

# News from the Clarks

Serving in Idaho with Mission Aviation Fellowship

Dear friends and family,

So there I was dangling from a slim rope over the edge and halfway down the sheer rock face, soaked by spray from the waterfall to my right, and full of fear from nothing 600 ft. below me. But, I am over the edge and committed. My mind fleets back to when I was standing on the top; all was secure, I knew I was safe, it was familiar. But there is no time for those thoughts now that I am committed, everything in life is narrowed down to the rope and my new surroundings.

The last we talked we had decided to leave Africa and return to the USA for a time to let the boys finish school. We arrived in Nampa, Idaho, at MAF's USA headquarters in early July followed about a month later by a sea shipping container with all of our household stuff. In August we purchased a house in Nampa and have set up shop. The boys, Tom and Robby, are attending Nampa Christian School, located one mile from our house.

Carol, as you may remember, opted to stay in Africa and finish her high school senior year at RVA in Kenya. Carol was here in Nampa with us in July and saw the new house one day before returning to Kenya. She is loving her senior year and is looking forward to visiting our new home in late November. Hooray for Christmas together in the snow... Christmas has been a sunny summer holiday for many years for us, so having Carol home and a white Christmas will be a real treat. She has no solid plans for post high school yet, but indicates some interest in emergency medicine and perhaps a stint aboard the Mercy ships that ply the waters of Africa and Asia bringing medical care and the Gospel to needy areas.



Tom is reveling in the American high school experience. As you may recall, basketball was a major reason for our relocation, and do we live basketball! The school, being one mile away is ideal for several nights a week of pre-season open gym and informal practice. Then there is Northwest Nazarene University, about 3 miles away with several big open gyms and lots of guys for pick-up games, where Tom can walk on about any time of day. AND, the rec center gym with an informal private coach helping Tom get ready for try-outs on November 15. There are only two slots open on the varsity team. Tom's school work is excellent, and he makes us proud simply in his character. At 6' 1" he is very happy to be taller than his dad.



Robby has remained his squirrely 12-year-old self. When, after the "greet the teachers" night at the new school Robby was asked if he had any questions, he thought for a moment and replied, "How long is recess and lunch?" Naturally. His latest pursuit is forging knives in an ad-hoc BBQ/ backyard forge running on Barb's hair dryer. Nothing made of metal around the house is safe from getting pounded into submission on Rob's backyard anvil.

Barb is now busier than ever. Knowing that we wanted the boys to attend a Christian school as well as the increased cost of living in

America meant that Barb would head back to work. Not our first choice, but needed for this season of life. Barb is substitute teaching in the Valley View public school district. Substitute teaching is very flexible and allows her to choose what days and grades she wants to teach any given week.

My days are spent at the MAF HQ hangar, still as an airplane mechanic. The other day we had a little going away party at the hangar for an MAF mechanic headed back out to the mission field. Our boss gave a little speech and mentioned, "Now

you are headed back out to the harvest. We'll stay here and keep getting the farm equipment repaired and out to you." He laughingly pointed out he was stretching the analogy a bit, but with good intent. That's really what we're doing here. I've got 15 years of MAF field experience I can plug into prepping equipment being sent out to do the



job. Since starting at the hangar, I have gotten my hands into a Cessna 210 (very similar to the old C 206's in Lesotho) that was crash landed in Central Asia about 3 years ago by a good MAF pilot friend of mine. No one was hurt, but the plane needed a total rebuild. It's been great getting my hands into helping the Radio Techs get sheet metal brackets and shelves built to hold the gamut of new communications and navigation equipment this plane will carry.

Recently, I was moved across the hangar to help out the radio guys with getting a brand new Cessna 208 Grand Caravan (3 times the size of a Lesotho 206!) ready for service in Mozambique, Africa. How cool is this? This huge Cessna is going out to my buddy Dave, who flies for MAF just two countries north of Lesotho. Dave has faithfully served in Mozambique for over 20 years. We are good friends who shared airplane parts, hard work and a plenty of cold drinks on our back porch while I was



in Africa. Now the Mozambique guys will have an incredible new plane for their flying doctor service. As I prepped some of the cockpit details, seats and instrumentation, I could just imagine the Moz guys flying sick and even maimed patients from the civil war (and thousands of left behind landmines) to safety with this powerful new "farm equipment."

To be honest, we miss working in the harvest field. We do so miss Africa. We long to return. But this season is not about us. This is a time to launch the kids into life with the best resources possible. A time to equip my fellow MAFers on the field with top notch "farm equipment." Thank you for walking this new path with us. This is not typically an easy time for a missionary family. The transition is difficult. Knowing how to put away the memories and move forward is at times heartbreaking. The obvious fact that you can't live in two places at once is a painful and weird place in life to be in. Moving ahead with all the needed emotional energy to start life over seems to shadow the past, the very past that has defined us for many years. Often well-meaning churches and friends choose to reduce or drop support to a returning family, thinking that "now you're home, we want to support real missionaries." The truth is we need your support just as much as ever and your prayers even more so. Guiding our kids along this path in America is so much rockier than we ever imagined. Thanks for walking the path with us for so many years. Now that the path leads to our door in the US, please do come and see us, and visit the fantastic hangar and "farm equipment" being readied at MAF.

***Roger (for C5 here and in Africa)***

## Praise

- ⇒ For a wonderful house in Nampa, close to MAF
- ⇒ For a good start to the school year for the kids

## Prayer

- ⇒ For our adjustment to life in America
- ⇒ For Carol as she finishes high school in Kenya

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**We'd love to hear from you. Please send us your Christmas letter!**

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