

## LETTERS FROM THE LINNS OF LILONGWE

From 1973–75 the Linn family lived in Malawi, Africa, where Wayne, a Peace Corps volunteer, served as the Chief Fisheries Officer of the country. With him in Malawi, often termed “the warm heart of Africa,” were his wife, Fae (also a volunteer), and their three children, Jennifer, Jay, and Douglas. In 2015 their adventure of more than forty years earlier was published by iUniverse: the book is available from Amazon Books. It is now “preserved in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston and listed in the guide to the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection. Chief Archivist Karen Abramson commended the Linns for sharing their letters with the museum, saying “The letters in particular provide great insight into your life and work in Malawi and will be very useful to researchers.”

We have excerpted a small portion of the book to give members of the Retirees Association a sense of its flavor. The excerpted passage is an account of Wayne and son Jay’s visit to South Luangwa National Park, in eastern Zambia. Wayne tells us that it is “one of the greatest wildlife sanctuaries in the world,” then continues:

“The concentration of game around the Luangwa River, which flows into the Zambezi, is intense. It was called the Valley of the Elephants, and with good reason—it had a herd of 100,000 or so then. By 2010, due mainly to poaching and habitat loss, the number had been reduced to 15,000. Though these elephants were considered the most dangerous due to their unpredictable behavior—which in my estimation rivals that of the Cape buffalo—they are majestic to see and admire on foot without a fence. A common misconception is that elephants are extremely dangerous; however, in all of Africa at that time, crocodiles killed the most people, and we had our problems with them in Malawi.

“Our walking safari included a Zambian guide and a rifleman with a first-aid kit—I couldn’t help but marvel at that incongruity—and eight walkers. . . . It was like walking in a Garden of Eden with all kinds of animals, including birds, especially the colorful bee eaters. What an incredible experience to look an elephant, rhino, or hippo in the eyes only a few yards away. (At that time there were twelve thousand rhinos in the park; now in 2010 there are none, most likely due to poaching). Four hundred species of birds and sixty animal species lived within the park’s 9,050 square kilometers (3,500 square miles). This included hippos at a concentration of twenty-five to thirty per river mile.

“As we crossed Luangwa River to occupy a thatched hut and view other parts of the park, we saw hippos and crocs (population 14,000) and we wondered about the safety in the boat. The thatched hut had provisions like a first class yet simple hotel. It was adequate, comfortable, and pleasant. It was hard to

believe we were in the bush in Africa, yet we were seeing all those African animals: waterbuck, bushbuck, duikers, puku, and numerous impalas (all among the 14 antelope species) plus warthogs and zebras. Vervet monkeys and chacma baboons were wary of us, but still visible. There was excellent birding, and among the species seen were: colorful bee eaters (carmine, red-throated, least, and white-bellied); crowned cranes, goliath heron, storks (white, open-billed, saddle-billed, and yellow-billed); oxpecker; vultures, guinea fowl; Egyptian geese; weaver sparrows; doves (Cape, laughing, and emerald-winged); glossy and sacred ibis; jacana; fish eagle, owl; lilac-sided roller; ground and red-billed hornbill, hoopoe, francolin; hammerkop, starlings; pied and wattled plover; and cattle and white egret. . . . Some of the other animals seen, while either walking or riding to our walking sites, were Cape buffalo (wow, big!), some with calves, and giraffes, honey badgers, squirrels, mice, and rabbits, according to my diary.

“We felt that this walking safari was fun and one of the finest ways to see, enjoy, and relish this pristine wilderness, providing a great sense of openness while hiking through various habitats: savannah, Brachystegia, mopani bush (dry), dambo (wet), plains, grasslands (short and tall), and sandy shore along the river and lagoon. We saw lots of signs of elephant, plus elephants themselves with big tusks at twenty kilograms each (with a market value at that time of \$1,500 uncarved, and five times that amount, carved.)

“ . . . We were always checking the wind direction as we stalked the environment. We would usually walk a few miles (four to eight) in the early morning and then come back to camp to eat breakfast. We rested, read, had lunch and tea, and then went out on an afternoon safari, often driving to different sites in an attempt to find more species. We saw hyenas and baby elephants; some of the latter had grown to fifty pounds, up from their birthweight of twenty-five pounds.

“At night we sat around a fire and listened to the guide and guard tell stories, such as an elephant killing a game guard in Wankie or a lion killing a guide in his tent at night at another park—always at another park. There was lots of discussion on the kinds of animals and their behavior. It was all interesting and informative, not only enriching my own knowledge and Jay’s, but deepening our impressions, memories, and love of this part of Africa, the bush.” ▲

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### IN MEMORIAM

**Don Reynolds (86), Oct. 2, 2015**

**Dean Phelps (89), Nov. 12, 2015**

**Harry Knight (86), Dec. 24, 2015**

**Don Daoust (80), Dec. 18, 2015**

**Judith Faulkner (67), Jan 18, 2015**

## THE MISSING GROOM

By Jim Dean

In late June the Watanabe and Dean clans descended on San Diego/La Jolla for Lynne Watanabe and Donald Kganetso’s beach-front wedding, with a reception to follow at a fashionable seafood restaurant in downtown San Diego. We booked hotel reservations, flew in, drove down and cursed southern California traffic. I thought La Jolla an odd place for their wedding, given the origins of the engaged couple. Lynne, my niece, had lived in the south, Midwest, and intermountain west, all places with no ocean beaches. Her fiancé, Donald (Eddie) Kganetso, was native to Botswana, a land-locked nation. No beaches there either. Why, then, a beach wedding?

In the days preceding our coming, frantic phone calls, emails, text messages, Facebook postings, and tweets vaulted into space, all asking whether the groom would arrive from Africa in time. We read the latest news about the State Department’s glitch in issuing visas. We visited their website to see when the problem might be resolved. No reassuring news. As many as fifty thousand travelers bound for America were unable to secure visas.

Business men and first-time tourists waited at airports and embassies, or languished in motel rooms. Guest workers from Mexico could not cross into California to pick strawberries. Thousands of travel plans were changed or aborted. Angry would-be travelers called State Department employees unhappy names. Members of congress dealt with pleading constituents, including my sister, Julia, and brother-in-law, Dan Watanabe of Tucson, Arizona. Even Senator John McCain could not persuade the State Department to expedite Eddie K’s visa request so the couple could be wed. Eddie had satisfied all diplomatic requirements, had airline tickets, and was in Johannesburg, South Africa awaiting his visa. Unhappily, days of waiting stretched into weeks.

Lynn lamented her plight to Facebook friends. Soon news of the wedding-that-might-not-happen spread across the internet. ABC’s “Good Morning America” picked up the story and aired it. How absurd, they concluded, to have international love thwarted by a bumbling bureaucracy. Through her African contacts Lynn was able to find a room for Eddie near the Embassy in Johannesburg. The long wait had rendered him destitute, until she found a way to get him a little money. But his plight was real. He was in limbo: he could not return home to Gaborone, Botswana, nor could he get to America. All he could do was wait, and hope.

Unhappily, hoping didn’t help. Eddie spent his scheduled wedding day 10,000 miles from La Jolla and San Diego. When Dan and Julia finally knew that Eddie could not

possibly arrive on time for the wedding, they launched Plan B, salvaging what they could. The wedding and reception morphed into a combination family reunion and a recitation of all the things that can contribute to a missing groom.

Nonetheless, there was plenty of good cheer. We were happy to be together “reunion-ing.” Lynne, having put her wedding dress in reserve, moved among us guests in a lovely and simple lavender dress. She confirmed in detail what we knew in a general way. In the prior half year she had become engaged to Eddie. She had also planned a wedding, completed field-work in Botswana for her Ph D dissertation, written her dissertation, passed her final oral examination, and found a university teaching job. She seemed to us a wonder woman, though at the moment an unmarried one.

We took our cue from her. If she could smile, be amusing and deal deftly with all our questions, even while distraught, we could help make the occasion a happy one. We offered our heartiest congratulations to her and the missing groom. We toasted them, my solid Mormon relatives with goblets of water and soft drinks, and those of us less constrained by church doctrine with glasses of wine and champagne.

Since none of us had had the opportunity to meet the groom and welcome him into the family, Dan Watanabe helped characterize him (the two had talked between Arizona and Botswana by way of Skype). Eddie was a safari guide and animal tracker, and he and Lynne met on a safari in a game reserve. They immediately liked one another, and romance bloomed in the bush. Before long there were pictures of the two on Facebook, and tales of adventures and ordinary life spent together in Botswana, and finally an engagement and a wedding scheduled.

Lynne learned that Eddie had never seen an ocean, so arranged for the two of them to travel to Namibia to see the Southern Atlantic. They were so happy there that they agreed they should be married with a seashore in view. Lynne suggested a beautiful place she knew in California: La Jolla.

We admitted confusion about Eddie’s name. Was he Donald? Was he Eddie? Or was he both? We learned Eddie’s legal name is Donald Kganetso, but a revered uncle didn’t like the name “Donald,” so called him Eddie instead. And because uncles enjoy great sway in Botswana, the unofficial name is the one everyone uses.

Dan wryly recounted another conversation between the two. While Eddie knew Botswanan wedding practices inside out, he was unsure about American ones. He didn’t know how many cows he should offer as a dowry



## ROAD SCHOLAR – EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL AT ITS BEST

By Wayne Schumacher

Road Scholar and SOU have quite a history together, dating back to 1980. In the early 1980s, when Road Scholar was known as Elderhostel, SOSC hosted more of its programs than any site in the country and in 1982 became its first “Supersite.” Several of you will remember what fun it was teaching classes and having so many “hostellers” on campus.

In 2010, the not-for-profit company based in Boston renamed its programs Road Scholar, to better reflect its mission. “Road” connotes a journey and real-world experience, and “Scholar” reflects a deep appreciation for learning. Now the world leader in educational travel programs for adults, Road Scholar offers 5,500 learning adventures in all 50 states and 150 countries.

Here in Ashland, Road Scholar programs focus primarily on theater, with tickets included to OSF plays, stimulating classes with OSF actors and staff, and special behind-the-scenes presentations in stage management, scenery, costumes, make-up and more. Road Scholars come from all over the country and stay together in a local hotel, eat at selected restaurants or use the new SOU residence hall and Hawk Dining facility (summer only). Locals like us can sign up as “commuters” for Ashland programs (at significant savings!) by staying in our own homes each night. All other scheduled program activities including the plays, classes, outings, socials and meals are included.

The best way to learn about Road Scholar is as close as your computer. Check out the website, [www.road scholar.org](http://www.road scholar.org) where you will discover an astounding variety of programs and the remarkable value of their all-inclusive, no-hidden-fees offers. Activity levels range from “Easy,” like Ashland’s programs, to “Challenging” for a truly adventurous, outdoor experience.

Use the search box on the home page to find programs by location, topic, interest, date, activity, country — you name it! For example, Ashland’s programs can easily be found by searching “Oregon Theater.”

Much more than being just a tour, Road Scholar programs are wonderful learning adventures. When you have a moment, check out the site. You will be amazed at what Road Scholar has to offer! ▲

## WINTER LUNCHEON BY PRESIDENT RALPH FIDLER

Happy New Year to all retirees, and a wish that all are in good health.

Our winter luncheon, February 26, 2016 should prove very interesting, for it will feature a presentation from the Director of Facilities Management and Planning, Drew Gilliland. He will inform us about the projects going on at the University, their effects on the community, and probable solutions to problems.

We will meet again in the Rogue River Room, with a social time from 11:30-11:45. Then we will disperse to get lunch at Elmo’s and come back to the RRR to eat and listen to the speaker. Once again we have arranged with Security to not issue citations from 11:00 to 2:00 p. m. in the parking lots north of Stevenson Union. Anyone needing parking assistance is asked to talk to a council member at the door.

Current membership stands at more than 60. We thank all who have renewed their memberships. If you have not yet joined or renewed your membership (\$20), please do so. We ask that you provide your name, email address, phone number, date of retirement, and any additional amount you wish designated for scholarship or newsletter mailing costs. Member benefits

include bookstore discounts, library borrowing privileges, and reduced ticket prices for University events.

Our spring luncheon with guest speaker President Saigo is set for May 20, 2016. He will be retiring, and it should be interesting to hear his final impressions about the University. On behalf of the entire Retirees Association we wish to thank contributors to the Scholarship fund, with a special thanks to Dr. Ed Hungerford for his generous donation in the amount of \$1,000.▲

The Missing Groom -- Continued from page 3...

for the privilege of marrying Lynne. No payment required, Dan told him.

Everyone I talked to thought the non wedding festivity as much a success as such things can be, and we left feeling happy we had come.

Two days later Eddie received his visa and boarded an international flight for Phoenix. Four days later Plan C went into effect. He and Lynne were married in an intimate ceremony in La Jolla. Attending were immediate family and Lynne’s maid of honor. We all received Facebook pictures of them, she in an exquisite wedding dress, he in an elegant tuxedo. The picture I liked best showed them holding hands and walking barefoot on a sandy beach. They looked immensely happy. The beach was a perfect place for them to be. ▲

Flies, by William Golding; Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott Odell; The Count of Monte Cristo, by Alexander Dumas; The Doc Savage series, by Andre Norton.

The Book of Indians, by Holling C. Holling; Black Beauty, by Anna Sewell; Little Women, by Louisa Mae Alcott; Misty of Chincateague, by Marguerite Henry; The Wizard of Oz series, by Frank Baum; The Nancy Drew Series, by Carolyn Keene; The Boy Allies series, by Clair Wallace Hayes.

Harold and the Purple Crayon, by Crockett Johnson; The Tarzan Series, by William Rice Burroughs; Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte; and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain. ▲

## AT A BAR

A very elderly gentleman (mid-nineties), very well dressed, hair well-groomed, great looking suit, flower in his lapel, smiling slightly of good after shave, presenting a well-looked after image, walks into an upscale cocktail lounge.

Seated at the bar is an elderly looking lady (mid-eighties). The gentleman walks over, sits alongside her, orders a drink, takes a sip, turns to her and says, “So tell me, do I come in here often?”▲

## BOOKS WE READ AS CHILDREN

At our Fall 2015 Luncheon Carol McNair left pencils and papers at each table, asking that we name books that pleased us when we were young readers. Happily, no one admitted to liking Dick and Jane stories, nor were there any precocious readers who devoured late works by Henry James and Proust. But here, in random order, are some books that greatly delighted some of us:

The Phantom Tollbooth, by Norman Justus; Lord of the

