

Subject: KAIMOSI CONNECTION 18: Happy New Year! (S-Z)

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KAIMOSI CONNECTION 18

January 2006

Happy New Year!

News from the Nugent Rehard family

FUM Field Staff in East Africa

Based at Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya

Dear Friends and Family,

Happy New Year! Kaimosi is shifting gears. Circumcision season has ended, and all the schools and colleges are re-opening for the new school year (which begins in January, rather than September). Foot traffic on the mission road has increased today, with students walking in smart uniforms. Blue and green are the colors of choice for uniforms in Kaimosi. *Boda bodas* (bicycle taxis) are carrying baggage down the road to various dormitories~duffel bags, trunks flying by, strapped on to bike racks with strips of rubber from old tires, used like bungee cords. Hopefully your next newsletter will be from Patrick, full of college news. So this one will be about Kaimosi and family life.

Every five years, the Tiriki boys are circumcised. Yesterday the last group of circumcised boys emerged from the forest; they „came out,%00 as they say here. So for the first night in many weeks (about 10) there was no drumming, no banging of sticks, no singing, shouting, chanting. For many weeks, the Tiriki men have been engaging in circumcision rites. The „Christian%00 groups came out on Christmas Eve, marching in uniforms not unlike boy scouts, and carrying wooden cut-out guns. The „traditional%00 groups came out this past week. They wear the traditional mask and grass tunic throughout and carry long poles (I,m attaching a photo of an illustration painted by Joy Adamson~it,s **not** okay to photograph the boys, so I don,t have any contemporary photos to show you.) Most odd and surprising to us was seeing one huge procession led by a man dancing and waving an enormous American flag. This was a „Christian%00 group. When I asked our friend to explain, he said it means they are now ready to embrace Western ways, and to enter the modern world. I thought that was very interesting, and I wondered what George

Bush would say! The boys are circumcised from the age of about 5 up to 15, and many groups seemed to be predominantly small boys. „Candidates%00 are taken into the forest during the school holidays, in August or December. We,ve learned so many things about what they do and how this works, from asking questions, and I wish we had more space to tell you what we,ve learned~but much remains a mystery to us. We missed the August sessions because we were in USA for deputation, but we certainly got to experience the community expressions of Tiriki pride these past two months or so (it began in late November). FTC staff estimate that about 1,000 boys underwent the rites this past year. We,re looking forward to quieter nights and better sleep.

This is my last „regular%00 day in Kaimosi. Tomorrow morning I leave for my first week in Eldoret, with registration at the medical school on Monday. I,m nervous but very excited. It will be really nice to „settle down,%00 as they say here~to know where my classes meet and to go to lectures. Soon Friends Theological College will re-open, January 15, but for now it,s still the holiday period here. Patrick left for Nairobi with the girls yesterday, to do some college errands and take them to the dentist at Kijabe. He,ll visit Ofafa Friends on Sunday morning if all goes as planned. When he asked if he,ll be the main speaker or just give greetings, the person organizing the visit said they were not sure~he should be prepared for anything! Good advice for life. The girls will arrive a couple days late to school. The house is all clean, tidy and orderly today~but so empty and quietΣ I miss them so much already! Word has it that they are going to see the Narnia movie at the cinema this afternoon~wish I was there. We had a super time this Christmas, just being at home together and visiting with friends. It was a much-needed rest for all of us.

Before they left, we packaged up gingerbread cookies for Emma and Eliza,s „important people%00 at Turi. In the USA, this would probably be just the home room teacher. But it takes a lot of staff to tend children in boarding school~house parents, assistant house parents, house tutor, main tutor (sort of like home room, all children are in a „tutor group%00 for pastoral care), and last but certainly not least the dorm matrons. Each dorm in prep school (grades 2-8) has two women who care for the children,s practical needs on a daily basis and provide emotional support as well. Emma told me she used to cry on her matron,s shoulder when she was first adjusting. They usually go by Miss P, or Miss K, etc. (first initial of last name). These women often have children of their own, but they provide an incredible ministry by staying at the school, sleeping in small rooms at opposite ends of the dorm. They forego all privacy and make enormous personal sacrifice to attend to our children,s needs. They manage the children,s laundry, make sure they keep their beds and bedside lockers tidy, work out conflicts between the children, gather up personal belongings and pack the children,s trunks at end of term, and shepherd the girls through the waking up and going to bed transitions each day. If you are so inclined, the dorm matrons would be special people to hold in prayer,

the way that Turi serves as a family and community for our children, and we've been so pleased that the staff provide the kind of love, discipline and guidance that we wish we could provide daily~so we're especially grateful to everyone on staff there. There are so many other people who care for our girls in special ways at Turi, it would take a truckload of cookies to properly thank everyone!

The last few days have been occupied with domestic tasks. Last week I completed the chapter on muscles in my anatomy book and decided that's enough preparatory study for now. So I've been nesting~gathering some dry goods and spices and cleaning supplies from the pantry to take to our cottage in Eldoret (photo of the cottage forthcoming), and doing some cooking and cleaning. It feels a little like saying goodbye to our Kaimosi kitchen, because I won't be using it much for some time, except on weekends. Patrick plans to eat more meals in the dining hall, which will be good in many ways, especially for fellowship and bonding with students. We did a lot of holiday baking this year, which was fun. Crazy in this heat, but fun (afternoon highs in mid-80s). Thumbprint, Mexican wedding cake, sugar and gingerbread cut-out cookies, and a new kind~sesame cookies. Eliza constructed a huge gingerbread village, nearly single-handedly; we all enjoyed nibbling on it last week. We made bagels and crackers. As I write, the house is filled with the aroma of cooling banana bread and mueslix (recipe below). Imported Kellogg's cereal costs too much (about \$6.00 to \$8.00 per box!), so we normally have oatmeal, eggs or homemade mueslix instead. It has less fat than granola, but similar~nuts, seeds, and raisins mixed with oats, honey and molasses. Instead of oil, we add a little water and it gets crispy and forms clumps as it bakes in the oven. It almost smells like chocolate chip cookies baking. Needless to say, all this fun work of baking in the kitchen has given me plenty of reason to get up and go running in the morning! And this morning I had help from three little boys. The smallest, Shadrack, is a chubby character, but boy~was I ever eating his dust!

On mornings we don't go running, Patrick and I like to put on hiking boots and walk together down to the reservoir at Goligoli or go back into the forest beyond the agricultural section (our „back campus,% for Earlham folk). It's a good way to stay connected with the local community, to be aware of our surroundings. At the reservoir, we've noticed that as the dry season wears on (it's been many weeks now without rain, probably 6 weeks now) the water is being depleted in the reservoir or wetlands at Goligoli. Patches of mud are appearing, and you can see the bottom all over. This is where our tap water comes from, pumped up the hill to a large tank behind our house. As we sat there, looking at the beautiful water birds, aware of the pumping station behind us, Patrick asked the unthinkable, unspeakable question: What will the college do if this thing fails permanently? Last year in February we went through several weeks with no tap water. Rumor had it that the pump had broken and the replacement part was not available in Kenya. We're not sure how it was ever found and repaired, but we were VERY happy when the water came back on! We managed pretty well with reserve tanks scattered

around the campus (normally they collect rain water, but during the dry season we refill them using hoses). Only at the very end of that difficult period did we have to send students with basins and buckets and jerry cans on their heads to fetch water from the river some distance from campus. That is normal for many primary and secondary schools, but usually colleges have to figure out better alternatives. As we plan for growth, these are hard questions we need to address. If the water main ever fails, or if Goligoli goes completely dry from drought, we are really in a fix. The reserve tanks will only help us for a week or two. We've noticed at Goligoli that there seem to be three places where once there were sluice gates to hold water back in the reservoir. But now there is only the concrete and metal framework, no gates. So we stand sadly watching precious water rushing onward~it pauses in the wetland then just continues downstream. If the flow could be controlled or slowed, maybe we wouldn't have such a problem with shortages by February. So that is something we are praying about. We don't know how much it would cost to drill a bore hole (well), and we don't know how deep the underground water would be, but we imagine that is beyond the scope of what is possible for FTC.

The tap water has mostly been on during the holiday, which has been nice. When students come back, rationing begins and it's on for a day or two then off for a few. We plan our hot showers accordingly! It's good to remember our students at FTC come from *shambas* (farms) and staff at FTC go home to *shambas* where there is no tapped water at all and they must carry water up from a spring or river, always using it sparingly~especially during the dry season. Today I cleaned our water filter. We use ceramic candles to filter the water. We also boil it and add a little Water Guard (a chlorine product). Some would say that is over-kill. But we've had enough tummy bugs that we'd rather avoid them if at all possible. It's hard to describe the brown slimy sludge that I was scrubbing off the ceramic candles with a nylon brush. Our gardener, Kefa, came to take water from the rain tank, where I was scrubbing. He's in his 80s, has always lived very simply, with no tap water. Even he grimaced and said, „*Chafu nyingi!*” (Very dirty!) Lonie Stimac, who was a Peace Corps Volunteer taught the staff how to make their own water filters. Ours is manufactured; it has two stainless steel stacked cylinder chambers. But Lonie showed us how you can use plastic buckets, one on top of the other, with a tiny hole cut in the top one for the filter to screw into. The ceramic filter has two washers to prevent leakage, and you screw a nut on the fitting underneath to hold it upright in the container. I asked Kefa if he also scrubs his candles to keep his filter clean. He said yes, but he doesn't have a nylon brush. I asked him how he cleans it and he said he uses fibers from the gunny sacks (they're made of plastic fibers, and you can make something like a nylon pot scrubber if you unravel them and bind them together). He smiled and rubbed his stomach, saying he feels much better now that he's using the water filter. How about that! Unfortunately, his water source is a river (creek or stream, really). Springs are usually much cleaner. I'm really glad he is doing something to improve the health of his whole family, by using the *jua kali* filter (hand made, with whatever you can find handy).

It,s incredibly windy and dry. The wind really kicks up at night. It sounds eerie, whipping through the trees. It sounds like October or March to me! And with a *mabati* (corrugated metal) roof, the wind can play with any loose corners, rattling and shaking it. When sticks fall on the roof it sounds really loud! I used to hear this wind and think: Tornado! Good Ohio girl. Thankfully we don,t have tornadoes here. But there are wind shears~we read in the paper about roofs of schools and other buildings being blown off. That is hard for me to picture, but it happened in Cheptulu market, so I saw the remains. I,m glad I wasn,t there when it happened! Lots of people are sneezing and coughing. The respiratory distress is mostly due to the dry season dust, aggravated by a lot of wind. A photo in the paper this week showed a man holding a sign, „We are sick and tired of dust!%oo There,s an anthrax outbreak in remote areas, apparently fueled by the dry and windy conditions. All the non-paved, murram roads are incredibly dusty. Murram is a composite of dirt, sand and rocks that holds up better than plain dirt in the heavy rains. Anyone know the origin of that word, murram? We,d love to know! Josphat, the college financial officer came to my house today and said, „It is too hot, too dusty, too everything!%oo (This was coming from a man who almost never complains about anything~at 9 a.m.! I wondered how he would feel by 4 p.m.!) Every time a vehicle passes I look down the hill toward the college gate, and I see a cloud of dust rise and engulf the college campus, then slowly settle. We feel incredible guilt about taking our vehicle down these murram roads where there are many pedestrians, leaving a cloud of dust ourselves. Bushes and grass by the roadside are coated with brown, so it all looks like a sepia photograph.

There seems to be another event of the dry season of which I was not aware until this year~*dudus*. *Dudus* are bugs, all kinds. Today at lunch, Kefa, Rose, Barnabas and I talked for about a half an hour about ***dudus on kukus*** (bugs on the chickens). I found this incredibly fascinating. It took a lot of questioning to figure out what exactly is going on. They explained how the *kukus* have *dudus*~this happens in the dry season, especially when there are chicks, and one hen just hatched 7 chicks. They told me we need to get some *dawa* (medicine) to treat them. (Poison actually, insecticide.) So we talked about what to do. They said, „We need Dudu Dust.%oo I kid you not. Gladly it,s available in Cheptulu and not expensive. Then they told me in the morning Barnabas will treat each *kuku*, applying some Dudu Dust under each wing. I asked them, „If the *dudus* are so tiny, how on earth did you notice they have them?%oo I looked at several *kukus* and couldn,t see anything! Then the three of them broke it to me~they all three have *dudus* on them too, from working outdoors here! Mostly around their eyes, ears, foreheads and necks. They said it,s worst behind the ears, „the sensitive parts,%oo Rose helpfully explained. Kefa was extremely consternated about his hat, which apparently gets infested with them~he said when he walks home (about an hour, up and down big hills), they are really bothering him all over his head and neck. As if the long walk in the heat and dust weren,t bad enough! Then Rose showed me

one on her fingertip! It was very tiny, almost transparent, kind of like a spider~thankfully not like head lice or fleas! I imagine they might be a sort of mite? Are you itching yet? We were eating outdoors, under our bougainvillea arbor. Suddenly I had this need to scratch behind my ears, and on my forehead. I asked Barnabas if we,d have to treat Kefa with Dudu Dust, letting him use it like a lady powders herself after a bath, putting it under both of **his** „wings%oo! Oh, he laughed. A lightbulb went on and I ran in the house and got a bottle of Cutter (with DEET, which we usually use in the evenings to ward off mosquitoes). Each one closed their eyes and I sprayed around the places they were afflicted, with an extra little squirt behind each ear. Kefa was so delighted when I confiscated his hat to wash it and gave him a different one to wear. Whew~I thought I had learned a lot about *kukus*, but you never know what is going to come along here! I keep learning something new every day. I think we have a strategy to eliminate the *dudus*! Our *kukus* give the best eggs~bright yellow yolks, so fresh and delicious. And it,s handy to have some *kukus* on hand for cooking, when a visitor comes or to take along as a gift. But some days I wonderΣ is it worth it?

Trees. Firewood. That is another perennial concern in Kaimosi, along with water. Firewood is *kuni* in Swahili. The dining hall has an insatiable appetite for *kuni*. We still have fantasies of developing at least one or two bio-gas burners (we did receive funding for bio-gas, but had to change the proposal when we found out all our electrical wiring in staff housing was substandard and had to be re-wired or pay fines to KPL). Anyway, with bio-gas a rather distant future hope, there is a stand of eucalyptus trees in FTC,s agricultural land. The land is fenced on three sides. Which is about as effective as it sounds. Unfortunately, our neighbors also have a constant need for *kuni*. So they come in the FTC forest on the side that,s still unfenced and cut the trees. Naturally! We are glad that citizens now seem to respect the laws against cutting indigenous trees; none of the college,s indigenous trees have been cut (one fell down near our house last week~it was rotten, but otherwise we haven,t lost any). But with all this illegal cutting by neighbors, it,s hard to see how the college will have anything left for itself if people from the local community keep coming in to cut down the forest. In a perfect world, we would go give each family that surrounds the college a solar cooker. Then they wouldn,t need *kuni* and they would stop cutting here. That would be better for the environment all around. However, we don,t have funds or resources to provide solar cookers for all the people who want the college,s *kuni*.

So how do we improve security in the agricultural land? It,s not just cutting. Last June, during the heavy rains, someone came and stole almost 100 grevillea tree seedlings FTC staff had just planted. This is not a huge expense~we grew the seedlings ourselves~but it was discouraging in the extreme. We,d like to plant more trees~exotics and indigenous~in the agricultural land, but we feel we have to first improve security there. How do we convince people to respect the fence, and not cross it to help themselves to college resources? On our walk this week to the back

campus, we encountered four young women coming through the fence to cut and carry away more trees. They were carrying *pangas* (machetes) and had banana fiber disks strapped to their waists (a donut-shaped pad, for carrying the bundle of wood away on their heads). They saw us, turned away and ran, laughing and screaming. I felt so ambivalent. Glad they were running away, sad that they come repeatedly to cut in the forest any sapling the diameter of your upper arm. This week I listened to the coverage on BBC of the girls who were brutally ambushed and beheaded in a forest in Indonesia. How do tensions escalate to that point? Granted, that was Christian-Muslim conflict. But we want our forest to be a safe place, not a place of escalating conflict.

The pressure on the Kaimosi forest (what little is left of it) is enormous. Some visitors in the guest house last week said they heard chain saws at night. Every sapling our neighbors cut (and steal) is potentially worth \$100 as a mature tree. If we can manage the college's forest well, re-planting as we cut trees for firewood, that's an enormous savings for the college, cash we don't need to spend. It's an ecological concern for the forest, an economic concern for the college, as well as a social concern for the neighbors around Kaimosi. What kind of neighbor is the college going to be? Barring solar cookers, what alternatives can we present to the community? For now, we're making plans to erect fence on the fourth side~the post holes are dug, now we're „organizing%” funding for posts. All we can afford is barbed wire, easy to cut. It keeps getting cut. We're advised, „Keep repairing it. They must get tired of cutting before you get tired of repairing. Eventually they will stop.%” We've also been advised to build a watchtower and place an *askari* (watchman) there, installing lights to point toward the fence, so intruders can be easily seen and chased out. Others have said it might help to have dogs for security in that area, deterring thieves from entering, especially at night. All of this seems logical and reasonable by the world's standards. None of it sounds very Quakerly. We live in a tension here, between seeking to live according to Friends testimonies and seeking to respect cultural practices. For better or worse, askaris and fences, security lights and dogs are assumed as cultural practices for institutions in Africa. Without any effective police protection, individuals and institutions are forced to find ways to meet their own security needs. At times as the only American staff at the college, it seems the best we can hope for is that Friends testimonies might moderate some of the cultural practices that seem inconsistent with Quaker faith and practice. These are ongoing prayer concerns~prevention of conflict and community relations, being good stewards of the ecological resources in the college's care, and meeting the demands of feeding about 100 people 3 meals a dayΣ

On a lighter note, attached are some photos. You'll find Eliza and her birthday cake~she turns 11 on Sunday, January 8! The only child I know who wishes she didn't have to get older. „I liked being 10! I wish I didn't have to turn 11!%” she exclaimed. This photo would be good for *Highlights* magazine: „What's wrong with

this picture?% You, notice we had no birthday candles on hand, so Eliza is blowing out imaginary candles. You, also note how the center of the cake is sagging~so we named it the Longanot cake (it looks like the famous volcano in the Rift Valley which Emma climbed in 7th grade with her geography class). I,m including a painting I made of Mt Longanot in October, to give you an idea. It doesn,t really show how big the crater is (the feature which unfortunately resembles Eliza,s cake~the crater spans the flattest area across the middle, from the „shoulder% on the left, over to the peak on the right). Let,s call the crater a **caldera**~that sounds nicer, doesn,t it, when applied to a cake? It took Emma,s class longer to walk around the rim of the caldera than to climb to the highest point. On the drive to Nairobi you get a bird,s eye view and realize how wide is the mountain and how large the caldera, as you climb the escarpment on the highway. In spite of the unseemly shape, the cake was delicious (Walnut mocha with caramel glaze). I made the poor decision to try to bake both layers at once in our tiny oven~it was 3 pm and a power cut was likely (it often goes out in the late afternoon). It was either bake them one by one, or simultaneously. I opted for the latter, trying to do a delicate balancing act of one layer on top of the other, the top one resting on a *sufuria* lid. Needless to say, next time I,ll start early in the day and bake the layers one by one!

There is also a picnic photo of our girls with Madeline and Betty, daughters of William Jumba, the carpenter who provides a lot of furniture for the college. His woodworking is really beautiful, all made with hand tools, the way my great-grandfather used to do it, the way the Amish still do. We enjoy talking about all sorts of things with him~agriculture, politics, education, you name it. He,s a really kind and interesting man, and it,s a pleasure to know someone who is really good at what they do. And this holiday Jumba showed us a photo of his climb up Mt Longanot, when he was a young man in his 20s! (Apologies to those of you who don,t receive photos~these needed a little explanation.)

Many thanks to those who sent year-end contributions to support our ministry! We wish you all the best in 2006! We learned that the ecumenical Trinity Fellowship has a motto for each year. Last year,s was: „Revive the drive in 2005.% This year,s is: „My heart is fixed in 2006!% (Ps 108:1 and Ps. 57:7) May your heart be steadfast, may your soul awaken and may you sing and give thanks!

With affection,

Mary Kay, with Patrick and the girls

Jesus said: Happy are they who hear the word of God and obey it. ~Luke 11:27-28

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KAIMOSI MUESLIX

From the Nugent Rehard family kitchen

FUM Field Staff in East Africa

Based at Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

2. Melt in double boiler:

1 c honey

⅓ c water

2 T molasses

2 T vanilla

1 t salt

3. When liquid mixture is blended, let cool slightly. Then add mixed dry ingredients:

750 g. rolled oats (about 1.5 to 2 pounds, depending on how oats-ey you like it)

1 c dried coconut flakes

⅓ c sesame seeds

⅓ c sunflower seeds

2 or 3 c nuts (cashews, peanuts, almonds), chopped

1 c flour (whole wheat, white or mixed)

4. Stir until all dry ingredients are moistened.

5. Spread thinly onto baking sheets and bake 10-15 mins until lightly browned.

WATCH CLOSELY~sweet ingredients may burn quickly. Make sure all water has dried up and stir ingredients occasionally while baking.

5. After baking, let cool. Then add 2 c raisins or other dried fruit. Mix and store in tightly sealed container.

Enjoy... and remember Friends Theological College while you eat breakfast!

January 2006







