

A Letter from Africa

December 2015

Since I last wrote there has been one main event and that is the departure of our Granddaughter, Courtney, to London.

It was in two parts, being her farewell gathering of friends and the departure itself. Andrea was already in London and finalising Visa requirements and setting up a base .In the end the long and costly process of obtaining a Visa was concluded and Courtney was given a handful of days to fly to England. This meant leaving school before the year end and a general rush to finalise matters.

These moments are captured in a very, very short sequence of pictures in the Blog. But I include some now.

We have most of the school friends in the main picture and then Bev and myself pose for the final scenes as she prepares to fly out in English winter clothing.



The Blog has shots that include her arrival at Heathrow and her introduction to the sites of London Town. Take a look aletterfromza.blogspot.com .

We had time to spend a day at Addo where the weather was great and we saw so many animals from Lion, elephant to rhino and the smaller yet important things that make the whole circle work.



An early morning arrival means we are in good time to breakfast at Jacks camp with bacon rolls.

We were very fortunate to see a rhino as we had begun to believe they had been removed from the park. The picture clearly shows this dehorned black rhino. The slaughter of rhinos

continues with most falling in the Kruger where organised crime use Mozambique as the easy route to take out the rhino horn.



I remain one to advocate the legalisation of rhino horn with farm harvesting providing work, income and control over a product that would then emerge from the dark

underworld at a fair market price. Please convince me otherwise.

As ever the elephants were about and this one was coming our way!



A change of subject although still Courtney related.

As a final fling Courtney put her school uniform back on and used her many weeks of rehearsals to take part in the Carol concert at the Feather Market Centre.

Collegiate is a fine school and has provided Courtney with a super grounding at high school level when it is hoped that Bullers Wood School in Chislehurst will finish the job. Collegiate is a government school that was known as a Model C school, but entry involves substantial fees that are paid over and above the taxes already made. To add perspective to those outside PE, Collegiate is rated as one of the top 25 schools in SA.

I mention all this because we may not be talking about it again.

I have to talk **politics** as this is the reason why Andrea and Courtney have left SA, together with thousands of others over the last few years. I know the subject will bore many but it overshadows everything that happens in SA and invades all conversations. It is the prominent feature in all media and the talk of respected commentators of all backgrounds. Their views are the same-namely that this ANC Government under Jacob Zuma is killing the country. The latest fiasco was the sacking of the Finance Minister who was being praised by all parties for his forthright approach to try and curtail reckless Government spending. This seems to have got in the way of dodgy SAA deals and the potential one trillion Rand nuclear station builds. Not even the Cabinet knew of his dismissal and that he was being put forward as a candidate to head the SA part of the BRICS bank. But only a candidate!

The **Rand has plummeted** once more amidst a sea of disbelief and loss of credibility in this ANC leadership. But sadly the masses who vote are ill informed and badly educated and seem to not realise that they are digging their own grave in voting ANC at the moment. The local elections take place in May 2016 but the main opposition have not taken the country by storm and do not offer the "go to" party for most people however competent and capable they are.

The crowds are being pulled in by the EFF who like The Pied Piper take the unemployed and other desperate people with them on marches offering nationalisation of banks and redistribution of land without compensation etc. We will know the outcome in May unless the **Zuma must Fall** campaign achieves its` objective before then.

So now is a great time to visit SA. It`s sunny, we have 2 spare bedrooms and this is how much your currency is worth in SA.

Pound = 24 US\$=15.8 Euro=17.4 Can\$=11.5 Aus\$=11.4

Let us say a beer or glass of wine is R16 and a steak main course R90 then you can have both for:- £4.4 , \$6.0 , €5.5 , C\$=8.3 , A\$=8.4

I did say that the *dolus eventualis* issue would rear its` head for **Oscar Pistorius** and indeed it has. The judge erred in her interpretation of this legal principle and although Oscar will delay it for as long as possible by way of appeals (using family money), he does face jail time of perhaps 12 years or more.

We need a break from the depressing story of SA politics and here are 2 old pictures. To the left we have Sherry and Michelle sandwiching a young Courtney around 2004 and the other



is a pic I took of a group of Old Camdenians holidaying in Spain in the early 1960`s. What a good looking lot they all are-and so young!



Some **personal news** should include a hip that gets better although still hobbling. Perhaps 9 holes in Jan, perhaps not. Bev`s knees getting worse although she keeps up the aquarobics. We will see what the surgeon has to say in 2016.

It is summer here, of course, and our temperate climate in Port Elizabeth has seen good rains during winter and only early/mid 20`s now. It means that we have avoided the drought that affects large parts of SA from drinking water to farming. Whilst the ANC are scoring own goals, they do have to contend with a massive fall off in resource prices and mines will almost certainly have to downsize which will mean more unemployment. Add to that the need to import maize and the troubles add up, leading to daily protests over service delivery and poverty.

We are planning a **holiday to the UK** in 2016 to see our family and we are lucky that the falling Rand is matched by a falling oil price that has so far not led to higher air fares. Of course, once there a beer that costs us say R16 will more likely be R70 in England (not actually the same size so not really quite so bad).

All that is left is for us to wish you well over the festive season and that 2016 will bring you joy and good health.

We have heard from NZ (thank you Ann and Vic) but do tell us what is going on in your part of the world. The last replies led to the fall of 2 prime ministers in Australia and Canada! So will someone please respond from South Africa!!



Thinking of Xmas lunch makes me recall that ours nearly flew in the other week! Yes, a Peking duck arrived in our pool and when placed on our local Facebook group the feedback was very much towards dinner. However, he was a missing pet and duly collected thus taking away the issue of what to do with him (or was it a "her"?). By the way has any one tried to catch a Peking duck because this one took at least half an hour to gather up. It had obviously seen a menu and feared for his future, but the fears were unfounded.

So that is it for 2015.What a year!

Have a great time over the holidays and we will talk to you again next year.

Love and best wishes.

Alan and Bev



PS I have to add that the comments are relative and clearly overlook how much worse life is, in places like Syria and Iraq to name just two. Our politics may be dreadful but we do sort of have a democracy and we remain a country worth going to for a great holiday.