

*It has taken me far too long to get around to putting this up. A bit of editing was required because in the chaos of travel, the email reports didn't always get sent in the right order. I've tried to correct this to preserve the narrative and also eliminate text affected by the sequence problems. There will no doubt be further edits, but at least the main task is done.*

*--GDN 4 August 2018*

Quick Trip Report #00 31 August 2010: Hello Everyone,

We are arrived in Melbourne Australia for the world Science Fiction Convention. Following the convention, we'll be going to Darwin, Perth, Kuala Lumpur, Cape Town SA, Johannesburg, Gaborone Botswana, Dakar and Thiès Senegal, and Dulles airport back in the US (from there, a bit uncertain). Before we start with the travelog and pictures, I'd like to give any of you who need to be not on this list for any reason the opportunity to say so. Note that I will reduce pictures to 100 kb or so before sending. I will also find out which email addresses are old--my apologies for any email address updates you've sent that are not included. Also, if you know someone I haven't included that wants to be on this, it's probably because I didn't have their current email address on this computer, if they email us, we'll add them.

--Best, Gerald Nordley and Gayle Wiesner



QTR #01 31 August 2010: Hello from Melbourne,

We have a sim chip for the Nokia cell phone Andrew has loaned us. That means the phone now works here. Our number is: +61-402-180-649, or 011 61-402-180-649 international, 0402-180-649 within Australia. That should be good until 19 Sep. Incoming calls and texts don't cost us anything. We will have some limited email capability as well, but will be using our computers mainly for email. Gayle says it costs to retrieve voice mail. We will be on a learning curve on this gadget for a while, so please have patience.

Prices are high in the immediate convention area, but quickly retreat to more reasonable a bit further away. Restaurants nearby charge Japanese business prices, but shopping center food courts can actually be lower than some stateside locations. Our lunch yesterday was an \$AU 7 Subway footlong which we split. I went up to the train station early to do email and got the equivalent of an egg McMuffin, potatoes, and espresso for \$AU 5.25 at Hungry Jacks. There are some anomalies. Candy bars and milk are about twice as expensive as we are used to stateside. Liquor prices are similar to US. Sodas are at least twice as expensive. In a restaurant that charges \$AU 17 for a full breakfast, the happy hour beer is \$AU 4. A package of six English muffins was \$AU 1.64, but the crunchy peanut butter was \$2.75. In our immediate area, we recommend Cole's groceries, on Spencer near the Southern Cross RR station. And so on. Like anywhere else, to eat reasonably, watch the locals and buy what they buy where they buy it. For casual drinks, I got a fifty bag box of tea for \$AU 2.99. At about \$AU 0.06 per cup, I can drink a lot of tea.

Aussie hotel rooms come equipped with an electric tea pot, so (like in Russia) you're never in want of boiling hot water.

Our hotel room is above. Gayle is standing in the door and one can get a glimpse the balconies and greenery of the courtyard beyond her.

--Best, Gerald and Gayle

QTR #02 1 Sep 2010 Greetings,

Gayle caught this little guy (an Aussie possum) inspecting her from around a tree in Melbourne.



From Gayle (apologies to the family for repeat):

The convention is over, but we may meet some new friends in Darwin and Perth. Gerry had a full schedule of panels, after thinking he might not have any. Good schmoozing was also to be had.

After a strenuous and disheartening packing exercise trying to make the weight limit for our Jetstar flight to Darwin (Gerry: "Whatever we saved on this low-fare airline, it wasn't worth it."), we're ready to call it a night.

For Andrew MacGregor; Sadly, we were told The Duke of Wellington restaurant in Melbourne closed its doors a few years ago. The Othello Greek restaurant across the river from the Flinders St. Station was still operating and I had excellent lamb. Gayle's Moussaka was good, but not as good as she remembered it 11 years ago.

--Best, Gerald

\*Darwin addendum: we made it. They didn't weigh the carry-ons; the plane was a big Airbus, and all the worry was for nothing. More Darwin stuff later.



QTR #03 11 Sep 2010 Greetings from Darwin,

We got to Darwin in the evening and spent the next day walking about the town. Friday, we went on a (long) day tour of the Kakadu national park, an area of tidal estuaries and wetlands with much wildlife.

The tour included a 90 minute river cruise along the "Alligator River" (It was named by an American) which was extremely well done and during which we saw many crocodiles and unusual birds.

Our bus guide thought that with luck we might see a couple of crocodiles; the tidal situation and time of day wasn't really favorable. Not only did we see a couple (I lost count of how many we saw) but we saw two at once getting into an altercation over a nice cool shady spot by the river bank.



In the picture, the smaller saltwater crocodile, a female, is about to be ejected from her resting place by the large black croc to the left. The big one was about three meters long. The female is raising her head, a gesture thought to be submissive (we are approaching mating season) but the big black was having none of that. There was a very sudden violent snap and the female scooted out of the way, leaving the favored place to the big male.

Darwin is a tropical resort town that reminds one of Hilo, Hawai'i or perhaps Fr. Lauderdale, Florida. It's been destroyed a couple of times (WWII, and Cyclone Tracy) and rebuilt. More later--we have another tour and a lodging change coming up.

While the croc fight was going on, the guy below made an appearance. It's a "pied heron" and we were told he's a rare bird, found only in the tropics and then only occasionally.

--Best, Gerald





QTR#04 12 Sep 2010 Greetings,

Yesterday (the 11th here) we were up at 5:30 to change hotels and catch a day tour with an aboriginal tour guide and former park ranger named Tess. She took us to Litchfield territorial park, then onto her land for a bush picnic of fish and crocodile meat with fruits and greens, giving us a running commentary on indigenous affairs, wildlife, and bush survival skills.

The picture is of Gayle and Tess at Litchfield park



After that, as quickly as we could manage, we joined an observing session of the local astronomical club, with to-die-for dark sky views of the Southern Milky Way and various galaxies and globular clusters as seen through an amateur-built 20 inch telescope. Sadly, we ran out of energy and had to leave well before midnight so Gerry could drive us home without falling asleep. The night sky was very dark and I got a pretty good picture of alpha Centauri, Beta Centauri, The Southern Cross, and the Eta Carinae region.



QTR 2010 #05 (#04, originally) 13 Sep 2010 Greetings,

We met up again with the Australian fan who treated us to dinner in Melbourne and took him and his wife to the Military museum north of Darwin and Charles Darwin National Park to the south before dropping them off for their harbor dinner cruise (all booked when we found out about it). We had dinner on the wharf, and found excellent seafood at a reasonable price there. My fish and chips was as much as I could eat at \$Au 6.50.

Darwin was heavily bombed during WWII, something under-reported at the time for morale purposes and so not too well known. It was hit first by almost the same force that hit Pearl Harbor--same carriers etc. The harbor was not full of warships at the time, and the military presence was more spread out. Several ships were sunk, including the US destroyer Peary, and numerous civilian targets hit as well. Some 250 people were killed, then and more in subsequent raids. (I don't have the exact numbers immediately available)



We'll be in Darwin today and tomorrow. We've purchased enough internet time to do a download and upload of email a couple times a day, plus some other necessary things. No surfing. It may be better in Perth.

The picture is taken from Charles Darwin National Park, a former military area, across the bay.

--Best, Gerald



Here is our dinner on the wharf, a couple of nights ago. A total of less than \$AU 20 for lots of very good fish.



QTR #06 13 Sep 2010 Greetings,

Monday we rested mostly, but took a walk down to Lyons' house, also known as the BAT house (British Australian Telegraph...?). The Lyons occupied it starting in 1949. It sets me back a bit to be in an historical site that wasn't occupied by its named family until after I was born. It had served as a telegraph office earlier and lost its roof during WWII. Now it's filled with aboriginal art and WWII photographs.

Then we walked down to the grassy area below and south of the esplanade and waited for the open-air theater to open. When it did, we had dinner there and saw Russell Crowe's *Robin Hood* demolish at once French armies, legend, and history. Gayle saw a flock of lorikeets and took the attached picture.

--Best, Gerald





QTR#07 14 Sep 2010 Greetings,

Our last day in Darwin, but possibly not our last picture from Darwin. We are doing laundry and email this morning and hope to visit Fanny Bay again this afternoon.

The photo is of a monitor lizard from Litchfield; its a smaller version of the famed "dragon of Komodo" and has similar habits. This one was about a meter long. These baby dragons get maybe twice as long and ten times as heavy here. The Komodo version, of course, is very much larger.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#08 14 Sep 2010 Greetings,

For our last day in Darwin, we did laundry, got to the Fanny Bay Gaol just before closing for a quick tour, walked the length of downtown to sort out some internet stuff, then out to the end of the wharf for dinner. Too tired to walk back, we took a cab back to the hotel and immediately ran into some convention folk just returned from Kakadu--so sat down with drinks and chatted while they ate.

Attached is a collage of photos of more birds from Kakadu plus one from Litchfield. --Best, Gerald



Clockwise from upper left:

- (1) Black necked stork (called a Jabiru, but not the same species as the South American bird with the same name.)
- (2) A Whistling kite from Litchfield
- (3) An immature night heron (quite rare, we're told).
- (4) A Brolga crane
- (5) An Australian White Ibis
- (6) A Great Egret



QTR#09 15 Sep 2010 Greetings,

We arrived in Perth yesterday evening. The picture is the view of the Perth Skyline from our bedroom, complete with more Aussie cranes. We're in an efficiency apartment converted into a hotel room; we have our own kitchen and are trying to do a meal or two a day there to save money. But dinner tonight was at McDonald's, for reasons described below.



Affordable, high quality internet was hard to come by, here; something over \$20/day at our hotel. We can get \$4/hr internet here and there of medium speed, but time goes by too quickly to get much done other than send out the answers to the email downloaded last session and download a new batch.

McDonald's at least doesn't have a ticking clock, but it's as fast as a poor dial up line at best. AOL doesn't like it and is constantly bumping me off which adds to the computer time. Also, here in Perth, the nearest McDonald's is a fifteen minute walk from our hotel and after a day of walking around in museums and city streets...legs and feet are sore.

Thanks for all the nice feedback on the QTRs and apologies for not getting back to everyone individually yet. I will try to catch up.

We went to Kings Park yesterday for a quick look--will probably go back Saturday. We spent most of the day today in Freemantle, mostly just wandering around the streets and absorbing the ambiance. I did get a couple of hours in the Maritime museum, saw a large variety of fishing boats and Australia II, the America's cup winner of a few years ago, when it was a game for millionaires as opposed to billionaires.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#10 17 Sep 2010 Freemantle Greetings,

Here is Gayle's lunch special (\$Au 11.80) in Freemantle at Cullen's Tea Rooms. She got a steak and onion pie, salad, chips and tea for that. I had a steak and kidney pie with the same. One of the nice things about Australia is that the price you see is generally the price you pay--they include taxes, service, etc. We are probably getting too used to that...

--Best, Gerald



QTR#10 a 17 Sep 2010 Fremantle Greetings,

Greetings,

Fremantle has many of the finest old (c.a. 1900) buildings in Western Australia. There were some exposure issues on this picture that weren't apparent in the review frame, but you get the idea.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#11 17 Sep 2010 Perth Greetings,

We did a long hike through King's park on Friday morning. This fellow is a red wattlebird, about crow-sized. (Next page) Kings Park has an elevated walkway that goes through the crowns of the trees, up with the leaves and birds, and this guy landed on the handrail in front of us. "What are you doing up here?" he seems to ask.

--Best, Gerald





QTR#12 Greetings,

Yesterday (Friday) afternoon we went to the Perth Museum which had one of the best meteorite exhibits I've ever seen in their natural history walk ("from diamonds to dinosaurs"). As we were leaving the museum as it was shutting down, Gayle encountered a black cockatoo leaving the children's section....

--Best, Gerald

QTR#13 18 Sep 2010 Greetings,

We're packing and getting ready to leave; next up Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, here's a dinosaur recreation (sorry for not writing down or remembering the name, but from the four fingered hand, I'm thinking a relative of Allosaurus, not Tyrannosaurus.) If memory serves, it's based on a South American specimen, but they probably lived in Australia, too, maybe 120 Ma ago. (Later note: looks like a Ceratosaurus)

--Best, Gerald



QTR#14 18 Sep 2010 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Greetings,

We're in KL at the Westin, which is way above our normal class, but Gayle got a good rate and Gerry is taking full advantage of free internet at the pool (after a few laps to try to make up for the breakfast buffet). It is relatively cool for KL just now, with a soft rain. We need to leave the hotel room at 11 tomorrow, so I'm making hay while the sun shines. We may do a day tour of something tomorrow, then the loooooong overnight flight to Cape Town SA.



We don't have big-city KL images downloaded yet, so here is a catch-up from Darwin; Litchfield park's resident dingo. Apparently he's free to go, but is used to being fed by the staff at show and tell time. Many years ago, I learned that Dingoes were the descendants of dogs brought over by people. That was before DNA mediated cladistics. Now, he's categorized as "Canis lupus dingo," a variant of the asiatic wolf and is distinct from "canis familiaris," the domestic dog.

He's an ancient Australian, that shows up more or less contemporaneously with the aboriginals, so the speculation remains that the

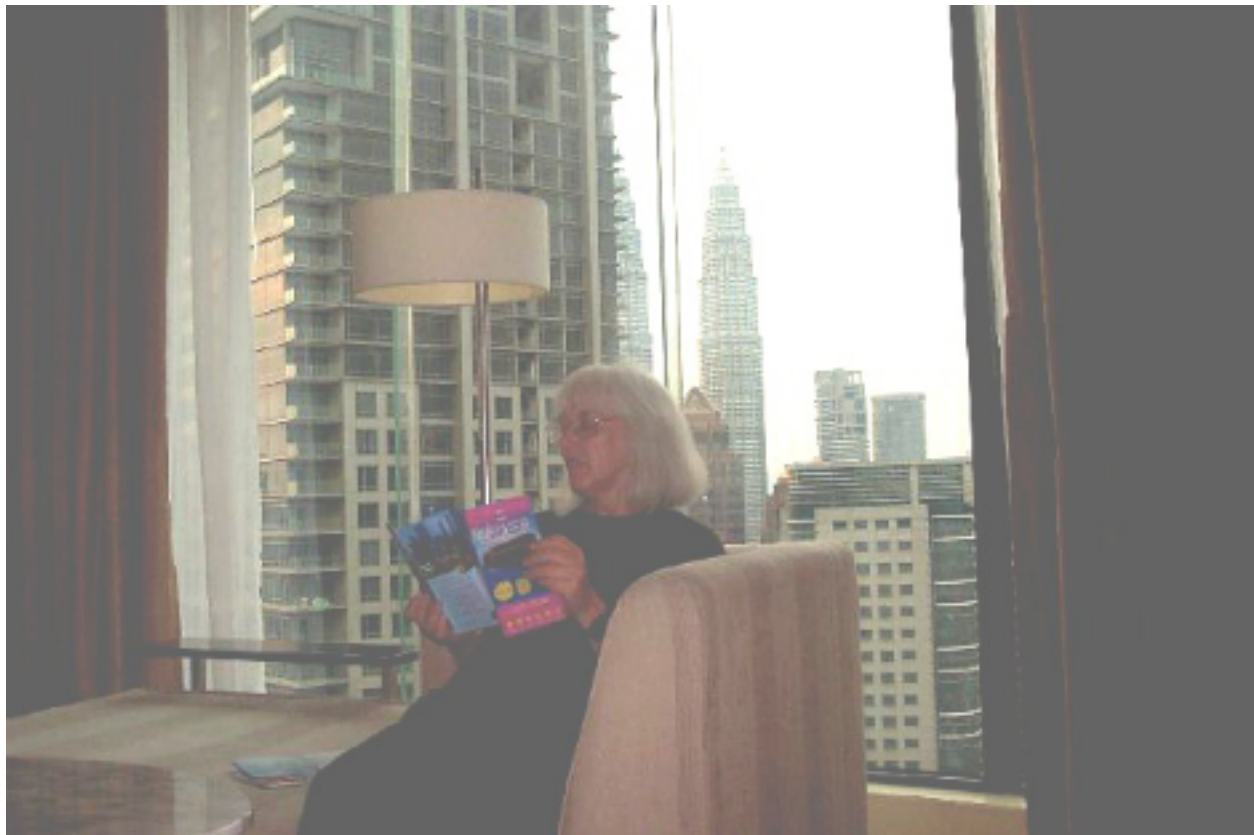


dingoes followed them over--but it's not a domesticated animal in its pure form. Dingoes do interbreed occasionally with wild domestic dogs, so there's an increasing hybrid population, enough so that people are worried about the future of the "pure" dingo.

--Best, Gerald

QTR#15 20 Sep 10 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Greetings,

We got to the Malaysian National Museum this afternoon. It was a very well organized tour through Malaysian history. I'd always wondered why the Malaysian flag was so much like ours and found out that there was a similar history; Malaysia is a federation of 13 former British colonies (previously self-governing sultanates) and a federal district, each of which get a stripe. The government is a constitutional monarchy with a separation-of-powers constitution that John Adams would likely admire. The monarch (the Yang di-Pertuan Agong) is one of the sultans (or equivalent); they rotate to the position at five year intervals, unless one dies in office. A council of rulers decides who gets stuck with the job.



Here's Gayle on the couch in our room with the Petronas towers (or at least 1 1/2 Petronas towers) in the background.



p.s. techie note: This picture took some doing--daylight background dark foreground. One uses fill-flash for this, but the flash on the Pentax is broken, so I had to use Gayle's point & shoot Kodak that's smarter than I am. Its fill flash was too bright; Gayle was okay, but it glared off the window and washed the outside and the towers were out of focus. I put it on the "Mountain" setting to get the towers in focus. This was better but the fill flash was still too much and Gayle was fuzzy. I cut the exposure down one stop, then two stops, which helped Gayle some (smaller aperture, better depth of field), but the fill flash was still too bright and the towers washed out. Finally, I held my finger over half the flash window with the exposure two stops down. All this while lying hanging over the edge of the bed. ;-)  
That's the shot you see.--GDN

QTR#16 21 Sep 10 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Greetings

Before going into the National Museum, we saw people playing with a cobra. Those are BIG snakes...

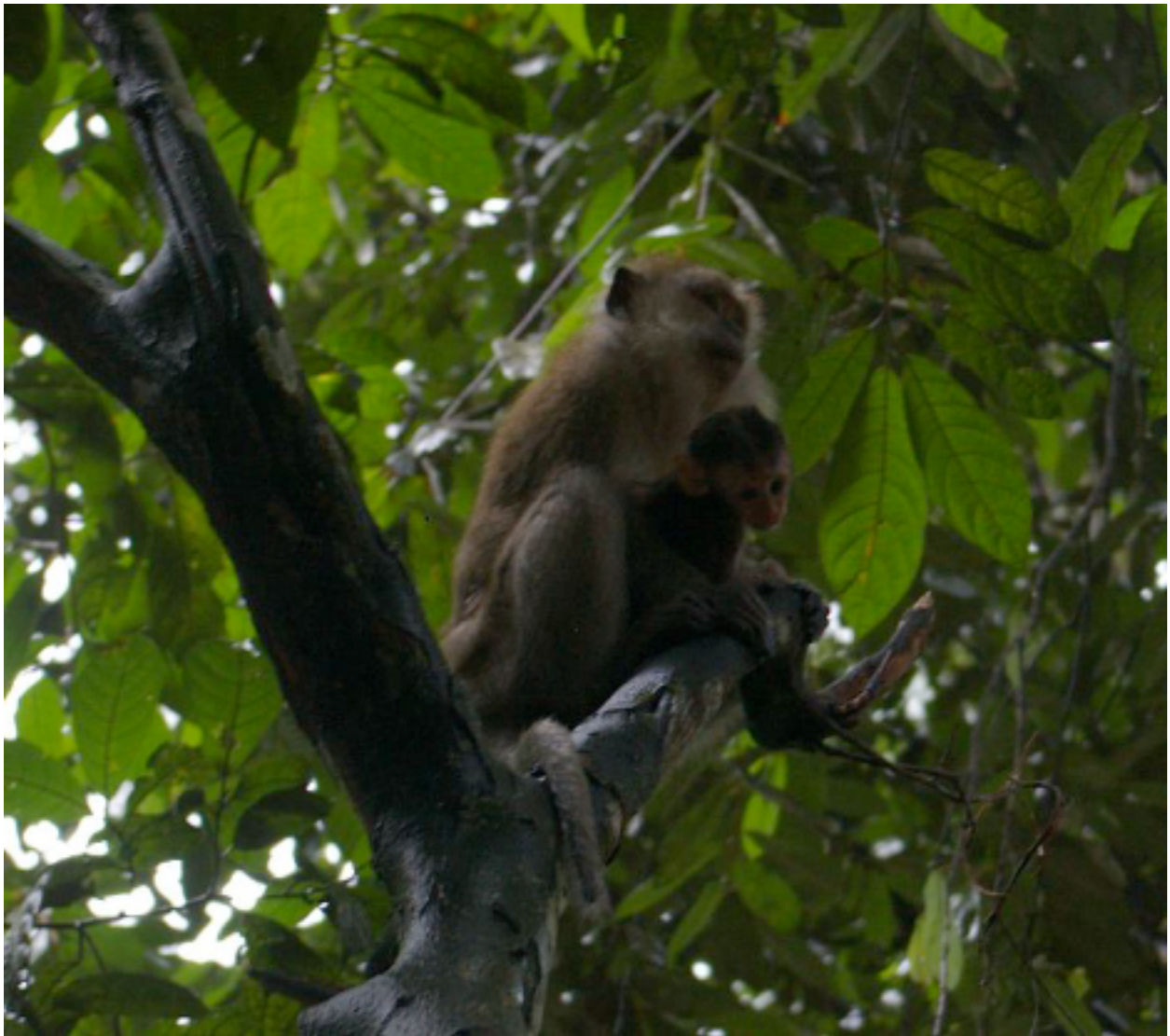
--Best, Gerald



QTR#17 22 Sep 10 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,

We had a late flight to South Africa, so after we checked out of our hotel, we took a day tour to a park well away from KL, with waterfalls, cascades, birds and monkeys. We heard birds but couldn't see them in the jungle. The monkeys were another matter entirely--they have no fear. Here is a mother with her baby.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#18 22 Sep 10 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,

John Bray recommended that we see KL by night from the KL tower, one of the taller antenna and revolving restaurant towers in the world and the best place to see the skyline, since you can't see the skyline from the Petronious towers. Our day tour guide was kind enough to make arrangements for us and drop us off. The buffet and the view were fabulous. Afterwards, we got a taxi to take us back to the hotel, pick up our bags, and take us to the Airport, all for about \$35 (US).

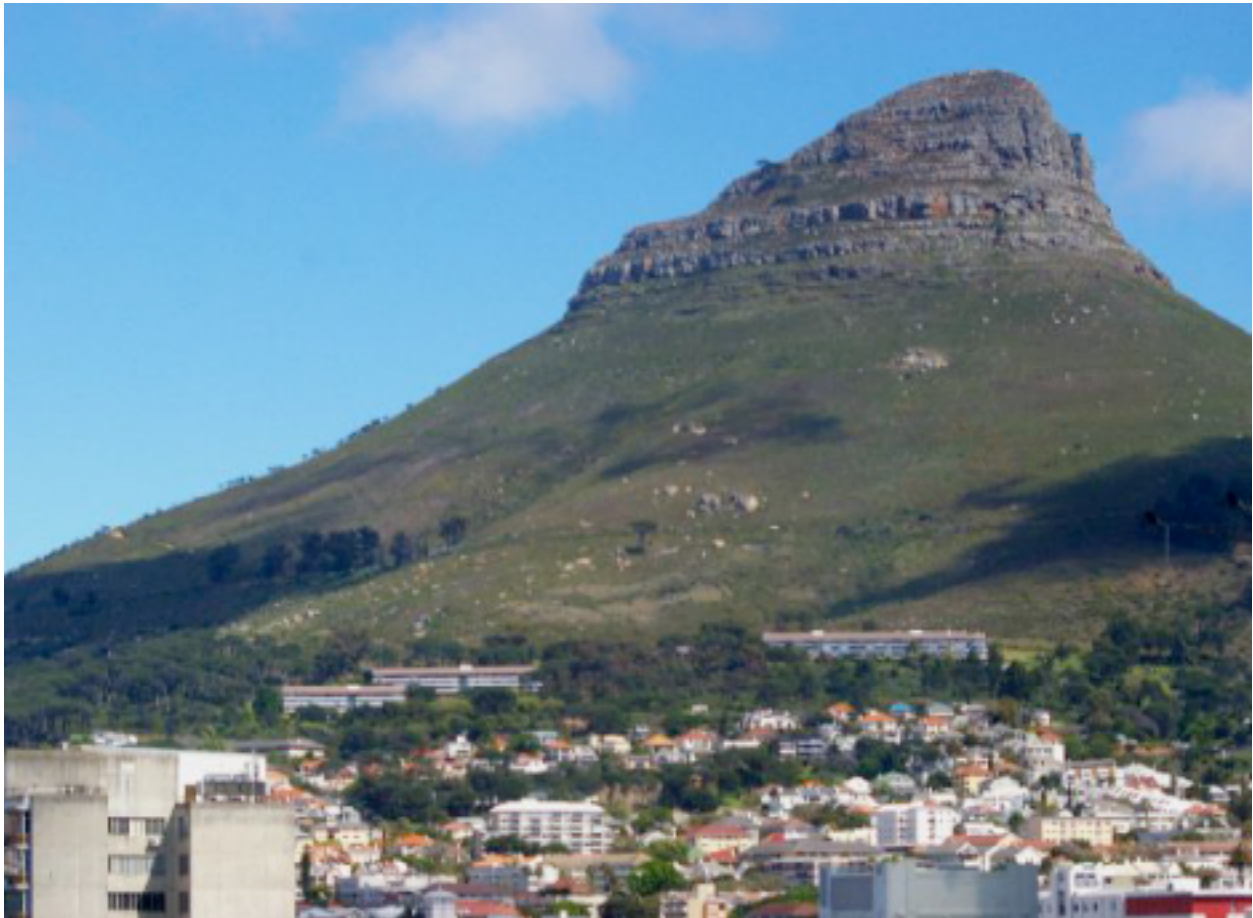
--Best, Gerald





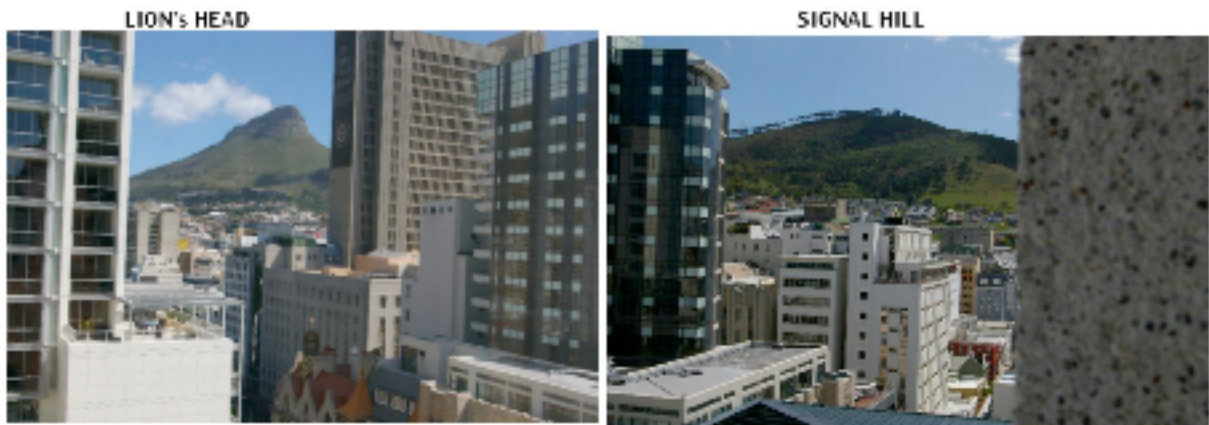
QTR#19 23 Sep 10 Cape Town, South Africa Greetings,

We're finally in Africa, our last continent, after a very long airplane day. We took off after 1 am, and chased the moon across the Indian ocean, losing the race in time to see sunrise from the Johannesburg airport. Between meal service and sleeping, the 9 hours or so went surprisingly quickly. I found Boingo works at Joburg airport, so I managed to download my email, but didn't have a QTR ready to go and with the clock ticking, had to get back on the plane (the same plane--it was going all the way to Buenos Aires).



It is now officially spring here, but it has been quite chilly; in the 40s overnight. The picture is of Lion's Head, from our hotel window.

There's a spiral path up to the top of it that some people climb. (I'm not sure I'm up to that.) Signal Hill, "the lion's rump" if I read the map correctly, should be in the right foreground, perhaps behind a building I cropped off



QTR#20 23 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

We were picked up at Cape Town airport by our very enthusiastic Afrikaner tour guide, Sarel Coetzee, and taken to the train station to pick up our tickets for the train we'd booked back to Johannesburg, before taking us to the hotel. But we found that the train we'd booked was canceled due to some "dispute" and all the other trains were booked. We would have to find some other way back to Johannesburg and would miss the ride through the South African countryside! We found a local travel agent who managed to book us a flight (the price went up by 50% while we were dithering about which airline to take) and get us another night at the same price in the place we will stay in Johannesburg, but with long waits for people to answer the phone, etc., it was late afternoon by the time the job was done.

--Best, Gerald

QTR#21 23 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

Greetings,

We have a bright clear cold morning this Friday, and an unclouded view of Table Mountain.

We are impressed by how clean Cape Town is; even the rooftops. There is very little graffiti and very little junk lying around. Our guide said it has the best mayor in the world (in 2010).

--Best, Gerald



QTR#22 25 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

Sarel Coetzee took us to the Cape of Good Hope yesterday. It's other name is "The Cape of Storms" and that's what we got. The scenery was magnificent, but the animals had the good sense to stay down out of the wind and rain.

We stopped at a small harbor where the fisherman still sell fish right off the boat. There is a certain amount of scrap in the process, and someone stuck up his head looking for a free meal. This was a big seal; its head was about the size of a basketball.

We're both a bit jet lagged, and perhaps suffering from a mild something-or-other. I think today (Saturday) will be mainly a day of rest and catching up. The internet situation is poor; we got thirty free minutes from the hotel, which is used up now, and more is at something like \$10/hour. McDonald's does not offer free wifi here. There may be a place up the road a bit we may try today.

--Best, Gerald





This is a honeybird from our Cape of Good Hope trip on Thursday; a telephoto lens shot from the car, about 6 m (20 ft) away.





Here we are actually at the Cape of Good Hope. Somewhere beyond us, the warm Indian Ocean waters are mingling with the cold Atlantic waters. The wind and rain were coming from the Atlantic, and if it looks as if we are reliving our Antarctic experience, that's what it felt like.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#23 25 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

This is a telephoto shot of Cape Town city center from Table Mountain, which we hike up. Look for a yellow box toward the upper right. That is our hotel room. To the lower left is the Company Gardens (Dutch East India Co.).

--Best, Gerald



QTR#24 26 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

There was a big exhibit of frogs at the aquarium in Cape Town. Some of them are spectacularly tiny. The photographer's little finger is included as a size reference. (above)

--Best, Gerald

QTR#25 26 Sep 10 Cape Town Greetings,

After the aquarium, we went through the South Africa Museum and made acquaintance with the current and Mesozoic local flora and fauna. They had a large exhibit on Charles Darwin, who spent some time here on his way home to Britain on the Beagle, making contact with John Herschel and other scientists then in the Cape Town area.

The pictured sauropod was apologetically listed as a "juvenile," but was fairly complete. Not that the front and back legs are about the same length. Of course, Gerry was too tired and sniffly to think to write down the species, and is too internet time challenged to look it up on the web.



We walked back to the hotel through the Company Gardens, full of roses and strange plants from exotic places like California. At some point in either the Museum or the walk through the Gardens, Gerry lost his distance glasses. They have remained lost. Fortunately, he has some binoculars.

We attended an open house at the old observatory (overcome with light pollution), heard a lecture on planetariums and saw an historic old refractor (currently under repair). There was a brief star party and views of Alpha Centauri as a double star, Jupiter and its moons, and the Antares-M4 area (not too great due to seeing and the full moon). Then it was back to our warm hotel.

--Best, Gayle & Gerald

QTR#26 26 Sep 10 Greetings from Johannesburg,

Our brief stay near Johannesburg Airport is concluding. The "Safari Club" (pictured) is a walled compound with electrified wire and two rollaway gates in an almost treeless, grassless industrial area of suburban Johannesburg. Inside the walls, it's very nice. Next stop, Botswana.

We did venture to a local shopping mall, which was very nice and up to date inside, with heavy security outside.

--Best, Gerald





QTR#27 26 Sep 10 Greetings from Mokolodi Reserve, Botswana

We have just spent an incredible couple of days at Mokolodi nature reserve in Botswana, just outside of Gabarone (hgh-ah-bah-row-nay). We rented a "chalet" (we would say cabin, or hut) on the shore of a small lake that served as a watering hole in the nature reserve, a former cattle ranch that has been given over to African wildlife. We had no internet there (thank goodness), no TV, no phone and were twenty minutes of slow driving over rocky roads from any of that. We did have a bedroom, bathroom (running water), tiny kitchen + fridge, and a porch overlooking the lake. I spent most of my time on that porch, or a little closer to the shore, watching the animals come down to the water. Meanwhile, our first picture from Mokolodi. About an hour after we arrived to see an Ostrich walking around a neighboring chalet, impalas gamboling all around the lake, and baboons all over the place. Gayle lay down for a rest and I woke her up to see a small herd of Zebra, who made an appearance across the lake. It was a magical moment.



--Best, Gerald



QTR#28 30 Sep 10 Mokolodi Greetings,

Troupes of baboons often post a "lookout" high in a tree nearby. This lookout baboon chose the top of a neighboring chalet.

--Best, Gerald

QTR#29 01 October 10 Mokolodi Greetings,

Sometimes nature anticipates the problem of the poor photographer who can send only so many emails with only so much upload time. I think the Wildebeest organized this for me. The female Kudu was a bit shy, hanging in the background, but the Impala were completely with the program. But arranging the duck swim-by? How did he do that?

--Best, Gerald





Gayle identifies this little bird as a male starling from the iridescent green and blue plumage and the orange eye.



QTR#30 2 October 2010 Mokolodi Greetings,

One of the high points for me was when two rhinos showed up at our water hole to drink. When these rhinos started walking away to the right, I went down to the shore and followed them on my side. The muddy water between us narrowed down until I realized there were only about 50 feet between us, and I was wondering whether the shallow, muddy bottom would support a rhino's weight.



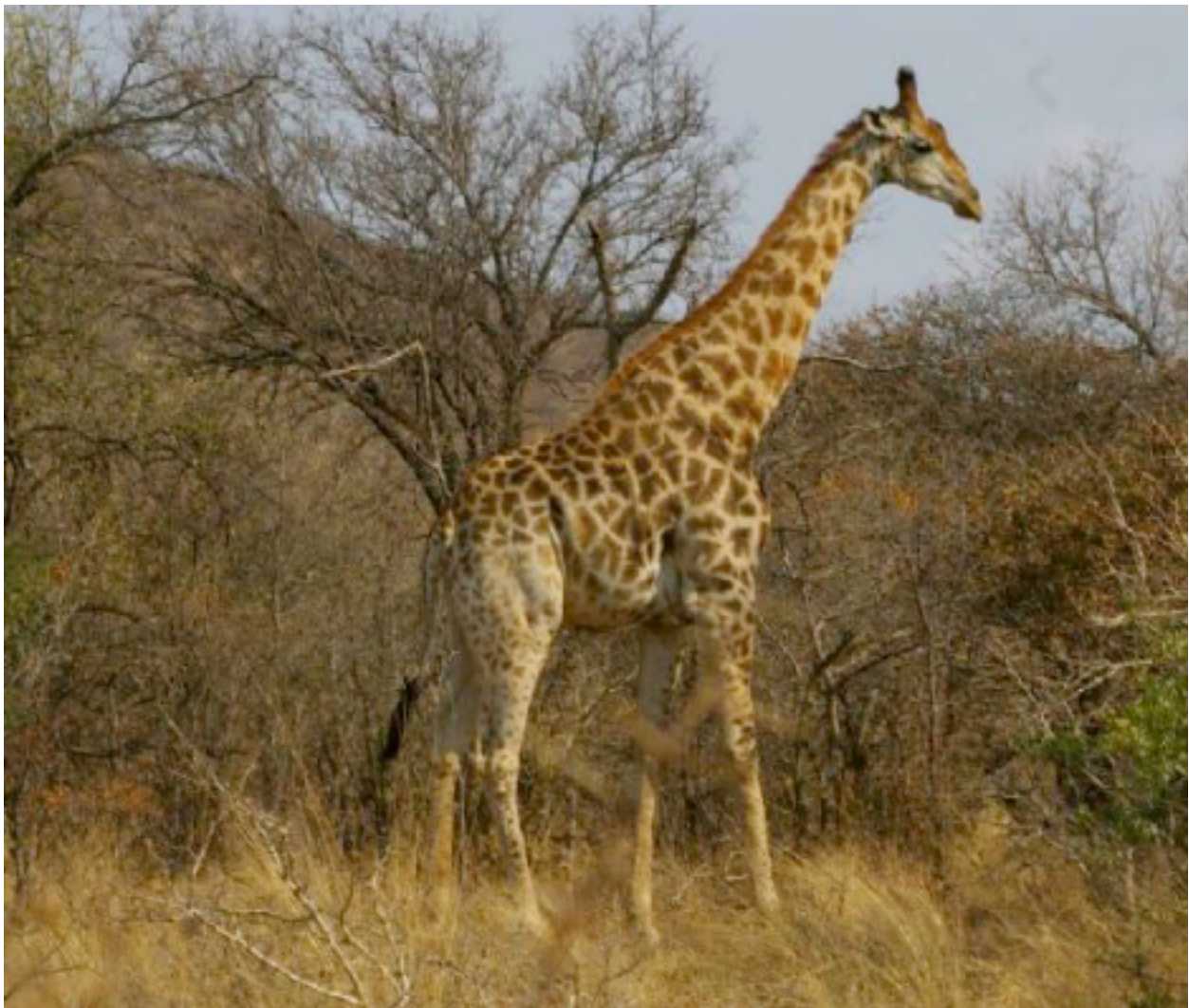


The big guy was eyeing me and probably wondering the same thing. At that point, I ran out of memory in my camera and went carefully back to where I belonged!

QTR#31 2 October 2010 Mokolodi Greetings

We found five giraffe on our giraffe-tracking expedition, the first led us to the others. The attached is my only almost clear shot of a complete giraffe; I have numerous heads and necks and torsos and "can you see the giraffe in this picture?" shots. They were close to us, but generally took care to have some piece of vegetation between them and us. Their natural camouflage is very good in this environment.

--Best, Gerald







QTR #32, 5 Oct 2010, Mokolodi, Botswana



Greetings,

We've been in Dakar and Thiès (pronounced something like "chess"), Senegal for the last few days, but I'm still working on a backlog of Botswana pictures. These will be the last from Mokolodi--a bird collage.

Above is an ordinary hornbill.

Clockwise from the upper left...

Crimson-breasted shrike (This guy was in constant motion; this is the best of fifteen attempts)

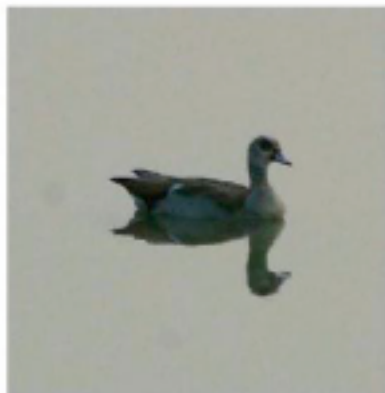
black Spur-winged Goose (The largest water bird in Africa, it was huge, but stayed on the other side of the water hole from us.

Ostrich; This guy was right in front of me

Heron

Duck; close enough to see the plumage, and a nice reflection

Yellow-Beaked hornbill. It has a loud, crow like, call.



Below is a close-up of the yellow-beaked hornbill





QTR#33 5 Oct 2010 Gabarone, Botswana Greetings,

We're in Gabarone today, with internet, but with a lot of sightseeing to do as we are leaving for Senegal tomorrow. We'll be catching up on the email as we can over the next few days. Gabarone, Botswana is a rustic small cattle town. We didn't see much in the way of excess of wealth or extreme poverty. We stayed at the Brackedene, a reasonable place with breakfast and good wifi. The best hotel in town, however, is the (Cresta) President Hotel. They have a very good restaurant, at which we had a couple of local Botswana dishes, Pot-fried chicken and Ox Tail. They were both very well prepared and tasty, though one had to eat the skin of the chicken to get the full taste experience.

The picture is of Gayle sipping red bush tea at the President Hotel in Gabarone. (This will mean more to some of you than others.)

--Best, Gerald





QTR#34 6 October 2010 Greetings from Dakar, Senegal

We spent Saturday and Sunday in Dakar, Senegal, staying at the SIL (Société Internationale Linguistique, more or less with apologies to francophones) complex with Gerry's daughter, who works there and in Thiès.

The attached picture is of Gayle and Sharon (right) with Samba, the proprietor of the shop that made the water bottle caddies we purchased. He was a very friendly, outgoing and engaging character who it is impossible not to like.



We went out to Isle de Gorée Sunday. We saw the horrible slave quarters, absorbed the awful history, and then spent some time looking at scenery and the works of the artistic community that has become prominent on the island in more modern days.

The picture is of a sand painter, Cheika, who provided a demonstration. He was good and we bought one of his works.



--Best, Gerald



image of our sand painting



QTR#35 6 October 2010 Greetings from Thiès, Senegal

After touring north of Dakar and having a nice lunch near the westernmost point of Africa (we couldn't actually get out to the westernmost point because it's on private property), we took a drive past a big expensive (some say too expensive, given Dakar's needs) statue and headed out to Thiès (pronounced something like "chess") the next day. The area has outgrown its infrastructure and many of the roads were physically a mess in addition to being crowded with vendors trying to make a few cents off passing motorists.



But Sharon has mastered driving through this and got us to our hotel in Thiès in good order. The hotel was air conditioned! It had free wifi! It had its own generator for when power went out (which happens frequently in Dakar and environs--those motivated can google Senegal's energy crisis...). It had its own water reservoir (water also goes off at times in Thiès). It was only the equivalent of about \$60/night.

We visited her apartment, attempted a low-tech solar oven, viewed the

local SIL Office she was setting up and saw lots and lots of bats in the evening.

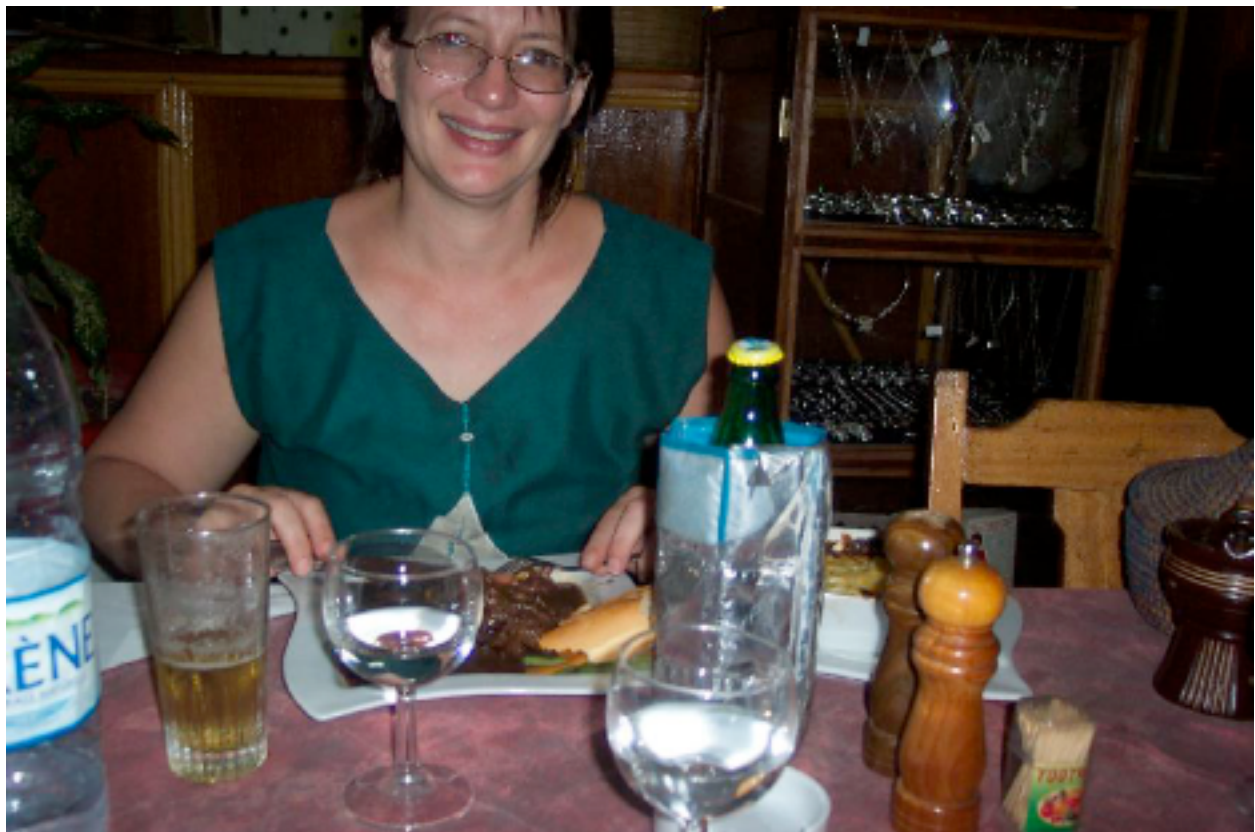
The photo is of Gayle arriving at the Hotel Croissant Magique. If you are interested in visiting Thiès and staying there, the phone number is in the photo! [Albeit 8 years ago--sorry.]

--Best, Gerald

QTR#36 6 October 2010 Greetings from Thiès, Senegal

Sharon took us to the best restaurant in Thiès, the Massa-Massa and we had there one of the best meals in our lives, despite the heat. The picture is of Sharon, enjoying her meal (lapin--I had it too)

--Best, Gerald



QTR#37 8 October 2010 Thiès Greetings,

While in Thiès, we made a visit to an SIL linguist living with a small clan near the site of what will be Dakar's new airport (paid for by foreign investment). Hillebrand Dijkstra had lived in their small village for something like 15 years, and has piece by piece made a profoundly off-grid home there, with redundant systems for water, solar electricity, and so on.





The shade of his rooftop patio made for a reasonably comfortable conversation area despite about 100 F, 90% humidity conditions.

It is very difficult to accomplish much else in such weather, and what one does takes much longer than you think it will. The heat affects ones mind, and one isn't efficient. Also, frequent stops for water are needed. They don't have enough electricity for air conditioning, nor even a refrigerator (they have a propane fridge, but propane supplies are unreliable). The solar cells (about a couple square meters) combined with a couple of RV batteries provide just enough power for computers, printers, and lighting. He has 220V and also 12V wiring (like an RV).

--Best, Gerald

QTR#38 8 October 2010 Thiès Greetings,



This picture is from Hillebrand's upper patio, showing the view, with Sharon, Gerry, and Hillebrand.

After a nice dinner with Sharon on the coast near the Dakar Airport, Sharon dropped us off at the airport to get us on our way back to the United states. It did not go smoothly, but the less said here, the better. If anyone on the list is contemplating a trip to Dakar, please write.

Setting that, and the heat and humidity aside, we spent five interesting, and amazing, days with Sharon. The SIL people there are doing good work under sometimes appalling conditions and can use all the support they can get. I found Thiès much easier to manage than Dakar; the streets were in somewhat better repair, it was less crowded, and there was less pressure--one had time to think about what to do next. There was also an affordable air-conditioned hotel!

We are on our way back to Dakar and will be parting Wednesday for Dulles Airport in Virginia.

--Best, Gerry and Gayle

QTR#38 10 October 2010 Greetings from Front Royal, Virginia

After a nice dinner with Sharon on the coast near the Dakar Airport, she dropped us off at the airport to get on our way back to the United states. It did not go smoothly, but the less said here, the better. If anyone on the list is contemplating a trip to Dakar, please write. (Things may have changed by 2018)

Setting that, and the heat and humidity aside, we had a wonderful visit. The SIL people there are doing good work under sometimes appalling conditions and can use all the support they can get. I found Thiès much easier to manage than Dakar; the streets were in somewhat better repair, it was less crowded, and there was less pressure--one had time to think about what to do next. There was also an affordable air-conditioned hotel!

Anyway, the next day saw us in the Virginia hill country near Front Royal, at Eric and Nancy's house. Nancy is Gayle's sister. We rested the first day then helped harvest a row of grapes the next day. The picture is of Gayle and I at work in the vineyard.

--Best, Gerald







QTR #40, 10 October 2010 Virginia, USA

Greetings,

We spent most of Friday with the grapes; they have to be pressed immediately after being taken from the vine. Here are Eric and Gerry with the wine press. The big screw pushes a metal plate down and squishes the grapes (most of them, anyway) and the juice runs out between the wooden slats and down through the strainer into a tub. The juice is then strained again into big glass jugs. Eric analyzed the juice added some chemicals to it and refrigerated it. From cutting the grapes to the refrigerator took from about eight am to evening, but my part was done by about 3 pm.

We had wine from their previous pressings with dinner. It was fabulously good.

--Best, Gerald



QTR#41 10 October 2010 Greetings from Sunnyvale, CA!

The picture is from Eric and Nancy's kitchen. The lap dog is Freya (phonetic spelling), otherwise known as Miss Fluff, who was then just out of puppyhood and in the process of learning adult dog manners with modified success.

Saturday, we were off to DCA and the flight home, with a one hour stopover at Gerry's hometown airport (MSP) then off to San José, where friend and co-author Candy Lowe picked us up at SJC.

We are sorting mail and recovering today. We're still taking malarone (an anti malaria drug, prescribed just in case...) which keeps us near plumbing in the mornings. It's been quite a trip.

Our return has happened to coincide with son Andrew's long-weekend leave from his studies at Ft Leonard Wood, so off to Santa Cruz for dinner tonight!

--Best, Gerald