

The September 2007 Newsletter of Jean Wahlstrom and Marvin Kananen  
ELCA-Global Missionaries serving in Tanzania

Dear wonderful people,

My promise to you in this newsletter is that we will keep it short. We did a whirlwind tour of the States, never had time enough to see everyone we wanted to see, ought to see, should have seen, and needed to see. But the doctors had their chance on us, between us we had one filling and one wonderfully successful laser eye surgery and we were pronounced fit to return. If we should have seen you but did not, we apologize.

Next year, it is our hope to see everyone. 2008 will be our next 'Home Assignment' in which time we are to visit all of our sponsoring churches, which gives us spare time to see others. The goal will be to be in the States from mid-April to mid-June. We would start in Michigan, swing west through Iowa and Minnesota, drive back to Detroit and then fly to Seattle with possible connections to Oakland California and Winchester, Virginia.

We returned to the MGLSS campus on Friday afternoon, the Form Four graduation was on Sunday. Our 14th Pre-Form One class had already begun to arrive. Three volunteer teachers from USA will be here from September to December. Between these three teachers, there are over 100 years of teaching experience. They join our Tanzanian teaching staff, the matron serving as the Coordinator, to prepare next year's (starting in January) class in English, geography, math, Kiswahili, hygiene, community living, worship, working to prepare them up for Form One academic levels. The work of these three (Donna, Kay, and Rae) will set the tenor of the class in the coming years. They are living on campus in the new Concordia house (a self-catering duplex) with hot showers, stove, refrigerator, etc. This is Kay and Rae's fourth pre-form one class and Donna's second.

If this thought occurs to you, "Gee, I'd like to do that some year," be aware that Gee is a euphemism for "Jesus" and that Jean is the person you want to contact. Teaching experience, although greatly appreciated, is not necessarily necessary but the passion to help is a 'must'. This job pays nothing: you pay your own transport and some rent. Other than those items, there are no other fringe benefits. But know this: working with these girls is a life-changing, heart-altering experience that you will cherish.

Two news-worthy items. For those who wonder about our eight-year-old Nawasa, my first glimpse of her after our return caused me to think of a racing sloop cutting through the water, full speed and on course. I looked at her walking, this former bundle of humility, and thought, "I'd hate to get in her way." She is now full of poise and pride. She'd found her course. Of her our friend Rebecca said, "I had a conversation with her in Swahili." In July she didn't know any Swahili or English. Concluded Rebecca, "She's a bright one." Said we, "Yup." Before she was born, God knew her. Before she was born, we were here teaching her older sisters. Oblivious to the ways of God, we stand humbled in the wake of this little girl and rejoice for her, especially mindful of the workings of God in her life, to which we are mere witnesses. We remain oblivious to God's plans, but are expectantly reverent. He is God; she is Nawasa: we rejoice. Amen.

The second news-worthy item: Graduation. The main speaker was scheduled; we never knew who it was. That meant it was a 'Big Potato.' Someone who is a 'Big Potato' does not have to

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day that they are going to answer the invitation to speak, but by their not saying 'No' it really means 'Yes.' So, all preparations were made for that big someone who never came. Because they never said 'No' we had to assume 'Yes,' which is less a story about the speaker and more of an insight into how difficult communication can be. But in the end 57 students, our largest class ever, graduated from Form Four, in early October they begin their National Exams. We have released them now, they are on their own. These four years of preparation are over, now it is a time for them to stand alone. May their health hold out (imagine trying to take your national exams with malaria), may they study intensely and still get enough sleep, exercise, and peace to do well. We have no problem putting them into God's hands, but it's also into the hands of those who have written and will grade these exams we must trust.

A-levels return on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October to continue their educational journey. Please pray especially for the Form Six students whom have now turned the corner and are headed down the stretch, so to speak. February is the finish line for this stage of their journey, Form Six graduation on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 2008.

Pray for new teachers to come to teach at MGLSS, the ones God can use best in this very unique place. We especially need science and math and Kiswahili teachers.

We close now, trying desperately to keep this letter short. Be blessed in all you see and do. Life is worth living and worth sharing. Rejoice this day; for this, too, is a day the Lord has made.

Love,  
Jean Wahlstrom and Marvin Kananen  
ELCA-GM missionaries serving in Tanzania

P.S. No unusual wildlife sightings, but it was a joy to return home and find dog Asali, the elder, still alive and doing well and dog Macho, the younger, still as clueless as ever!!

P.S.S. Jean has succumbed to the creative temptation to conduct the Arusha Community Church choir at Carols by Candlelight this Christmas in Arusha. Pray for her!!

P.S.S.S. And as we send this, Rev. Dr. Jim and Pam Boston from Grant's Pass, OR have come to rest and renew and try to resurrect our library. They will be here 3 weeks. Pray for them as well; we are so thankful to God for such folks who just come and start to work the next day.

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