



To our residents who contributed to this Adventure Issue—THANK YOU!

- The "Buglers"

Lee A.  
Phil C.  
Max K.  
Cari B.

Linda C.  
Lois K.  
Paul S.

## Namibia Safari

By Arne M.

In 1988, I had a unique opportunity to visit Namibia before it became the hot tourist spot that it is today. Originally, Namibia was German South West Africa with much German influence then and even today. This country is in southern Africa, bordering on Zambia and Angola to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south and east.



By way of background, my wife's cousin, Gerdi, had married Abbi Remcken, a German man who had volunteered in 1945 to go to Namibia to help rebuild the country after WW II. After his two year obligation, he stayed in Windhoek and formed a successful construction company. He certainly knew the area and provided expertise in arranging various African safaris, the first of which was to Etosha Pan. This 1,840 sq mi area is located within the Etosha National Park —Namibia's second-largest wildlife park.

Abbi arranged and hired the tour guide plus a native to drive our two Land Rovers. I have many photos of the four of us camping (Lilly and Gerdi in a tent and Abbi and I sleeping under the stars) and watching our guide as he cooked delicious, gourmet food. We had to make our campsite near the mountain so to provide protection from lions and other animals. Many nights were spent sitting around the campfire, telling stories and lies, singing songs and even sipping from our ample booze supply. Other times we stayed in hotels. On one occasion I remember (when asleep) I felt something on my face that stung me so I slapped it away. The sting was 10 times worse than a bee sting and my face was very swollen. In the morning we found the dead scorpion on the floor. Daytime sightings during this two week safari included seeing many hawks, eagles, vultures; flamingos; reptiles; giraffes, African bush elephants, spotted hyenas, warthogs, impalas, wildebeests, etc. We saw a black rhinoceros, an endangered species even then. However, we did not see a lion kill as we did when on a safari to Kruger National Park.

*Editor's note: the WIKIPEDIA articles on Namibia and its Caprivi Strip provide a fascinating history of the country and its predecessor versions in the European colonial days.*



Arne, Gerdi, Lilly



Abbi in the Land Rover

## Adventures on the Silk Road with Middlebury College in 2011

By Susan R.

Just hearing the phrase Silk Road sold us on a trip to China with Middlebury Professor of Chinese John Berninghausen and his wife Alice. It was one adventure after another. We stayed in the best hotels available, many owned by the Communist Party. Beds in Uighur areas were rock hard like their beds. They sleep on a concrete pad with an oriental style rug thrown over it. Everyone in our group asked for three or four more duvets to put under the sheets.

In Dunhuang near the Gobi Desert, we toured the Mogao Caves with the Director as our guide. The caves are filled with beautiful frescoes and statues created by Buddhist monks traveling there from India in the 4th century. Another day, many of our group climbed up the huge dunes outside of Dunhuang. They rode down the dunes on silver discs like kids sledding on a snowy day. Camel rides followed at the base of these magnificent dunes.

We flew west into Xinjiang Province, home to the Uighurs who now are being persecuted and imprisoned for their beliefs. We landed in an ancient looking culture—women with covered heads, some wearing burkas and men in Muslim dress and hats. Donkey carts were prevalent. We first visited Turpan, the raisin capital of China. Grapes were being sun-dried into raisins on the roofs of the old mud houses.

Then we flew to Kashgar—an oasis and a major trading post on the Silk Road between China, the Middle East and Europe. A Uighur guide lead us through several beautiful mosques. A highlight of this ancient city was our visit to the 2000-year-old Sunday Animal Market where livestock were traded between farmers. When they could not agree on a price for the animal, an arbitrator dressed in the traditional long gown with wide sleeves and using concealed hand signals would find a compromise.

Now we wonder if our Uighur guide has been sent to an internment camp. He had never been to the US, but he spoke English with an American accent and was outgoing and fun to be with. He and our Han guide could only safely talk to each other when they were on our bus.

Sinicization continues to take place as mosques are being destroyed and good students are being removed and sent to Beijing to continue their education. Chinese pagodas are being constructed and the largest statue of Mao in China looms down on the people in the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar. There was palpable fear by the residents of Xinjiang of the Chinese when we visited in 2011. We could feel the tension in the air. Sadly, the entire province was closed to outsiders soon after our visit.

We are so glad that we were able to tour this area of China before the government's horrid imprisonment of the Uighurs in internment camps began. We think about our young educated guide, his wife and son, his mother, all Muslim minorities in China. He was so proud to be Muslim and talked about the day when he would go on his pilgrimage to Mecca, his lifelong dream.



*Middlebury hats travel to China*



*Uighur—with our Uighur guide*

## Adventures with our Grandchildren

*By Lee and Bob A.*

We were inspired by one of Bob's RPI friends to take each of our 5 grandchildren on a custom trip once the age of thirteen was reached. Fitting a trip into their busy schedules wasn't easy, but we managed to squeak out about 12 days with each grandchild.

The first trip with Tory was to Italy in April 2005. Based on a teacher's recommendation, we concentrated on the Cinque Terre— five picturesque fishing villages on the west side of the Italian boot connected only by a hiking path, the railroad, and/or boat. Tory delighted in exploring on her own so that when we reached Venice, she would find her way through back alleys between our hotel and the Basilica di San Marco. We happened to be inside St. Marks on a dark morning when the lights were switched on and the golden mosaics glowed. Tory subsequently studied Italian in depth at Middlebury College, qualifying her for a semester abroad near Florence.

London and Paris via the recently completed Chunnel was Molly's choice in April 2006. She loved riding the red double-decker buses and scrambled to the upper level to secure a seat. This was THE way to see the city. Fresh bread in Paris was a favorite. Once, half the loaf was gone before we reached our picnic destination. Molly's follow-up was a semester abroad in Vienna from Whitman College. She is now in her third year at medical school.

Caroline's trip to the Galapagos in June 2008 was perfect for someone as interested in the environment as she was. The experience of exposure to Darwin's theories in real life and observing wild animals so fearless of humans was mind-boggling. She met face to face with Lonesome George, a now-extinct variety of giant tortoise. Caroline was too committed to her Carleton College soccer team to study abroad, but a summer working in a salmon canning factory in Alaska provided fodder for her studies in anthropologies. She is now about to transition from her job advocating for workers' rights in Minneapolis.

With Sophie, we went to Austria and Switzerland in April 2009 and indulged in lots of chocolate. On our first day in Vienna, we obtained "stehplatz" (standing room) tickets for the Lippizaner horses in the elegantly Baroque hall of the Spanish Riding School. That evening we had "nosebleed seats" to see the ballet "Die Fledermaus" at the grand Wiener Staatsoper. This evening was topped off with eating Sacher Torte at the Hotel Sacher. We went on to Switzerland. It was late in the ski season so the mountain villages were deserted. Bad weather closed cable cars to the high peaks, but we found beautiful hikes lower down. Sophie had a semester in Paris complementing her Studio Art degree from Bates College and later a Masters degree from the Maine College of Art. She is now teaching in Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

In April, 2012 we were off to Spain with our grandson, Mason. We were impressed by the Moorish architecture at the Alhambra. We attended a bull fight in Seville and witnessed the pageantry and skill of the matadors. Mason, a soccer fan, had the chance to see the new huge Bernabeu Real Madrid "Football" stadium. Later Mason "studied" for a semester in New Zealand, then in 2021 graduated from Middlebury College and is now working in investment banking.

Each trip was uniquely memorable, encouraged each grandchild to build confidence, experience a foreign language and culture, and to travel and study abroad. We used Rick Steves travel guides, made our own reservations, traveled mostly by rail, once going the wrong way, and walked our feet off!



*Sound of Music tour*



*Tortoise feeding station*

## Our African Safari

*By Dick H.*

After 20 years of teaching biology at a 9-12 preparatory high school, we were given a half year's sabbatical. Because I am a birder and like wildlife I felt it would be a challenge and add to my classroom knowledge to take my family on a wildlife safari. In 1989, many African countries were either too touristy or had problems and this did not appeal to me. However, Tanzania seemed to be emerging as a good place to view wildlife. I booked a three-week Victor Emanuel Nature Tour to Eastern Tanzania for Cindy, our youngest son David, and myself.

On our safari, there were two vehicles with 6 people in each Land-Rover. Our guide instructed us that if we wanted to observe animals in their natural habitat and behavior we had to be quiet, patient, and not move not even to swat a fly on any part of our body. Obviously this was tough for some to do over an extended period of time. The people in the other vehicle got bored and left. Fortunately, the three other people in our vehicle also wanted to have the same wildlife experience as we did. By being stationary for a good length of time, the animals became accustomed to our vehicle and came very close. They weren't afraid of us. We had very close encounters.

We travelled to many parks throughout the center of Tanzania. We saw the three big cats: cheetah, leopard, and lion. I particularly wanted to have a chance to sit and watch a cheetah hunt. Did we see a cheetah hunt? No, but we did see a separate cheetah kill. We saw hippos, giraffes, elephants, water buffalo, other large animals and over 400 species of birds. Probably one of the most colorful and beautiful birds in Africa (besides the hummingbirds) is the Lilac-breasted Roller. This bird tends to perch conspicuously on treetops or poles—any high vantage point from where it can spot insects, lizards, scorpions, and any small food possibility.

On one of our day trips, we went into the Ngorongoro Crater. We stopped for lunch. Because we were well away from any predatory animals, our guide let us leave our vehicle and sit on the grass to eat our food. There is one bird that takes up residence in the Ngorongoro Crater waiting for people like us. It is called the Black Kite. This small bird of prey is notorious for stealing your lunch if you are not careful. These kites would hover over us and wait for the opportunity to swoop down and steal a morsel of our sandwich. I'm serious! Quite an experience!

In the Serengeti Plain, in northern Tanzania, there are no towns or cities nearby so the nights were pitch black and the stars sparkled like diamonds. One night we came out of our little hut and looked up. There hanging right in front of us was the Southern Cross...huge and bright! An image never to be forgotten!



*Lilac-breasted Roller*



*Black Kite*

## The Hundred Mile Wilderness

*By Gordon C.*

Problem: How do we get to Crawford Pond?? It is located in a section of Maine woods known to the Appalachian Trail hikers as the Hundred Mile Wilderness. The entire surroundings are owned by a paper company. Logging roads are gated and are inaccessible to the public.

It was July 1985. My wife Helen and I wanted to hike the section of the Appalachian Trail from the Crawford Pond to the Kennebec River. Somehow we learned that there was an air taxi service in the town of Moscow (the one on the Kennebec River – not the other one). Sure enough, Steve flew to Crawford Pond in his dinky seaplane.

We waved to Steve as he took off from Crawford Pond to head home to Moscow. In the meantime we started our trip back to Moscow by shanks mare. The race wasn't even close. Steve flew back in 30 minutes. We walked back in 7 ½ days.

But we dawdled on the summit of White Cap Mountain, which is something Steve couldn't do. The summit is above tree line, giving us a panoramic view of the unspoiled splendor of Maine woods and mountains. The massive Katahdin Mtn was easily identified. We also saw Saddleback Mtn, Barren Mtn, Moxie Bald Mtn and others. But we resorted to guesswork in deciding which was which. We climbed several other mountains – but they had wooded peaks.

We stayed in shelters maintained by the AT Conservancy at least 3 nights. (In Maine they're known as lean-tos). We used our backpacker's tent at least one night. In addition to a sleeping platform, each lean-to had an outhouse and sometimes a fire ring.

The trail finally brought us to Route 201 and the Kennebec River. In the 6 ½ days we had hiked 85 miles of the AT and a 13 mile road walk from the trail head to Moscow where our car was parked.

In retrospect, it was surprising that we never saw another human being on the trail. But through-hikers heading south would have gone through this stretch of trail months earlier. And those starting at Springer Mtn in Georgia heading north would not arrive until months later. The trail would not attract day hikers.



*Pilot Steve and Gordon on the shore of Crawford Pond, ME.  
Katahdin Mountain in the distance 7/20/1985*

## Our East African Adventure 1985

*By Lois and Max K.*

There they were—a magnificent silverback with his family! Six females, a group of juveniles, some youngsters and the babies clinging to their mothers' backs. We had come 12,000 miles from Philadelphia with a group from the zoo to see the animals of East Africa and this was the moment we had come for. Nairobi had been interesting. Tanzania and the Ngorongoro Crater with lions, cheetahs, a leopard in a tree, and wildebeests were amazing. But this was IT!

Seeing the gorillas in western Rwanda wasn't easy. We had flown to the capital, Kigali, and then bussed to spend five days in exploring eastern Rwanda, a government requirement for those wishing to visit the



gorillas. Rwanda was a poor country and the government wanted tourists to linger, spend dollars, and not just see the gorillas and depart. That was ok with us. We had boated in the Akagera National Park to see storks and hippos and had met a Belgian couple who ran an excellent hotel.

Then it was off to Gisenyi, a small, poor town in the west and the jumping-off place to visit the Virunga Mountains, home of the highland gorillas. We were fully equipped with hiking attire; our guides not so. They wore the remnants of business suits gleaned from the piles of clothes that wealthy westerners had donated to missions. The clothes were bailed and transported by land and sea to this poor land-locked country and sold at exorbitant prices in the village squares. But they were excellent guides. For two hours they helped us up the rough trail and through bamboo thickets until we saw OUR group. There were two habituated gorilla groups and our tour of twenty-four had split in half.

The guides and the gorillas knew each other. The guides grunted a greeting and the family continued eating and playing with the silverback keeping an eye on us to make sure we behaved. The kids were curious, however, and tried to come close to examine these newcomers. The guides swished bamboo branches to discourage them while admonishing us not to put our cameras and lenses down. If a little gorilla swiped anything, that was it. We could not retrieve it. We were allowed only one hour with the group and it went by all too quickly but it was an hour to be treasured— face-to-face with our cousins in a setting that we Sapiens once called home.



## Machu Picchu December 1982

*By Linda and Phil C.*

In the midst of a 4 year work assignment in Brazil, we traded in a home leave for a several weeks mid summer (Southern Hemisphere) vacation trip to Bolivia and Peru returning to São Paulo in time for Christmas. With our two children, Nica (13) and Zachary (11), we flew to La Paz, Bolivia—and did some city and nearby sightseeing. This included hiking up into the Andes and taking a photo of the entrance to Chacaltaya Ski Resort. Unfortunately, the Chacaltaya Glacier has melted so what was once the highest ski resort in the world is now all but abandoned. We watched a fisherman build his reed boat on the shores of Lake Titicaca and continued to the Peruvian town of Puno. Here we boarded a train for the 10 hour ride to Cusco—the starting point for our adventure to Machu Picchu.



In Cusco, we took the early train that ran along the Urubamba River to the base of Machu Picchu. During the 4 hour ride we caught a glimpse of life in this river valley—the people, simple farms, small villages, and numerous train stations. After the train reached its destination, our family and maybe 100 other tourists boarded buses that took us to the entrance to this Inca archaeological site. From 10:30-3:00 all of us explored the ruins. At about 3:00 the majority of the group had to return to Cusco. Because we had reservations to spend the night at the one small

mountain hotel, we did not leave. With the exception of the few fellow hotel guests, we had Machu Picchu all to ourselves until the first buses arrived about 10:30 the following morning. Unbelievable! Nothing was off limits to us so we explored the entire ruins and I took photos at will. Phil and Zachary climbed up Huayna Picchu (the peak at the rear left of the photo ). Zachary recalls how afraid he was to see his dad sit on the top of the big stone throne carved into the overlook with the sheer drop off behind him. It was almost eerie to be the only people in this magnificent place to watch the sun set and rise.



For the four of us, this was an adventure to treasure!

## A Defining Day

By Bonnie S.

The morning dawns crystal clear with a blue cloudless sky. The sun sparkles on the Atlantic as our small Lindblad cruise ship anchors in a bay offshore from idyllic St. Jean de Luz—a fishing port, seaside resort, and cultural center off the southern Atlantic coast of France. For the past six days, our ship has worked its way south along the French coast. We now find ourselves in the Basque region, with a much greater feel of Mediterranean and Spanish influence in architecture and culture. After breakfast aboard ship, the group of about 75 of us is motor-ferried to shore. This takes some time because the Zodiacs (large rubber dinghies) only accommodate 10-15 people. A group of local musicians greets us with traditional Basque folk music played on pipes and drums. We walk along the docks toward our buses, admiring this morning's fresh fish catch and the artistry of the nets set out to dry. Who knows? Some of the fish we see may be part of tonight's dinner menu. This is our last day in France. Tomorrow we'll be in Balboa, Spain (aka Bilbao to the Spanish).

The buses take us inland to the very old town of Bayonne that dates back to Roman times. We visit several interesting sites affiliated with the town's history, including a cathedral and a citadel, and end at Rue Port Neuf, famous worldwide for its manufacture and consumption of chocolate. Of course it's worth sampling!

The magnificent weather continues as we head back to the coast and follow a scenic road to Biarritz—considered at one time to be the “Monte Carlo of the Atlantic coast.” In the mid-19th century Napoleon III turned the area into a “super playground for monarchs.” Today it is a posh seaside resort, famous as the place where surfing started. Much of the architecture is more modern than we have seen in other places and is very tastefully implemented. We are given several opportunities to get out of the bus along the shoreline for just gazing or photographing. The coastal waters are mesmerizing.

The group returns to the ship for lunch. After that some people, including my husband, Derwin, go back to shore by Zodiac and take a walking tour of the charming town of St. Jean de Luz. I remain aboard ship to enjoy a more leisurely pace, relaxing on deck, with the town beautifully arrayed in front of me.

Earlier than expected the Zodiacs return to the ship with all passengers who were onshore. There are whispered conversations circulating among some of the group. We are asked to assemble in the ship's lounge.....The date is September 11, 2001.



### February Birthdays

Nancy W. 2/5

Bob G. 2/9

Jim F. 2/10

Pete G 2/16

Judy L. 2/17

Eleanor I. 2/20

Ann C. 2/28



### Adventures with “Snoopy”

EV's “Tech Guru” Shawn C. goes on countless adventures in his private plane, named Snoopy (left). One day, he flew over EastView, and snapped this photo.