



The *JUST NOW* News - A now-and-then Newsletter for alumni and friends of COWABUNGA SAFARIS published whenever we have enough news and time to put it together.



The Mystique of the Baobab

Gary K. Clarke

Baobabs are so unlike any other tree. Although they may grow 60 to 70 feet tall, their enormous girth seems out of proportion to their height. One in South Africa has a measured circumference of 152 feet. Mature baobabs have a hollow cavity inside the trunk. Considered one of the oldest species on earth, baobabs have been radio carbon-dated at over 1,000 years, and a few are estimated at 4,000 years old.

Elephants have a special affinity for baobabs. Considered by some to be a giant succulent, baobabs retain an enormous amount of water during the dry season. Elephants will dig with their tusks into the bark to obtain moisture, sometimes creating a hole in the trunk of the tree. Surprisingly, baobabs continue to thrive despite the damage.

Baobabs look bewitched and it is easy to believe fairy tales about them. Legends and superstitions abound in Africa with reference to this extraordinary tree. So many, in fact, that it is difficult to select just a few. Following are several of my favorites.

One of the most popular says that when the Great Spirit created the earth he assigned a tree to each animal. For example: the acacia tree standing tall so the giraffe can eat the leaves; the palm tree to provide a lofty haven for the baboon; the sausage tree for the hippopotamus to feed on the fallen fruit.

The last animal in line was the hyena, and the only remaining tree was the baobab. The hyena was so incensed by this grotesque, wrinkled, thick-trunked tree that he ripped it out of the ground and planted it upside down. Hence, the branches and leaves grow underground and what we see on 'top' of the trunk are the roots. No doubt this gave rise to the colloquial term of the "upside down tree".

Another legend asserts that the blossoms of the baobab are inhabited by spirits, and that

anyone rash enough to pluck a flower will be devoured by a lion.

In some areas of Africa families always settle around a giant baobab. They believe that as a person dies, the spirit of the departing one climbs onto the back of a deceased relative. When the ghosts become excessive, they oldest ones are sent to live up in the branches of the village baobab — creating a spiritual family tree.

And while it sounds like a folk tale, it has been documented that elephant damaged baobabs have so weakened they have fallen on and killed an elephant that was feeding on it.

Personally, I have a great fondness for both baobabs and elephants. Each is large and grey with wrinkled skin and symbolic of Africa. And each has a trunk.



Special thanks to Barbara Nibbelink Scott of Wichita, KS for her original sketch of the baobab and elephant.

COWABUNGA! Bringing the World of Safaris to you one game drive at a time.

"Men have other ideals for which they are willing to die: freedom, glory, politics, religion, the rulership of their class or the expansion of national borders.

"Men are easily inspired by human ideas, but they forget them just as quickly. Only nature is eternal, unless we senselessly destroy it. In fifty years' time nobody will be interested in the result of the conferences which fill today's headlines.

"But when fifty years from now a lion walks into the red dawn and roars resoundingly, it will mean something to people and quicken their hearts, whether they are bolsheviks or democrats, or whether they speak English, German, Russian or Swahili. They will stand in quiet awe as for the first time in their lives, they watch twenty thousand zebras wander across the endless plains."

Prof. Bernhard Grzimek
Serengeti Shall Not Die



The Prominence of Three

Brian Hesse

The number three has been prominent in my life of late. Recently, I've conducted three face-to-face Safari briefings (I normally like to do these three months prior to departure), one with a mere three individuals in attendance. In the briefings, I've stressed the rule of three — that three sets of clothing are adequate for Safari: one you're wearing, one clean, and one being laundered. Roughly three months from now, in August, my first book, *The United States, South Africa & Africa: Of Grand Foreign Policy Aims and Modest Means*, is scheduled to hit bookstores and libraries (my editors would like me to tell you to tell at least three of your friends). Also come August, I will be wrapping up a three month stint in Africa, having led three very contrasting Safaris in three very different countries (Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia).

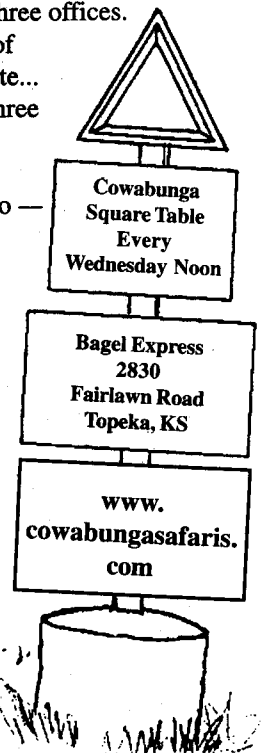
But if the number three has been a source of familiar reassurance for me (three shirts, three shorts, simple), and of great anticipation (I can hardly believe that in three back-to-back months I'll have the privilege of traversing the Serengeti, trekking gorillas, and canoeing the Zambezi!), I have also come to associate the number with mild frustration and amusement. Recently, I've become the Associate Director of Washburn University's Leadership Institute (with a total staff of three) where I am presently involved in three primary tasks: curriculum and class development, arranging and hosting guest speakers, and giving informal guidance to undergraduates. So, on a normal day I might awaken at a decent Safari time (i.e., dawn), pass by the Cowabunga Main Camp to handle any overnight business like newly arrived faxes, spend the day on the Washburn campus, swing back by Main Camp after hours to pick up the day's mail and phone messages, then, from my home (what I affectionately call the Cowabunga "Fly-camp"),

handle all and sundry tasks. In the course of Safaring between the three locales, the Fly-camp, Main Camp and Washburn, I carry a bag which is nearly three times as big, with three times as much "stuff," as what I take on Safari! And the funny thing is, wanted items always seem to be migrating to any one of the three places where I'm not. As a result, I'm always calling Gary and Nancy (two of Cowabunga's total staff of — you guessed it — three) asking for this address or that phone number. I've even resorted to buying three toothbrushes and three tubes of toothpaste, so I now have one of each at each of my three offices.

Having reached the third paragraph of this piece, I'd like to conclude with a quote... it's just that the book I need is at one of three places, and I'm not at the right one at present. It's times like these where it is all I can do to clench my fists and count to — well, you know.



We are on the web!



Elephant Moments

Nancy Cherry

Recently on Safari I had some of the most incredible elephant moments I've ever experienced.

Picture this: we're camped on the banks of the Zambezi River in Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe. We have seven tents all in a row facing the river, which has plenty of hippos and crocodiles, but is still a glorious water to canoe in.

One afternoon I elected to stay by myself in camp while others in the group either went canoeing, on a game drive or a bush walk. It was so lovely and peaceful, but not entirely quiet. There were always birds chirping, as well as the sounds of the camp staff — the ones who make the camp so delightful for the rest of us. They make our beds, clean our tents, wash and iron our clothes, prepare, cook, and serve our food, and bring us hot water for wash-ups in the morning and showers later in the day. I could just barely hear the murmur of their voices as they did their work and it was a delightful background sound as I was catching up in my Journal.

As I was sitting outside writing I 'felt' the presence of another being. When I turned around I saw an elephant ambling toward me, slowing sweeping the ground with his trunk and putting pods in his mouth. That's when I realized with dismay that my camera was in my tent which was only about 15 feet away. The elephant was about 50 feet so I worked up the courage to creep to the tent. Thank goodness there was film in the camera.

Each day we had seen a few elephants come into camp so I wasn't afraid. Because it is a popular campsite there are frequently humans. The elephants are by no means tame but they are used to the sounds of a camp, smell of diesel and campfires, the odor of humans and really don't bother anyone. They come in this time of year for one of their favorite foods — apple ring acacia pods. And if there are not enough on the ground they just shake the tree and the pods come tumbling down. These are mostly young bulls with pretty good sized tusks.

As the elephant walked down the row of tents towards me I was shooting photos

like mad. I was standing outside my tent (I feel safer with something behind me) when he came so close that all I was getting through the lens was wrinkled grey skin filling the frame — and I didn't have the telephoto on. I was standing by the tent flap when the elephant walked within three feet of me. I am only 5'3" tall, and he seemed like a moving Empire State Building! It was incredible. As he towered over me I had never felt so insignificant in my life. And just a little scared.

He passed the front of our tent and turned the corner. I went into the tent to look out the window. The elephant gently stepped over the guy ropes of the tent and continued to sweep the ground for pods while his tusk grazed the mesh window over my bed. I was actually afraid he would poke a hole in the mesh but he didn't.

Alone with an elephant on the banks of the Zambezi is *very very* special. And people wonder why I keep going back to Africa.

...View From The Loo...

The Perfect World

Gary K. Clarke

Africa is my passion. I go on Safari at every opportunity (104 at last count). I accumulate anything and everything about Africa which includes maps and books (both antiquarian and contemporary), journeys, field guides, brochures, wildlife checklists, even annual reports. Much to my horror when our family moved 15 years ago my collection weighed in at 11 1/2 tons. In spite of this, I still manage to slip in a few more African items with each Safari.

I have a special affinity for maps, atlases and globes in general, and particularly for those that depict historical or exceptional dimensions of the so-called Dark Continent. Globes are particularly interesting as they date back to classical times and are considered by some to be the oldest continuous technique for depicting the earth.

Those who travel to Africa with me know of my predilection and frequently bestow me with new items for my treasure trove. Undoubtedly the most unusual I've ever seen was presented to me by artist, photographer and Safarist

Rod Furgason of Topeka, Kansas

It's called "The Perfect World". And that it is!

Rod took a revolving standard 14-inch diameter globe, complete with brass plated base and semi-meridian, and recreated a world of cartographic interpretation that immediately sent me into a state of intense jubilation.

Each and every land mass on *this* globe is in the shape of the African Continent! Rod has labeled all of these "Africas" to reflect some cognizance of the world as it is perceived in the 21st Century.

Starting at the prime meridian and proceeding east along the equator we see Europe Africa, the Real Africa (with Kansas inlaid on the central rain forest area), Russia Africa, Asia Africa, Australian Africa, Clarke Africa, North and South Pacific Africa, Big Africa, Little Africa, Warm Africa, Canada Africa, Central America Africa, Atlantic Africa, Central North Africa, Down There Africa, Middle of Nowhere Africa and Cowabunga Africa. At the top of the globe is North North Africa, Arctic Africa and Cold

Africa. And at the bottom Antarctic Africa, South South Africa, Way the Hell Down There Africa and Freeze Your Butt Off Africa. And here and there a label on the blue ocean that simply reads Out of Africa.

Thinking that the artist would want to protect this spark of creative endeavor, I looked for some indication of a signature, trademark or copyright. HA! Discreetly on the base in small print is the statement: Copywong Rod Furgason/2000.

Rod's one-of-a-kind rendition of the world is a topic of conversation at our Main Camp (called our office by some). While the founders of the Royal Geographical Society of London probably would *not* endorse this concept, I surmise that noted explorers like Stanley, Livingstone, Burton and Speke at times felt like the world was "all-Africa". Nonetheless, to me this sphere represents Utopia. No matter where on earth I travel I will always be in Africa.



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"I'd rather be on Safari"

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President for Life
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Safari Leader

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Visit our Main Camp at
Fairlawn Plaza

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SAFARI TRAILS

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>SL*</u>	<u>Tariff</u>
2001	1-14 May	NAMIBIA: Skeleton Coast	GKC	\$7750
	1-14 June	KENYA: Mjukuu Private Safari	GKC	\$5321
	14-24 June	TANZANIA: Wildlife Adventure	BH	\$5545
		♦23-30 June: Optional Kilimanjaro Climb	BH	\$1550
	9-22 July	TANZANIA: Lane Family Private Safari	GKC	\$7165
	18-31 July	UGANDA: Under-Discovered Africa and Gorilla Treks	BH	\$8250
	3-17 Aug	ZAMBIA: Luangwa Valley to Victoria Falls	BH	\$7391
	12-26 Aug	ZIMBABWE: Kopjes, Hides & Canoes	GKC	\$8195
	1-15 Oct	KENYA: The Essence of Africa	GKC	\$6850
	27 Dec - 8 Jan	KENYA: Gnu Year in Kenya, Under Canvas	BH	\$5475
2002	12-24 Feb	TANZANIA: Kilimanjaro Snow & Serengeti Plain	BH	\$6295
		♦23-2 Feb/Mar: Optional Kilimanjaro Climb	BH	\$1750**
	14 Feb - 5Mar	TANZANIA: Africa's Great Rift Valley	GKC	\$9845
	Mar	Propose a Private Safari!	BH	On request
	May	TANZANIA: Serengeti Western Corridor	GKC	I.P.
	May - Jun	Propose a Private Safari!	BH	On request
	9-22 Jun	KENYA: Blanchard/Arbelaez Private Safari	GKC	\$8985
	6-19 Jul	ZIMBABWE: Mavuradonna Mountains, Mana & Vic Falls	BH	\$6700**
	11-24 Jul	TANZANIA: Return to Eden	GKC	\$7095
	17 Jul - 1 Aug	KENYA & SOUTH AFRICA: Great Rift, Equator & Cape of Good Hope	BH	\$6195
2003	12-26 Aug	ZIMBABWE: Spirit of the Zambezi	GKC	I.P.
	Sept	ZAMBIA: Land of Livingstone	GKC	I.P.
	2003 Jul	TANZANIA: Himmert Central Family Safari	GKC	I.P.
	2004 Jul	TANZANIA: Tantillo Family Private Safari	GKC	I.P.
	2005 Aug	KENYA: Pattee Family Private Safari	GKC	I.P.
	2008 Jun	TANZANIA: Allen Family Private Safari	GKC	I.P.
2010 Jul	TANZANIA: Himmert Central Reunion Safari	GKC	I.P.	

Are you migrating?

Please let us know your new address as we mail your *Just Now News* by bulk rate and it cannot be forwarded. If you have friends who would enjoy reading our newsletter, send us their addresses. Also, if you would like your name removed from our list, just advise us.

Detailed itineraries are available at no obligation. Call, write, fax, or pop into Main Camp — we'll break out the maps, brew African coffee or have a sundowner, and talk Africa.

* Our Safari Leaders, Gary K. Clarke and Brian Hesse, are listed by their initials.

** Estimated cost at time of printing (I.P. means *in planning*)

*Eat Dessert First...
Life is so Uncertain*