

Second Saturday Net

June 2006

# Zimbabwe



**Where I'm Coming From--In Case You're Wondering...** *My four years as president of Second Saturday's Board of Directors comes to an end on August 31<sup>st</sup> along with my time as Project Coordinator. Since this will also be our last issue of Second Saturday Net, I'd like to briefly revisit a few of the past events that have informed this particular publication project.*

*After fifteen years of innovative educational work at UC Santa Cruz, UH Manoa and Hiram College in Ohio, I took a position at the new CSU Monterey Bay campus in Fall of 1996. As Liberal Studies faculty, we were charged with creating a child development curriculum that combined community service with global learning and competency in computer science technology. As an applied social psychologist committed to transformational learning, I took that amazing challenge quite seriously, so a couple of years later my life partner Michael Podorson and I agreed to host a series of supper meetings with the idea of stimulating discussion between parents and educators about how to encourage the educational success of African heritage kids. At our first meeting, Carolyn Martin Shaw and her daughter Koren Clark spoke about living in Harare in the early 1980s, when Carolyn was a Fulbright fellow at University of Zimbabwe. Koren, who was eight at the time attended primary school in nearby Avondale, and they each shared a very fascinating and somewhat different perspective on the experience.*

*Then at our October meeting, Nigerian born educator Kenoye Eke spoke about the concerns of African Americans who have more recently arrived in this country. Ken eventually persuaded me to become part of California's delegation to the National Summit on Africa (NSoA) that was to be held in Washington, D.C. in February of 2000, and, as part of preparing for my participation, Michael and I visited Carolyn and her husband Bill Shaw in Harare, where Bill was by then heading up the CSU International Studies Program at the University of Zimbabwe. During our two week stay with them, we met Mrs. Viola Gondo, who almost immediately asked that we adopt her talented sixteen year old daughter, Miriam and take her home with us. We were not at all prepared for the request and tried to explain that neither our financial situation, nor our lifestyle would allow us to assume such a responsibility. At the same time, I was very impressed with Miriam's verbal facility and quality of spirit. My suggestion was that we stay in touch as she continued her schooling in Zimbabwe and that she consider applying for international grants or private scholarships, if she did eventually decide to attend college in the United States.*

*That was the year I first applied for a Fulbright fellowship to do research with young people in Zimbabwe that might provide additional perspective on the work I'd been doing with African heritage teens in the United States. I also returned to Harare in December to meet with the staff at Highfield High about establishing a sister school project with Santa Cruz High. Although my research application was not successful, my friend and colleague Gwen Fischer was later awarded a Fulbright to teach at the University of Zimbabwe, and I was able to visit the country again as her guest in February of 2002. When we both returned to Harare in July of 2003 to follow up on various community projects, we found Miriam had applied and been accepted at Portland State University. At the time, she still didn't know how her education was going to be funded, so we all started working on a budget and also enlisted her help in organizing some of the other students who were expressing interest in attending college in the U.S. I certainly didn't believe it was going to be easy for Miriam to get financial support as an international student on such short notice, but she worked extremely hard and did amazingly well, during her time at PSU. What she accomplished should inspire other African heritage kids wherever they may choose to pursue their studies, and hopefully Second Saturday Network can continue to be a resource for them. My heartfelt thanks goes to all who have helped so far! --Nubra Elaine Floyd, PhD*



Postmark: 12-06-06

Name: Annah Gondo  
Age: 15 DOB: 9-6-90  
School: Girls High - Harare

Dear Nubra!

Greetings from everyone back in Zimbabwe, from the time that you left I have managed to do a lot of things... In school I was able to join a lot of clubs. Those clubs include the following: **Interact**, which is mainly centered on the assistance of orphans and elderly people. It also helps motivate leadership skills in students. During the term, students do all sorts of projects to help improve the society. This term we are thinking of going to a home and paint the walls and also put graphite on the walls. An exchange student program might happen in the course of the year.

Another club is the **Marimba Club** (also know as the Xylophone.) It's an instrument with a row of wooden pieces that you hit with a wooden hammer that has a piece of rubber at the end. This club is more or less linked to music, because we learn how to play this instrument. In February of this year we went for a **National Allied Arts Competition** and for our performance...we got half colours... I am the co-ordinator for this club...

At church I'm part of the church dance group. I'm also part of **Child Evangelism** team...

Yours lovingly,

Annah

PS: We would like to have an exchange program.

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WILLIAM W. MONNING, J.D.  
Pro-Democracy Education Fund  
Marina, California

Dear Bill & PDEF Board Members:  
Many thanks for your recent grant of \$200 toward the purchase of text books as part of our Sister School Project at Highfield High School in Harare, Zimbabwe. Your awards to us in 2004 and 2005 made it possible to share some of our young people's cultural and educational accomplishments with young Zimbabweans in the form of desk top publications. Those two newsbooks will help promote good will and may increase literacy as well as English language acquisition. Also, congratulations on 12 years of caring support for local community groups and all the monies you've managed to raise as--a bunch of overworked, overextended community activists! While your mission may be changing, we're very glad to know PDEF will continue to serve the most needy.

All best wishes!

6-21-06

Email sent: Friday, April 7, 2006 6:01 AM

Hie Nubra!

Thanks for the reply Nubra, it has been a while without getting access to the internet... how is your life? mine is fine just work work and more work. What are you doing these days? Pass my greetings to all the Secondnet members. Thank you so much and please say hie to Kamau.

Bye for now

Phanuel Joseph Linje.

Email sent: Friday, May 5, 2006 1:08 PM

Phanuel,

How have you been doing?...It has been a long time since the last letter I had sent to you but I do not want to miss the opportunity to stay in touch and see what's going on from your perspective.

I am now 22 years old and I have been very busy in the past four years with school and extracurricular activities. I have been attending Pomona College in Claremont, CA. If you know where Los Angeles is, Claremont is approximately 40 minutes to an hour east from there, by car. It is an excellent private school with challenging programs and interesting students. Originally, I entered Pomona College to be an Engineer, focusing my studies on Physics and Mathematics, but my focus has changed to become an African American Studies Major and a Mathematics minor. A large part of that transition happened in the last two years, which have been...unique and challenging...

I wanted to tell you about some of my experiences at Pomona College in hopes that it can help you in your process of being able to attend a university in the United States.

I continued to play basketball after high school it was a lot of fun. The first two seasons I had with the team were long because we weren't very good, but it was still very exciting to play basketball at the collegiate level. I am realizing that I may want to continue to play basketball somewhere in the future at "a" professional level, probably not the NBA. I think it would be really fun if I could find a way into some of the leagues either in the United States or elsewhere. Who knows?

I have been taking a class with Ms. Floyd called *Economic Issues in the Black Community*. This class is very unique, not only because of the structure of the class but also because there are so many interesting people in the class... without a doubt, they further the class as an enjoyable experience.

Take Care.

Kamau Norman-Terrance



Kim and Kamau solve Ashanti William's TANGRAM puzzle with fellow students at SJSU. photo by nef Apr 2006