

Greetings from Phebe Hospital in Bong County, Liberia!

Gary and I have traveled 3 hours from Zorzor to Phebe so that Gary can meet with Patrick Jackson, the Liberian Tuition Sponsorship Program coordinator and his helpers. Along with us are Yongqui, our driver, and Scott, a member of the Global Health Ministries, who spent an enjoyable week with us helping at Curran Hospital and is now working his way back to Monrovia.

We are emailing you from Phebe because Edna's computer (the only one that has the satellite hook-up) has picked up a virus and we do not want to spread it to anyone else's computer. Edna does not have an anti-virus program and at the moment we have no way of getting one. We should be able to clear the virus from our systems once we get back to the States.

The building at Curran Hospital is going well despite the recent slow down as we have been waiting for the needed supplies from the neighborhood hardware store eight hours away in Monrovia (so far the truck has broken down twice). Last night the truck with the supplies from the Container that Gary and I helped packed back in November arrived so we left amid much excitement at all the boxes being unloaded and dispersed.

Up until this point, one of the most exciting days occurred last week. We were just getting started for the day when there was a commotion under three trees that are in the area of the medical surgical ward we are working on. A monkey was discovered in the trees! Just picture 20+ workers throwing rocks, and using their rubber guns (sling shots) to get the monkey. For them it is a source of needed food—protein! Although they had the monkey cornered, they couldn't bring him down so they sent for the "barrel."

They left a couple of spotters on the monkey as everyone went back to work until the "barrel" arrived. Finally a man came with a very old gun and work came to a screeching halt as everyone watched to see what would happen. Since bullets cost a dear price here, the gunman was very judicious with his shot. First they maneuvered the monkey around with their rubber guns and then he took aim, fired one shot and down the monkey came. Everyone was very excited especially when Gary paid the man both for the one shot he fired so that the monkey would be the "bush meat" in our "soup" on Monday. Gary kidded about being careful about finding buckshot in our meat on Monday. No one did then, but Gary chomped down on a bullet in his soup on Wednesday. Gary shot video of most of the hunt which I am sure he'll show anyone who wants to watch it!

Life is still very hard here in Liberia as they continue to recover from the civil war, but signs of progress are seen everywhere you look: the final ward of the hospital being rebuilt, the Lutheran school I had an opportunity to visit this week that is in its second year of operation, and the dichotomy of driving pass a thatched roof hut watching the person sitting in front of it pull out their cell phone. God has sent an amazing mixture of people to come help the people of Liberia. I am thankful I have had the opportunity to be one of them. Gary and I pray all is going well with you and yours back in the States. When we have access to another virus-free computer we will write again, otherwise, we'll see you in February! God bless, Deb and Gary