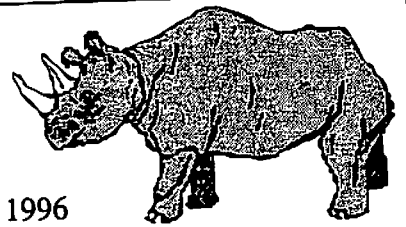


REALLY, RHINOS!



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This issue is dedicated to Anna Merz.

A Letter from Anna Merz

As so many of you will be aware, total disaster befell Samia and her baby very soon after I completed my last newsletter. Both fell over a forty foot cliff on the night of the 21st November 95. Both died; my beloved Samia instantly and little Samuel broke his back and had to be shot. The cause of the tragedy are known only to the trees, rocks and stars and they guard their secret. Her tracks and those of her mate, Kenu, were together on top of the cliff. Did the love, [sic] fight or play? We shall not know.

Three months have now passed but the pain of their loss has not. I miss them both all the time. But I have, however, been both comforted and astounded by the incredible outpouring of compassion their deaths has provoked. I have received over 200 wonderful letters, cards and faxes. I hope I have replied to everyone personally but anyone who wrote and has not heard from me please accept my heartfelt gratitude for the courage you have all given to me. It makes me feel that perhaps Samia's life and my love for her have not been in vain and that all of you who have cared enough to write to me will also care enough to ensure the continuation of her species on the beautiful earth in the next millennium. I am also deeply grateful that the documentary film made about her by Jack and Pauline Bollamy for BBC Wildlife on One Was completed and will be shown in the late spring, narrated by David Attenborough. I hope so much that it will show the whole world what wonderful animals rhinos are and make people care about them enough to create the political and economic pressure needed to ensure their survival.

Here at Lewa our work has to go on. The November rains having virtually failed we are terribly dry and longing and hoping for rain in April. On the 24th January the young black cow, Juniper, herself born here in 1988, produced her first calf. She is being an excellent mother. The three calves born last year to Morembo, Solia and Stumpy also continue

to make good progress. This week the team of volunteers brought by Janet and Spencer Golsthorpe of the Guernsey Rhino Trust arrived and have already laid the foundations of our new clinic. Last year they built a clinic for the Lake Nekuru Rhino Sanctuary. We are so lucky that this year it is our turn. Ten cases of supplies and medical equipment have already been donated by Dr. Marjorie Harmon's Support Group in Springfield, Missouri and six more cases are en route. The clinic is expected to cater to some 500 people on completion, about half will be our own people and the other half our neighbors. It will be under the supervision of Dr. Harmon. The nurse who it is hoped will staff it is now completing her training with AMREF.

So, despite tragedies our work must go on and I hope you will all continue to give us your support and encouragement and I would thank once more all of you who have written to me for your caring and kindness. We will not let Samia's life be in vain.



A personal, handwritten note from Anna:

Dear Ms. Lessee,

I have just learnt from Karen Kane of the Rhino Trust of your most generous donation of \$100 towards our work here with rhinos. We are in appreciation of your help. Keeping these precious animals safe [sic] is a major undertaking and a very costly one so we do so need our support and interest. Thank you very much.

Anna Merz.

[ed note: I have just read that Anna is leaving Lewa Downs and retiring to South Africa. If she hasn't already won it, someone should nominate her for the Goldman Prize. Wait, I think she won it! She deserves it. The Mother Theresa of the rhino world. Blessings to her for a long and healthy life!]