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LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY | courier-journal.com | A GANNETT NEWSPAPER



By Pam Spaulding, The Courier-Journal

At the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, Rhoda Nyanthich waits for the day she can be reunited with her husband, who lives in Louisville.

Lost Boys, torn families

It was war that drove them from Africa, but love is leading them back. The Lost Boys, refugees from a long and bloody battle in their homeland, are reconnecting with the lives and loved ones they left behind. In the four years since 200 of the young men were resettled in Louisville, some have learned of family members still in villages and refugee camps. Others have returned to their homeland to try to find wives. This week, we'll introduce you to their love stories, which reach across the ocean and against the odds.

Many claim smoking ban exemptions

Louisville businesses, groups prepare for new rules Tuesday

By Joseph Gerth
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 The Courier-Journal

With less than 48 hours before Louisville's smoking ban begins, many businesses are serving notice whether they will go smoke-free. Most large restaurant chains, such as Applebee's and O'Charley's, say they will end smoking when the ban begins a 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. But people will still be able to light up in hundreds of businesses. The Louisville Metro Health Department has compiled a list of 291 groups and businesses that say they are exempt. Among them is Bearno's in the Highlands, where Kelly Frith, 40, last week said she is pleased that she'll still be able to enjoy a cigarette there and at some of her other favorite haunts. "If you don't like smoke, don't go to The Back Door and don't go to the Left Field Lounge," she said, citing two bars. Chester Clements, who puffed away as he watched a football game at The Back Door, which will also be exempt, said he wasn't too concerned about the ban. "I (already) can't smoke when I'm at work," he

See **SMOKING**, A6, col. 2

ON THE WEB
 Go to courier-journal.com for:
 ▶ A searchable database of nearly 300 businesses that have notified the metro government that they will be exempt from the ban.
 ▶ Our online forum, where you can tell us what you think about the ban.
 ▶ More stories on the ban.
INSIDE
 ▶ Challenge to law could come from bingo hall operators.
 ▶ Basic questions about the ban answered.
 ▶ Tips for those who want to quit smoking.
 Stories, A6

A love worlds apart



Solomon John works at UPS and worships at Resurrection Episcopal Church.

Solomon John fell in love in a Kenyan refugee camp, but immigration policies have left his wife and young son there, waiting, while he works in Louisville to bring them to his side.

TODAY ON A7-A10

Wives and siblings



Sora Martin, left, the wife of Martin Nhial, with her sister-in-law, Josephine Nhial.

Family is strong in the traditions of the Lost Boys, and that can mean their wives are chosen by their parents. And they work to aid siblings who couldn't leave the camps.

MONDAY IN FEATURES

The red tape



Adut Bak, the wife of Benjamin Ageuk, bought meat in Eldoret, Kenya.

For the Lost Boys, happiness can hinge on their ability to navigate immigration regulations. One man has won approval for his wife to join him in Louisville. His friend has not.

TUESDAY IN FEATURES

Gay priests fight for acceptance

Church considers them 'disordered'

By Rachel Zoll
 Associated Press

The Rev. Fred Daley, a gay Roman Catholic priest, grew increasingly disturbed by Vatican pronouncements over the years that homosexuals were unfit for the clergy. The situation escalated when some church leaders suggested that homosexuals were responsible for the sex-abuse crisis. Daley was so angry he did something last year that almost no other homosexual Catholic cler-

ic in the country has done: He came out to his bishop, parishioners and his entire community to show that homosexuals are faithfully working in the church. "I'm as much a member of the church as anybody else," said Daley, of St. Francis de Sales Church in Utica, N.Y., who was ordained in 1974. "I love being a priest." Researchers have estimated that thousands of homosexual clergy across the United States have dedicated their lives to a church that considers them "intrinsically disordered" and prone to "evil tendencies." Soon, the Vatican will back up

See **GAY**, All, col. 1

Tornado victims trying to put their lives back together

Many must start over with nothing

By Alex Davis
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 The Courier-Journal

DeGONIA SPRINGS, Ind. — Their bedroom was buried under a pile of bricks. The kitchen

cabinets were smashed, the walls coated with mud. But a week after a tornado swept through their town in rural Warrick County, retirees Jim and Donna Lutz are simply grateful to be alive. And, like

hundreds of other families across southwestern Indiana, they're focusing on starting over. "After being through something like that, you have an altogether different outlook," said Jim, 68, standing in front of his destroyed home several days after the storm. "Things aren't as important."

The tornado was Indiana's deadliest in three decades, killing 23 people in Vanderburgh and Warrick counties. At least 500 homes were destroyed, and overall storm damage is expected to be in the tens of millions of dollars. Disaster-relief experts predict it will take a year or longer

for some tornado survivors to rebuild. The federal government will provide some assistance, along with churches, insurance companies and non-profit groups such as the American Red Cross. But not all of the destruction will be covered. Julie Pulliam, a spokeswoman

for the American Insurance Association, said the cost of tree removal and other land damage, for example, isn't covered by most homeowner policies. And she said families who haven't updated their insurance to reflect the value of additions or renovations

See **TORNADO**, A4, col. 1



METRO | B1

Judicial changes
 Judicial retirement announcements might set off a "seismic shift" on the bench in Jefferson County courts.

FEATURES | E1

Polo team mounts up
 The women's polo team at the University of Louisville is looking to establish itself for the long haul.

CLOSER LOOK | A12

European time bomb
 As France struggled last week to contain violence by enraged youths, Europeans watched with bewilderment and alarm.

WEATHER | B8

36-HOUR FORECAST
Louisville: Showers likely early, clearing by afternoon. Mostly clear and cooler tonight. Increasing clouds tomorrow.



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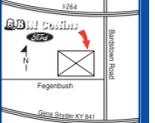
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LOST BOYS ...



... TORN FAMILIES



Rhoda Nyanthic, wife of Louisville Lost Boy Solomon John, was followed by local children as she walked in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. She hopes to be reunited with her husband soon.

Africa never left 'Lost Boys'

Story by Katya Cengel and photos by Pam Spaulding | kcengel@courier-journal.com | The Courier-Journal

Now begins a new chapter in the saga of the Lost Boys, whose story already is legend: 17,000 young men from war-ravaged Sudan — children with homes destroyed, parents killed or sisters sold into slavery — who dodged soldiers, lions and crocodiles on an agonizing African odyssey. More than half made it to a refugee camp in Kenya.

By 2001, about 4,000 of those had been welcomed into the United States to find new lives, about 200 in Louisville.

Four years later, they are forging new ties to their scattered families. Some pay rent for apartments in Louisville and Nairobi; some send pictures to sons they have never seen. Some talk on crackly phone lines to mothers they can no longer picture or cousins they long thought dead.

But, most of all, they think about wives.

While thousands of Lost Boys were brought to America,

fewer than 100 Lost Girls, who fit the same profile as the young men, came. Most of the young women, traditionally worth money when they marry, were absorbed into families in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. The young men remained on their own, visible and vulnerable to being drawn into the ongoing war in Sudan.

When the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. State Department decided to resettle many of them, even though most of the young men were over 18, romance did not enter into the equation.

"You know, at that point, I don't think we were thinking about that," said Joung-Ah Ghedini, public information officer with the U.N. refugee agency. "It's a valid point."

"One of the failings of this process was that it was perceived that this was a group of unaccompanied young men who ... were orphans and had no family attachments," said

Sasha Chanoff, a former Kakuma camp relief worker.

"The fact was, a number of young men were married and had children, (but) they knew if they said anything they would be taken off the list for resettlement."

Others, who weren't married at the time, have since returned to marry in order to help preserve their culture, a mission their tribal elders had given them.

"This is proving that they are ambassadors, that they have not forgotten their people," said Dinka elder Joseph Maker Kur at Kakuma.

Last spring and summer, a number of Louisville's Lost Boys returned to Africa to marry. Another half-dozen or so are working to bring their wives here.

This is their story — a story of family and affection surviving years of silence, separation and despair.

It's a love story that, for many, is just beginning.



United Nations High Commission for Refugees

A 1993 photo shows the sprawling Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya soon after about 10,000 Lost Boys arrived there, ending a 1,000-mile walk to escape their country's civil war.

HOW WE DID IT

- ▶ Writer Katya Cengel spent two weeks in Africa reporting on Louisville's "Lost Boys," as the recipient of a World Affairs Journalism Fellowship from the International Center for Journalists.
- ▶ Courier-Journal photographer Pam Spaulding accompanied her at the newspaper's expense.
- ▶ Most conversations in Africa were obtained with the help of translators.

SOLOMON JOHN...



He works at UPS in Louisville, while she and their son live in a refugee camp in Kenya. They wait for the day they can finally live together.



... RHODA NYANTHIC

One family, worlds apart



Rhoda Nyanthic lives in Kenya with son Mayen, 1, awaiting U.S. approval to join husband Solomon John in Louisville. He left Kenya in 2001 and returned briefly in 2003 to marry Nyanthic, but hasn't seen his son.

Story by Katya Cengel and photos by Pam Spaulding | kcengel@courier-journal.com | The Courier-Journal

KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, KENYA

In the stifling air of the small, mud home, the 1-year-old boy presses his wet mouth to a photo of Solomon John.

"Ba-ba," the baby says cheerfully as he kisses the photo.

In Dinka, his language, "ba-ba" means father.

But little Mayen Solomon has never met his father, who works the second shift at United Parcel Service in distant Louisville, Ky.

He only knows his father in photos, like the one that hangs in a gold frame on the wall of the tiny space he shares with his mother, Rhoda Nyanthic, and grandmother, Rebecca Adit. There are no closets in their single-room dwelling, just two beds resting on the dirt floor, two small tables and two suitcases. The suitcases remain packed — ready to go.

Even large camps like this one, holding about 86,000 refugees, are meant to be temporary homes. But Mayen's mother has been living here for 13 years.

As the hot, dry days pass, she waits for mysterious bureaucratic processes to sweep her out of the camp, into the arms of her baby's father in Louisville. She remembers that Solomon Aluong John made her a promise: When he left the Kakuma camp in 2001 as one of the Lost Boys being resettled in the United States, he said he would return and marry her.

"He told me," says Nyanthic. "He promise me."

John did return two years

later, and he did marry her. But he had to leave her behind until U.S. immigration officials said she could join him.

Nyanthic has undergone preliminary immigration interviews and awaits a Homeland Security interview next year that could finally lead to her being reunited with her husband. Or it could leave them as they are now, caught between continents and cultures, trying to reconcile an African wedding with American bureaucracy — and trying to keep their love strong despite intervening oceans and mountains of red tape.

Back in Louisville it's work and study

As night envelops the African refugee camp, seven time zones away, Solomon John, 24, is starting his afternoon shift at a United Parcel Service warehouse in Louisville.

He wears a black, white and red necklace, the same kind his son wears in Africa. John's loose jeans hang low on his lanky frame, and sweat falls from his face as he unpacks large boxes, organizing the smaller ones within to be put away and later shipped.

Beginning at 2 p.m., he sorts through box after box in silence for \$9.50 an hour, \$2 more than he made in a previous job, working as a janitor at Caritas Peace Center.

When he has money and time, he takes classes at Jefferson Community College. This fall he is taking English



Solomon John works the afternoon shift at a United Parcel Service warehouse in Louisville. He sends his wife \$150 to \$200 every month. To save money, he shares a two-bedroom apartment with three other Lost Boys.

and math. He got his General Educational Development certificate in 2002. Every weekend he buys a "Hello Africa" or "African Dream" phone card and talks to his wife.

This isn't the future he dreamed of when he, along with almost 4,000 other "Lost Boys" fleeing a civil war in Sudan, first learned they would be relocated to the United States.

At cultural orientation classes in the Kakuma Refugee Camp before coming to America, he was taught about things

he'd never experienced before, like winter, flush toilets and dialing 9-1-1. He was told about free education, free meals and uniting with his family.

"In orientation they said you can bring family, girlfriends to U.S. later," John remembers. But they never said how much later.

Escaping the war comes with losses

The brutal civil war in their homeland of Sudan still colors life for Nyanthic and John.

The war forced John, his cousins and uncle out of their

village in southern Sudan when he was 8. It claimed the cousin who had helped carry him in their flight across the swirling waters of the Gilo river in Ethiopia. It separated him from his father and mother, who has since died, and his siblings.

Nyanthic doesn't remember how old she was when the northern army raided her own village, killing her father and sending her and her mother on the trek that would eventually end at the refugee camp.

She believes she is 23 now, the second-oldest child in her

family. Her two younger sisters joined her in Kenya this year. They live in a mud hut next door. Her older sister lives in a village in Sudan.

The two meet and are joined

It was in the dirt and desolation of the Kakuma camp that Nyanthic and John first met. He was a Sunday school teacher there.

"I just saw her at the church, and I felt attracted to her," John said from the Louisville apartment he shares with other Lost Boys. It was 1999. He had been in the camp since 1992, and he had known her family since childhood.

"I ask some of my friends who are related to her what they know about her. It took five months before she agree we can be friends."

In Dinka culture the girl must be pursued and almost always, at the beginning, shows disinterest. But the two soon grew closer. Nyanthic liked John's excellent manners and his straightforward behavior. "He's not a liar," she said.

The couple were married — for the first time — in 2002 in a Dinka ceremony. John was in Kentucky at the time, and Nyanthic in Kenya. In a Dinka marriage there is no certificate and, in some cases, no husband present.

But the United States has different standards, so in 2003, after saving for a plane ticket, John returned to marry Nyanthic again. This time, the cere-

See LOUISVILLE, A9, col. 1

LOUISVILLE

Lost Boy, wife await reunion

Continued from A8

mony included a certificate recognized in the United States. John was able to spend three months with his wife before returning to Louisville. (In keeping with the Dinkas' complex naming tradition, Nyanthic did not change her name, nor was her son given his father's last name.)

The next year, after their son, Mayen, had been born, John, with the help of Kentucky Refugee Ministries, submitted to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services an Affidavit of Relationship for his wife and child to join him in the United States. The procedure allows those who come to the United States as refugees and asylum-seekers to request refugee processing for family members.

Finally, after months of waiting, John's wife had several interviews last week with the Joint Voluntary Agency, which works with the U.S. State Department on refugee matters. But she hasn't been told when her Homeland Security interview will be.

John is excited that things are finally happening, but he knows that complications still may lie ahead. He has learned to be patient, but patience can be difficult.

This spring he learned his son was sick with dysentery, without the proper medicine, and he felt he had to take more action. With the help of friends, he wrote to U.S. Rep. Anne Northup, asking that her office help to expedite his case. (Northup's office says it does not discuss individual cases.)

Again with the help of friends, John was able to send some medicine to the camp, but by the time it arrived, Mayen had recovered on his own.

Life in camp means few amenities

Nyanthic receives food from the Kakuma camp authorities twice a month. Sometimes it runs out before her next ration. And sometimes the water she brings from the tap stand each morning doesn't last until she is allowed to get more in the evening.

She and her son share with nine other families a primitive toilet, a hole in the ground with a metal door. In the corner of their particular compound — a dirt area surrounded by a circle of mud huts — a crooked sheet of metal and woven mats hangs from tree branches above a small plastic tub and water canister: the shower.

Nyanthic's ceiling is made of sacks stamped with "Maize World Food Programme"; the rust on her tin roof eats away at its "USA" markings.

From 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. the sky is a dark blue, the wind blows strong and no outsiders visit the camp — it is too dangerous. The road leading to it is one of the most threatening in Kenya. Aid organizations drive in convoys, armed guards at the ready.

Nyanthic says that three of her distant relatives were killed during an attack by the local Turkana tribe in 2003. The attacks postponed her wedding and left her terrified of the Turkana, the camp's only real neighbors, a fierce, seminomadic people who live in paper-covered mud huts near the camp's borders.

Nyanthic takes a gold band from her ring finger and holds it in the sunlight streaming through a square hole in the wall of her hut, a tiny window with green and yellow curtains. On the inside of the ring is written "S. Aluong," John's first initial and middle name.

"The only thing that makes me so patient is because I want to be married to Solomon for life," says Nyanthic.

Outside, under the hole in the wall, is a clump of purple portulaca flowers, the only flower garden in the dusty compound. The flowers are surrounded by upside-down glass jars. Similar jars also help



Rhoda Nyanthic carried water from a central tap to her home in the Kakuma camp, where she has lived for 13 years. She receives food from the camp authorities twice a month, but sometimes it runs out before the next ration. "The only thing that makes me so patient is because I want to be married to Solomon for life," she said.



Solomon John, in green shirt, led dancers at a southern Sudanese celebration at the Americana Apartments in Louisville last spring. "Many (Lost Boys) look to him as one of their leaders. And I think their trust is well placed," says Bishop Ted Gulick, of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky.



John plays drums and delivers a message each Sunday at Resurrection Episcopal Church on Southern Parkway. At left is Gabriel Akec Kuai. The playful 1-year-old is Bul Deng, the son of Lost Boy Abraham Deng Chol and Mary Aguer. She and Bul arrived in Louisville last spring.

support the house's slightly elevated dirt entryway.

During the camp's warm and arid days, Nyanthic leaves the door open and uses only a curtain for privacy and to keep out insects.

Several times a day she washes Mayen and his knock-off NBA basketball outfits; she cannot afford diapers. In the

afternoon she sometimes sits on a log bench in the center of the compound.

If John has sent her money, she can buy meat, warm sodas or soap in a nearby shopping area, a street of one-story, tin-roof shacks with wood posts holding up tattered awnings.

There is little work in the camp — no electricity, no run-



Nyanthic held her son, Mayen, in the Kakuma camp. There is little to do there.

HOW TO HELP

Tax-deductible donations to help pay for local Lost Boys' education can be made to the Community Foundation of Louisville, designated for the Sudanese Refugee Education Fund, and sent to Waterfront Plaza, 325 W. Main St., Suite 1110, Louisville, KY 40202.

To help refugees being resettled in Louisville from various countries by donating household items and food, your time or your expertise, contact one of these agencies:

► Kentucky Refugee Ministries, (502) 479-9180 or www.kyrm.org/help.

► Catholic Charities, (502) 637-9786 or www.catholiccharities-louisville.org

► Jewish Family & Vocational Service, (502) 452-6341, or www.jfvs.com (click on "Support JFVS").

ning water, and little to do except wait and hope.

Nyanthic waits for John to call her on the cell phone he bought for her, which she charges on a community solar panel in the camp. She waits all day and every evening, when she goes to collect water in a bucket she carries on her head. She waits even as she lies down

to sleep, to dream of a day when the waiting will be over.

Praying for a reunion

On Sundays, at Resurrection Episcopal Church on Southern Parkway, John helps to conduct a Sudanese service held at 11:30 a.m., or whenever most of the Dinka worshippers show up.

"He always has had a kind of spiritual presence," says Bishop Ted Gulick, of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky. "Many (Lost Boys) look to him as one of their leaders. And I think their trust is well placed."

When a Louisville Lost Boy was murdered last year, John read Scripture at his funeral. At celebrations marking the anniversary of the southern Sudanese uprising against the north, he leads dancers and singers.

And at church every Sunday, he plays drums and delivers a message. It is one of longing and patience. He says he willingly will consign himself to a future of manual labor so he can provide something more for his son.

"It's really sad," says John. "I sometimes say, why didn't my ancestors realize this (how important education is) before my time so I can enjoy it? But it's at my time, so maybe my son can enjoy."

John says he sends his wife \$150 to \$200 every month. He already has given Nyanthic's family 25 cows — equivalent to about \$3,000 — for the marriage, as is traditional when a Dinka man seeks to marry a woman. Her family would like 25 more.

He saves money by sharing a two-bedroom apartment in the Highlands neighborhood with three other Lost Boys. John and two of his roommates are married but still waiting for their wives.

The walls in John's room are bare, the coffee table in the living room covered with a striped bath towel. Meals are sparse, often eaten only twice a day, and decorations rare.

Unlike many Americans, John and his roommates are used to getting by on little and would rather spend what extra money they have on family in Africa than on themselves. They know that even their crowded and basic apartment is better than what their families have in Africa.

"That's why we are always worried," says John. "It's overwhelming sometimes to think about it."

Friends and helpers: 'Bring Rhoda Here'

Any extra money he earns goes to a Louisville friend, George Gans III, who puts the money in an account called "Bring Rhoda Here." Gans and his wife, Dawn, taught John to drive and lent him money to buy a used car.

When John sends Gans, the retired president and CEO of Paul Semonin Realtors, a check to help pay off the car loan, Gans puts it in the account. Gans lent John the suit for his wedding.

John gets help from others, as well. He was able to get to Africa to marry his wife with help from Bishop Gulick. Eva Markham, an assistant professor at the pediatric department's Child Evaluation Center at the University of Louisville, helped buy medicine for his son. Friends with less money help in other ways.

"Last Thanksgiving, when we had one of the (Lost) Boys give the prayer, it was not for himself but for Solomon to get Rhoda over here," said Dawn Gans.

Another young Sudanese mother and her son already have been relocated to Louisville. Bul Deng, born just 17 days after Mayen in the Kakuma camp, and his mother, Mary Aguer, arrived last spring.

Bul is often the only child at the Dinka church service on Sundays. He runs from one adult to another. When he reaches the front row, John scoops him onto his lap. For a minute Bul is silent; then he starts squirming again, and John puts him down.

It is the closest he has ever come to holding his son.