with Dick and Nancy. They seemed sort of stuffy or shy. Couldn't get any information out of Dick, but I think that he is retired and used to work for the government in some capacity. Back to our rooms for a nightcap with the boys. We have to get used to rum and cokes with no ice, since the ice seems to be suspect and we don't want to get sick. We are all so happy with our first day and really glad that we took this trip. Once again I was awakened by the incredibly loud Muslim chanting in the middle of the night. I certainly hope all of Tanzania is not Muslim!



Thursday, 2/11/99

After another very nice breakfast, we checked out of our rooms and started our journey. Today we are riding with Moses again and joining us are Brian and Andy. Brian is a medical doctor (I think gastro-enterologist) and Andy is a shrink. On our journey towards Tarangire, we stopped at the Cultural Center in Arusha. This was a treat for me. They had natives dressed up and singing and dancing for us, a Maasai warrior standing guard at the gate (he posed with Gary for a picture), and tons and tons of stuff to buy. We purchased some makonda sculpture, which is carved from the center bark of the ebony tree. Very beautiful stuff indeed. They also had tanzanite stones but I couldn't afford any of these. I did buy a pretty orange “konga” cloth that the natives wear wrapped

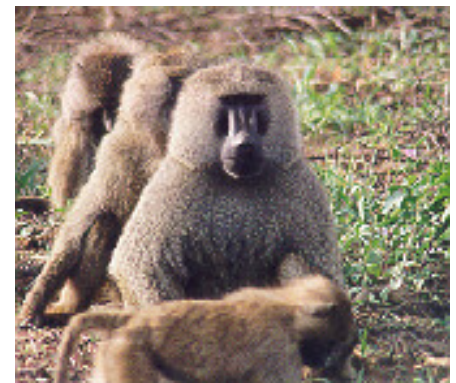
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around them, along with some souvenirs for our "babysitters" and some jewelry. Eddie bought a carved Cape buffalo head. We had our pictures taken with the Maasai out front. The trip to Tarangire Safari Lodge was very interesting. The landscape was very interesting—you could see forever across the open fields and every once in a while, there would be a single boma hut. We saw lots of Maasai and Arushan tribesmen with their cattle. It was amazing to see the women walking carrying HUGE baskets, loads of wood, buckets of water, etc. on top of their head. Incredible balance and they all had great posture! I was amazed at seeing all these people walking. Where did they come from and where were they going? They seemed to be in the middle of a vast expanse with no villages or homes in sight as far as the eye could see.

We arrived at Tarangire Safari Lodge and checked into our tents. Great accommodations! Permanent tents on slabs, complete with private showers (solar heated hot water) and bathrooms. We had a nice buffet lunch and then some free time to relax by the pool which was very cool and refreshing. The location of the tents was incredible. We were up on a bluff overlooking the Tarangire River Valley and we had great views of the animals coming to the river to drink. There were many small monkeys and lots of beautiful birds at the lodge. At 4 PM we went on a game drive. This was another exceptional trip! We saw elephants—lots and lots of elephants! There was a whole herd of them with their babies in a river basin. The babies were so cute trying to climb the bank! We also saw tons of giraffes, bushbuck, Kirk's dikdik, and herds and herds of Impala. The impala are so very beautiful with the huge



horns—they look so graceful. The giraffes are very elegant and fascinating to observe. We saw some reedbuck, waterbuck and ostrich. We came across a family of vervet (black faced) monkeys playing in the trees. They were very cute, especially the babies. There were lots and lots of zebras (punda milias), and some vultures in the trees. This was truly an exceptional game drive. I can't believe that each day gets better and better. There was a beautiful rainbow for us as we returned to the lodge. We had a very nice buffet dinner. The food has been exceptional so far. Nice homemade soups for each day, fresh bread, lots of vegetables, and stews. There are always nice desserts for each meal. We had cocktails "on the veranda" with Dick & Gary as we watched the animals in the distance coming to the river for their evening drinks. There was some lightning in the distance and it rained during the night. This was was a great spot for sleeping.



Friday, 2/12/99



We had an early breakfast at 7AM and then a game drive at 7:30 AM. Today we went with Peter. This was another incredible game drive. Peter is a "birder" so he pointed out every bird we saw. My favorite bird so far is the Fisher's Love Bird, a beautiful green

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and yellow bird. We saw 3 squirrels living in a huge termite mound. We also saw a Hyrax. Peter said that they were called Tree Hyrax when they were in trees and Rock Hyrax when they were on rocks, but I think that he was just kidding. Then we saw a big tribe of olive baboons, probably 30 of them, right in the road in front of us. There were lots of babies, some who were probably only one to two days old. They were co cute. The infants hang under the mother's belly until they are about a month old and then they ride on the mother's back. We watched them for quite a while. Next we saw lots of vultures in the trees and went over to discover the reason—there was a carcass of a baby giraffe. Some of the birds we saw—Crested Cranes, the national emblem of Uganda—they are black and white, very pretty, and Peter said that they mate for life; Pop Starlings—blue birds; White bird cuckoo; Owl (a huge one). We also saw some mongoose. They are cute little animals with stripes and they are very shy. We also saw lots and lots of Impala (swala). They are so very pretty. There was a turtle at the side of the road. Somehow, I did not expect to see a turtle in Africa! There was a large brown bird called hornbill with a bright red beak. We saw another Kirk's dikdik (dikidiki). They are so small and cute. Peter said that they don't ever need to drink water, they get all their liquids from the plants that they eat. Next, we saw some Maribu Storks. In the distance, there were some Cape buffalo. There was a very pretty yellow flower called the tree orchid. We also saw some Crowned Hornbill and lots of Guinea Fowl. They are grey and black spotted with bright blue heads. There are usually very large flocks of them right alongside the roads. We saw a Cory Bustard—the largest bird in Africa that can fly. They are really big and can only fly a short distance. There were also several White Bottled Bustards (smaller birds). After the game drive we went back to the Tarangire Safari Lodge for a nice buffet lunch and time for another dip in the pool. We got to try out a few different kinds of beers.



The afternoon game drive with Peter was more of what I had expected to find—lots of driving and not as many sightings of animals. However, the ones that we did see were pretty rare. We saw a Steinbok—a type of antelope that is very pretty and very shy. We next saw a group of Beisa Oryx—these are very rare. We saw a silver-backed jackal in the distance. Next we saw several ostrich. The males are black with white necks and heads and the females are brown and grey. The ostrich always run in a “zig zag”, never in a straight line. We saw some Grant's Gazelles from a distance as well as lots of mongoose. Once again they were so shy that we couldn't get any pictures of them.



One of the distinctive features of Tarangire National Park is the huge baobob trees that dot the landscape. These trees are extremely large and live to be up to 2000 years old. The elephants eat the bark from the outside of the tree but there is an inner bark that survives and keeps the tree alive. These trees make a beautiful sight along the plains. As we headed back to the lodge we spotted some more ostrich that were running in circles. They looked like they were drunk. As we got close to the lodge, we came across the highlight of this game drive—lions (simba). There were 2 males and 4 females lounging under a huge baobob tree just outside the boundaries of our lodge. They posed for us for a while. Quite a treat to finally see lions and so close



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to our tents!! Tonight we had a very nice dinner and after cocktails, had an early night to bed. Lion sounds reverberated through the tent during the night.

Saturday, 2/13/99

This morning we had an early game drive leaving at 6:30 AM with Moses. Bob & Mary rode with us this morning. Bob & Mary are both retired from Boeing. They were great traveling companions. We started off the drive with some elephants. They were so close to us that you could easily see the details of scars and cuts in their ears. They were right at the side of the road and as a matter of fact, they were so close to the other land rover behind us that they charged their van! Guess it was pretty scary for Peter and the crew. Dick fell into Nancy and broke her glasses as Peter lunged forward to get out of the way of the elephant. After the "tembo kubwa", we saw the smallest of the creatures-another dikidiki. The sunrise was very nice. Quite different going for such an early game drive while it was still cool. We saw some bushbuck and some more banded mongoose. I spotted 3 Bat-eared Fox peeking out of their den. Saw some more Fisher Love Birds, Kingfisher Birds, and Lilac Breasted Rollers-(very pretty). Also saw some ground hornbills. Back to the lodge for a buffet breakfast and then we checked out of Tarangire Safari Lodge. All in all, a very nice stay. From here we drove to Lake Manyara. This was the end of the paved road. The next 1300 + miles would be on dirt roads. During this trip we saw lots of Maasai walking along the sides of the roads and we passed through a small village called Mto Wa Mbu



(Mosquito Creek) for shopping. This was quite an experience to say the least. The pressure was worse than you get while shopping in Jamaica!! The merchants grab onto you and won't let you go. Gary was especially good at this type of shopping—NOT!! 😊 At one point I had about 5 different



guy trying to get me to buy their necklaces and one guy put two necklaces over my head. When I tried to take them off, one of them broke and the beads scattered all over the ground. I thought I was really in trouble now, so I headed back and got in the van with several merchants in hot pursuit. Actually, I thought I did extremely well. While in the van, I bartered my old T-shirts and baseball caps that I had brought from home, for a necklace, a giraffe statue and a T-shirt. I didn't spend a penny and got rid of 3 old T-shirts and a baseball cap. The other guests were pretty impressed with my bartering skills! But this kind of shopping is pretty harrowing and I am ready

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now for a bier baridi, so Moses headed up the mountain to our very beautiful Lake Manyara Serena Lodge. This is such beautiful countryside. We saw many types of acacia trees (there are over 120



types). The lodge is right on the edge of the mountain overlooking Lake Manyara. The view was spectacular. They had a great pool at cliffside with a nice pool bar, which we scouted out right away. The bartender was named Nicodemus and was very nice. We got to practice our Swahili some more. Lunch was delicious!! Our waiter was named Priscus and he was very, very nice. He taught me more Swahili. It seems that out of the 13 people on this trip, so far only Eddie and I even tried to speak Swahili, and the local people really seemed to appreciate our efforts. After lunch we went

on another game drive with Moses through Lake Manyara National Park. Of all the parks, this one was truly a jungle. The sights and sounds reminded me of the old Tarzan movies. The trees were HUGE and some of them were covered with big vines. The area was very hilly and there were large mahogany trees and ebony trees. In this park we saw many baboons with lots of little babies only 1 or 2 days old. They are adorable and we spent some time observing them. We also saw some Blue Skye Monkeys and warthogs and Impalas. This was a very pleasant park and due to the jungle type vegetation, it was much cooler than some of the other parks we saw. However, we did not see any of the famous tree-climbing lions. Moses said they have not seen any for quite a long time. We saw hippos in Lake Manyara from a distance along with many flamingos. We also saw more giraffes, which are the national emblem of Tanzania.

During our drives through the countryside, we saw many Maasai people dressed all in red robes. They are so tall and stately looking. We also saw several dressed all in black with their faces painted white with black dots. They also had big headdresses made with black ostrich feathers. Moses said that these are the young Maasai boys who have just been circumcised. (Ouch!!) They are between 13 and 16 years old and the custom was that they were supposed to dress this way, paint their faces, and stay in the bush for 3 months until they healed. Then after they were healed and they killed a lion or a man they are considered "adults" and can then wear the red robes. Now you see these young boys on the side of the road hoping to get the tourists to stop and pay them to take their picture. Once again the American culture has had its negative impact!

Back at the lodge there was a nice children's choir performing songs for St. Valentine's Day for us at the pool lounge. Part of the lyrics they sung was "nakupenda Tanzania...I love you Tanzania". Dinner was very nice again. Then the evening entertainment was a troupe of Maasai dancers. Quite interesting!! Beds in the rooms had mosquito netting, but bugs did not seem to be a problem. You still had to keep the sliders closed to keep out the roaming babbons!



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Sunday, 2/14/99—Valentine's Day

After breakfast, we begin our very long overland journey to the Serengeti. Bob is feeling very ill this morning so he sat in the front seat of our land rover with Moses. This was a tough trip for him. Everyone is being very careful about what we eat and drink, especially Bob, but still the bug got him! We went over incredibly bumpy roads for several hours. We went up and over the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. These were some very large mountain ranges that we went up and over and the views were quite impressive. We were over 7000 feet above sea level! At the top we stopped at the overlook area to view the crater and had some great photo opportunities. The vegetation is different here than what we have been seeing. We went through huge expanses of savannah. Some of the animals we saw were Steinbok, Cory's Bustard, the large bird, and now we started seeing some Thompson's Gazelles. (These are commonly called Tommies.) There were lots and lots of them along with Grant's Gazelles. The Tommies were much smaller and can be recognized by the black stripe on their sides. We also saw an occasional elephant, Secretary Birds, Topi (from a distance), Golden Jackals, and THOUSANDS of Wildebeests. There were lots of Zebras with the Wildebeests. It seems that they always can be seen together because they graze on different grasses. The Wildebeests graze on the large grasses and break them down so that the Zebras can graze on the shorter blades.

One of the highlights of this journey was our stop at a Maasai Village in the Malanja Depression.



This was an incredible experience that I will always remember. The Maasai men and children, all dressed in red and lots of beaded jewelry, came out and did their "jumping" dancing and singing to greet us. Then we went into their village and got a chance to go into their bomas (houses). These are small rounded houses with no windows, very dark inside, and covered with cow dung. This is the reason that there are so many flies everywhere. These people are so regal looking. There were many small children here. It reminded me of the TV

commercials you see asking to send money to adopt these poor children and they always have their faces covered with flies. The flies on the faces, in the eyes, and the mouths of the small children and infants really bothered me. They didn't even seem to mind. Brian said that there is a lot of blindness in these children due to the diseases these flies carry. We were allowed to take as many pictures as we wished. I can't help but wonder what these people must think of the tourists who must seem so alien to them. There was no water in the village. It had to be carried from miles away. There were no bathrooms. These people were so very poor. They only owned the clothes on their backs and their cattle. The Maasai people have always existed on only meat, milk, and blood. Moses said that they have started to add some grains to their diets recently, but their lifestyle still seems so very alien to me. After the Maasai Village, we drove up through another mountain pass and into the Serengeti plains. We begin to see thousands of Thompson's Gazelles and Grant's Gazelles. We turned off onto another bumpy dirt road and went to the Nduto Safari Lodge where we had a very nice lunch.

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There was a beautiful breeze in the outdoor lounge and we got to spend a little time here to relax before setting out on the balance of our journey for today. We now set off through the Serengeti Plains. This was such an incredible trip. Words cannot describe the vastness of these plains—open grassland for as far as your eye can see in all directions. We even saw some mirages. This was really neat—I have never seen a mirage before. I can see how someone lost in the desert can really get screwed up when they see these. You would SWEAR that there was a big lake in the distance, but it was only a mirage. We rode standing up through the top of the land rover as Moses drove about “warp 9” through these vast plains and we saw thousand and thousands of wildebeests, Tommies, and



Grant’s Gazelles. After a while, we came upon more vegetation—acacia trees, scrub brush, and kopjes. Kopjes are very large rock outcroppings in the savannahs, with their own little areas of vegetation and animals that live around them. This was a very strange and beautiful landscape. Today is another perfect day with the bright blue sky and white fluffy clouds. We started seeing some different animals—zebras, giraffes, and more wildebeests.

Soon we came to the finale of this game drive—we came across a pride of lions at a big clump of grass next to a stream.

There were several female lions and 9 or 10 cubs. They were so cute that it made you want to get out of the van and play with them. They were very close—within 5 feet of the land rover and they did not seem to be afraid of us at all. I could have stayed here all day to watch them, but Moses said we had to keep going. On the last leg of the journey to our camp, we stopped at the hippo pool and watched for a few minutes. We finally arrived at our camp—a beautiful setting with our very own kopje right in front of us. The accommodations were very comfortable. We had an excellent dinner in the dining tent. Everything was done very nicely, linen napkins, silverware, china, and the camp staff was very attentive. We sat around the campfire for a while and observed the beautiful sky. There were lots more stars than we typically see at home. The crescent moon is upside down. At the tents, the staff bring us warm water to wash up with and they bring hot water for our showers. There are shower tents and toilet tents. Not bad for being in the wilderness!! Tonight we sleep with the sound of the animals in the distance.

Monday, 2/15/99

This morning I saw a rock hyrax at our campsite. We had a very nice breakfast and then a game drive at 8AM. Today, we got split up and I rode with Peter while Eddie and Gary rode with Moses. Dick did not feel very well, so he sat out today’s morning game drive, but he was fine by lunch time. I saw many animals



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today also, starting with dikidiki, and Coke's Hartebeest. These are smaller than wildebeest and a lighter brown color. Their horns curve inward almost forming the shape of a heart. We also saw lots of Grant's gazelles, hundreds of wildebeest, and some Topi (very pretty antelopes with thicker straighter horns, a dark brown color with black on their shoulders and hips). We saw lots and lots of zebras (punda milia), and many giraffes in picturesque settings. We saw some warthogs from a distance. Peter told me about a lady in his last tour who loved the warthogs so much that she made him stop and watch them quite a lot. Her name was Marsha, so the people in that tour re-named the warthogs "Marsha-hogs".



Then we came upon a very handsome male lion (Bwana Simba) under a tree and two female lions with a recent wildebeest kill. We stopped and watched them chowing down for a while. Their faces were covered with flies. There were lots of flies everywhere in the Serengeti, as a matter of fact. Peter said that there were lots of flies because there are so many wildebeests. There were two

silver-backed jackals nearby waiting their turn to have a snack on this poor wildebeest. We also saw lots of birds—Saddlebilled storks, black-headed heron, Fisher love birds, Superb Starlings, etc., etc. We saw a common reedbuck and 2 slender mongoose in the tall grass. These are different from the banded mongoose that we had seen before. They have very long tails. Then we saw a big herd of elephants with many babies. They were fun to watch for a while. We saw more giraffes at the acacia trees. The giraffes have very long tongues, with which they pull off the tender leaves of the acacia trees. The trick is that the acacia trees have many, many sharp thorns. The giraffes use their thick lips to push aside the thorns so their tongues can get to the tender leaves. We saw Cape buffalo in the distance and a spotted hyena. Back to camp for a nice lunch. After siesta time, we had a 4PM game drive. Dick, now fully recovered, joined us. We saw lots of wildebeest and their babies. The wildebeest are very interesting creatures. They do their yearly migration from the Serengeti plains in Tanzania to the Maasa Mara in Kenya. Basically, they are following the availability of the new grasses. They usually carry their babies for a term of 8 months, but if there are no new grasses, they will hold their babies for an extra month until the new grasses come. Amazing!! They have their babies right out in the open plains. February is the start of their birthing season, so we are lucky to see many babies. Next, we stopped at a hippo pool. Today we saw much beautiful countryside, but there were too many flies and too much dust. We saw 3 Cape buffaloes, each with a white cattle egret on its back. Back to the camp for a hot shower and a delicious dinner. Watched the sky for a while and I saw a shooting star. It was an early night for everyone and we slept great!

Tuesday, 2/16/99



This morning, after breakfast, we started off at 6:30 for an early game drive with Peter. It was nice and cool this morning and the sunrise was very pretty. We saw two male impalas fighting. Then we stopped at another hippo pool. There were beautiful Marabou storks posing for us on a tree branch. We saw a spotted hyena.

Next, we saw a HUGE herd of Cape buffalo—probably 300 to 400 of them—in a line for as far as

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you could see to the horizon. They were going for their morning drink. We watched them crossing the road in front of us. A herd of wildebeest came up behind us. Then we spotted a nice family of



elephants coming right toward us, two adult females and a baby. I thought that they were so cute coming towards us when all of a sudden one of the females flapped her ears, raised her trunk and trumpeted and charged the buffaloes. I was so excited to hear that sound and see the elephant move the buffalo out of the way so that the baby elephant could walk through. Then I looked up and the other larger female elephant was charging us!!! Peter started up the van, started backing up, and Eddie's hat blew off. We had to make a snap decision—"Should we save Eddie's hat or save ourselves?" The hat lost! We took off in a hurry and the elephant chased us down the road 200 yards. We finally got away from her and went back to rescue the hat. This was quite an adventure to be charged by a big elephant before

breakfast! We joined our friends in the other van for a nice brunch snack under an acacia tree. There were many Superb Starlings (very beautiful blue and gold birds), and cattle weavers joining us for our snack. We then saw a Black shouldered Kite just hovering above the ground waiting to catch a squirrel. Next, we saw another big herd of elephants with lots of babies. There were mostly female elephants and one large male. He charged us too, but he was too far away to really excite us after our first charge of the morning.

Today is really the day of big herds of everything—Cape buffalo, elephants, zebra, Coke's hartebeest, and wildebeest. Next we saw 2 Grey Crowned Cranes—they seemed to be posing for us. They are very beautiful birds and are the national emblem of Uganda. We saw Vervet black faced monkeys. There was a lone reedbuck in the tall grass. We saw White headed vultures and Nubian vultures. There were 2 big owls sitting on top of a kopje. Peter said that the Serengeti is about 4000 feet above sea level and has 3.5 million wildebeest, 2000 Cheetahs, 300 lions, and only around 40 leopards. So far, we have not seem any Cheetah (Duma) or Leopard (Chuie).

Back to our camp where we found that our laundry had been done for us. We had an excellent lunch. Our afternoon game drive left at 4:00 with Peter again. We saw 10 giraffes, large herds of elephants, a beautiful Saddle billed stork (Eddie's favorite bird). Next thing we knew, Moses had spotted a cheetah (he has incredible eyes!). Peter took off at warp 9 "off piste" in search of the elusive cheetah. Before we knew it, we were right on top of the cheetah and her kill. He pulled up to a stop and we were about 5 feet away from her. Unfortunately, it scared her and she ran away. We tired to get photos of her running away, but I don't know if we got any good ones or not. This would have been a "National Geographic moment" is she had not run away. She lifted her head from the kill with her mouth all covered in blood before she spotted us.

We drove on through massive herds of wildebeests and zebras. Then at the next kopje, we found a family of spotted hyenas. They were within 5 feet of us. The baby was nursing. They walked right in front of our van and you could hear the baby crying for her mother. Back to the camp for a delicious dinner. Eddie gave Peter and Moses each a "Leatherman" that he had brought from home as gifts. They were thrilled, and were seen using them the rest of the trip. We watched the stars for a while and I saw another shooting star. After we went to bed, the winds came up in a very big way. I would guess that



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there were 50 mile per hours winds—gale force for sure. They were whipping the tent and it felt like the tent was going to lift right off the ground. The thing I was most afraid of was the fact that they put out lanterns each night on our table in front of the tent, and I was afraid that they were going to blow over and set the tent on fire. Bob said he was afraid of the same thing, so he found his knife during the middle of the night in case his tent caught on fire and he had to cut himself out of the tent. Of course, Eddie slept through the whole thing! As I later told Moses, it was just like being in a hurricane without the water.

Wednesday, 2/17/99

Today we had a full game drive day with Moses who promised that today would be “Cat Day” in the Serengeti. We started off with 4 huge ostrich, then lots of Grant’s gazelles, zebras, and wildebeest. Soon we saw 7 lions stalking the wildebeest as well as lots of vultures. Moses said that lions are only about 25% successful in their kills, cheetahs are about 60% successful, and leopards are about 75% successful. Lions stalk their prey and they hunt in packs sometimes. Cheetahs are the fastest animal, but they can only sustain the great speeds for very short distances. Leopards are very solitary hunters and they stalk their prey. Once they get a kill, they usually carry it up into the trees to keep it safe from other predators, but they must kill on the ground. We saw hundreds and hundreds of Tommies—“Chakula duma” and lots of babies. We saw a group a spotted hyenas at a kopje. One of them had a hurt leg, but Moses said he would survive. We saw a silver backed jackal, and more Tommies and even one newborn. There were some Topis in the distance. The Topi like to stand on top of termite mounds “to see and be seen”. Next we saw a pair of mating lions. They were right in the grass at the side of the road. We stopped to watch them, but it was very windy and Cindy’s hat blew off as well as Dick’s scarf. Bob retrieved my hat, which was pretty scary with the simba so close. The two lions were sort of lounging around facing each other, then they got up, mated, and walked to another spot to rest. The sex was over in about 10 seconds!! An unbelievable sight.



We went to another hippo pool. This one had a baby hippo. Next we came upon a cheetah with her six kittens sleeping under a tree. The kittens were about 2 weeks old. This was such a beautiful sight and there were five land rovers all parked and watching for quite a while. A little later, we saw 2 more male lions under a tree. Great!! Moses said this area of the Serengeti was called Simba Kopje (for obvious reasons). We went along a little further and stopped for a nice picnic lunch under a huge sausage tree. There was a bone from an elephant on the ground (I

think a femur bone) , and I wanted it but Eddie said I couldn’t take it home. It was very heavy. Right after our lunch, we drove about 100 yards away when Moses spotted a lion under the very next sausage tree just off the road. We drove right over to it. The female lion was standing and looking

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up into the tree. We did the same thing and saw a male leopard in the top of the tree with his kill. He was right over us! Unbelievable!! This truly was "Cat Day". We have seen them all today. Moses said it was very unusual to spot leopards and we were very lucky. A little further along the road we came upon yet another male lion. We stopped and he walked right up to Gary's window. This was kind of scary and magnificent all at the same time. My day has been complete! We drove back to

the camp for clean up and rest before dinner. The wonderful breeze that we started out the day with produced a huge amount of dust all along the Serengeti and we were all filthy!! However, they had our hot water (maji moto) all ready for us to wash up with and they brought hot showers for us. Time for more bier. The only thing we had to get used to while at camp was the fact that there is no ice, so we had to drink warm rum and coke and then when we got a little more brave, warm bier. (Hacuna baridi bier!).



I really can't believe that each day keeps getting better and better. The scenery and amount of animals has FAR exceeded my expectations. I will always remember Tanzania!! Nina penda Tanzania!

The camp staff cooks 3 meals a day for about 25 people over an open campfire (see picture). And the meals are terrific! Amazing!!

Thursday, 2/18/99

After a nice breakfast, we checked out of our tents and did a game drive to our next destination. On the way we saw Impala, Defassa waterbuck, and common reedbuck. There were lots of zebra, warthogs, Cape buffalo, Coke's hartebeest, and , of course, wildebeest. The Swahili for babies is "wa totu". We saw lots of them of every species. We saw wild date palms along the river. Baboons eat the dates. I had not really expected to see these in Africa. We stopped at a large hippo pool, which also had many very large crocodiles. We watched for a while. Andy was sitting at the water's edge and didn't realize that there was a big crocodile under the water just watching him. All you could see was the eye. Peter rushed over to rescue him, although Andy still denies that there was actually a croc, but we all saw it! Andy was almost "chukula cha m'chana for mambo".



We arrived at the Serengeti Serena Lodge, a very beautiful place indeed. The rooms are built to look just like the Maasai domas, but without the cow dung! The restaurant, lounge, grounds, and pool are

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very beautiful. We were met right away by Ezekiel, who showed us around and spent much time with us. He was very friendly and was very willing to share his history with us. He comes from the Luo tribe, close to Lake Victoria. His father had 7 wives and his mother was wife #3. (It is common



for many of these tribesmen, especially the Maasai to have as many as 12 wives.) In Ezekiel's extended family are 145 people!! He is only going to have his one wife and his one child (now age one and a half). He is also taking care of his 2 younger sisters (ages 18 and 21) and sending them to school. School is mandatory up to grade 6 but you must pay for school after that and it is very expensive. Ezekiel is building himself a home now of 6 rooms. It costs \$50 to buy a one half-acre lot of land to build on, and the house he is building will cost \$1,100. His job here is very good. He works for 3

months, and then he can go home to visit his family for 14 days. His vacation is for one month in March during the rains. Ezekiel went to "college" and studied hotel management to get this job as a waiter and I think that he will go far in his profession. He said that in his extended family there was only one other brother who had a regular job like this. Ezekiel is probably one of the better-paid people in Africa. I find it such a dichotomy that the people here are so very poor and that some things cost so very much for us. Just ask Dick and Gary. We ordered one round of drinks as we were talking with Ezekiel before lunch. Ed and I had beers and Dick and Gary each had a Scotch and water. The Scotch costs \$15.00 per drink!! Thank God we didn't just order another round, just for the fun of it!

We had a nice lunch and then pool time. Back for our 4PM game drive. We are now deeper into the



Serengeti in an area called Seronera. The landscape here is very different from what we have been seeing. There are lots and lots of whistling thorn acacia bushes. They have many thorns, as well as hollow round seeds, which make a whistling sound when the wind blows. The area looks pretty barren actually. Moses took us "off piste" again to find a herd of giraffes and a huge herd of Cape buffalos. These

animals seem to be more skitterish than in the other areas of the Serengeti.

I took a photo of the road we were on, the "main highway" to Lake Victoria, another bumpy dirt road. I spotted three lions in the distance under an acacia tree -very pretty. Back at the lodge, we had sunset and cocktails on our deck. Dick and Gary joined us with their own Scotch from the states (much cheaper that way). We had another excellent dinner and entertainment was acrobatics. The young guys were pretty good. We had an early night. Haraka, the guy who made up our rooms, had put up our sleeping nets for us. He is also extremely nice as are all of the people we had met so far in Tanzania.

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Friday, 2/19/99

We had a wake-up call at 4:45 AM for our hot air balloon safari. This was quite an experience. There were 12 people in each of the two baskets. When we arrived the balloon baskets are lying on their sides with the balloons not inflated. The crew turned on fans to blow air into the balloons, and as they filled, we had to jump into the baskets in a sitting down on your back position. Then the balloons picked up the baskets and we were off! The ascent was very smooth and quiet except for the blasts of fire right over our heads to make the balloon rise. We went up pretty high for a minute, but then came back down lower to the ground so that we could see more of the animals. Some of the time, we were just skimming along over the top of the ground. Then we would go up just in time to clear an acacia tree. We saw the sunrise—quite a sight over the Serengeti. We saw a migrating herd of wildebeest and lots of zebras and Coke's hartebeest. We passed over a herd of elephants that did not like us being there at all! They gathered their babies into the middle of a circle and trumpeted and stamped their feet to make us go away. Our shadow going over them scared them. As we were close to the ground, I spotted an African hare. There were not as many animals as I had expected to see, but this was certainly a worthwhile experience just for the scenery! The pilot kept going up and down so that we would just scrape the tops of the trees (He gave us a giraffe's eye-view of the trees.) The landing was lots of fun—"assume the position", then a couple of big bumps as he set the basket down. Very exciting. We all crawled out, had champagne toasts, then a short drive to our breakfast. This was a nice touch. They had set up a long table, fully decked out, under a giant acacia tree in the middle of the Serengeti. The servants were all dressed just like in the 1800s with white turbans, brocade vests, and white fluffy pants just like out of the Tales of the Arabian Knights. They poured hot water for us to wash up, served us more champagne, fresh fruit, breads, and a full breakfast.



All with china, silver, and crystal. Amazing. We met some of the folks from Australia who were traveling on the big bus. They are called "overlanders" and they are traveling through Africa for 14 weeks. We also met a couple from the other OAT group who took the Kenya/Tanzania trip (the "lodge people"). We sat next to the other pilot, who has lived in Tanzania for 4 years flying hot air balloons. Prior to that he spent two years in Costa Rica, also flying balloons. We told him of some of our adventures. He said he had not seen a leopard in 4 years living in Tanzania. After breakfast, the bus took us up to the Seronera Wildlife Lodge at the top of the hill. We met up with the others on our trip who didn't do the balloon ride. This lodge is truly spectacular. It is built on top of the hill right into and around the huge boulders that are there. The restaurant and bar are spectacular, wish we could stay here a little longer. We saw rock hyrax and the very beautiful Agama lizards, which have bright red heads with blue bottoms. We headed over to the Serengeti National Park Museum where Dora took us on a very informative tour. We learned all about rock hyrax who are the closest relative to the elephant, and who live on the kopjes. Their guano is used to make gunpowder. We learned more about the wildebeest, which do their great migrations each year

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in search of grass to eat. They can hold their babies one more month if they have to before delivering if it is still dry and the grasses have not come out. In addition, we learned about the formation of the Serengeti plains, which were formed 3-4 million years ago when ash from the exploding volcanoes of the Ngorongoro crater covered the landscape and packed down to form what we see today. Dora also told us about the termites who build these big termite mounds that you see all along the Serengeti. They are quite the little architects!! The mounds have tunnels, which let the cool air escape, and that is why you sometimes see lions lying on top of the termite mounds. The lions take advantage of the cool air as it escapes the top of the mounds and this helps them to digest their food. The termites are farmers. They raise a fungus inside the termite mound!

Eddie had an interesting grammar lesson. He went up to a man at the museum and asked, "Choo iko wapi?" which is supposed to mean where are the toilets. The man looked at him quizzically and said, "There are no leopards here." I guess "choo" sounded too much like "chui" which is Swahili for leopard. We now headed back for a "bier baridi" and a nice buffet lunch. It was so hot that Eddie and Gary decided to stay behind at the pool while Dick and I went on our 4PM game drive with Moses. We saw a big herd of elephants with many babies playing in a mud hole. We saw giraffes, then Moses spotted two Klipspringers on the top of a kopje—a rare treat. They are very rare antelope-type animals who live on these big rocks and their hoofs are pointed which makes them look like they are standing on tiptoe. Their hoofs are made of a rubber-like material so that they can jump from rock to rock without falling. We spotted an African hare and because we were stopped at the tree taking its picture, 4 other vans came flying over to see what our "find" was! We came upon a herd of Topi. Then I spotted a big ugly vulture with a small male impala kill. A troop of banded mongoose crossed the road in front of us. Then we had a very sad sight—right on the side of the road was a beautiful male Impala. As we passed him, he tried to get up, but his back leg was broken and we think he was hit by a car. It was so sad. He was so scared and trying to get up. There was nothing we could do to help him and Moses said he wouldn't last the night. I just hope that he didn't suffer too long before he became someone else's dinner. On the way back home we saw a huge Maribou stork. We saw big Blue Heron (very similar to those that we have back home). We had cocktails and a beautiful sunset again on our balcony. Another excellent dinner at the Serengeti Serena Lodge. We were sad to say goodbye to Ezekiel. This lodge has been a very pleasant stay.

Saturday, 2/20/99

We awoke to yet another beautiful day. After our breakfast, we checked out and headed out with Moses toward our next destination. We stopped by the Seronera Wildlife Lodge so that Eddie could buy a balloon safari hat. Then we did a nice game drive towards the Ngorongoro crater area. On the way, we stopped at one of the truly fascinating parts of our journey. We stopped at Oduvai Gorge and the Laetoli Archeological sites. This is where Louis & Mary Leakey spent 50 years doing their research and where Mary Leakey found the footprints of our ancestors. Some 3.6 million years ago, when the Sadiman volcano erupted, the footprints were preserved in the ash. This is the cradle of humanity! We toured the small museum and saw the casting of the actual footprints. The area's landscape is so amazing. You can see huge cliffs of rock that clearly show the different types of rock and soil from each of the eras. I can only imagine what it must have been like working all those years in this area and to then make the greatest archeological find of all history!! We continued on our game drive towards Ngorongoro crater. We saw lots of Impala (swala), baboons, and hippos, and thousands of Tommies. We spotted a beautiful leopard sitting in a tree—such beautiful golden eyes! I

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back and forth, which looks like they are moving a typewriter carriage. Lunch was at Ngorongoro Serena Lodge—another beautiful spot with astounding views of the crater. All three Serena lodges are owned by Agha Kahn, a very rich Indian religious leader who lives in Paris. They are all relatively new lodges and each is built to blend into the natural landscape. This one is covered with small rounded stones.

On to our camps—a truly spectacular spot right on the rim, 2000 feet above the bottom of the crater, with magnificent views. We have an armed guard named Phillip. He was very nice and practiced Swahili with me. He was very little, as



was the other guard we had at Arusha Park. He was a park ranger who protected the very rare rhinos when he wasn't protecting the tourists. I asked him if he was protecting us from the animals or from people and he said "from both". But we looked at his bullets and they were "people" bullets according to Bob, and they would not stop a charging elephant. He said he was also here to keep the Maasai from bothering us. We got lots of pictures of the crater below and I could swear that I could see Kilimanjaro in the far distance. We had a great dinner prepared for us by the same camp staff as before. It is very, very cool up here tonight. After all, we are above 7000 feet, (higher than Mt. Washington!). After dinner, we had a very pleasant surprise in our tents—the camp staff had placed hot water bottles in our beds. We had a great night's sleep.

hope our pictures come out. Peter drove too close again and scarred him away. Moses was really mad. Peter doesn't seem to respect the animals as much as Moses does. We saw more ostrich. We were on another very long drive through the Serengeti plains and I am beginning to recognize some of the areas we have seen before, such as simba kopjes, and the big hippo pools. We saw some Secretary birds—they kill snakes to eat by stomping on them with their long legs. This looks like they are typing with their feet, and they also swing their heads

back and forth, which looks like they are moving a typewriter carriage. Lunch was at Ngorongoro Serena Lodge—another beautiful spot with astounding views of the crater. All three Serena lodges are owned by Agha Kahn, a very rich Indian religious leader who lives in Paris. They are all relatively new lodges and each is built to blend into the natural landscape. This one is covered with small rounded stones.

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Sunday, 2/21/99

We awoke to a very nice sunrise over Ngorongoro crater. We are to have a full day of game viewing in the crater with Peter. Ngorongoro crater is the largest inactive, unbroken, unflooded caldera in the world. It was formed when the massive volcano Ngorongoro erupted. At the time, 2.5 million years ago, this volcano was larger than Kilimanjaro. As its vents filled with solid rock, the molten material was forced elsewhere and the top of the volcano collapsed inward, forming the crater.



The drive down into the crater was impressive, down a long dirt road at a very, very steep pitch, with many switchbacks into the Malanja Depression. Peter said that the road pitch was about 17 degrees. There are 120

different kinds of acacia trees in Tanzania and here we saw the Acacia Lacai. We saw some very large elephants right outside our camp. (Sure glad that Phillip was there last night!) Our first major sighting was the thousands of pink flamingos on the lake. Quite a sight! We saw black-winged stilts with long orange legs. Next we saw Grey Crowned Cranes (the national emblem of Uganda and Eddie's favorite bird). They mate for life. They were very busy eating bugs from the dirt. We saw lots and lots of Tommies. This crater is 120



square miles and the huge lake we see, Makat, is only 2-3 feet deep and very alkaline. There is another fresh water lake. There are hundreds of Egyptian geese. We saw Black-billed bustards, and Bee-eaters (tiny green and yellow birds). There were Black Angola Swallows-flying and eating the flying insects. Peter is a "birder" and he seems to know and spot every bird in Tanzania! He drove right up to three large "retired" hippo males. Then we saw an Avocet -an unusual bird with a beak that goes up. There were lots of pretty Western Paper Flowers by the road. We saw more ostrich, zebras, and Coke's hartebeest. There were some giant hippos in another pool. One looked just like a

huge boulder! We finally spotted a rhino in the distance-he stood up and posed for us. There are only a very few left. We saw 2 black-maned male lions in the tall grass. There were 2 male Grant's gazelles fighting over the females for while. The females were just sitting and watching them. They didn't seem to be too interested in the outcome of the battle. A big herd of zebra crossed in front of us and there was a young one with a bad injury to his left front leg. He was still nursing his mother and he would stop every once in a while to lick his wound.



Peter said he would be OK. We saw another rhino. That is pretty good, since there are only about 15

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black rhinos left in all of the crater. Their lifespan is 45-50 years with a gestation period of 18 months. They have a baby every 4-5 years. There are 2 or 3 babies in the crater. (Kifaru is Swahili for rhino). We came upon three lions lying right up next to the land rovers—not afraid at all. They just wanted to get into the shade of the trucks! This was a fascinating sight, I only hope that some of the pictures come out. One of the lions was resting right up against the front bumper of Moses' truck, and one came right up to our truck and decided to lie down under our back bumper. They were so close that you could easily touch one of them if you were foolish enough to stick your hand out of the window. Unfortunately, in the panic to reload his camera Eddie blew it. The film did not advance and we did not get any good pictures of this. Fortunately, Dick did! The park rangers came up and hassled Moses and Peter about being off the road onto the grass where the lions were. They negotiated with the ranger at lunch to avoid the tickets and pay \$30.00 each directly into the ranger's pocket.



We had a nice picnic lunch as it began to rain a little. We had counted 47 land rovers at the hippo pool for lunch. The animals are very happy with the rain -the wildebeest are playing and running in circles "celebrating the rains". We saw two female lions playing in the rain. We drove on to another hippo pool for our best viewing yet of the hippos. They were playing in the rain and coming up out of the water much more. We got some great shots of two young hippos at play. They really liked the rain! We saw three "Marsha hogs". We got some nice photos of two wildebeest. We saw the very old elephants who live down here. The environment in the crater is so perfectly matched between prey and predator that most of the animals feel no need to ever leave the crater. The ride back up the very steep dirt road out of the crater is pretty scary with the many switchbacks and very steep drop-offs at the side of the road. Back to our camp for our last night of camping out. We were served a fine meal of African food tonight-ugahli, green bananas and beef, beans, and a cake for dessert. The camp crew sang a nice song for us after dinner and then we presented them with their tip. We had another very cold night and the hot water bottles were much appreciated again. The sleeping was great tonight.

Monday, 2/22/99



After a very nice sunrise and a great breakfast, we drove with Peter from our camp to Gibb's Farm. We stopped at a curio store for shopping, and after much bargaining, Eddie bought a nice carved wooden bowl. We used up the last of my T-shirts and ball caps. I am so glad that I brought these! We stopped by a local food market in

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Mto wa Mbu where I bought a beautiful kanga for \$5.00. The market was pretty interesting to see.

We continued on to Gibb's Farm, which is a very beautiful spot -the site of an old coffee plantation. It has amazing flowers and a great view. The rooms are all different. Ours was decorated in red, green, and black with an elephant motif. There are fresh flowers in the rooms. The food was excellent. After a nice lunch, we went for a hike to see a waterfall and the elephant caves. It was nice to get some exercise! We had cocktails on the lawn, overlooking the valley and the nice sunset. We took lots of pictures of the various flowers that abound here. What a very nice place to spend the last day of the trip to relax after all the hot game drives on bumpy dirt roads! We had a delicious dinner and then on to a great night's sleep.



Tuesday, 2/23/99

After a nice breakfast, we started on our big trip back to Arusha with Moses. We stopped again at the school we had previously visited so that we could actually see the kids.

(When we stopped on our way west, it was a Saturday and no kids were at school, so we just left all the paper, pens, and pencils that we brought.) The children were so cute and well behaved.



They sang for us. As we were leaving, one of the teachers asked us to mail a big envelope for her when we arrived back in the states. It turned out to be a letter to an organization asking for scholarship money for two of the students. One was for a girl who wanted to become a teacher. She came from a family of seven and the annual yearly income of her family was 480,000 Tsh which is around \$700 per year. She was requesting a scholarship for \$350. The other application was for a boy who wanted to attend high school. He came from a family with six children and his family's annual income was 96,000 Tsh which equals around \$141 per year. His annual student cost was projected at 155,000 Tsh, or \$230, more than the family yearly

income. It is really amazing how poor these people are compared to the very poorest people in the US.



We stopped back at the Cultural Center to pick up the things we bought before and for some last minute shopping. Eddie bought a Maasai spear and I bought a beautiful necklace made of Umburu beads. We later learned, after we got back to the states, that Dick and Gary had been given the wrong package at the cultural center. Instead of their beautiful statue and other stuff, they had a zebra skin. They eventually got their statue shipped to them, but things were somewhat damaged.

We arrived back at Novotel Mt. Meru and said our good-byes to Moses and Peter. We had a very nice lunch, packed, and

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then had some time by the pool (in the rain), then we were off with Yusef to the airport. We got through customs with only one problem-"hakuna matata". Bob lost his Leatherman. One of the customs officials took a liking to it, and confiscated it, all in the name of safe air travel! We didn't have to pay the \$40 departure tax that we expected to pay, so I could do some last minute shopping at the duty free shops in the airport. Got some good buys there! Carvings at the airport were cheaper than the best deal we could bargain for!

We had our long, long plane ride back to Amsterdam. The plane that we flew on was called the "Audrey Hepburn". After our overnight flight, we arrived at Schipol Airport in Amsterdam in the morning of 2/24/99. Since we had a long layover, we took a 2 and a half hour tour of Amsterdam. This is a very nice and very quaint city. I would love to come back sometime and spend more time exploring. We saw Anne Frank's house (the outside only), and we visited a cheese farm where they also make wooden shoes.

Our plane ride back to Boston was on a plane called "City of Amsterdam". An uneventful trip and when we arrived back in Boston we sailed right through customs and our limo was awaiting us. The end to our wonderful trip, one which I shall always fondly remember.



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