

Johannesburg

We got lost as we came into Johannesburg and therefore didn't arrive at Cynthia Hugo's house until 7:30. Cynthia is co director of the Read Foundation. Jim stayed at Cynthia's and Thomas, one of the Read's drivers, drove us to the home of Irene Manell. Irene is a unique woman. She is knowledgeable on a wide range of subjects. She is an important social and political leader in Johannesburg. She is a wonderful hostess. We had chicken for dinner served by Phineas, the butler and caretaker. We have a suite to ourselves that includes a large bedroom sitting room and a bathroom. We are closed off from the rest of this lovely older but comfortable house.

Friday, August 26, Johannesburg.... Joburg

Slept well and woke about 6:30 & 7:00 a.m. Dressed and went out for breakfast. Wilhelmina, another worker at Irene's house, and Phineas served us breakfast. We asked for an egg, toast and fruit and got it. We organized our folders to some degree, read the paper and walked around the garden. There are familiar and unfamiliar plants. A wall of bushes with white and blue fragrant flowers. It is called "yesterday, today and tomorrow". There is a rose garden, strawberry patch, lemon tree and pecan tree. Interesting new birds including a black ibis and another dark gray or black bird with a long tail and a black crest.

We were picked up by Thomas who took us to Read Foundations where we were met by Jim Hoffman and Bertus. We went with Tandy, a teacher leader, to two Soweto schools. Soweto is a much more complex community than we had expected. The original townships at the height of apartheid had many small brick identical relatively well built houses to segregate the black and colored populations from the whites. Over a period of time between the houses in some areas and in adjacent areas informal houses developed to accommodate the many people who could not fit into the existing houses and new immigrants. We saw signs for homes in housing developments for sale. So Soweto is a patchwork that includes everything from minimal shacks made of scrounged out materials to substantial homes.



We first visited one school called Nka - Thuto Primary School. We were greeted by the principal Teboho Skele, who welcomed us. The school has children from first to eight grades. Parents can choose the primary language of instruction. But all schools are at least bilingual. This school is in Tsonga and English. The children are taught in Tsonga from the beginning to third grade. Then they have departmentalized education and the language of instruction is basically English but the children have a course in Tsonga. The school is an older Brick building. It seems relatively well maintained. The children wear uniforms but this is not enforced. The classes had about 30 kids. Because this is a Read project schools they have materials beyond what the government provides and there is extra teacher compensation. Another surprising thing was the literacy environment on the walls of the office and the classrooms.

We visited the third grade class from which will be chosen the kids we will be working with next week. The classroom had a word wall, child authored books about the animals the children were researching, charts for kids to read which they had generated with their teacher. There was a small collection of books for the classroom supplied mostly by Read. The children greeted us and called Tandy Mama Tandy. She introduced Yetta as Mama



Yetta and Baba Ken. They responded in unison to Tandy's greeting and to ours as well. Yetta asked them to ask us questions.

They guessed that we were American from our accent. They wanted to know how long it took us to get to SA. We told them we flew from Tucson to Washington DC to Ghana to Johannesburg and they figured out how many hours it took us to fly. They knew that George W. Bush was president of the U.S. The children were responsive, friendly and smiled a lot. Because they looked happy, Yetta sang If you're Happy and you know it clap your hands. They children immediately joined in. She asked them if they would sing us a song and after some general discussion, they seemed to join in a song easily and in many part harmony. They move and use their hands and enjoy singing very much. They stand when they sing and everyone was singing.



We left the classroom and went to the principal's office where we were served a drink and biscuits. We then drove to the other school.

There we went into the office after being greeted by the principal. At each school the gate was locked and had to be opened for the car to go through. Tandy asked the driver to make sure the doors were locked when we drove.

We then went to a fifth grade class who greeted us in unison and sang a song in beautiful harmony. Then the teacher demonstrated a lesson using a frame called an Owl chart which she introduced which involved the children in Observation, Wondering, and Links. She asked the children to talk generally about OWL and then read them a book called Shark Rescue and asked them to write at the same time that they were listening to the story she was reading placing Observation, Wondering and Links about the story on the chart. The children did this quietly and all participated. The teacher called on a number of children to read their responses aloud. The children were engaged.. Tandy sometimes interrupted the teacher to direct her and the children more. Tandy asked the teacher to tell us why she was using the frame and what good it did for the children. The teacher turned the task over to the kids by asking them how they responded to the activity. The kids had fairly good answers. The kids sang again and we left the classroom.



Tandy wanted us to see the Reception class of five year olds. Reception has just become compulsory in South Africa. The little ones sang the South African National Anthem to us in four languages.... English, Sotho, Zulu and Afrikaans. This school has more language diversity than the previous school does. In addition to the above languages, Tsonga is also spoken. There are also Mozambicans who speak another dialect of Tsonga in the school. The SA children are exposed to the diversity of the languages in homes, community and t.v. The Mozambican kids are speakers of Tsonga and may be exposed to Portuguese. The Reception teacher told us that she code switched with the children in about five languages although the language of instruction for primary is English.



Teachers at both schools commented that the children play together before they come to school and usually learn each others

language through their play. So learning a new language – English is not much of a problems. Both the third and fifth graders were able to understand us and speak English so we understood.

We returned to Read for a nice lunch and tour of the Read Foundation. It is an impressive operation. They have a division that imports, produces and distributes materials to their programs and for general sales. Their hope is that this division will become profit making and contribute to the Read budget. Depending on how many projects they have going they have as many as 200 employees mostly in the field. Clearly Read is one of the best funded NGO's working on literacy in South Africa.

We spent the rest of the afternoon working on our email and was driven back to Irene's by Robert, a contract driver. We had tea, dinner and tea with our hostess, Irene Menell. The surname is derived from what her husband's grandfather told the London immigration that his name was Mendel. We had a great discussion about South African and U.S. and world politics, philosophy, etc.

Saturday, August 27, Johannesburg

We had breakfast served by Whilhelmina and were picked up by Riette and Pete Els at 9:00 who are Afrikaners. She is a National training coordinator for Read Educational Trust



similar to Tandy. He is a civil engineer who has his own building company working mostly on remodeling older houses. We were driving in a four wheel SUV. We got something of an Afrikaner view of the current situation and past history. He described growing up on a medium size farm where his playmates were black and the nearest white kids lived a considerable distance away. His attitude seemed to be more that of a self made business man than any kind of holdover of racism. At several points in our driving he had interactions with black Africans such as asking directions and had an easy humorous interactions. He seemed to switch registers as he talked to them.

Riette is heading up a new project for Read working with teachers of reception classes. She is somewhat critical of the teachers not being able to follow up on her workshops quickly enough. Although there were times where they seemed to be critical of blacks they did indicate the great mistakes of the apartheid regime. There was one point where they said that Pete was not able to take the black people who worked for him into a restaurant and shared some humorous experiences that happened to the black folks the first time he was able to take them in with him.

We went to the Cradle of Mankind ,a dig being excavated. It involves a series of caves where they found humanoid remains going back two to four million years. The project is operated by Wits University. The museum is not open yet but we could walk around and see plaques about historical events and the area where the excavations were going on but we didn't take a tour of the caves. Our hosts were very knowledgeable about the flora and fauna, plants, birds and animals we saw on the whole trip. They often shared the Afrikaans names with us.

We drove to a private lion park. We saw ostriches on the way. We saw a hen with chicks, and adult males and females. The males were black and the females gray.



At the lion park we walked into an enclosure that had lion cubs including some white ones. We saw spring bucks, other antelopes, and other wild animals. We had refreshments and then drove through four enclosed lion areas. We had to stay in our car. For the most part the lions were lethargic but easily visible to cameras and eyes. A few were walking around. We also saw hyenas and cheetahs in enclosures. There were many family groups at the park including many black Africans. They seemed to be church or school groups.



We ate at an upscale Safari Ranch at a pool side restaurant while peacocks, pea hens and other animals wandered about. At one point four or five zebras came to the swimming pool for a drink. As we were leaving Ken was able to get close up pictures of a zebra and giraffes. We saw various kinds of antelope walking around the place. blue wildebeests.



On the whole trip we saw wide open fields well taken care of. We saw lots of building going on. There are areas of sour grass that the animals will not eat but many houses and buildings have thatched roofs made from the sour grass collected by Black Africans who make a meager living selling it to builders or roofers. We saw a women cutting away at such a task off a highway. We passed large areas of informal shacks. There was a running flea market between the houses and the road. Pete remarked that people lived there free and spent their money on expensive cars. We also saw a lot of hawking of all kind of wares along the road.

We saw one person hawking right next to a no hawking sign.

We had tea with Irene and her son Rick and talked about the reading process because Irene asked what miscue meant. Rick is a captain of industry having worked on wall street. He is a geologist and eventually took over and became an executive in his father's mining business. His younger brother Brian works with him. He is starting a new venture in the Congo with Canadian capital.

We went to dinner at a Japanese restaurant in one of the shopping malls with Irene, Jim and Burtus. We had a lovely evening and conversation and returned home, wrote this diary and prepared for sleep.

Sunday, August 28, Johannesburg

Wilhelmina went to her home for Saturday afternoon and Sunday so Phineas served us breakfast. Ken worked on pictures and Yetta worked on the RMA manuscript. Burtus dropped Jim off at 10:15 and Robert picked us up at 10:30. He drove us to a shopping center where the rooftop car park is turned into a market with crafts, flea market etc. We had coffee and a roll at a Greek deli. We spent about 2 ½ hours looking and buying crafts. We bought masks, throws,

batiks, trinkets, a hair pick and a wooden turtle. Jim bought a wall hanging. We had lunch at the same Greek Restaurant. The food was good and reminded us of a Jewish deli. We bought cookies and halvah for Irene. Robert picked us up at 2:30 and took us back to Irene's. Jim was picked up by Burtus at 3:00 and was going to the airport to go home. We worked organizing for our Monday a.m. an Wits PM presentations, on pictures and manuscripts.



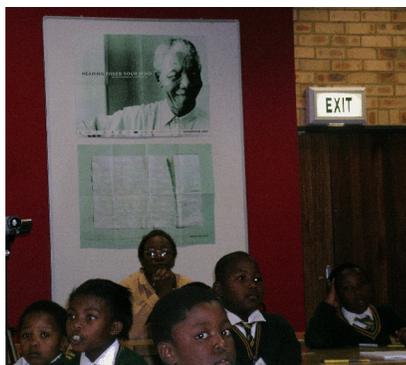
Irene came home and later her son and two beautiful grandsons arrived and we had tea and conversation together. We had an omelet for dinner that Irene made, had tea again and watched the news. Since Jesse Jackson was on t.v. (He was speaking to the Venezuelan parliament in response to Pat Robertson's call for the assassination of the Venezuelan president) Irene told us about the time that Jesse Jackson was served breakfast at her home. She knows many people who have been prominent through the years around the world and especially knows the important people in South Africa..

Monday August 29, Johannesburg

Sometime in the wee hours of the morning, Ken realized that the lights were out. There was a blackout (not all that unique) over a good part of the city and it lasted through the morning. The power authorities offered no explanation for the outages. We had a cold breakfast without tea..



Robert picked us up at 9:00 to take use to Read Foundation. Burtus welcomed us. We did email and got ready for the classroom where we would work with 20 3rd grade kids from the school we visited Friday. The children arrived with the children's teachers and principal. The Read staff joined our presentation. We asked the adults to sit at the tables where the kids were sitting and to take notes about their interactions, their behaviors and their language. Yetta talked to the kids about writing letters to friends in the U.S. She used a model by writing a letter from herself to Dear Friend. After writing the letter and involving the kids in helping to expand the letter using their ideas, we told them to write a letter to a friend and Yetta would find kids their age to respond back to them. These kids seemed inexperienced about letter writing although they did talk about birthday and mother's day cards. She asked the kids to share with each other what they would say in a letter so it wouldn't be copied from Yetta's letter. The kids talked to each other and then settled in to write the letter. There were magic markers, pencils, pens and rulers on the table with blank paper.



Many of the children folded their paper in half to make a card. Many used the rule to make lines on their paper. They wrote slowly

and carefully even though Yetta said they would have the opportunity to rewrite. As it turned out they spent a lot of time on this activity so we sent them off to lunch. After a quick lunch they read their letters to each other which we collected. We gave them one of Debi's Detective club sheets. Yetta and the children worked on the one word that was missing from the sheet and talked about the clues they used to know what that word was. We had to work fast because of time but many of the children were able to do the activity. Some of the children were having difficulty. This is the first year the children are in English majority classes. They showed some influence from first language syntax. They were reluctant to write without correct spelling. Some of the Read people helped them a bit much but were kind and supportive. The kids were cooperative, well behaved and showed no lack of attention span. This group of kids have Zulu and Tsonga as the mother tongue languages in the school and English is added in third grade so the children have been in English instruction since March.

We had lunch at Read with Edward and Burtus. Edward was in on the beginnings of the Read experience. We did more email but it was fairly slow in the afternoon. Burtus said goodbye to us since he was going off to Cape Town for a big project.

We returned to Irene's house about 4:30, had tea, dinner, planned for Tuesday and went to bed. Ken downloaded and edited pictures.

Tuesday August 30, Johannesburg

We woke up at 6:30 but Yetta was lazy and stayed in bed until Ken finished showering and shaving. The lights were on which was pleasant. It was cold enough that we had the heater going which kept things warm and cozy. Wilhelmina returned some of the laundry from yesterday.

We had breakfast and Ken downloaded the pictures from the night before. Robert picked us up at 9:00. We went to Read Foundation, did an hours worth of email and got the room ready for the 5th graders with great support from Read staff.



A number of teachers from various Read schools came on time. The children were late so we started with the teachers and Read staff introducing themselves. The teachers were from various schools and were teaching kids from reception through to about 13 year olds. There were a few principals as well.

The children arrived. Yetta asked them to start by singing one of their songs that she liked that they did last Friday. Yetta engaged them in a letter writing experience to write to friends in the U.S. They were much more proficient at the letter writing process then the 3rd graders yesterday. They were to write one draft, read it to their neighbor and then make a final draft to be given to kids in the U.S. Yetta encouraged them to write quickly and not worry about final copy. She called what they were doing as their sloppy copy. The children were very receptive and started in immediately to write. This took about 20 minutes. They then read to their friends to edit their letters and then produced their final copy. The final copy took longer as the children

illustrated and decorated their letters. They also copied their work carefully. We took a break and the children ate lunch as they finished their letters.



The teachers who had been walking around the room and watching and interacting with the kids had time to ask Ken questions about what we had done with the kids.

Then we went back into the classroom with the kids and many of the teachers stayed to observe more. We did a quick “three little pigs” Reading Detective Club strategy lesson. Many of the kids responded well but there were a number of kids who could have used a longer time to understand the process.

Yetta read *The Wise Woman and her Secret* to finish the session. The children and the teachers were in awe of the story. The children responded with a song – *Smile A While* which Ken captured on the camera and later transferred to the computer.

We had lunch with Cynthia and Deborah at Read. It was a gourmet lunch – chateau briand, lovely cold veggies, roasted potatoes. After lunch we did email til 4:30 and Robert picked us up. We stopped at a shopping center for Tylenol, water and wine to take to Cynthia’s for dinner. Yetta organized the children’s letters for the workshop on Thursday. Ken downloaded pictures. Wilhelmina gave us the rest of the laundry and we drove with Irene to Cynthia’s house.



We had a lovely meal at Cynthia’s – smoked salmon appetizer, mild fish, veggies, roasted potatoes and couscous with apple strudel for dessert. The company was wonderful. There was Professor Fleish from Wits whose degree is from Teacher’s College and he did his dissertation at Bank Street. There was another staff member from Read with Debbie. Cynthia and Irene were there. We talked about lots of things related to language issues, Dewey education, literacy, Bush politics, secondary education in South Africa, dialects, etc. etc. We went home with Irene about 10:30.

We called Tanya Meyer and will try to see her sometime before we leave.