

# Teaching Math in Uganda

by

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As I attempt to write an account of my travel to Uganda in June 2009, I am plagued by the sketchiness and illegibility of my notes, often scribbled in a notebook as the vehicle in which I was riding bumped along a hopelessly potholed road. Worse, my memory, never too reliable, is already having trouble recalling what happened. (I scribbled the following words on the bottom of one page: "A place yearning to see them." I have no idea what that means.) It is therefore not only possible, but likely, that this account bears little resemblance to what actually happened. Nevertheless, it is completely true, and if you like, you can follow along with the photographs at [http://people.hofstra.edu/raymond\\_n\\_greenwell/pictures.html](http://people.hofstra.edu/raymond_n_greenwell/pictures.html)

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## 1. Teach and Tour

In February 2009 I received an email from Evelyn Nabaggala, University Program Director for an organization called Teach and Tour Sojourners (TATS), inviting me to travel to Uganda to give lectures at universities and other schools. She had apparently emailed professors and teachers in the U.S. at random. I was looking for something more interesting to do than teach summer school at Hofstra University, where I had been a math professor for 26 years. I had never been to Africa, so I looked at the TATS website at <http://www.teachandtours.com>. There I read a statement by a political science professor named Jenny from a nearby university who had recently been to Uganda through TATS. I sent her an email to try and find out more about TATS and to ensure that the program was legitimate. We ended up talking on the phone for about an hour, after which I decided that this was a totally crazy idea, and that I definitely wanted to do it.

Another helpful person in preparing for my trip was a Canadian theater professor named Michael, who has a blog of his TATS experience at <http://www.mytripjournal.com/travel-438957>.

During the months before I left, I tried to get a schedule of my talks from Evelyn, but I soon found firsthand what others had told me: It's very hard to get anything precisely pinned down in Uganda. If you want a precise schedule with itemized bills and everything spelled out, go to Germany. If you go to Uganda, at least through TATS, be prepared for chaos. If you can go with the flow and enjoy it, you can have a blast.

## 2. Amsterdam

On June 11, 2009, I took off from Newark International Airport. Before landing for a four hour layover in Amsterdam, I spoke with the other two people in my row. One was a Dutch native, and the other had a Netherlands guidebook. I discovered that a train can take you from the airport to downtown Amsterdam in about 20 minutes. Visiting a city I had never visited before sounded a lot more fun than sitting around the airport, so after we landed, I took some euros out of an ATM, bought a train ticket, and soon was wandering around Amsterdam.

Yes, Amsterdam really does have canals everywhere. And the Netherlands has lots of windmills, but they're the modern type for energy generation. Most people seem to get around on bicycles, all equipped with bells suitable for warning a jet-lagged American that a collision was imminent. I wanted something to eat and so was happy to see a place labeled "Coffee Shop." I was puzzled when I walked in, since I saw nothing to eat or drink. Apparently I'm the only person left in the world to not

know that Dutch coffee shops don't sell coffee. Two men behind the counter smiled as I approached and opened up a large wooden display case with several dozen varieties of marijuana. I quickly explained that I was looking for something to eat. They laughed, and then I laughed. Ha ha ha! Silly American. Fortunately, on another block I found a shop with pastries in the window. I ate the most luscious pastry I've ever had in my life, a waffle with chocolate coating and nuts on top. There's no way I can explain to you how good it tasted. I was delirious as I sat eating it at a table on the sidewalk, watching the boats and bicycles and enjoying the brilliant sunshine in the cool morning.

I wished I had printed a map of Amsterdam before leaving. I came across a sign with a map, but all the streets twisted around and had unpronounceable names with too many consonants. With a map and a more determined pace, I could have made it to Ann Frank's house.

### 3. On to Uganda

I got back to the airport with time to spare. There was no way I was going to miss my flight. Airport security in Amsterdam is at the gate, rather than before you enter the gate area. The advantage is that you avoid the huge lines through American security. The drawback is that there is no food or drink you can buy once you've gone through security. Fortunately, lots of food was offered on the flight. I alternated between reading my book and watching out the window as we crossed Europe, then the Mediterranean, and then Africa. I was amazed at how vast the Sahara desert was, going on forever until night made it too dark to see.

As we landed at Entebbe, I was struck by how dark everything was. The Ugandans were clearly more frugal with electricity than Americans. As I walked through the airport, I noticed huge piles of moths outside the windows, drawn to the light inside. Getting out took longer, since a group of mask-clad medical people were questioning everyone about symptoms of the H1N1 flu. I bought my visa (\$30, I think), found my bag, and was a free man.

Larry, the driver for TATS, was waiting for me outside the baggage claim. Larry is a friendly, quiet man who chuckles at driving conditions that would drive a lesser man berserk. Entebbe is located about an hour from Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The road is decent and was not too crowded late at night. Congestion was worse in downtown Kampala, where drivers did not seem to take lanes seriously and careened through the roads, looking for an opening. From Kampala we had a 40 minute ride to the TATS guest house on Najjera Road, outside the suburb of Ntinda. Near our destination, the road appeared to have undergone a bombing raid. These were not potholes; these were vast craters, into which my Mini Cooper would have disappeared without being seen again. The oversized wheels on Larry's Toyota Hilux truck gave him an advantage, but he still wandered from one side of the road to another to avoid the biggest holes, facing near head-on collisions with other

drivers doing the same. I was surprised that more vehicles didn't have four-wheel drive. The most common car by far was the Toyota Corolla.

We made a stop along the way so I could withdraw Uganda shillings from an ATM. The ATM at the airport wouldn't take my Citicard, but a Stanbic bank on the road home was happy to give me a huge pile of shillings. The exchange rate was about 2100 shillings per dollar, but throughout the trip, I rounded this figure to 2000, making it easy to convert in my head. I will use the 2000 figure throughout this account. A 10,000 shilling note is then worth about \$5. When you get 460,000 shillings in 10,000 shilling notes, it makes a fat wad. I later found that it could be hard to get change for bills in larger denominations, and credit cards are rarely accepted.

As we approached the TATS guest house, a gentle man named Stephen opened the gate. He stayed in a small room right by the gate. The guest house was inside a compound with barbed wire around the top of the fence. Despite this ominous appearance, the crime rate in Uganda is low. The guest house was one of several houses connected together. It consisted of one small bedroom, where I stayed, a larger bedroom, a living room that became a third bedroom as needed, a kitchen, and a bathroom. The kitchen lacked a stove or oven; all cooking was done on charcoal stoves by the back door, except for an electric pot for boiling water. The accommodations were comparable to a dorm room, hardly the "first class" accommodations Evelyn promised in her email, but the bed was comfortable, and I was very sleepy. There were no screens on the windows, but I was happy and surprised to discover that Uganda had very few insects (despite all the moths at the airport), so I could leave my window open to let the cool night air gently blow into my room.

#### 4. Jinja

The following morning I woke up and could hardly believe I was in Africa. It became less hard to believe when I took a shower. Warm water came out of the hand-held shower head in more of a trickle than a spray. There was insufficient water pressure for the water to reach my head when I stood up, so I sat in the tub and held the wand over my head. Brown water flowed off of me down the drain. I could hardly believe I had gotten so dirty so fast, but the red dust on the roads was pervasive. The housekeepers thoroughly cleaned the guest house daily, but the red dust returned as fast as they could remove it.

Bessy was the housekeeper who made breakfast that morning. She was a lovely young woman with a sweet disposition. Ugandans tended to not eat breakfast, and breakfast for us was usually minimal: tea and bread with peanut butter, jam, or honey. We later had some juice that was essentially sugar water with orange flavoring, but after several days some real orange juice (or so the box claimed) appeared in the refrigerator. Ugandans didn't need breakfast because they ate dinner so late, usually between 9 p.m. and midnight. Those first few dinners were

rough on me, since I was ready to fall asleep around 9:00. I pleaded for an earlier dinnertime, and so dinner was then served at the preposterously early hour of 7:00 p.m.

At various times there were two other housekeepers. Betty was a quiet woman who spoke little English and wore her hair short in the style of African schoolgirls. Miriam was a thin, graceful woman in her thirties who seemed to carry ages of African suffering in her eyes. She had several kids but her husband was no longer caring for any of them.

The other guest in the house was Andrew, a lanky, generous graduate student in criminal justice. He had been in Africa for several weeks, teaching various topics in local schools while doing research on wildlife poaching.

After breakfast, Larry drove me to Jinja, a town about an hour and a half (or a lot more if traffic was bad) east of Kampala, where water flowed out of Lake Victoria to begin the Nile River. First we stopped at the Martyrs Shrine, commemorating the spot where 22 Catholics were martyred when they refused to renounce their faith in 1886. I was fortunate to arrive when the students were practicing their music, a beautiful call-and-response type of singing accompanied by drums and other instruments. I bought a CD, but was later disappointed to learn that the music sounded nothing like what I had heard the students sing. On the road to Jinja, we stopped at the Uganda form of fast food. Before Larry had fully stopped the truck, dozens of vendors were shoving food and bottles of water into our car windows. They all wore identical blue smocks, indicating that they are officially registered vendors. The food is yummy, cheap, and fast: beef and chicken barbecued on a stick, as well as a roasted banana known as gonjn. The vendors carry the bananas in a basket, but you must give that back, and they give you a piece of paper with which to hold (or attempt to hold) the bananas.

In Jinja we stopped at the Nile River and took a boat ride to what is labeled the source of the Nile, a barely noticeable ripple in the river where an underground spring delivers 30% of the Nile's water. (The rest comes from Lake Victoria.) I heard that the water from the spring could be seen erupting until the nearby dam was built, raising the water level and submerging the spring. We stopped at a small island, where young Ugandans frolicked in and out of the water. We were accompanied by a self-appointed tour guide, a boy of about 16 years who gave a running commentary and offered to take photographs. At the end, he wanted some money, and Larry explained to me that the money I paid to TATS for this day (\$80, I learned a few days later) did not include this fellow. Larry offered him a 1000 shilling note (50 cents), but the fellow declined and exchanged a few words with Larry in Luganda, the language of the tribe that inhabits central Uganda. I asked Larry what this conversation was about. Larry said that the fellow doesn't want his little money; he wants my big money. I had nothing smaller than a 10,000 shilling note (\$5), so I gave that to him. He was just hustling to make a living, as so many poor Ugandans were doing. That tip should have included a song on the guitar-like

instrument he was carrying, but he didn't play it on the boat due to the engine noise, and at this point I wasn't interested in waiting around. I did, however, stop to sample some nuts from a woman vendor, and ended up getting a bag of very tasty peanuts. I videoed (for a fee) some dancers from an orphans' school. We also visited a shrine dedicated to Ghandi, and then we left for Bujagali Falls, a series of small falls and rapids on the Nile. I didn't appreciate how well I would come to know those falls the following day. I admired the bird life: storks, eagles, and cormorants.

Our next stop was at Nile River Explorers (NRE), where I made a reservation to raft on the Nile the following day. I had a couple of recommendations for another company named Adrift, but Nile River Explorers said they used smaller boats, which appealed to me. Also, if my information was correct, Adrift gives a nice lunch halfway through the trip, while NRE provides a breakfast at the beginning, dinner and beer at the end, and a light snack midway through the trip. I was happy to learn that the \$125 for a day of rafting included transportation to and from Kampala. Also, they videoed segments of the trip and made a DVD for sale at \$25. This would turn out to be a good purchase, because otherwise I would never believe afterwards what I experienced the next day.

On the way home, Larry and I stopped at the Hotel Africana in Kampala, where we ate samosas beside the swimming pool. Although samosas originated in India, they are very popular in east Africa. I think the African version is even tastier. We also stopped to get a box of bottles of drinking water. I had bought a couple of bottles at the airport, and more bottles were available at a store just a 10 minute walk from the guest house, but this box meant I was hydrated for several days.

## 5. Rafting

Saturday night the water mysteriously stopped running in the guest house. Larry filled some jerry cans with water at a nearby gas station so that we could still clean up and occasionally flush the toilet. I later learned that water was running at the house under construction next door. This scuttled the theory that there was no water in the area because workers had cut the pipe while repairing the road. It took me several days of experimenting before finding that the best strategy for bathing was to fill one of the smaller jerry cans about halfway so it was still light enough to lift over my head, and pour the water over me as I sat in the tub. It was cold, and it didn't remove all the grime, but it was adequate.

Early Sunday morning Larry drove me to the nearby shopping center, where the NRE van picked me up. We picked up more rafters at the Red Chili Camp on the east side of Kampala, and then headed to Jinja, where we had a more thorough breakfast than those at the guest house. I had my first taste there of the extraordinary Ugandan pineapple, as well as chapati, the yummy Ugandan bread that is kind of a cross between a pancake and a tortilla.

A large truck then transported the roughly seven rafts and their soon-to-be occupants to our drop-off point on the Nile. As we barreled along, children in mud huts with thatched roofs waved at us. I found it difficult to take photos; an interesting group of kids would appear, but we flew by them almost before my brain could register. On the way, I chatted with an American psychologist and his Egyptian-born psychologist wife. They were in Uganda to teach more humane disciplinary methods in the schools. Caning had been outlawed a few years earlier, but they said it was still widely practiced, usually at the urging of the parents.

At the drop-off point, those of us with tender feet walked delicately across the ground; we were warned to go barefoot because any footwear would be pulled off by the rapids. While waiting to board the raft, I felt something on my foot. I saw a millipede, similar to the harmless ones in New York state forests. I was about to touch it when someone warned me that those in Uganda give a nasty sting. OK, I guess we're not in Kansas any more, Toto. I need to be more careful.

We all donned our life jackets and helmets. I boarded a raft with four Brits, two Irish sisters, and an Aussie guide named Jesse, who trained us while we were in still water in the logistics of how to handle a flipped raft. The still water didn't last long, as we soon approached our first of four Class 5 rapids. As we picked up speed, Jesse called for us to keep paddling, although our senses told us this was madness as we plunged down the falls. Before we hit bottom, he yelled out, "Get down!" Although we could barely hear his voice over the roar of the rapids, we needed no further prompting and crouched in the bottom of the raft while holding the rope as we had been trained. The crash at the bottom felt like an auto accident in a very rubbery car. The raft then shot up as it flew over the wave, miraculously avoid flipping. Then a second wave crashed over the raft. For a few seconds I could see very little through all the water, but out of the corner of my eye I noticed the young man who had been sitting next to me suddenly go flying and vanish into the roaring water. When we had passed through the worst of the rapid, I noticed that our boat was less populated than before. A few rescue kayakers and all the rafts spun around collecting assorted paddles and body parts. One rapid down, three more to go.

We had a quiet spell, and then the second crazy rapid, after which we settled down for a snack of pineapple and cookies. We had plenty of time to lay around and relax. We often passed African villagers washing their clothes or themselves on the rocks by the river bank. We waved and smiled. One Ugandan girl used a bucket to toss water on the occupants of my raft. The people we passed were clearly very poor, but when I saw a man lathering his whole body in a delicious bath in the river, I was momentarily envious.

After lunch, several people departed who had only signed up for a half day. At \$115, a half day makes no financial sense, but anyone watching us get battered around might wonder if any of this made any sense. I joined the remaining occupants of the depopulated raft: an African guide named Henry, the psychologist couple, and a Dutchman who was even older than me. I then realized that all the other rafters

were quite a bit younger. Most people over 40 are uneasy about having this much fun. Unlike my previous companions, these rafters had already flipped a couple of times, so I knew the afternoon would be exciting. Sure enough, in the next rapid, as the raft went flying upwards, it flipped over and we all went flying too. I was fortunate, landing outside (rather than underneath) the raft, and close enough so I could easily grab the rope. I became less sanguine when I noticed that the current was pushing us toward a bunch of rocks, with me trapped between the rocks and the raft. Henry had grabbed the far end of the raft. I called out to him, "This is not good!" (So eloquent in moments of panic.) Fortunately, Henry was able to push the raft to a safer location, and we were all eventually able to climb into other rafts while Henry and others worked to right our raft.

We came to a Class 6 rapid that was out of our league, so we got out and gingerly walked barefoot along a bypass path. The guides had tougher feet and strode by us carrying the rafts over their heads.

At the end of the day, we walked up a steep path to where the truck was waiting for us. The path wouldn't have been too bad in boots, but presented a challenge in bare feet. But we all made it and had our choice of fruit juice at the top. (Mine was pina colada. Yum!) Another bumpy truck ride took us back to the NRE headquarters, where a barbecue dinner awaited us, plus tickets for two beers. What a magical way to end the day, eating African barbecue and drinking a Nile Special (my favorite Ugandan beer) while looking at the Nile from a cliff about 100 ft above the water. They told us we had an hour before the bus would leave for Kampala. I noticed that there were showers there for campers to use, and I was acutely aware of how muddy I had become both in the river and on the climb up the bank. So after eating some food and drinking my first beer, I ran to get a quick shower. Just as I had pulled off my clothes, I heard someone call out that the bus for Kampala was about to leave. "Noooo!" The American psychologist was in the bathroom, so I asked him to try to hold the bus until I got out. I rinsed off in the shower, dried off, and pulled on my clothes, all so quickly that the acts were almost simultaneous. I ran out and jumped on the bus, which immediately took off.

The bus was very spacious for the dozen or so going back to Kampala. Such luxury could not be tolerated, so they stopped in town and loaded us into a van. Unfortunately, the van driver didn't know his way around Kampala and got hopelessly lost trying to find the Red Chili Camp, where the first group was supposed to get off. Eventually he found the camp, but then had no idea how to get the rest of us to the dropoff at the shopping center. People with cell phones were calling to try and get directions, and there was a lot of confusing conversations between people speaking Luganda and people speaking English and no one understanding anything. Eventually the driver thought he knew the way, and sure enough I eventually saw the shopping center across the street. I had already called Larry on someone's cell phone, asking him to pick me up there.

At this point I encountered my closest brush with danger while in Uganda. The driver of the van was still saying something in Luganda, but I just wanted to get across the first half of the street to the divider in the middle. I looked to my left, and seeing no traffic, I was about to run into the street. At the last moment, I glanced to my right and froze when I saw the stampede of cars about to crush my body into tiny pieces if I took another step. I had been in Uganda for a couple of days, so I knew that they drive on the left side of the road, as in England. But I was tired and had not been thinking clearly. I was a bit rattled at how close I had come to serious injury or death.

Eventually I did get across the street, and after even more time I found Larry, who had gone to the other side of the street to look for me. I slept well that night.

## 6. Murchison Falls

My first school visit wasn't until Wednesday, so on Monday morning Larry and I left the guest house to visit Murchison Falls, the best wildlife park in the country. In Kampala we picked up Rachael, a rabbinical student who was staying at a private home while teaching art through TATS. Rachael was a perky, wiry woman who looked more like a backpacker or marathon runner (and she was both) than a rabbi. The three of us headed north for Murchison. We had a reservation for a boat ride on the Nile at 2:00. This turned out to be unrealistic; we had left Kampala too late, and we had to make a couple of stops along the way. Not to worry; Larry said there was a 2:30 boat ride we could make. He sped along the bumpy, pot-holed road (I was getting used to this experience in Uganda, except it wasn't something you could ever get used to) in a desperate attempt to get us to the boat on time. Rachael cried "Slow down!" as Larry's truck nearly flew off the road. He nearly ran over several packs of baboons, who seemed as unconcerned about getting out of our way as some of the pedestrians in Brooklyn or the Bronx. "Hey, humans, we baboons have the right of way." I was unhappy about the irony that rather than stopping for a rare opportunity to study baboon families close up, we were in a race to view wildlife. It was all in vain anyway. We arrived at the Nile about 3:00. We took photos of the herd of elephants on the other side and then returned to the Red Chili Camp a few hundred yards from the river, where we stayed for the night.

While Larry and Rachael rested, I tried stalking baboons on foot. The baboons near the camp were less bold than the ones we had seen earlier on the road. As I approached, they moved away, keeping a distance of about 50 yards between us. They finally entered a grove of trees, from which I could hear baboon warning cries. I decided to stop the pursuit. The male in the group looked pretty big, and I didn't want to get on his bad side in close quarters. "We're not sure what happened to Ray, but the last picture in his camera was a great close-up of an angry looking baboon."

The wart hogs had no such fear. As I walked closer and closer to one, I thought he would eventually run away or threaten me, but he did neither. I later saw a couple of wart hogs lying in a pile in the camp as if they were some family's pets.

I had one of my better dinners in Uganda at the Red Chili Camp that night. Our cabin was a step up from the guest house. It had screens! And a shower! Rachael took one bedroom while Larry and I shared the other. We also had a living room, except the light fixture was missing a bulb. I requested a bulb in the afternoon, and when it wasn't there by dark, I went to pursue my case further. Eventually someone at the bar brought out a bulb and put it on a counter to be taken to my cabin at some future time. After a while, I snatched the bulb, went back to the cabin, put it in the socket, and there was light. I had not completely replaced my New York ways with Uganda ways.

We got up at 6:00 the following morning for our safari. There was no electricity in the morning, so I took my shower by candle light. (Uganda lies on the equator, and the sun rises at about 7 a.m. and sets about 7 p.m., with 12 hours of daylight year round.) We were at the Nile in time to watch the sun rise, and Larry drove his truck onto the ferry. On the other side, he drove slowly on the road through the park while we viewed all the animals around us. We saw elephants, giraffes, baboons, African buffalo, warthogs, and various deer-like animals, including hartebeest, oribi, kob, and waterbuck. I saw numerous birds whose names I can't recall. We didn't see a lion, my only regret on the safari. My favorite animal was the large male elephant standing very close to the road. At one point he decided we were too close for his liking, and he charged at us a few steps. Our hearts skipped a beat as Larry lurched the car forward a bit. That seemed to pacify him, as he continued to graze and occasionally toss some dirt in the air. He urinated fairly early during our visit, and he was in no hurry to pull his penis back in, leaving it unsheathed for all to gaze at in wonder.

Back at the Red Chili Camp, we had a nice lunch and then hung around until the 2:30 boat ride to the falls, replacing the one we had missed the previous day. From the boat we saw more hippos than we could count, as well as a couple of crocodiles and more herds of elephants. We eventually saw the falls about a half mile in the distance, after which we returned to shore.

Larry now faced a long late drive home. I admired his stamina; I fell asleep almost immediately, but kept waking up every 5 seconds when we hit a huge bump. We stopped in the town of Masindi (I think; who knows?) for one of the worst dinners of our trip. It was about 1:00 a.m., way past my bedtime, when we finally returned to the guest house.

## 7. The first workday

I woke up about 3:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning and heard the sound of water running. I got up to witness this miracle and saw that water was pouring out of the faucet, which had been left open. I shut the tap, enjoyed the experience of flushing the toilet, and went back to sleep to the sound of the water tank outside my bedroom window filling up.

Despite the late night, I woke up a little after 7:00 a.m., excited about my first day of work. We had to leave at 8:00 a.m. for my talk at Makerere College School (a secondary school affiliated with Makerere University) at 9:00 a.m. As I sat in the tub showering off the grit, Larry called through the bathroom door and said that we had to leave immediately because my talk was switched to 8:00. I finished my shower as fast as possible, dressed, grabbed my stuff, and left without eating breakfast. I ate my last Kashi bar as Larry slowly drove through the maddening early morning Kampala traffic. Brief moments of motion were followed by seemingly eternal waits to move again. The only ones moving were the motorcyclists trying to weave through the cars without getting crushed. Ugandans take all this with calmness and grace. The only Ugandan I saw get angry was a motorcyclist whom Larry almost ran over. Kampala only has three traffic lights, and these are often superseded by a traffic cop who decides which lane can proceed with all the randomness of a bouncer letting people into a Manhattan nightclub.

We finally reached the school a little before 9:00. Everyone there seemed surprised to see us. This was an early indication that communication is not a strong point in Uganda. After Larry left, I hung out in the staff room, tired and hungry. I was very grateful when someone finally offered me a cup of tea, and even more grateful when another brought me a couple of samosas. When a huge tray of samosas arrived at the 10:40 break, I was ecstatic. To top it all, a teacher offered me the use of his laptop so I could email Karla, my wife. The staff room had wifi! There was a computer in the TATS guest house, but it often wasn't working, and when the computer was working, the internet connection frequently was down. Even when the computer and internet worked perfectly, the space bar was defective, requiring the user to almost jump up and down on it to get a space. But for a moment that morning, everything in life was perfect.

Things continued to be good when I met a class at 11:00. The talk I gave at the secondary schools was a magic act, in which all the tricks are based on mathematical principles (plus a bit of deceit here and there to enhance the mystery). When I correctly predicted a card that was apparently selected at random, or did a calculation in my head far faster than the students could do it on their calculators, the class exploded in laughter and amazement, eager to learn how math could cause such magic. The class had about 80 students, a common class size in Uganda. The classroom was primitive by U.S. standards, with a crude blackboard that was hard to write on clearly. Despite these disadvantages, the students seemed to be more advanced mathematically than American students of the same age. They asked great questions, and I had wonderful interactions with them.

I taught a second class, after which we had lunch. Rachael appeared at the school and sat next to me. She was as impressed with this school as I was, and said this was one of the best schools she had visited. Lunch was filled with a long, boring meeting of endless reports on such trivial matters (to me, anyway) about details of student behavior and cleanliness, students missing assembly and boys whose beards were

too long (none even approached the length of mine, which is very trim compared with what it was in the 80's) or who didn't wear the appropriate tie or belt buckle. They also reported the results of all the intermural sports competitions. Finally, they introduced Rachael and me, after which I left to walk up the road to Makerere University (<http://www.mak.ac.ug/>), the largest and most prestigious university in Uganda, for my 3:00 seminar.

Although Kampala is located near the equator, its altitude of roughly 4000 ft makes the climate pleasant, with highs in the low 80's F and lows in the 60's. Nevertheless, I felt hot walking in the afternoon equatorial sun, especially dressed in a long-sleeved shirt and a tie, which seemed to be the appropriate dress for a visiting professor.

Finding the math building was a challenge, as one person directed me in one direction, and once I got there, another person directed me back the way I came. I started thinking of the British WWI song "It's a Long Way to Makerere." At last, like the Holy Grail, there was the math building in front of me. I still had to find the math office, since the building was polluted by other departments such as geography. I finally found the office and told the secretary who I was. The chair of the math department was the only person in Uganda, other than Evelyn of TATS, with whom I had communicated before leaving the U.S. I was the featured speaker at their weekly seminar, and I had emailed an abstract of my talk, which involved my recent research in statistics. The secretary took me to the classroom where I would speak. The math department chair, a dignified gentleman by the name of Juma, rounded up a laptop and a computer projection system for me to present my slides. I had also brought overhead transparencies, but I never saw an overhead projector in my entire time in Uganda. I tried checking my email again before my talk, but the Makerere computers were dinosaurs that kept timing out on Hofstra's email server.

Classes were not in session during the month of June, so my small audience consisted of a few professors who were around as well as several graduate students. I'm not sure how much they appreciated my talk. Their eyes seemed a bit glazed over, but that's common in math research talks. Their questions afterwards focused not on my research but on other aspects of my mathematical life, such as my work with high schools. At least my talk was in applied mathematics. I learned that there is little appreciation of pure math in Uganda, and a student who wanted to do his masters thesis in number theory had to get help from outside.

Andrew, Larry and I had dinner together that night on the porch at the guest house, along with a chicken who sat in the fourth chair.

## 8. Education in Uganda

The educational system in Uganda is based on the British model, since Uganda was a British colony until their independence in 1962. Primary school is 7 years long, and some children attended kindergarten before this. Secondary school consists of 6

years. The first 4 years are O level (for "ordinary"?) and the last two are A level (for advanced). The secondary classes are labeled S1 through S6. After the first four years, the students take O level exams in various topics. I was amazed to see on the O level syllabus topics that students in the U.S. would not see until college, such as the graphical approach to linear programming. Not all these topics are on the O level exam, but I still think that my Hofstra University students who are not math majors would have trouble passing this exam, which the better Ugandan schools claimed was passed by 80-90% of their students. The O level exam consists of 10 questions from part A, worth 4 points (or marks, as they call them) each, all of which must be answered, plus any 5 of the 7 questions in part B, worth 12 points each. The questions cover algebra, systems of two equations in two unknowns, planar and three-dimensional geometry, statistics, sets, probability, basic calculus, and math of finance. The exam is two and a half hours long, and there is no multiple choice. Non-programmable scientific calculators are allowed. A kind teacher at Kyambogo College School, which I visited the following week, gave me two copies each of the O level and the A level exams in math. Here is a sample question from part A of an O level exam:

Given that  $x^2 - y^2 = 135$ , and  $x - y = 9$ , find the values of  $x$  and  $y$ .

Here is the first part of one question from part B of an O level exam.

Using a ruler, pencil, and pair of compasses only, construct a triangle  $PQR$ , where angle  $QPR = 135^\circ$ ,  $PQ = 8.4$  cm and  $QR = 12.5$  cm. State the length of  $PR$ .

I'm not sure about the scoring, but here is the grading scale from one teacher's grade book, and this might be what everyone uses.

75+	D1
70-74	D2
65-69	C3
60-64	C4
55-59	C5
50-54	C6
45-49	P7
40-44	P8
39 or below	F9

Larry, who had studied in the U.S., felt that the American grading scale was too compressed at the top. I agree.

Students who did not pass the O level in math could still take A level courses in other subjects, but they could not get the highest honors. Students studying math at the A level could take various combinations of subjects, such as PCM (for physics, chemistry, and mathematics) or MEG (mathematics, economics, and geography). The A level math exam was three hours long and included more advanced calculus (integrals and differential equations), vectors, Maclaurin series, parametric equations, combinatorics, complex numbers, mechanics, numerical methods, calculus-based probability, and trigonometric identities.

After primary school, some students can pursue a trade, such as bricklaying, rather than continue with O level schooling. Some type of education past primary school is mandatory, but this is not universally enforced, since even the public schools require tuition beyond what many families can afford. At one school, I saw dozens of students locked out at the front gate because their family hadn't paid the tuition.

In addition to taking the A level exam, every A level student takes part in a national general knowledge exam. The teacher chooses a topic on which the student would write a position paper. It could be a controversial topic such as abortion or corruption. During the A level classes, students can study optional subjects such as entrepreneurship, fine arts, food science/nutrition, German, and Luganda.

There were few girls in the A level math classes in most schools, despite the presence of several female math teachers. I encouraged the girls to stay with math, and observed that although the situation in the U.S. was similar several decades ago, we have made great strides in equal participation in math among males and females.

## 9. Language

The official language in Uganda is English, but everyone's first language is a tribal language, which around Kampala is Luganda (the language of the Baganda people who live in the kingdom of Buganda). Everyone supposedly learns English in school, although poorer people from the countryside who don't attend much school may know little English. Also, some of the people's Luganda accent was so thick that I found it difficult to understand what they were saying, and I often had to ask students to repeat their questions a couple of times because I didn't understand what the words at first. The host at the Ndere dance troupe (see Section 15 below) made jokes about his accent. He asked the audience to "beat your hands." He then observed that we used a different expression and asked us what that was. We said, "Clap your hands." He replied that he couldn't say that because he had trouble distinguishing the letters l and r, and he didn't want to sound like he was insulting us. He also asked us Americans what we had when we voted last November. We said we had an election. That was another word he couldn't say without embarrassing us.

My Bradt guidebook on Uganda has a section on Swahili in the back, but I met no one in Uganda who spoke Swahili. The book has a smaller section on Luganda, but it doesn't provide details on pronunciation (nor will I do so here). It also has errors. For example, it gave "owange" as the expression for "excuse me." Larry said "owange" means "mine," which you would say if you were claiming something for yourself. He said the correct phrase is "Nsongyiwa ko." The book gave the phrase for "thank you" ("webale") but not the phrase for "you're welcome" ("kaale"). It had useless phrases such as "Do you speak English?" You might as well ask this question in English; you'll know the answer pretty fast. Questions such as "How can I get to Mbale?" aren't very useful, since I probably wouldn't understand the answer. The book neglects key phrase phrases such as "mu ma so awo," which comes out

sounding like "ma sao." This is how you tell the taxi you want it to stop and let you off. (See Section 14.) I tried to learn as many Luganda phrases as I could. People seem to appreciate attempts, no matter how bungled, to speak their native language, and my attempt at speaking Luganda dazzled Ugandans who didn't expect it.

Another important word to know is "muzungu," the Luganda word for white person. Unlike the term "gringo" in Mexico, "muzungu" is a word of a word of respect, almost of awe. When kids would wave at me and cry "Bye, muzungu!", I felt like a rock star. No, they weren't telling me to go away; kids would often say "bye" when greeting someone.

## 10. Thursday at Mengo

The previous night Larry had installed a brighter light in my room so that at last I had enough light to read at night. Thursday morning's breakfast included real orange juice (though not of the quality of good OJ in the U.S., which was a pity, considering the great climate in Uganda for growing citrus). Things were going so well that I hesitated asking for one more thing. But ever since the water returned, only cold water came out of the shower, so I finally asked Larry why this was so, considering that I had warm water the first morning. He then pointed out the hot water switch outside the bathroom door. It was normally turned off to conserve energy, but I could turn it on about 15 minutes before showering if I wanted hot water. Now life was really good.

Larry took me to Mengo Senior School (<http://www.mengoss.sc.ug/>), where I gave a talk at 11:00. Founded in 1895, it is the oldest school in Uganda. It is also large, with 3000 students. Just like at Makerere College School the previous day, the classes were large and the students were excellent. I was supposed to give a talk earlier in the morning, but that didn't happen. This gave me free time to sit outside in a sheltered spot and have my daily devotional time, although events kept intruding. I chatted for a while with Elizabeth Katumba-Tamale, a minister and religious studies teacher. Then I met Enock Kibuuka, a remarkable, eloquent, and thoughtful young man who told me of his involvement with the Kampala project at Vanderbilt University (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs/kampala/projects.html>).

At one point I became intrigued by a student kneeling as a teacher watched over him. Curiosity overcame me, so I asked the teacher if the student was being punished for something. She said that the student had misbehaved (I think he missed a class or something like that) and then lied about it, saying that a teacher had said it was okay. She asked me if I would like to speak with the student. I was surprised, since I know nothing about disciplining kids, and I wasn't sure that I, as a total stranger, should be involved in a school disciplinary matter. But I felt that voice inside telling me that I should accept the invitation, so I said okay, and the teacher told the student to come over. I gently introduced myself, asked him his name, and then asked him if he had any religious belief. (For context on this, please see the next section on religion.) He said he was born again. I now felt that this voice inside was

indeed God leading me. I told him that I, too, was born again and had just been reading Psalm 119 a short time earlier. I brought out my Bible, showed him some of what I had been reading, and invited him to read some of the verses. I then pointed out to him some of the benefits that God promised to those who follow his law, and that lying was contrary to his law. He seemed to understand and accept this. I shook his hand again and wished him well, happy to be able to play the good cop and perhaps have a positive influence on this student. The teacher seemed pleased with my intervention.

My talk went well. Lunchtime was filled with another boring staff meeting. I started to wonder if these meetings occurred every day, but I think they only occur once a week. My timing was just bad on these first two days, and I saw no more staff meetings for the rest of my visit.

## 11. Religion

Unlike in the United States, there is no separation of church and state in Uganda. I was surprised when the staff meeting at Makerere College School began with a prayer which closed "in Jesus name, Amen." I asked later about how the Moslem teachers felt about this. No one seemed to care. Similarly, the staff meeting at Mengo Senior School began with the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul." When I was wandering downtown and bought something at a booth, the vendor said to me, "God bless you!" I replied, "God bless you too!" She asked if I was a believer, and when I said that I was, she said that not many Americans that she met seemed to be believers. I found this odd, because many of the Americans I met in Uganda were missionaries. Nevertheless, the density of believers per capita among Americans in Uganda must be smaller than that among Ugandans, almost all of whom seem to be devout Catholics, Protestants, or Moslems. Rachael told me of a Jewish community she visited, though I saw no signs of Judaism around Kampala.

During one of my Q&A times with the students, one told me he had heard that prayer wasn't allowed in the schools in the U.S., and he wanted to know more about this. I explained that many of the early residents of our country had escaped religious persecution in their native lands, and to avoid this problem our founding fathers established a separation of church and state, enshrined in the first amendment to our constitution. I added that some Christians want to break down this separation, but that I felt the separation was important, given our history and diversity. The students seemed to understand this better than some of my Christian friends in the U.S.

## 12. Food

I love ethnic food, so I was eager to try East African food, which was new to me. I soon learned that there isn't much variety and that it isn't that good. The most popular food is matoke, a cooked, mashed banana with an orange color. At the better places it has no taste; from a lousier kitchen it had a slight bitter taste.

Another common staple is posho, which looks like very white mashed potatoes but is made from corn. The taste of posho compared with mashed potatoes is like mashed potatoes compared with spicy chili. What makes this bland food edible is the sauce, usually made from beef, chicken, or fish. With a decent sauce over it, even matoke isn't too bad. I tended to go for fish if it was available, but sometimes found that all that was left was fish heads, in which case I went for the beef. This could cause problems, since often the beef came in tough, gristly pieces. Often I was not given a knife, so I had to tackle the beef with just a fork. The toughest pieces were impossible to cut with a fork, so I tried picking the chunk up with my fork and pulling off a piece with my teeth, fearing that any moment the piece of meat would go flying off the fork and hit some teacher in the head, violating a strict rule of African etiquette.

Sometimes a sauce made from groundnut was available for the matoke and posho. It sounds better than it tastes. The first time I had it at a school, I couldn't figure out what this foul brown slime was. Later renditions were an improvement. How could they not be?

I suppose that school lunches are not a good guide to cuisine anywhere, and I did have some good meals, particularly the grilled whole tilapia at Triangle Tavern, about a 15 minute walk from the TATS guest house. The housekeepers at the guest house made some delicious dishes with cabbage and other vegetables. Rice and beans tended to be tasty when they could be had.

I mentioned to one of the teachers that my wife and I might go several weeks before repeating the same dinner menu. He was amazed at this. I asked him if he didn't ever get tired of eating matoke. He said that it was impossible to tire of matoke. I, however, did the impossible.

The best snacks were the samosas and chapati, which I mentioned earlier, and mandazi, a type of donut.

### 13. Bright Angels' College

On Friday morning I didn't have to leave early, so I first spent some time visiting the kids next door. The youngest kids spoke no English, and they seemed shy of me when I first arrived. But now they greeted me ecstatically with "Bye, muzungu!" The youngest boy grabbed me by the hand and dragged me around from one side of his yard to the other. One girl wanted my pen. Since I still needed it, I ran back to the house and got her a scented candle, several of which I had brought as gifts. I also bought the kids a bag of popcorn from the stand on the corner.

Larry and I then departed for Bright Angels' College (another secondary school). This was one of my favorite places to visit. The school is very poor, meeting in crude shacks, and the students seemed academically weaker than at the first two schools I had visited. But the classes had only about a dozen students, most of whom were

extraordinarily friendly. They also asked great questions. One student asked why the U.S. couldn't do more to push Uganda toward democracy. Uganda has a semblance of democracy, but one party has all the power, and this student considered the current president to be a dictator. This led to a lively discussion on democracy in Africa, corruption, and the role of the U.S.

I was also asked, as I was at every school, how many children I had. The students were always shocked to learn that Karla and I had no children. In Uganda, the whole purpose of marriage was to have children, and the companionship between husband and wife seemed like an unimportant afterthought. I explained personal reasons for Karla and my decision, as well as sociological differences in a more developed country. I always used this as a teaching moment to point out that raising children requires time. Having children is a choice, and people who have children and don't take the time to raise them properly are being irresponsible.

Kids at every school wanted to know about Obama, who was a big hero in Africa. I saw an Obama grocery and an Obama restaurant, and someone told me that you could buy Obama chewing gum in some stores. Although Uganda is a conservative country in many ways, a Republican might not feel comfortable here right now.

The other question that students in every school wanted to know was how they could come to the U.S. to study, particularly at Hofstra University. I explained that this was difficult for undergraduates. We have students from all around the world, but most come from families or countries that are well enough off to support them. Like all American universities, Hofstra offers a great deal of financial aid, but they might still find attendance there prohibitively expensive. On the other hand, if they can get their undergraduate degree in Uganda, graduate education in the U.S. is much more realistic. In mathematics, for example, about half of the American doctorates each year are granted to students from other countries. The U.S. doesn't produce enough graduate students in math to meet the demand. Most graduate programs provide sufficient financial aid to cover tuition, room and board, particularly if the student is sufficiently fluent in English to serve as a graduate assistant. I encouraged students to pursue this route, and I offered my assistance in any way I could.

After lunch I came across a group of girls singing songs in Luganda and English. They later told me they belonged to a Christian group called Mega-Mania Ministries. One round, radiant girl named Peace was particularly affectionate toward me, and all of the girls later lined up to have their pictures taken as I wrote their names in my notebook. This was a new experience for me; Ugandans had previously seemed rather shy about being photographed.

After my afternoon talk, I had a chance to observe some of the kids singing and dancing. I found it wonderful to witness real African music, unpolluted by Western styles.

After a while I called Larry to find out where he was. I had inherited the cell phone Rachael had previously been using. Apparently no one in Uganda has a regular cell phone plan, but you can buy minutes for your phone from the tiniest of stores or even from street vendors while you're stuck in traffic. \$5 worth of minutes took care of me for several days, including a short call to Karla in the U.S. These minutes also included several free text messages, which are the only way to leave a message for someone since no one has voice mail. I was not into texting in the U.S., but once I was told how to find the punctuation marks, I became an enthusiastic texter.

I had been wearing a long sleeve shirt and tie to appear appropriately dressy, but I felt distinctly overdressed at Bright Angels', so after that I reverted to the more comfortable attire of short-sleeved shirts.

#### 14. Taxis in Kampala

On Saturday I was free, so Andrew offered to show me around Kampala and how to use the taxis. A taxi is a 15 passenger van that serves more as a bus, driving on prescribed routes. Unlike buses, they have no fixed time schedule. They take off when they feel as if they have enough passengers (usually more than 15), and the conductor/fare collector continues to seek more passengers as the taxi drives along, calling out the name of the destination like a barker hawking goods at a county fair. The fare is cheap; it costs \$0.75 for a ride from the guest house to downtown Kampala. Sometimes this requires changing taxis in Ntinda, the town closest to the guest house. Sometimes the conductor collected the fare when you left the taxi, sometimes when you had been riding for a while. My waiting time for a taxi from the guest house averaged about *negative* 10 seconds, since usually a taxi was going by as I walked up the driveway to the road, and it was happy to wait for me. I rushed up to the road so as not to delay the taxi, but I learned that this was very unlike Ugandans, who stroll toward the taxi as if they're walking through a museum, enjoying all the art around them.

If you want to get someplace in a hurry when the streets are crowded, or if you want to go somewhere that's not on a taxi route, you take a boda-boda. This is my favorite word. It is also a motorcycle. You sit behind the driver and pray that you arrive unharmed. You can also say "boda boda boda boda." C'mon, try it! "Boda boda boda boda." I read that boda-boda drivers are legally required to wear a helmet and have one for their passenger, but I saw only one driver wear a helmet, and I never saw a passenger wearing one. The fare is whatever you agree on in advance. It typically costs about double what a taxi would cost, or four times as much for the muzungu price. Sometimes the boda-boda driver will point out interesting sites along the way, such as the fields belonging to the Buganda king and the walls surrounding his compound.

Kampala is an ugly city by any measure, but it's fascinating to wander through the crowded streets and see all the people and the strange stuff for sale. It's so different from the U.S. that you can have a blast just wandering and staring. There's lots of

cheap stuff for sale, especially in a secluded section of shops that is designed for tourists. Andrew and I eventually had lunch at a Turkish restaurant in a sheltered, garden-like setting, and then returned home.

As Andrew packed to leave the following day for several days in the bush, he discovered that some money had been stolen out of an envelope in his case. Who could have done that? The only other person who had stayed in the guest house was Larry, who was completely trustworthy and honest. (Larry had an apartment in the area but often stayed in the guest house to save on travel time when there was room.) I knew I was innocent but somehow felt I must be an object of suspicion, even though I realized that Andrew and Larry knew I was honest. Somehow being raised in a strict Catholic home and elementary school can make a person feel guilty even when they haven't done anything. One housekeeper who had access to our rooms was Bessy, but she, too, seemed totally trustworthy. After I had given her a \$5 tip for doing my laundry, she came to me and expressed gratitude for the tip, telling me that she had a son who was sick, and the money helped to buy medicine for her son. She happily accepted my offer to pray with her concerning her son. I didn't know Betty, the other housekeeper, quite as well since she spoke little English, but she seemed like a hardworking, honest young woman. Perhaps a resident of one of the other houses in the compound had snuck in. Worse, perhaps someone from outside the compound had entered the guest house when no one was watching. Stephen, the gentle young man who guarded the gate, couldn't be alert 24 hours a day. The mystery would remain for several days. Meanwhile, Larry instructed us to keep our rooms locked when we weren't around, something neither Andrew nor I were doing. I had, however, been locking my suitcase with my Transportation Security Administration approved lock, which I had purchased after Karla had lost a GPS device and a camera while her luggage was checked with Northwest Airlines. With this lock, only TSA officials can steal stuff from your luggage.

## 15. Church and Ndere Dance Troupe

I wanted to attend church, so Larry asked a friend of his named Rachel to take me to church. She asked me to take a taxi to the Kabila Country Club, where I awaited her while sitting next to the pool. Suddenly Uganda seemed more luxurious than it had. This luxury almost made me forget about the cockroach that had slowly crawled across my backpack as I sat in the taxi on the way to the Country Club. The woman next to me made a face, so I took the only course of action possible and squished the cockroach with a kleenex. (This Ugandan cockroach was no match for a New York cockroach, who would have scrambled fast enough to be in the third taxi in front of us by the time his Ugandan cousin met his fate.) I wasn't sure what to do with the squished cockroach in the kleenex, but then the woman next to me opened the cab window and seemed to want me to throw out the kleenex. This violated one of the highest commandments in my being: Don't litter! But I didn't know what else to do, so I threw the kleenex and bug out the window. I felt very guilty. I still do.

Once Rachel arrived, we took a taxi to downtown. From there we squeezed through congested streets until we found a boda-boda driver to take us to the Miracle Centre Cathedral (<http://kayanja.org/>), the largest Pentecostal church in Kampala. This was my first boda-boda ride, and I felt as if I could easily go flying off the back. So I spread my knees and reached down between my legs to grab onto the seat. Unfortunately, this pushed my knees out to where they might be amputated by a vehicle, so when we were in heavy traffic, I clung to some other part of the seat, figuring we were going slowly enough that I was unlikely to fall off. Most Ugandans sat on a boda-boda as casually as if they were on their living room sofa.

We arrived late for the 10:30 service, but that was okay since it didn't start until 11:00. Finally thousands of us thronged into the plastic chairs. The pastor, Robert Kayanja, was a handsome, riveting man. He brought up to the front a former Moslem man who had been crippled until Kayanja had recently prayed over him. The man was now apparently in perfect health. Kayanja brought up family members and friends who had known him when he was crippled and let each of them speak for a few moments. All were amazed and now wanted to follow Jesus.

Kayanja's sermon combines evangelism, pentecostalism, and the gospel of prosperity. I was sitting near the front off to one side, and at one point in the sermon Kayanja approached me and asked me where I was from. I said, "New York," although even my booming voice may not have been audible throughout the vast auditorium. He then used this to observe that New York was the center of the financial world as well as the location of the United Nations, not necessarily because of its ideal location, but because of its state of mind of prosperity. I wondered what he would have said if I had said "Michigan."

The next service was supposed to start at 12:30, but our service was still going strong at 1:30, when I told Rachel I had to leave. I needed to get something to eat and get back home in time to attend the Ndere Dance performance that evening. Rachel whispered, "But then you won't be here when they introduce you to the congregation." "Too bad," I whispered back. So we left. Rachel, too, was later than she wanted to be. She said that the service doesn't always go that long.

I asked Rachel about Benny Hinn, the evangelist who had recently preached at Miracle Centre Cathedral. He has reported to have made several prophecies that never came to pass. (See <http://biblelight.net/tbn.htm>.) The Bible warns us against prophets who make false prophecies. (See Ezek. 13:2-9.) Rachel responded that she tried not to be negative or judgmental, because when she was, she found that negative consequences returned to her. She also observed that God could relent from fulfilling a prophecy (see Jonah 3), which I acknowledged.

After I returned home and had lunch at Triangle Tavern, Larry took me to the Ndere Centre (<http://www.ndere.com/>). The dance show was scheduled to run from 6:00 to 9:00 without intermission, and was a bargain at \$5. They served food and drink before and during the show. I wondered how the dancers could possibly go for three

hours straight. The answer was that they only danced for about an hour; the rest of the evening consisted of a chat by an MC/comedian/purveyor of African folk wisdom. Both he and the dancers were very entertaining. An assortment of musicians playing drums and other African instruments accompanied the dancers. We sat in an outdoor theater until a light rain caused us to flee to the indoor theater. Photography was allowed, but videotaping was forbidden. They encouraged people to instead buy the DVD, but at \$50, there were not many takers. I saw lots of people taking video with their cameras, so I discretely took some video with my tiny Flip video camera.

Near the end, the MC asked what countries people in the audience came from, and then made comments on the country. When he asked, "How many of you are from the United States?", a bunch of us cheered. He added, "We in Uganda used to be your friends?" Huh? "We are no longer your friends." Awww... "Since you voted for your new president, now we are your family." Yay!!

At 9:30 I was very tired, and I had to leave early the following morning, yet the program was not over. The MC had been mentioning the final dance for the previous 25 minutes, so I finally took off without ever seeing the final dance.

## 16. Forest Hill College

Late Sunday night Kris arrived. She was an amazing and creative professor of art and writing from Minnesota. She and Larry left with me at 7:45 on Monday morning to go to Forest Hill College, a one-year-old secondary school way outside of Uganda. The school was not yet full and the classes were still small. I regretted that Kris and Larry attended the first part of my talk because nothing went right. I had a quick opening trick to which no one responded. I then did a trick in which I had everyone participate in their seats, but no one seemed to be able to follow the directions. Some of the students were younger than those I had previously addressed, which may explain why they seemed to have no clue as to what I was saying. Did these students know English? Near the end, I tried some tricks with more advanced math, and those seemed to go better. This was my only talk in Uganda in which no one asked any questions.

After the talk, the headmaster took me for a tour around the school. Although his school was new, he had great ambitions. Wearing a USB memory stick on a cord around his neck, he was a man after my own heart. We walked together down the road to one of the fast food places, where he bought a few roasted bananas for the two of us. This also gave me a chance to admire close-up the displays of fruit, vegetables, and meat. We took a taxi back, and eventually Larry returned to take Kris and me to Old Kampala Secondary School, where I made arrangements to give talks the following day.

## 17. Two schools, one day

In the morning Larry took me to Kyambogo College School, whose Latin motto is "Duc in altum," which roughly translates as "There's a duck up in the sky." So what should you do? Duck! (Latin purists might argue that the motto is better translated as "Put out into the depths," from Luke 5:4. Latin purists aren't much fun.) Larry thought that my first talk was at either 8:00 or 9:00. So I gave talks at 10:30 and 11:40, and then had lunch. Two math teachers walked me to where I could catch a boda-boda, which took me to where I could get a cab, which took me to where I could catch another boda-boda, and this cycle might have continued forever except that the last boda-boda took me to Old Kampala Secondary School. I was supposed to speak to one S6 group at 3:30 and a second at 5:00, but the second group started dribbling in during my first talk, so I just spoke until about 5:30, at which point my audience had swelled to over 100.

That night at the guest house, the electricity went out for a while, so Kris and I had part of our dinner by candlelight.

#### 18. New guests, old school

Late that night three delightful young teachers from Philadelphia named Erin, Kim, and Susan arrived at the guest house. They were great fun and significantly increased the level of joviality in the house. Unfortunately, their arrival was immediately followed by the departure of our running water. Perhaps you can imagine five people trying to use one bathroom in the morning when there is no running water. I found that when I woke up with both my bladder and the bathroom full, an empty water bottle was a man's best friend. Perhaps a funnel might be a woman's best friend.

Our new guests had to leave early, but Kris and I were in no rush. Kris hadn't met the neighborhood children yet, so I invited her to come with me and play with them. This also gave me an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity about the "Clinic on Complicated Diseases" next to the house where the kids lived. I walked in and saw various bottles lining the shelves. I pointed to a bottle and asked the matron what this medicine was supposed to cure. "Syphilis." I then pointed to another bottle on a different shelf and asked the same question. "Syphilis." I began to detect a pattern. This also answered my question about what exactly a "complicated disease" was.

This was an easy day for me, with one talk at Kyambogo College School. I'm not sure what they did to get me two days in a row, but it was fine.

The five of us guests as well as Larry crowded onto the porch for a fun dinner. It was about that time that I learned who had stolen Andrew's money. Several items stolen from the guest house were found in the possession of Bessy, who was promptly fired. This revelation floored me, and I mourned at the lovely young woman who seemed so sweet and sincere.

#### 19. Tombs and Aga Khan

The Philadelphia teachers had an early start, but I was able to have a leisurely breakfast. The African music from Stephen's room sounded like Hawaiian music. I ate a delicious mango as I sat in the warm, moist morning air, and as I gazed on the banana trees visible over the walls of our compound, I suddenly felt as if I were in Hilo on the Big Island.

Neither Kris nor I had any morning business, so Larry took us to the Kusubi Tombs, where several of the Buganda kings are buried in what is advertised as the largest thatch-roofed house in the world. Sarah, our guide, first directed us to various smaller huts outside, such as the drum hut. I could go inside, but not Kris, because drums are forbidden for women. Lest you think that Uganda is regressive on women's issues, Sarah solemnly informed us that some years ago the law was changed so that women could now eat eggs, chicken, and grasshoppers (or grasscoppers, as she called them.) A smoldering fire was kept burning outside to keep the king's spirit warmed up or something like that. When the king died, they didn't say he died; they said he disappeared into the forest.

Sarah warned us take off our shoes and hat when we entered the tomb. Inside there were nice woven mats on the floor, a beautiful ceiling with concentric circles, and various photos and other paraphernalia, including the stuffed former pet leopard of one of the kings. Sarah said we could sit down, but had to either bend our legs to one side or put them straight out in front. I did the latter, but she corrected me because my legs had to be parallel to the altar, rather than pointed at the altar. They take respect for the dead kings seriously. There was a line consisting of straw at the front. Sarah informed us that we must not cross it, or we would disappear into the forest. I observed that this sounded better than rotting away with cancer, and besides, that would mean that I would die in the same way that the kings died. Sarah did not approve of this observation, so I controlled my overwhelming urge to cross the line for fear of invoking her anger and perhaps get thrown out of the place.

We learned many other fascinating facts from Sarah. If you were from a certain clan, you were not allowed to eat your clan symbol, so that, for example, a member of the grasscopper clan could not eat grasscoppers. I said that I was from the matoke clan. She looked puzzled and said that there was no matoke clan.

Larry, Kris, and I then picked up the three Philadelphians at the school where they had spent the morning and took us to an African buffet in town, after which Larry and I made a quick visit to Evelyn, whom I had not yet met. She was a timid, quiet woman, not at all the dynamic presence I expected from the University Program Director for TATS.

We could not stay long because we had a 2:00 meeting at Aga Khan High School. This was a very good private school with a larger number of Indian students than I had seen elsewhere. I was glad we were only 5 minutes late; we were met by an African woman named Sarah (distinct from our guide that morning), who spoke

with the crispest English I heard in Uganda. She clearly meant business, as did the math teachers at our meeting, Joachim and Samuel. This was the one time in Uganda that I wished I were wearing a dress shirt and tie but wasn't. The Aga Khan staff was seriously interested in forming a long-term relation and wanted to know why arrangements weren't made for me to be in touch with them before I arrived in Uganda. These Ugandans were real New Yorkers, and I immediately resonated with them and agreed. After some discussion, Larry said he had to go and would be back in about 40 minutes. "Just double that," I said to Sarah, Joachim, and Samuel. They grinned with delight; we were on the same wavelength. And my comment was more of an accurate estimate than a joke; I had learned something from almost two weeks in Uganda.

We had more discussion, focusing on their concern that their students currently learn to perform the mathematics they are taught, but not how to create math. This is a tough problem, but I think we had a productive discussion. Larry came back after about 80 minutes and took me and the others home. On the way we stopped at the Shoprite (about 400 times the size of any other store I saw in Uganda) and marveled at the storks in one of the trees in the parking lot. The Marabou storks of Uganda are massive birds, standing about 4 ft tall. To see a tree full of about a dozen amazed us, even if it made no impression on the Ugandans walking by.

## 20. Bugema and Eagle's Nest

On Friday morning we left the guest house to pick up Yang, a Chinese economist now working as an adjunct at New York University. Yang was visiting various African countries for his research on development, and although he was in Uganda under the auspices of TATS, he stayed at a friend's house in a very nice section of Uganda. Yang and I were both supposed to lecture at Bugema University, a Seventh Day Adventist University located about an hour north of Kampala (<http://www.bugemauniv.ac.ug/>). Larry took us to the taxi park, a vast parking lot crammed with taxis waiting to go to all different parts of Uganda. The taxi to Bugema was the last one on the far end of the lot. I sat on a broken seat, but things got worse as we picked up more passengers, until there were finally 21 of us in the 15 passenger van. The road to Bugema was dustier than any that I had seen. At times the visibility was reduced to about 20 feet by the red clouds kicked up by vehicles. Any plants beside the road were covered with red dust, so the landscape reminded me of photographs of the Martian surface. Finally the bus stopped in what seemed like the middle of nowhere, but once the dust settled, Yang and I found ourselves outside the gates of Bugema University.

Yang and I went looking for the Math and Economics Departments, thinking that we were supposed to address either faculty or students in our respective departments. It turned out that we were addressing the same audience sequentially, a group of about 20 undergraduate business majors taking summer school. (The phrase "summer school" was adopted from the U.S. When you're on the equator, summer doesn't mean much.) We were to each talk to the students for about 30 minutes and

then answer questions for about 15 minutes. I was first, giving me about a minute to prepare. Fortunately, they had a computer projection system, and being warned in advance that there was an interest here in business mathematics, I had loaded onto my flash drive a handout illustrating the graphical approach to linear programming that I still had on my website from a class I had taught the previous semester. Supposedly these students had already seen the graphical approach in their O level mathematics, as well as matrix notation for solving linear systems, but I learned that about half had no recollection of this. My talk then became a whirlwind review of Gauss-Jordan, illustrating the fraction-free method that I prefer, followed by another whirlwind review of the graphical approach, and finally a brief introduction to what the simplex method was all about. The talk seemed to work. Then Yang spoke about economic development zones, which have been successful in China and are now being tested in Africa.

We had a quick lunch, after which I tried to extract us as rapidly as possible, knowing that I had another talk to give that afternoon in Kampala, although I didn't know exactly when. At about 1:20, on the taxi ride home, I got a call from Larry, who said my talk was at 2:00, and that he would be at City Oil in Kampala waiting for me. I replied that I anticipated being at City Oil about 2:00, so I hoped it was okay if my talk started a little late. Unfortunately, the taxi took a detour that bypassed City Oil. I didn't realize what was happening until the driver stopped at a crowded intersection and told everyone to get off. Yang and I stood at the intersection of two streets without street signs, which was characteristic of most streets in Uganda. (One exception was Col. Muammar Gaddafi Road, a street name you are unlikely to find in the U.S. The road led to a large mosque looking rather stunning on the top of a hill.) So I called Larry back and described my predicament. He suggested taking a boda-boda. I asked a boda-boda driver to take us to City Oil, but he seemed to have no idea what I was saying and spoke back to me in Luganda. I called Larry once more and had him talk to the boda-boda driver. Eventually Yang and I were each on a boda-boda and arrived at City Oil about 2:20. Larry then took us to Eagle's Nest Secondary School, a Christian boarding school.

It was after 2:30 by the time we got there, and no one had any idea where we were supposed to go. Eventually someone found an S4 math class for me to address. As soon as I entered the room, the teacher was happy to leave. After a very short talk, since classes were supposed to end about 3:00, the students started asking me a lot of questions, but we eventually had to stop because the music from an assembly going on outside the room made too much noise for us to hear each other. I went to the assembly, which included music from various groups of students, a visiting group of missionaries, and a few speeches (such as the one by a teacher who expressed concern that several students were escaping from the school without authorization). I had two visitors during the assembly. One was an insect about 4 inches long, and an inch and a half wide. It was very flat with feather-like back legs. It slowly crawled past me, and I silently but enthusiastically pointed it out to the horrified students sitting behind me. The second visitor was a math teacher named Ken who expressed disappointment. My talk that day had been scheduled for 10:00

but was moved to 2:00 because of my morning talk at Bugema. Ken had waited for me until 2:30 but then left. The class that I taught was not the group of students whom I was supposed to teach. I expressed my apologies and explained what happened. I also told him that I had nothing scheduled for Monday morning, my last day in Uganda, so he asked me to address a group of students then.

Eventually the assembly was over, and Yang and I waited until Larry and the others came to rescue us. We petted Scooby, the school dog (one of very few dogs I saw in Uganda), and then headed home. This was another crowded ride; with seven of us in Larry's truck, two unfortunate volunteers had to sit in the back of the truck, where the bumps in the road felt even worse. Or so I suspected; with my bad back, I never volunteered for this tough assignment. We celebrated another TATS week with a festive evening at the Triangle Tavern.

## 21. Back to Jinja

On Saturday Larry was taking Kris, Erin, Kim, and Susan to Jinja for the same tour of the Nile that I did two weeks earlier. I had agreed to speak at Jinja Secondary School (<http://jinjasecondaryschool.co.cc/>), so Larry dropped me off at the school while taking the others touring. I spoke to a huge group of enthusiastic students, after which I had lunch with the teachers. When Larry arrived to bring me home, I dragged him and the women in to meet the Jinja teachers. The teachers were eager to meet more TATS participants, particularly Isaac, the intense, compelling math teacher who had invited me here after meeting me at Kyambogo College School, where he taught part time. The women were mortified, since they were grubby and didn't feel they were appropriately dressed for the occasion. I think (hope) they forgave me. We had lots of fun (and some not so fun) experiences to share on the very slow drive home.

## 22. Chaotic Sunday

On Sunday I was scheduled to go to Seeta Hill College, where I was planning to attend church and then give a talk. Larry was taking the women to Murchison Falls, so he arranged for a woman named Faith to get me to my destination. Faith was supposed to arrive at 10:00 a.m. While I waited, two of the neighborhood children entered the compound, and I began to play with them. I led them in a song that involved clapping and singing, and I was able to teach it to them far more rapidly than I had taught any math topic. I guess I'm in the wrong field. Every time I thought of something I should take care of, the kids followed close at my heels. I opened my room to get something, and the children stared in awe. What seemed like a very humble dwelling to me seemed like a palace to them.

More children arrived, and I eventually had a mob scene. I thought of how Jesus loved hanging out with little children and wondered whether he ever found their energy and demands to be too much. I had a hard time shoving them out the door but had established peace by the time Faith arrived at 10:40. Faith was a dark,

attractive woman of about 20. I never fully understood her connection to Seeta Hill College. She spoke with a heavy accent, which impeded our communication. We got in a taxi and she said we were going to her church. What about Seeta Hill? They were supposed to call her and hadn't done so yet. If they did, we would go there. First we had to go to her house because she was wearing jeans, which she said she couldn't wear to church. I told her that my church, the Vineyard in Rockville Centre, NY, (<http://www.thevineyardchurch.com/>), was much less formal, and that you could go in your pajamas if you liked. She assured me this was not the case at her church. We had to switch to a second taxi, and then to a boda-boda to take a dirt path up to the top of a hill where her home was located.

The view of Kampala from Faith's home was splendid. Although her house was very modest, I told her that a location with that view would fetch a high price in the U.S. (but only if there was a real road to the top).

We had reached her house about noon. She told me that the service went from 12:00 to 6:00. Seeing my reaction, she assured me that there was a break midway through. While she changed into a skirt, her sisters showed me around the place, where I met their pig, their calf, and a dog named Scooby. (I began to detect another pattern.) More time passed with no sign of Faith, so her sister Nora showed me the entire family album of photographs.

Finally Faith came out at about 12:30, wearing the same top but now with a skirt. I wondered how she had spent the last half hour. Perhaps she had taken a shower, something that I, too, had done that morning since the water in the guest house had returned overnight. As we walked back down the hill, I saw the darkening clouds and heard thunder in the distance and observed that it might rain. She said that was impossible, not here and not this time of year.

Once we reached the road, we took a taxi to her church. I didn't notice anything on the outside to indicate that it was a church, but the shouting and singing coming from inside made that clear. As we entered, a man wanted to take our picture. I figured that they liked to have pictures of visitors, so I accepted. After the first couple of shots, they tried to put us in a more romantic pose, with Faith's hand on my shoulder. We declined, saying we were just friends. Faith started to take out some money to pay the photographer, but I objected and stopped her. I don't know what rule of Ugandan etiquette I may have violated, but I figured that anyone is welcome to take my picture until they start collecting money for a service that I don't want.

We entered the church and sat in a couple of the plastic chairs. I noted with curiosity that the concrete floor sloped upward, so I felt as if my feet were raised. I soon learned the reason for this architectural feature. A video camera alternated between focusing on the person speaking and focusing on the congregation. In the former case, this resulted in an identical but larger image of the speaker projected on the screen next to where the speaker was standing. After I sat down, the camera

immediately focused on me, the only muzungu in the audience. I looked to the side and saw my image on the screen, looking to the side at my image on the screen, etc. This infinite sequence turned out to be my only mathematical experience that day.

I was concerned to find that the teaching and singing were in Luganda. I sang along in English on those hymns I recognized. I wondered how Seeta Hill College was managing without me. Faith assured me that the pastor would preach in English. This turned out to be not as much help as I thought, as I learned when the pastor rose to preach. He was a large man with a shaved head, wearing what appeared to be pajamas with large polka dots. Apparently pajamas were acceptable attire in this church after all. He spoke too loudly into a microphone too close to his mouth. He had a thick accent, and I had a hard time understanding anything he said. Compounding the problem, as soon as he said a sentence, another man would translate it into Luganda, shouting even louder and almost swallowing the microphone. Once he completed his translation, my ears were ringing, making it even harder for me to understand to understand the pastor's next sentence. The preaching and translation were rapid fire, with no pause to grope for the right word or to let the words sink in or for my ears to recover.

About then the heavens opened up and torrents of rain came down. The sound on the tin ceiling would have been deafening had I not already been deafened. A river formed in the back of the church, but on the slanted floor, my seat close to the front was totally dry.

Suddenly the noise inside the church stopped and people starting moving around. Faith informed me that this was the break. I would have made my escape right then except for the rain still pounding down outside. People squeezed through narrow corridors and returned with plates of food that were apparently sold at the back. I used the restroom, which was accessible by running just a short distance through the rain. By the time I returned, the rain was letting up, so I decided to say goodbye to Faith and the church, whose name I still don't know.

As I rode a taxi back to Ntinda, a woman sat next to me holding a baby, who gazed at me with a Buddha face. Eventually weariness overcame the baby's curiosity as his eyes slowly closed and his mouth slowly opened. I began to feel weary of Uganda. The excitement and sense of adventure that had so energized me over two weeks earlier had worn off. I was glad that I was leaving for home the following day.

In Ntinda I met Andrew for dinner. Andrew was staying at the new guest house in Ntinda. They had running water, so I had asked Larry several days earlier why the rest of us couldn't stay in the new house, but Larry just chuckled. Andrew told me that the only furniture he had was a mattress on the floor. Also, the water had mysteriously stopped running in the bathroom, even though it still ran in the kitchen.

Andrew and I had trouble finding a place to eat. Apparently the storm had knocked out electricity in various places, and menu choices were more limited than normal. One place seemed promising, and we both ordered rice and beans. After a while the waiter returned and said there was no rice. Fine, we'd have potatoes instead of rice. There were no potatoes. What do you have? The waiter shrugged. Andrew asked what the people at the next table were eating. It turned out they had chapati cut into strips. So Andrew and I had a delicious meal of chapati and beans for only \$2 each.

Before leaving Ntinda, I stopped at the grocery store to get more snacks, since I had finished all I had on the way to and from the church. I spotted bags of brown edible-looking objects and asked a store worker what these things were. She said they were Daddies. "What exactly are Daddies?" She looked at me puzzled, thinking she had just answered my question, and repeated, "They're Daddies." I asked whether they were made of wheat or nuts or whether they were sweet or salty, and she just shrugged, so I knew I had to buy them. They are like small, hard, crunchy donuts, fairly tasty and unlikely to crumble in my pack or my mouth or a nuclear explosion.

Back at the guest house, I was alone and worked on packing.

### 23. The last day

I took a taxi and then a boda-boda to Eagle's Nest Secondary School to talk from 9:20 until 10:40. The students were very sweet and asked me when I would return. I said I didn't know. I still don't.

I never saw Ken. I called him and then sent him a text message saying that I had given my talk, but I never heard back from him.

While I was on the taxi ride home, Faith called me to tell me that she had the pictures from the church. I told her to keep them. I had already taken a photo of Faith in front of her house.

I had a tasty lunch at a small restaurant near the guest house that I hadn't tried until then. As I walked home, I took a photo of one of the five-foot-high ant hills found in most fields in Uganda. I thought ants around my home were industrious, but the ants in Long Beach, New York are slackers next to their Ugandan cousins.

I finished packing, took a nap, and read while waiting for Larry to return to take me to the airport. I spoke with Stephen, to whom Andrew had donated his old boots. Stephen said he didn't have any socks to wear with the boots, so I gave him a pair of my socks, warning him to wash them first since all my clothes were dirty by then. Miriam wanted my tote bag from the 2008 Joint Mathematics Meeting in San Diego. I had despaired of ever getting it clean again, so I gladly parted with it.

At last Larry returned from Murchison Falls with the women, who had great tales to tell of being cold and wet after the storm hit their camp. After saying my goodbyes, I

hopped in Larry's truck for the ride to the airport. Traffic was horrendous, but we made it to Entebbe in time. My plane took off into the dark night and I fell asleep.

#### 24. Cost

One of my first questions when I reached Uganda was how TATS was financed. The answer was through teachers and other tourists who use their services. This explained why things seemed too expensive. \$200 a week felt like a lot for a small room with no screens in the windows, sharing a bathroom with four other people, and sometimes having no running water. This figure became more reasonable when I realized that my fees and those of others paid for Larry, for Evelyn, and for all the housekeepers.

As another example, I paid \$300 to TATS for the two day trip to Murchison. My meals were extra. I later learned that the Red Chili Camp offers a three day trip, including all meals and transportation to and from Kampala, for only \$240. See <http://www.redchillihideaway.com/murchisontrip.htm> Clearly we were paying a premium by going through TATS. I saved money almost accidentally on my rafting trip by making the arrangements with NRE rather than having Larry take me to Jinja.

On the other hand, I never would have gone to Uganda had it not been for TATS. It was through TATS making the arrangements that I was able to speak at these schools and meet all these wonderful people. Someone might wonder why anyone would pay to work; aren't you supposed to get paid when you work? But as a mathematician, I can't always tell when I'm working and when I'm just having fun. I didn't have to write tests or do grading in Uganda, which are the hard part of teaching. I just talked about stuff that I found interesting. I had a terrific time in Uganda at a lower cost than if I had gone there strictly as a tourist, and as long as I'm earning enough money to pay the bills, I wasn't going to worry about the finances of this trip. I think this attitude is necessary if you want to enjoy such an experience.

#### 25. Items I wished I had brought

--My solar shower, which I had bought years ago for backpacking. I had been alerted that there was no running water in January, but Evelyn assured me that this had been fixed and that I would have running water.

--A small bottle of soap for hand laundry. I was told that one of the housekeepers could do my laundry. I didn't realize that no washer or dryer were anywhere nearby, and that all laundry was washed by hand and hung up to dry. It was sometimes faster to just do it myself. Fortunately, Kris had brought some soap that she lent me.

--Another pair of lightweight hiking pants, convertible to shorts. This way I'd have shorts to wear while my one pair was still hanging out to dry.

--Mefloquine. Rather than take this weekly antimalarial medicine, which sometime provokes mood swings and nightmares and other side effects, I took Malarone, which is usually considered safer but must be taken daily. Andrew, however, got prescriptions for both. Since mefloquine must be started a couple of weeks before departure, compared with two days for Malarone, he figured he could switch to Malarone if he experienced bad side effects from mefloquine. All that Andrew experienced was vivid dreams. Hey, I love vivid dreams! I occasionally take galantamine to provoke vivid dreams and induce lucid dreaming, and here it is as a freebie from antimalarial medication. Next time I'll try Andrew's plan.

--Flip flops. I was fortunate to find a pair at the guest house that no one was using, since these are perfect for wandering around the guest house or the surrounding property.

--More business cards. I brought what I thought was enough of my Hofstra University business cards to give to people I would meet. Once I started giving them out to school kids, however, they went very fast. The kids love to get business cards, which are inexpensive mementos.

## 26. Items I brought that I should have left at home

--A sports coat. I had heard that Ugandan men dressed somewhat formally and that this would be expected of a guest speaker. In fact, it was too warm for a sports coat, and I saw only a few men wearing one. They were having trouble all fitting into it at once.

--Overhead transparencies. The transparencies for a 45 minute talk weigh more than a two-month supply of Kashi bars, which would have been more useful, since Kashi bars are as impossible to find in Uganda as an overhead projector.

--Water purifier. I brought it in case I had trouble getting clean water to drink. With a store just a 10 minute walk from the guest house, this was not an issue. I lent Andrew my purifier when he went into the bush for several days, but he decided to use purification pills instead, since we heard that there is something in the water (either crocodiles or hippos) that my ultraviolet purifier would not kill.

--Insect repellent. Maybe a small quantity is worth taking, but I took a medium sized bottle of DEET-based repellent and another of citronella-based, and I never used either. There aren't many bugs in any part of Uganda I visited, at least during the dry season.

--Lightweight Gortex hiking boots. I never wore them the whole time. In the dry season, a pair of sneakers would be more practical. I thought they would be useful at Murchison, but it was so warm that I wore my Tevas the whole time.

## 27. Conclusion

There were times when I was almost giddy with happiness in Uganda. Here I was in an exotic place, meeting wonderful people, with each day an adventure. It didn't matter that the day didn't always turn out the way it was planned. Any hitches that occurred weren't my fault, so I might as well go with the flow and enjoy the experience. I feel that I have more joy and wisdom because of this trip. It now seems like a dream, but it was well worth dreaming.