

Helping Kenya

... cont'd from Pg 2

week focused on a single animal. After expenses, the rest of the safari money goes to wealthy resort owners in the Netherlands, South Africa, and China. None of it helps local people.

Kenya has 43 tribes, each with its own language. Swahili and English are the country's official languages. Most Kenyans speak their native tongue as their first language and use Swahili and English for communication throughout the country.

The Maasai people are a semi-nomadic tribe that tend to and follow their animals – cows, sheep, and goats. Men with strong hunting skills protect their village from wild animals. They carry thick wooden sticks, one with a ball at the end to throw at non-domestic animals and a longer one to lean on when they are out in the field. If you are recognized for strong hunting skills, the elders choose you for an initiation to become a leader. You must venture into the wild and survive with only a stick for several days. If you endure the challenge, you become a tribe leader and receive a spear. When we arrived at our huts, one of the warriors was standing by a fire with a pole bearing a spear. He told me he was protecting the domestic animals from hyenas. We heard hyenas and owls at night.

Most of the tribe's people live in mud huts about 100 square feet in size. There is no electricity or running water, and each hut has only one small window for ventilation. The huts contain two small rooms and a tiny cooking area, where they cook over indoor fires. The floors are made of mud. In larger villages, some people live in a one-room 168-square-foot rental. These are made of cement, have small front windows, no running water, and small indoor grills used for cooking. Electricity is limited. Within a section of the complex, three holes in the ground serve as bathrooms.

Our host's name was Caroline. She was the daughter of a Maasai chief and had two older brothers. Her parents believed in educating all their children. It is very uncommon for a woman to receive instruction,



This mud hut houses a Maasai family. The fenced area beside it houses their cattle. (Elaine Strobel photo)

let alone a college degree. After completing their schooling, she and her brothers left their village to work in Kenya's tourist regions. When Caroline was 19, her parents arranged a marriage for her. The man was about 20 years older than she was, and she would be his second wife. He already had six children from his first wife. Her parents gave her the option to return home. She agreed to marry out of respect for them. Caroline said, "They gave me an education; I need to obey them." She met her husband on the day of her wedding. Most brides' families receive compensation from the groom. The dowry is usually about two cows and a couple of blankets. The more educated a woman is, the higher the cost. She never told us her dowry. Caroline has three children with her husband. Notably, he married again and has two more kids. Men determine how many offspring their wives will have. Once they marry, they must stay home and rear their babies.

When her parents died, Caroline inherited her father's land, which was quite unusual. Her brothers chose not to return home, so she received the property. She established a village on this acreage for widowed or disabled women and their children, young girls from poor families who cannot be supported, and runaway married girls. Fifty-two people live there. Most of the older women are "not marriageable widows," women who cannot command a dowry and are viewed as having no value. A woman's worth is judged by her ability to command a dowry. Some of her village's residents have physical

and mental disabilities; in the past, these people were told to walk into the wilderness and let the wild animals overtake them. The rural community was created specifically for people with disabilities. Some girls are as young as five; they live there because their parents could not afford to keep them; otherwise, they would have been married off. Some girls aged 14 or 15 who live in the community are runaways. They were married off and fled from their husbands. They cannot return to their parents because they would embarrass their families. They find refuge in Caroline's village. Older widows take care of the young children. There are one or two men in her village. They handle "male things," like butchering, starting fires, and warding off wild animals. Caroline teaches the widows crafts like beadwork, wood carving, and textile art; helps them sell their products to support themselves; and manages their finances so that they can earn an income.

Outside her village, girls are married off for their dowries, often by age 12, to men nearly twice or three times their age. The less educated and poorer the family, the earlier the girl is sold, usually between ages 8 and 10. Before marriage, girls undergo a female circumcision ceremony. It is performed by a "witch doctor" using a broken piece of glass. Circumcision causes long-term health issues, including difficult childbirth and chronic urinary tract infections, due to extensive scar tissue. After the circumcision ceremony, she must live with her father until her wedding day. Adolescents often become pregnant at ages 11, 12, or 13.

Green Expo will be May 9

Residents of Southbury and surrounding communities are invited to attend the Southbury Green Expo 2026, a free, family-friendly event focused on sustainability, community engagement, and practical solutions for greener living. It will be held Saturday, May 9, 2026 (rain or shine) from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Pomperaug Elementary School at 607 Main St. S. in Southbury, Connecticut.

The Expo will bring together local businesses, organizations, and artisans dedicated to building a more sustainable future. Designed for both beginners and those already embracing eco-conscious lifestyles, the event offers accessible ideas, valuable resources, and inspiration for making everyday life more sustainable.

- Event Highlights Include:
- **Recycling Drive:** Attendees can responsibly dispose of hard-to-recycle items such as batteries, electronics, clothing, plastic bags and film, corks, ink cartridges, and eyeglasses – helping to keep waste out of landfills.
 - **Local Vendors and Exhibitors:** Explore eco-friendly products and services ranging from energy efficiency solutions to sustainable goods and upcycled creations.
 - **Artisans:** Support local makers offering unique, handmade items crafted with sustainability in mind.
 - **Student Sustainability Contest:** Celebrate the creativity and environmental leadership of local students, whose projects



Jim Teed poses with the guest of honor, Dr. Plastikstein, at the 2025 Green Expo. Don't miss this year's Green Expo on May 9. (Sarah Phiri photo)

are inspired by the "Seven Rs" of sustainability, in order of priority: Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, Rethink, Repair, Repurpose, and Recycle.

- **Educational Opportunities:** Learn practical ways to reduce waste, conserve energy, and make environmentally conscious choices at home and in the community.
- **Family-Friendly Activities:** Enjoy interactive exhibits and hands-on experiences designed for all ages.
- **Door Prizes and Giveaways:** Attendees will have the chance to win a variety of eco-friendly

door prizes donated by participating vendors and community partners.

The Southbury Green Expo provides an opportunity to reduce waste and recycle responsibly, save energy and lower household costs, support local businesses and artisans, connect with neighbors and community organizations, and take meaningful steps toward a more sustainable future!

Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.sustainable-southbury.org.

Obituary

Bruce Alan Meier



A cherished husband, father, grandfather and brother, Bruce Alan Meier, 87, of Middlebury, Conn., passed away peacefully at Vitis Healthcare at St. Mary's Hospital on April 1, 2026. He was born on September 7, 1938, in Waterbury, Conn., to Raymond and Ruby Meier.

Bruce was a graduate of Quinnipiac University and had a successful career as a tax accountant for Scovill

Manufacturing, General DataComm and Sodexo Food Services. He was the treasurer for the Middlebury Cemetery Association for 30 years.

With his parents' permission, Bruce enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 17. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve until his honorable discharge in 1963.

Bruce was blessed with many close friends, whom he enjoyed and appreciated beyond words. He enjoyed skiing, playing golf and watching UCONN basketball with his wife and granddaughter. Above all else, Bruce enjoyed providing a wonderful life for his family.

Bruce is survived by his wife of 63 years, Doris Meier; son Gary Meier and his wife Tachorn of Middlebury; granddaughter Clara Meier of Middlebury; sister Nancy Salcito and her husband Gene of Waterbury; cousin Kim Blanchard and his wife Maureen of New Hampshire; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Carol Meier.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held April 9, 2026, at Saint John of the Cross Church in Middlebury, Conn. Interment followed in Middlebury Cemetery.

To leave an online condolence visit munsonloveterefuneralhome.com.

Now Here's a Tip



- "If you add a teaspoon of sugar to your biscuit mix or to the dough for rolls, it will help them to brown well and they will come out of the oven with golden tops." – J.R. in Michigan
- Two ways to save money on laundry expenses: First, spring and summer are an excellent time to get into line drying clothes -- especially towels and jeans, which take longer to dry thoroughly in a dryer. Then, clean out and shorten your dryer's vent hose to make machine drying more energy efficient. It cuts down drying time, too, saving you time AND money.
- "Got an odd job coming up? Before you go out and purchase an expensive limited-use tool, check with your friends and neighbors to see if you can borrow instead of buying. Check with local hardware stores to see if it's cheaper to rent it, too." – S.L. in Kentucky

- Add a small bit of boiling water to a glass of iced tea to clear it up if it is cloudy. You can do this to a pitcher just before serving.
- "Call and schedule your chimney service for a date in the next couple of months. Prices drop during the summer and the sweeps are not as busy." – C.C. in New York
- "I have pets that leave hair and dirt on the couch. When I wash my cushion covers, one thing I always do is put them back on the pillows when they are not quite dry. They stretch better when they are a little bit damp. I had a terrible time a few years ago, when I let them dry all the way and couldn't get them back on!" – H.P. in Arizona

Send your tips to *Now Here's a Tip*, 1800 Pembroke Drive, Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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