



SAFARI " Life is not measured by the amount of breaths one takes but by the things that take your breath away."

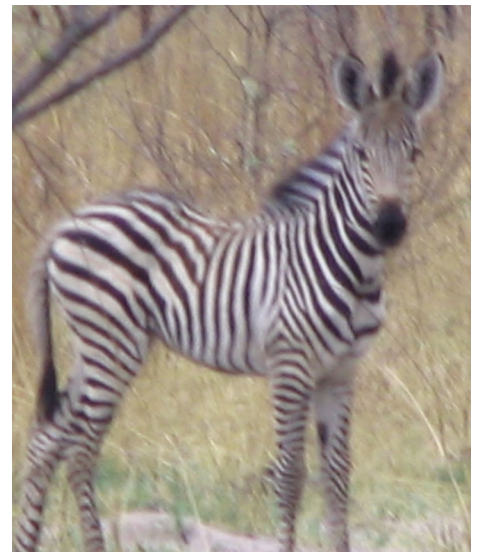
Nothing could be more true when on a safari in Africa. Oh I really don't know how I could ever describe the experience of it all. The feeling of peace, the landscapes and the animals, the glorious sunsets and the bright starry nights; it was magical and overwhelming and awesome and a totally unique experience. Although close to the summer

season there, our spring time weather was about as good as it could get. Hot enough to have the animals come out of hiding and go to the water areas and yet cool enough for some of them to take a rest in open space. We actually got the closest to the elephants and lions that we saw. They didn't run away when our vehicle approached. Quickly we learned that *they* don't have to run away. They are the big and the powerful in the line of survival. Oh wow.....and to see them up close and personal is awesome. It surprised me to see that most of the animals were quite healthy looking. Here in the national parks they are protected from poaching. Here they find enough to eat and have space to roam free with only the rules of nature. I learned a lot of new terms that describe the animals and understood the connection of the words so much more after seeing the them in action. A *pride* of lions....indeed they walk with pride. A *dazzle* of zebra....beautiful disco in action. A *tower* of giraffe that bends gracefully low to drink or becomes a *journey* when they saunter to their next destination. Or how about a *mob* of mongoose and a *troupe* of baboons? In case you didn't know, it's a *rank* of impala, a *bellow* of buffalo and a *bicycle* of ostrich. When you see an ostrich charging ahead, their legs really do look like they're bicycling. But my favorite was watching the big "parade". Elephants in mass migration. I almost wanted to strike up the band! How wonderful to watch. The animals in the natural splendor were exceptional to watch but I had different feelings about the peoples of Southern Africa. In most of the countries, all too many are desperately poor and without much hope. Although rich in natural resources, Africa remains one of the poorest continents in the world. It remains a victim of it's past and has not progressed to taking the personal responsibility needed for change. Zimbabwe currently has the worse of everything in Africa. Recently the 99% black population seized power and elected it's first black leader. Immediately seizing the land of white controlled farms, the country has quickly seen the collapse of it's agriculture based economy. In this post colonial state, Zimbabwe now has a one-man rule

where democracy is stunted, human rights are abused and there is much political corruption. Inflation fluctuates by the thousands daily and there literally is no hope for change without civil war. Namibia is hot, dry and has sparse rainfall. Usable land is less than one percent. Life expectancy is low and aids and other diseases are high. There are few jobs and people struggle daily just to find food or water to survive. Botswana is currently doing well. It has a progressive and dynamic economy with capital invest-

ments, natu- and growing haps it will to their fel- nations.

Unlike other here man dominate -made won- gle. And for hope for



mental resources tourism. Per- show the way low African Overall it was experience.

"vacations", does not the land. There are few buildings or roads or man- ders to see. Africa is still about the law of the jun- now, the animals are born free and give the best man's survival.