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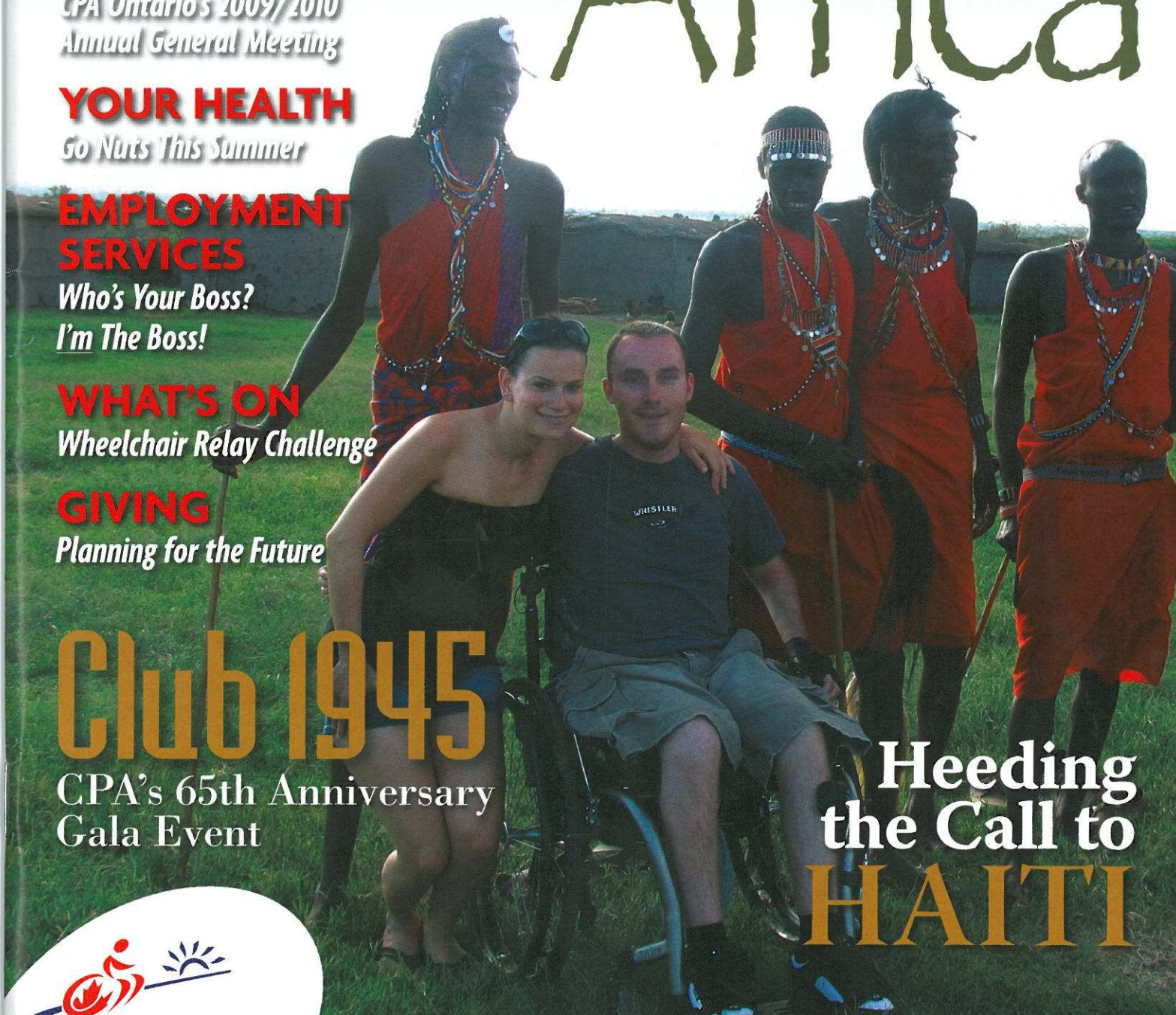
WHAT'S ON

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GIVING

Planning for the Future

ACCESSIBLE Africa



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Heeding the Call to HAITI

TO ASSIST PERSONS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURIES AND OTHER PHYSICAL DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE, SELF-RELIANCE AND FULL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.



Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario

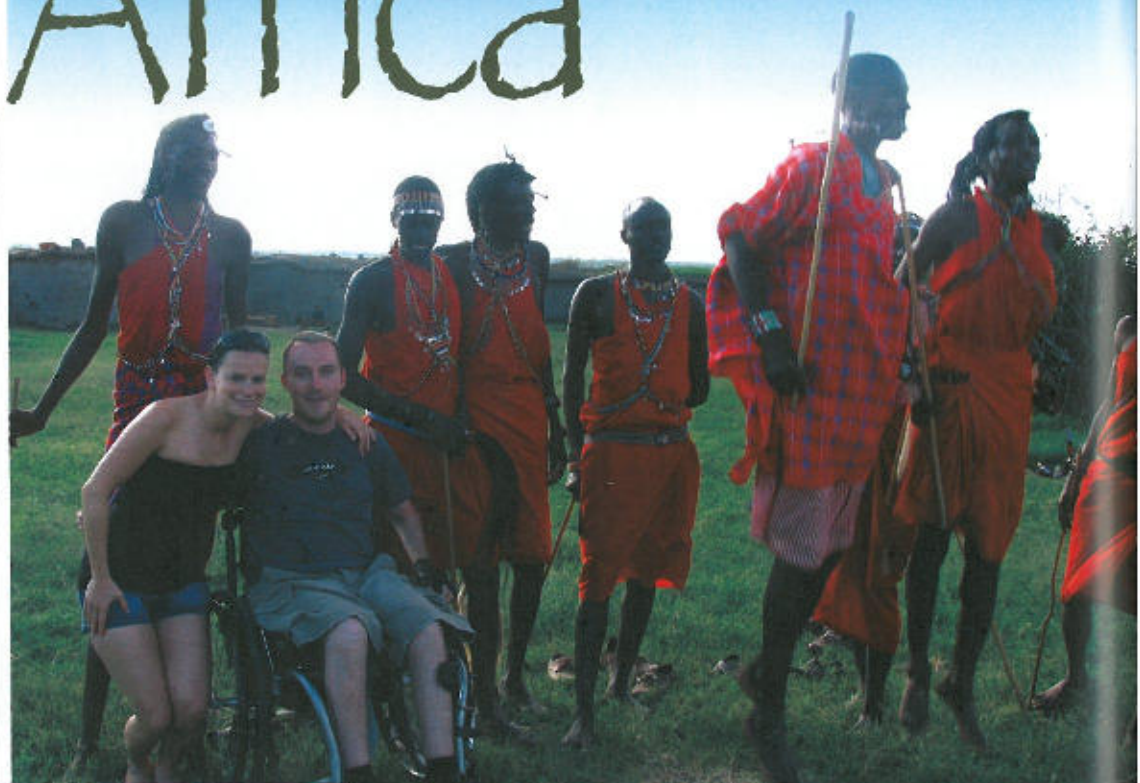
Association canadienne des paraplégiques Ontario

By Jeff Todd

It all started with a Google search for accessible vacations in Africa. Once my fiancée Jessica and I found the company 'Go-Africa' and contacted Yvonne everything just seemed to come together so smoothly. From the first email to the day we left, she was there for us.

I am 28 years old and have C5 quadriplegia. I use a manual wheelchair and know how loosely the term 'accessible' gets thrown around. It's easy for a company to say that everything will be accessible but to come across a company like Go-Africa, who has the experience and knowledge of accessibility, is quite amazing! Along with knowledge and experience, they are also very equipped and able to supply

ACCESSIBLE Africa



*Above: Visiting the Masai Village at Masai Mara.
Left: Male lion wanting to mate, but rejected at the Mara.
Right: Our accessible room at Indian Ocean Beach Club.
Below Right: Our Jeep Ambaselli.
Below: Peter helping Jeff into Jeep at Flamingo Hill.*



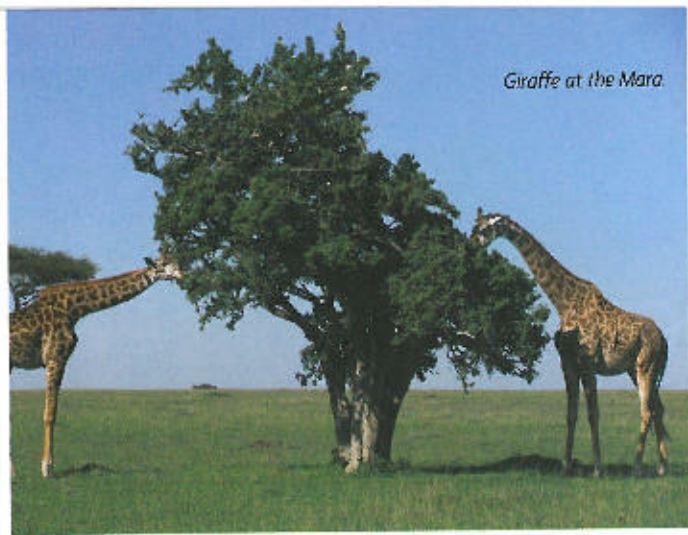
people with the necessary equipment they may require.

After our two flights from Toronto (21 hrs.), we arrived at Nairobi airport, where we conveniently met Yvonne and Peter, who helped us with our luggage. We packed into the jeep, a very nice accessible Toyota Land Cruiser, and headed to the hotel. Peter, our driver for the entire trip, was there for us from the day we arrived to the

day we left! Both Peter and Yvonne were very professional, and by the end of our adventure they became great friends with us, making our overall experience that much more special!

The first lodge we stayed at was Sweetwaters Sanctuary in Nanyuki. The camp was beautiful, and the tented lodge was just like an accessible hotel room, with a wheel-in shower and a sink to wheel under. The shower did





Giraffe at the Mara.

unfortunately have an approximately three inch lip. This however was not a surprise because Yvonne informed me well before we got there. This was also the only lodge that had a lip to get in the shower. After we unpacked and watched some zebras and warthogs at the watering hole just outside our lodge, we hopped in the jeep with Peter for our first of many game drives. I cannot describe how amazing it was

The second camp we visited was Flamingo Hill, another beautiful camp, and amazing park for game drives. This camp, like all the others had a cobblestone path from the tents to the main lodge, making it very easy to get around. The highlight here was watching two lions mate. Seeing thousands of flamingos, and looking over the parks amazing view from an observatory is also worth mentioning.



Lion at the Mara.

to drive around and see the wild animals. We also quickly noticed how much Peter loves his job! Not only is he very knowledgeable and a great driver, but he also takes so much pride in what he does. He was able to answer all of our questions, and told us great stories with enthusiasm! We also enjoyed our first of many delicious meals at Sweetwaters camp. The terrific food, beautiful camp, amazing scenery and extremely polite staff, was astonishingly consistent throughout our 14 day safari.

Next was the Masai Mara Safari Club. Hands down, this was the best of the six camps we visited! This is a camp that must be visited while on a safari in Kenya. Aside from the awesome camp, great staff and outstanding food, the game drives were definitely the best. This is because the jeeps were not restricted to any roads or paths. If we saw an animal in the distance, Peter would drive over and park right next to them so we could take close up pictures.

Our fourth stop was The Naivasha Simba lodge. We did not have a game drive at this park but the camp was very luxurious. We relaxed, enjoyed the sun, and the very beautiful pool.

After a relaxing day at Naivasha we packed up and headed to the Ol Tukai Lodge in Amboseli. This was the closest we came to Mount Kilimanjaro. We had a very nice view of the mountain from the camp, and an even nicer

*Below: Nairobi - Accessible Shower at Sarova Panarific Hotel.
Bottom: Sweetwaters tent.*



view on our morning game drive where we enjoyed the sunrise next to the mountain. Again, we saw many animals but one of the main highlights was wheeling around camp watching yellow baboons roaming around everywhere.

We ended our safari at the Voi Wildlife Lodge in Tsavo East, which is known for the 'red elephants' due to all the beautiful red sand. We noticed that the elephants here were much more active and aggressive. We watched the elephants play and chase storks at the watering hole on camp.

Throughout the entire safari we saw many animals. Unfortunately, we did not see a leopard and therefore only saw four of the 'Big 5' - elephant, lion, water buffalo, and rhinoceros. We were, however, very lucky overall on the close proximity we had to the animals, and how many animals we were able to see. We ended up taking just over 1,000 great photos that we brought back with us to share with our family and friends. I found each and every lodge and camp to be very accessible. The jeep was exceptionally reliable, and Peter is not only a very experienced driver but also is obviously experienced

with assisting people with disabilities.

After our safari we drove to the Indian Ocean Beach Club (IOBC) in Mombasa where we got married! The staff at the IOBC was amazing! I also had no problems getting around the resort as it was very accessible. Go-Africa also brought a very nice beach chair to the resort to give me the option of going into the ocean. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to try it out because we were pretty busy. The wedding was even better than we had hoped! They had an African shaped wedding cake prepared, as well as native African dancers who sang and danced for us. Much thanks and credit goes to Yvonne for working with us and planning such a beautiful wedding. We were so happy the Go-Africa team could share our special day with us and we were honoured to have Peter and his wife Nancy as our witnesses.

Jessica and I had an adventure of a lifetime and would highly recommend this type of vacation to anyone! No matter what your disability may be, I am certain Go-Africa will do everything they can to create a trip that best suits your needs! 