



Rouster Ramblings 2011

John & Lorella Rouster

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Christmas greetings to all our friends & family,

We love to hear from you all. Thank God for special holidays that remind us to keep in touch. We are awed once again as we contemplate how God humbled Himself to take on human form, to be born and live and die and rise again among us—all to become our Savior. Down from His glory...it never ceases to amaze us. We are truly blessed.



Lorella with Fauzia at HH

It's been another busy and challenging year for the Rousters. Lorella started out the year at Haven of Hope, our children's home in Ghana, where she was helping out while our missionaries took a much-needed break and also training new caretakers for the children.

It won't officially be our 45th Anniversary until April 1 (still fools for each other), but since the dates of our planned celebration activity worked out for us this year, we celebrated early. We've always wanted to visit Alaska, and doing so with the Gaither Homecoming crew was an extra special blessing with many wonderful memories to treasure. We got our pictures taken with cutouts of bears and of Sarah Palin (no comparison implied).

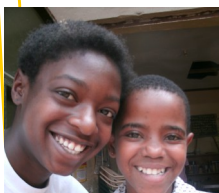


Sharon & family —enjoying their patio

Of course, since the cruise started in Seattle, we had to spend some time with Sharon's family. It was a fun time, getting to know our grandchildren Jordan and Hannah better and enjoy family time with Sharon, Steve, and the whole family.

Lorella had several occasions this year when she was able to share her heart, her vision, and her research to fight human trafficking. Early in the year, she taught a three day intensive seminar here at Mission Central for a small group, including a couple who are now in Italy and hope to fight human trafficking there. (Nigeria to Italy is a major trafficking route.) Later in the year she was able to share condensed versions at Converge Worldwide (our church group), STEER (a mission that helps those in agriculture give to missions), and at the Moody Bible Institute Missions Conference in Chicago. She misses teaching since we have been the Int'l Directors of ECM, so these are special and treasured occasions that she really appreciates.

Down from His glory...my Lord and Savior came.



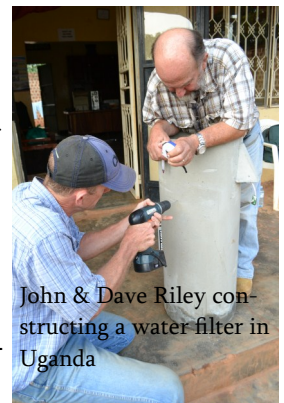
Whitney with one of her new Ugandan friends

We spent the summer in Uganda as a family (taking turns alternate years between Ghana & Uganda). Whitney raised quite a bit of her own support this year and served as team photographer. She put some of her pictures on YouTube. Just search for Whitney Rouster-Uganda.



Water Filter Workshop

John enjoyed heading up a water team. They used hand equipment (hard work but a WHOLE lot cheaper) to dig two wells for remote villages in Northern Uganda. Because most water sources were destroyed in Jos. Kony's 20-year war, the people had been forced to walk a long distance, toting back to their village buckets of water from the same stream in which they bathe. They were so thrilled to see clean water running close to their homes! One of the team members said that just seeing the expression on their faces when they pumped water for the first time was worth the investment of the whole trip. John also did 2 water filter workshops showing some of the people how to make effective water filters entirely from locally available, natural materials.



John & Dave Riley constructing a water filter in Uganda

While John was doing that, Lorella taught a three-day seminar on fighting human trafficking & modern-day slavery to ECM staff and some church leaders. The group then spent two days interviewing people in an area where we know trafficking is rampant. Lorella was in her glory with all of that. Unfortunately, some problems with our National Director sapped most of the rest of her time and strength. He ended up quitting, and we were thankful. Lorella also made a very hard trip to South Sudan. She was privileged to train teachers to reach out to the new generation there only days before their independence was declared.



Lorella training teachers in S Sudan

John gave us a scare by having a mini-stroke on Sept. 7th. He went to the emergency room and they kept him in intensive care for a couple of days, but he made a wonderful recovery and went completely back to normal very quickly. Tests showed that he has a small hole between the ventricles of his heart which could cause clotting and that he has plaque buildup on the aorta, which could also have caused the event. He is now on a new kind of blood thinner to reduce the risk of further events.



We (John & Lorella) signed up for Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University at our church. Alt-



though we're usually very tired when we go, we're enjoying it and learning a lot. We had already got out of debt and done some of the other steps several years back as a result of listening to Larry Burkett on the radio, but we just signed up because we want to be the very best stewards of God's resources that we can be. The FPU gave us other good ideas, goals, and understandings that will be a big help to us.

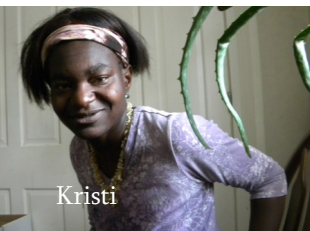
Lorella also began another journey. For some time she's been doing a lot of reading on counseling and on working with children in crisis, motivated by the deep needs of so many of the children we are trying to help in Africa. Finally, although she's a little worried about how her memory will perform on tests at 66, she decided to go for it and signed up for a program which will ultimately give her a Ph.D. in Christian counseling and will also license her with the NCCC. She wants to write training materials for our African staff, be equipped to evaluate counselors & counseling programs we might use in Africa, and have the credentials for this to be recognized by the governments of the countries where we work. She's working hard on it and so far feels that it is very useful and worthwhile.

Our son John Henry is living in Lorella's childhood home, where he says he always dreamed of living. He & Lori have really made the place bloom with beautiful flower gardens all around and a huge, productive garden in back. Mom & Dad would love what they have done with the place. Our step grandchildren Megan and Nathan have been a great help with those projects. John is doing well in his job as a mechanic.

Our daughter Carrie, Bill & the Boehmer crew bought additional land and are raising peonies which they sell to markets around Indy in season. It's fun to see the different personalities in all 8 of their kids—even the twins. Marissa is hands-on, Caleb a computer whiz, Serena the artsy beauty-lover, Alaina easy-going & loving, Elizabeth a never-give-upper, Tessa still in the laugh & run away stage (she still hasn't figured out that Grandma is not up to chasing her), Alisa always trotting to you with a smile & a book, and Abigail happy & contented, as long as someone is in sight.



The Boehmer bunch at Abby's dedication service



Kristi

Our daughter Kristi recently got a chance to meet Condoleezza Rice when she signed books in Indianapolis. With Kristi's interest in politics, that was a very special day for her.

Whitney, our 14-year old daughter-granddaughter, is in 8th grade, which is a big deal because the class graduates next year and does all kinds of special things as "seniors". She loves music and is in advanced band and show choir at school. She also helps out with Jr. church at Hillside, our home church. She has become an avid reader, too, but mostly she just loves to hang out with friends. While we were on the Alaska cruise this summer, Whitney got to go to a youth retreat with her older cousin Hannah. She did great, but when she got back, it took her awhile to figure out that she wasn't 18 yet!

We are especially excited because another of our granddaughters, Carrie's Marissa, is planning to go with us to Ghana next summer. She will help drill an emergency well with a hand pump & help grandpa & others build kitchen cupboards in the guest house to help us celebrate Haven of Hope's 10th Anniversary (ECM's children's home in Ghana).

Three of our grandchildren, Carrie's Marissa & Sharon's Hannah, as well as John's step-daughter Megan, graduate from high school this year, all in home schooling programs. Hannah is making the most of her long struggle with numerous food allergies by making her senior project a blog on what to eat when you can't eat anything at all. Jordan, the oldest grandkid, is already well into his college program & still loving computer programming. Joe & Debbie Roberts, who adopted our granddaughter Jenna, are always so kind to send pictures and to keep us all up on how she is doing. We don't hear much from our grandson John Everett, but we all love & pray for him.



Jenna & Joe

A lot of people keep asking us when we're retiring. Lorella is now 66 & John will be 70 on Jan. 2. However, we love what we are doing. We are thinking in terms of five more years or so, until Whitney is finished with high school. Then we are praying that God will bring our successor so that we could step down from the responsibilities of being directors. Even then, Lorella still wants to devote full time to writing & developing training materials for ECM, and John plans to help in other ways. We are praying that God will give us strength. In Uganda they tell us, "May you blow 121 candles!"

So many of you have offered love, encouragement & friendship. We want you to know that we love & appreciate you all. May you have a most blessed Christmas!

Love, *John & Lorella & Whit*



Alaska



Abby



Almost the whole crew



Uganda Pictures by Whitney

