

# NEWS FROM THE CLARKS

I'm at 35,000 ft. in seat 22E in route to Port Au Prince, Haiti. While waiting for my snack and beverage service, I begin to count back how many times just this year I have been in a similar seat at this altitude. Having come "home" from Africa in mid-2015, we thought that our traveling days were behind us for a while. But as I did the math, I realized that I had 14 flights in 2016 with 6 more coming up as I am planning to return to Haiti in mid-December!

This July was Carol's high school graduation from RVA in Kijabe, Kenya. Thanks to friends at ABC in Atascadero, the four of us were able to fly back to Africa and join Carol for her big day. Robby and I spent two weeks prior in

Lesotho, helping out with airplane maintenance and having a great time with old friends. It was especially sweet to be with my old Basotho mechanic, Joe, and see my help lift some of his burden for a few weeks. He and his family had Robs and me over for dinner one night where they spoiled us with American food... pizza... and an extravagance of fruit juice followed by "real USA coffee" that he had been saving. What an honor. What a friend.

Our summer travels took us on to Johannesburg, South Africa then to Nairobi, Kenya. Robby and I were smashed into the arrivals building at Jomo Kenyatta airport near midnight, 95 degrees and as much humidity with a flood of other Afro-

travelers when I felt a tap on my back and heard a deep voice, "Hey Dad." My 6'1" blond son Tom stood out like a beacon, all of us arriving from different corners of the world within minutes of each other. It was off to the coast at Mombasa for a much needed holiday where we met up with Carol's senior class staying just down the beach less than a kilometer from us. I woke up from an afternoon nap one day with Robby excitedly telling me about going scuba diving with the local instructor... in full equipment. "He said I had to have your permission. It is ok, isn't it?" Ah, Africa.

After a week of sun and sand, it was off to Kijabe village and Rift Valley Academy. We had come early and purposely spent a week prior to graduation just hanging out on campus and watching Carol. Seeing her giddy excitement with her classmates was worth the time. We ate in the 'cafo' with her, visited most of her teachers and met up with old MAF friends. Watching Carol walk the aisle with her 75 chums and hearing her sing with her choir the Shona spiritual "Oh Africa" left us with an empty Kleenex box. Is this the daughter I brought to Africa in my arms? Barb and I were so honored to be there. Thank you so much to those of you who made it possible to close this Africa chapter. Our trips home scattered us on separate routes, and Robby and I ended up waylaid in Amsterdam for an evening and overnight. What a hoot to walk the old quartier, check out cool old canal boats and get in some photography on our way home.



Carol is now happily settled as an au pair in Starnberg, Germany, just south of Munich. Her melting into another family hasn't been seamless; imagine trying to babysit little kids with the parents there watching and correcting and "rescuing" the kids. But Carol has prevailed and when we talked last, she said, "Dad, we've turned the corner. Things aren't easy, but I can do it. I love it here." She has Mattheo (3) and Marie (4) in her care. We are so happy for her, and truly proud of her. "WhatsApp" is really our friend as we can chat with Carol easily.

Last basketball season left Tom, our then 10<sup>th</sup> grader, wisely going out for the JV team and having a great season learning the game. His massive over-summer practice and working out has paid off and as of last week, we have a VARSITY starter in the house. Way to go, Tom! Season started November 30<sup>th</sup>.

So here we are at the Christmas bend in the path... Wow... so many of you have trod this path with us for so many years. Over the past months, I have expressed the difficulties of leaving 'the field' and finding the path in America. We are now really starting to feel at home here. We were so blessed for 15 years of 'full throttle' service in Africa that it felt like we were cheating on a spouse by settling in and being happy here. Weird, I know. However, we are blessed to have such a great history and now so much more blessed with a fantastic new life in the US. Thanks to all of you who have faithfully ventured along with us. We are so grateful to you all.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

Roger for C5



*"Please fasten your seatbelt"... up next...  
Two trips to Haiti for Hurricane Matthew relief...*

In October, Hurricane Mathew swept up through the Caribbean, devastating the rural expanses of Haiti. This following on the heels of the 2010 earthquake left thousands of Haitians without crops, seeds for next year's crops and in some regions, even potable water.

MAF has had a program in Haiti for over thirty years that has faithfully provided flying solutions to the country's poor transportation infrastructure. After the hurricane, MAF requested

pilots and mechanics from Nampa HQ to come help with the increased workload. For many years, I have had a heart for disaster response work, but my responsibilities in Lesotho kept me there.

What a privilege it was to spend two weeks in Port Au Prince, Haiti this October with the MAF team, and knock out two aircraft inspections and the related repairs for them. Working on MAF Haiti's Cessna 206 and 207 was a great fit as they are just like the planes I cared for in Lesotho. My covering their maintenance load allowed the regular staff to concentrate on a heavy flight schedule and an increased logistics load for the disaster response. What a treat it was to get to know the Haitian staff and have some real fun in the hangar together.

Please keep me in your prayers as I head back to Haiti on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December for another round of airplane inspections and repairs.



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