
TANZANIA CONNECTIONS

Liz Werner & Arlene Army

October 2012

Warm Welcome at Manow

Our reception at Manow this year was exceptionally warm. The school has a new Headmaster, Mr. Juma. He is a professional school administrator and seems to understand the needs of the students, the educational requirements, as well as the need for building community among the staff and within the support community of Manow village. He is a breath of fresh air, and I am convinced he will make Manow a strong and vibrant school.

The first full day we were there, he made a point to find us and met us with a hearty welcome. His warm exuberant personality immediately made us feel at home. His command of English and personality enables him to tease us and accept teasing in return. And he really sees the value of the Pre-From 1 English program.

He specifically made us welcome in four ways. First, he called a special assembly of the students and faculty just to introduce us and the program. Second, he met with us on several occasions and came to our class room to encourage our students. Third, he invited us to graduation where I was asked to sit at the head table. Fourth, he put me in contact with key people in the Division of Education at the Diocese and enabled me to provide a much broader visibility for the program. While all these may seem minor to most Americans, they are hugely important in Tanzania culture and a first for us. (Nancy)

Bus Ride

A day after arriving in Dar es Salaam, we took the *Sumry High Class* bus from Dar to Tukuyu – a grueling 15-hour ride. Our “luxury” bus had dirty, tattered, fringed valances at the windows, a screen had been put up between passengers and the driver, so we could not look out front. The screen contained a Sony big screen TV, which had been used to show movies without the sound some years back. The seats may have reclined at one time, but now they seemed permanently in one position that was not always upright. Nancy tried to adjust hers and ended with her head

almost in the lap of the passenger behind her. The “conductor” came to her rescue and got the seat almost upright. One plus for the bus – we had more leg room than in the plane.

Our fellow passengers livened up the trip, a bit too much at times. There were a group of Malawians and one fellow’s voice never got below a roar either while talking or laughing. He did nod off for a bit and gave the rest of us a quiet break. When he started up again he was slightly hoarse and not quite as loud. He must have been telling some great stories from the response he was getting. Wish I understood Malawian. (Arlene)

Initial Impressions

I felt at home within a week of coming to Tanzania. The sights, the sounds, the smells have become familiar and comfortable. The corn mill running, cows lowing, dogs barking, people laughing, the thud of pied crows landing hard on the metal roof, the smell of charcoal, and the sounds of the choir practicing are all part and parcel of life here. It is a slower pace of life that is easy to adjust to.

Of course, our pace is not that slow. Classes require preparation and correcting papers, besides the seven and a half hours spent with our students. It has been fun. Doing the Hokey Pokey was a highlight for the students the first week. It took no time at all for them to shout out another body part to put in.

It has taken a bit of adjustment to take advantage of those times that we have power to cook, heat water for bathing, print quizzes for class, and charge phones. Each is an essential function so we must accomplish them all between the frequent power outages. Head lamps are a must here. I take mine to bed with me, since I arise by five thirty. We have been fortunate so far because the power is on in the morning and we can have coffee.

Another adjustment on my part was to get used to walking everywhere. If you come, bring a good pair of walking shoes. Shank’s mare is the

common way of getting around. My stamina is increasing each time I hike back uphill to Manow carrying a weeks worth of groceries. Talk about aerobic conditioning! (Arlene)

Returning to Manow as a Teacher.

Last year when I traveled to Manow with the TTF volunteers to help them get situated, I keenly felt that I needed to experience Manow as more than a transient visitor. Coming here as a volunteer meant another stint of temporary employment, further delaying graduate school prospects, separating myself once again from my peers who are speedily progressing through the normal steps of adult life (apartment-living, career, marriage, etc.), and leaving the Northwest at the peak of hiking and tomato season. But being back in Tanzania right now, and especially in Manow, feels utterly natural.

Manow is as pleasant as I remember it. Even people who have lived here their whole lives consider this place paradise – just today, one of these *wazee* (elders) remarked how fortunate they are to live in Manow because it's unique position in the highlands and proximity to lower elevations allows for the presence of both hot-weather fruit and cold-weather fruit in their market. In our first two weeks here, I have become reacquainted with some of the people who have seen me intermittently in the past three years and some that even remember me as a surly 15 year old when I came in 2001. As always, the community welcomes us with open arms and plenty of food and soda. Drinking super-sweet soda (which has been opened for you with a measure of ceremony by a gracious Tanzanian Mama) out of a glass bottle that looks like it's been around the country a few times (and dropped in the dirt on occasion) is a fantastic experience that just can't be compared to getting a pop out the fridge at home.

The first two weeks of class have been rewarding and frenzied in equal measure. Our ever-ignorant expectations of shy but eager young souls thirsting for English knowledge have been replaced with the reality of spending 7.5 hours a day with 40 loquacious 14 year olds. As we gain familiarity of individual personalities and iron out our teaching methods, they gain awareness of our style and expectations. It's a learning process for all of us every day. During the week, Arlene and

I stay busy from the time we get up to the time we go to bed. There are lessons to plan, tests to write, quizzes to grade, dinner to cook, and house problems to puzzle over (e.g., why isn't the water working when the tank is noisily overflowing?). By the time I climb under my mosquito net I am satisfyingly exhausted. (Liz)

Weekend Time

As far as weekends are concerned, most of Sunday is occupied by the lengthy church service and preparing for Monday's class, but Saturday is all ours. Last Saturday, I hiked up a nearby mountain, through a jungle, and into a volcanic crater. On my way back, I caught up with a woman and her daughter heading for market. I told them I was here teaching English, and the woman immediately asked me if I was with Mama Nancy. Why, yes indeed, I replied. "You help our children," she said matter-of-factly, and continued on her way. (Liz)

Send email!!

Liz and Arlene would love to hear from you and they have email at the house now. Liz's email address is lizwerner9@gmail.com and Arlene's is a_army@Q.com They would love to hear from you – even short snippets, but please do not send large attachments or pictures, as it is very slow to download them in TZ.

God's Blessings and Peace,
Arlene and Liz