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**W**e have been back now for 5 months. It has been difficult. It seems we have been back a year. The Kenyan infrastructure has been deteriorating for the past 4 years and our “Power-Sharing” government seems oblivious of matters outside those relevant to their own immediate self-enrichment. Electrical power is a sometime thing now. We were told the scanty rains depleted the reservoirs and we were to be rationed with no daytime power on Mondays and Thursdays. That lasted a week, and then electric power became unpredictable – we had it some “ration days” only to be deprived of it at any time for unpredictable periods on other days. It is disconcerting to have the power go off in the middle of a surgical procedure or endoscopy. The hospital has been dependent on rain runoff for water for the past 6 months. Municipal Water, at the behest of the World Bank and IMF, became privatized. They are currently unable to pump water to the Hospital. But that, of course, does not prevent them from billing the Hospital monthly from bogus meter readings. The water situation at St. Phillips is also a case-study in either corruption or incompetence (I am not sure which is harder to repair) which Nan will relate. And the roads! Each month new potholes are filled with dirt, only to gape again with the first rain. As a result, at all times one or more our vehicles have been in the shop for repairs to various parts of the suspensions and frames. The highway death toll is increasing and has alarmed even the Government (which, however, seems unable to do anything about it). The cost mounts daily. There are certain trips we simply refuse to make any more. Inflation in food prices since Jan 2008 has ranged between 100% and 200% depending on the timeliness of the West’s food supplements. Finally, we remain medically short-staffed with the Medical Officer the Government used to give us unreplaced for the past 6 months. The other Medical Officer has become restive and has taken to being absent for unspecified periods. Zimbabwe, here we come!

Nonetheless, the reasons we came to Maseno are still vibrant. Our Comprehensive Care Center (CCC), funded through PEPFAR, continues to give outpatient care to AIDS victims. The funding has become less generous as the project aims to taper off by 2012, but it is still operational. Your donor funds to the Hospital enable us to give inpatient care to the really sick and impoverished, many from the CCC where inpatient care is not funded. Visitors, whether they come for three days or three months, leave with a different view of life. We consider this a crucial part of our work. CNN simply cannot get the true situation across. People must “Come and see!”. Emma at Rotary House at the Hospital and Ruth at St. Phillips continue to keep guests well fed in between the outings and projects planned by and for the visitors. For the visiting medical personnel, the Kenyan health system (or lack of it) is a real eye-opener. The challenges are immense, but even small improvements are gratifying to those we work with, and the medical conditions that visitors see remind one of what William Osler saw in Baltimore in 1911, Taken together, this all seems still worthwhile in spite of difficulties. Our current favorite motto is, “If at first you don’t succeed.....lower your expectations!” It works.

Several bright lights glimmer on the horizon and serve to dispel the darkness. The first is the imminent renovation of the Maternity Ward. We finally figured out how to get the money from the United Thank Offering grant and hope to start renovation as soon as our

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San Diego Diocese receives the check. Renovation of all the wards is sorely needed and Maternity will be the first. It will also be a morale booster for the Hospital staff.

The second piece of news which holds great promise is that the Engineers Without Borders has taken us on as a site for improvement. The engineering group taking on this project is from Houston and hopes to make an assessment visit in mid January. They sound like an aggressive, first rate, no-nonsense group. The major target is water for the Hospital and St. Phillips. A secondary objective is to improve the power situation at the Hospital at the smallest cost possible. The group makes a major commitment to the site and works with it for 5 years. Exactly what form this assistance takes we are not certain, but we get the feeling that this will be a great boon. In addition, the group is very concerned about the environment and the community and is eager to have the Hospital improvements benefit the environment and the general surrounding community as well. We certainly need all the help we can get.

The third piece of good news is that the University of Tennessee in Memphis has agreed to allow its residents to spend a month at Maseno Hospital for credit. They continue the salary of the visiting resident for a month and a very generous Episcopal parish in Memphis has agreed to help with the travel funds. So far, two Medicine residents have rotated through here. It has been a fun and stimulating experience for everyone. We are hoping strongly that it will continue. It is the first commitment we have had for medical help on a potentially ongoing basis, and it boosts the academic legitimacy of our entire mission.. It has been long in coming, but it is a start. We hope some of the Tennessee faculty will be interested enough to visit for a period – perhaps that will come. The project was pushed and implemented by an old Medical School and Residency classmate of mine, Dr. Bruce Steinhauer. Many thanks, Bruce!

So not all is bleak. The story at St. Phillips is much the same: hardships mixed with triumphs. Nan will tell you more of that and of the Orphan Programs.



The St. Philip's graduation on October 24 was a wonderful and colorful occasion. Nan is greeting the Rev. Hellen Ngatho, a graduate who is accompanied by her mother. Bishop Oketch appears between them. The graduation has taken much time and effort. But college staff and students worked tirelessly to make the occasion special. Even the water crisis at the college didn't dampen the festivities! The local water company has not delivered water to the college since June. We have been taking a number of actions while buying water by the jerry-can, since rains have failed. We are also adding gutters and tanks for more roof runoff should the rains come. We are deepening the well. And

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Nancy is in the middle of a community fight to regain control of the water company. She has been elected treasurer of a new board of directors. The process of reclaiming the company is long and tough, but it seems to be moving. We also are having trouble about documents. The Kenya Immigration says we have to leave the country in mid November in order to get our visitor's visas renewed, and they have not yet issued us work permission renewal because they said they lost the documents which we submitted in July'08. The incompetence and/or corruption in the civil service is breathtaking. So we are a bit up in the air. However, we are cheered by all the visitors that have come to see and to help: Dr. Cynthia Caples, teaching at the college, Nancy Rowe and a group from Wisconsin, Joe Atwater and Rich Cahill from San Diego, Dr. David Sands from Montana, Chris Friedrich from Boston, and resident physicians from the University of Tennessee, and a medical student from UCSD among others. We are looking forward to having Br. David Vryhof, SSJE with us for a week's retreat at the college. Dianne Smith is home on Martha's Vineyard for a couple of months, and we miss her!

The children in the Ekwanda Parish orphan program are learning how to start seedlings and to prepare soil for planting. They will take the seedlings home when they are ready to plant, and will then plant them at home and care for them. The program has rented this field, and the children have prepared it. The seeds are under the banana leaves, and have just begun to sprout in this picture, taken in September. The Ekwanda program volunteers have taught the other program volunteers how to do the farm training for the children.



We are very grateful for your prayers and gifts during this challenging time. The rains are late and scanty.

God bless you all.

Nan and Gerry

[www.masenomissions.org](http://www.masenomissions.org)