

Letters from India – Addendum

After completing the *Letters From India* book I obtained a third collection of letters that had been sent to my father's parents. This collection included the same newsletters that were included in the book, but also had letters that were personally written to my grandparents as well as postcards, photographs, and some other miscellaneous items.

I didn't think this material was of general interest, but I did decide to transcribe and print it for my own family and friends and anyone else that might be interested.

As in the *Letters From India* book, these were transcribed from the typed letters with only a few changes to correct obvious typographical errors. They are presented in chronological order. Unlike the previous letters which were all manually transcribed, I scanned these letters and used OCR software to extract the text. While some editing was still needed, this greatly reduced the effort to convert them to digital format.

I've added footnotes where I thought it would be helpful to clarify something or add a point of interest.

Additional content that was not included in the book, including scans of photographs, postcards, and other documents, can be found on the internet at

<https://github.com/jefftranter/misc/tree/main/LettersFromIndiaBook>

Jeff Tranter
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
April, 2025

The Tranter's Itinerary ¹						
Date	Time	From	To	Flight	Carrier	Hotel
July 6	2:45 pm	Toronto	New York	828	Air Canada	
July 6	8:30 pm	New York	London	102	Air India	Mostyn Hotel, Portman St., London, W.1.
July 12	12:30pm	London	Paris	012	British European Airways	Scribe Hotel, 1 Rue Scribe, Paris 9, France
July 15	1:10pm	Paris	Rome	A333	Alitalia	Albergo Milano, Piazzo Montecitorio 12, Rome, Italy
July 18	1:35pm	Rome	Athens	404	Olympic Airlines	Alfa Hotel, 17 Haikokondyli St., Athens, Greece.
July 20	10:35pm	Athens	Bombay	314	Swissair	Taj Mahal Hotel, Apollo Bunder, Bombay, India.
July 23		Bombay	Kota		Train Ride Overnight	

¹ The year was 1970. As far as I can recall we did stick to this itinerary, including the hotels.

TAJ MAHAL HOTEL

Telegrams PALACE
Telex 2442, Palace, By

APOLLO BUNDER, BOMBAY 1

Telephone: 297755

July 28, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well we finally got here. We've been at RAPP for three days so I better get going on a letter. First of all, thank you for your mail. We've received two letters from you. The news from home was very welcome. We felt out of touch after almost three weeks away with no word about the people back home. Glad to hear Muffie's O.K. We're not too worried about the house. By the time we got your letter we figured the Tonn's will have moved in, so it's too late to worry about that.

There's so much to write that I'll put it down briefly and ask you to share it with Diane and Dick and anyone else that might be interested.

Bombay

We arrived in Bombay Tuesday morning (July 21st). The airport was hot and sticky. We got through customs fairly easily and were met by AECL personnel and driven to the beautiful Taj Mahal Hotel. It is lavishly designed and furnished for the rich white Sahibs, fully air conditioned of course! Bombay is a city of contrasts. From the lavish hotel you can look across the street and see people sleeping on the sidewalk, cooking meals at the curb, etc. There really are cows wandering on the roads! There are lots of beggars and on every shopping trip there are dozens of boys volunteering to act as guides, carriers, advisors, etc.

We shopped for school supplies and transformers and visited the apartments of several AECL people in Bombay. The Canadian's apartments for families are unbelievably large. I'm sure they have as much floor space as our house in Canada. By Friday we had completed our shopping, visiting and meeting Atomic Energy V.I.P.'s. At 8:15 p.m. we left on the "Frontier Mail" Train for Kota. We had a sleeping compartment for four and an additional bed in the next compartment (fully air conditioned again). We didn't use the other compartment at all. It was most comfortable. Probably more so than a Canadian train and certainly bigger compartments.

We arrived in Kota at 11:30 a.m. Saturday and were again met by a number of AECL personnel.
From Kota to RAPP

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From Kota to RAPP

On the 25-mile drive from Kota to RAPP site we really knew we were in a different country. We saw huge flocks of sheep, walking down the middle of the road of course, cows, water buffalo, camels, peacocks, monkeys, herons, gypsy encampments and shepherds. The road is pretty good but rather curvy and often cluttered with people or animals.

RAPP Site

Our arrival at site was greeted by a number of personnel. We spent the first afternoon with the

2 Our cat, which we left with my grandparents.

3 The people that rented our house in Canada while we were away.

4 My father's sister and her husband.

resident engineer of the project and had a lovely cold lunch and lots of cold beer after the hot drive from Kota (Bill had beer at least). We were invited out for dinner to the home of the other teacher in the RAPP school and again had a lovely time. The people here are very friendly and helpful. We met dozens of families already. Many of them have provided us with food, supplies, etc. and lots of advice while we get settled in.

The site itself houses about 25 Canadian families and a much larger number of Indians. They are busy putting additions on to many of the houses to accommodate the extra-large size of Canadian families coming over. (India has a very strong birth control campaign going on suggesting that "two children are enough". The Canadians are a terrible example. Many have 3, 4, or 5 children and at least one family has 7!) The site is clean, bright and well organized with swimming pool (closed until Sept. 1st because of the monsoon - sob!) recreation centre and children's play ground. Most of these areas belong to the Indians, but the Canadians are allowed to use them as well.

Our House

We received a pleasant surprise when we went to see our house. We have been given an H-7 house with four bedrooms (3 upstairs and one down). It sits on the top of a hill overlooking the whole township. It is furnished, has curtains on all windows, large rug in the living room, huge rotating fans in every room and air conditioners in two bedrooms. The house was very clean and freshly painted - much better than most in the township. We are very pleased. Pictures will follow eventually.

Servants

Well we've fallen into the routines of most families on site. We have 3 servants! We hired a full-time girl (Mary) to act as cook and general house-keeper while we were in Bombay (she used to work at site). We've hired a "sweeper" - a girl that comes in every morning to sweep and wash the floors and do dishes. We also have a part-time Mali (gardener) who spends 3 hours a day working on our garden. The garden needs a fair bit of work. When the house has no occupant the gardens are just left untended and almost everything dies. The women in the community justify all these servants because the weather and the type of house require much more cleaning than at home. Floors must be swept and washed every day. Clothes can only be worn once and then washed. The preparation of food is very time-consuming.

Food

Lots of food is available at the store on site and in the nearby village of Rawat Bhata. We can buy fresh limes, bananas (we have a banana tree and a papaya tree in our back yard with fruit on them!), potatoes, rice, a number of unrecognizable Indian vegetables, goat meat, buffalo meat, fish, shrimps, etc. The other night we had buffalo meat. It was really good. We've also eaten chicken several times. Water isn't drinkable unless its boiled (particularly for children). Milk isn't easily available and must be boiled since it isn't pasteurized. We can get ice cream, Coke, Fanta, etc. at the local store. The liquor store sells beer (in quart bottles!) gin, rum, whiskey, etc. at about the same prices as Canada which makes it pretty expensive. Six large bottles of beer and a bottle of gin cost 60 Rupees (\$8.50).

The School

The school is bigger than I thought. It has two good-sized classrooms, a library, and at least 5 other small storage or office rooms. There should be lots of room for now and an extension is planned for the new year. There is a good stock of text books, supplies, etc. and the other teacher seems very nice. There are also a full-time secretary and librarian and a sweeper. This week the school is crawling with workmen getting everything in order for the opening day next Monday (Aug.3). Bill spent a good amount of time over there checking out supplies, organizing texts and equipment, etc.

Air Shipment and Sea Shipment

Our sea shipment arrived in Bombay several days before we did. It has been passed through customs and should be up to site within the next few days. We haven't heard about our air freight, but it should soon arrive too. In the mean time, we have been supplied with the basic necessities such as dishes, cutlery, linen, etc. We continue to wear the clothes we had with us throughout Europe.

The car was shipped on July 13th and should arrive at the end of August. We'll probably have a trip down to Bombay the first week of September to pick it up.

Pictures

We took several rolls of slides and four movies on our trip. We are getting the slides developed in Bombay. We'll have to send the movies to Canada for processing so you'll probably see them before we do.

Did You Know?

1. In India you can hire a servant for a month for about 35.00?
2. There are many more insects in India than Canada. We have already seen a scorpion, a 3-inch centipede, spiders, flies, moths, ants, etc. in the house? Snakes aren't too uncommon either even in the house,
3. The temperature has been in the 90's almost every day since we arrived and this is the "cool" period following the monsoon. You spend a lot of time drinking Freshie⁵ and water. Ice cubes are absolutely indispensable. We can't wait to get the freezer so that we can keep a larger stock on hand than the refrigerator makes.
4. The fishing is supposed to be really good within walking distance of the site. We went down to a deep channel in the river the other night and saw literally hundreds of fish! There are a number of varieties. Carp are quite common. There is also a type of trout that can be caught. The record size so far is 10 lb.
5. Rawat Bhata (the nearby Indian town) takes a bit of getting used to but is really interesting. All the merchants spread their wares out on the ground and several of the bigger ones have stores. You can buy fruits, vegetables, canned goods, household goods, in fact, almost anything you could buy in Canada. The quality of all manufactured goods is lower but still quite reasonable. The butcher slaughters a goat or sheep behind his shack and cuts it up in front of you so you can choose the exact cut you want. Since there is no refrigeration (not even a front on the store) the meat is covered with flies so it must be thoroughly washed before cooking. Still, most Canadians find it quite good enough when you adjust to the changing conditions.

⁵ A drink made by mixing a powder with sugar and water, similar to Kool-Aid.

6. The oscillating fans in every room have seven speeds.
7. The tailors at Rawat Bhata can make almost any kind of clothing you want from a picture.

What About You?

First of all a belated happy birthday to Mom and Dad! We were thinking of you. Please encourage people to write. It's fun to get news about home. Possibly Dick could get this letter photo-copied if anyone else wants to know our first impressions of India. As soon as we get our tape recorders we'll send some tapes back home. It may not be for a month or so.

Important Announcement

As we said, we are in a different house than we expected. Our address is not the one we gave to 60 million people before we left, but we'll still get it if it is sent to that address. Our real address is as follows:

Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Tranter,
H7/5,
RAPP Permanent Township,
Via Kota,
Rajasthan, India.

Please let people know if they are likely to be writing regularly (close family). Love to all,

From,
Margaret, Bill,
Jeff, Linda & David.

P.S. There really are Geckos (little lizards) on the walls. They vary in length from 2 inches to about 8 inches. They are quiet, clean and useful since they kill lots of insects. They make excellent house guests. We've seen at least six in the house in the first four days.

P.P.S. Don't expect all letters to be this long. If they were, we could only write once every six months!

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota,
Rajasthan, India.
August 29, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad,

We received your letter with Debbie's letter to Linda enclosed in it yesterday. It took two weeks to get here so you can see that the mail delivery varies considerably. We were glad to hear you finally got our first letter from Township. We were beginning to wonder whether our mail was getting through.

The business of stealing stamps off the envelopes really only applies to letters mailed in India and that is solved nicely by the local township post office which sells you the stamps, puts them on your letter and then cancels them right in front of you making it useless for anyone to try to take them off.

I'm not surprised to hear that the mail strike⁶ is still on. Is the government just waiting hoping it will go away? If so, this could go on for a long time.

We've had a fairly busy week here. Tuesday night Marg and I attended a party given for some AECL personnel visiting the plant from Canada. Wednesday night we went to Hindi lessons and then back to Elaine White's place (the other school teacher) for coffee and a visit. Friday night we went square dancing again. We're really getting pretty good at square dancing. Funny that we should have to go to India to learn how!

We have lots of possible things coming up next week, A big shipment of school supplies is due in. The other half of our sea shipment is also due. Our Volkswagen Van should arrive in Bombay very soon. If it is cleared through customs we may close the school for several days next week and take the train down to Bombay to pick it up and buy school supplies. There are a lot of "maybe's" in there though. We have learned that an Indian promise of delivery may be given because it is what you want to hear and not what will really happen. We learned that in the middle of the month with our gardener. He came and announced that he didn't want to work here any more (he has another job as well). Margaret suggested that the least he could do was stay until the end of the month. Finally he agreed to stay, but he never showed up again. Fortunately there are lots of men around who would like to work as gardeners. We hired another one the following day and he seems to be working out all right. They are all pretty slow but what can you expect on a salary of about 80 rupees (less than \$10.00) per month for 6 half days a week.

With all the rain we've been having the humidity must be almost 100% every day. A large puddle forms around every cold drink you put down for a minute from condensation. Not only that, the puddles just don't dry up by themselves. It is quite common to come down in the morning and find that the puddle where your glass was is still there the same as it was the previous night. Similarly, it is the dampness that brings out the insects, scorpions, snakes, etc. at this time of year. We are told that once the dry season starts (in September) these problems all disappear. You would be surprised how quickly you adjust to changing conditions though. In Canada you would be shocked if you saw a cockroach. Here you just kill it and make sure that your food and other valuables are properly stored away.

I bought a badminton racket in Kota last week and some table tennis balls. I've been down to the recreation hall a few times for badminton and table tennis. With some practice, Jeffrey and I could make a pretty good doubles team just like Dad and I used to against the Elders⁷.

I was pleased to hear that you are getting special privileges as senior citizens now. I'll really save up

⁶ Historical note: In 1970, Canada Post faced a series of 24-hour walkouts, primarily driven by wage grievances, that resulted in the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) securing wage increases exceeding the Trudeau government's guidelines.

⁷ Elder was the family name of some of my father's cousins.

and when I get home I'll treat you to some exciting wheel chair rides just like other old people. Comments about senior citizens make me feel old too. Margaret's only got about 33 weeks left before she turns thirty. Then she'll be a "senior citizen" herself!

Well, I guess that's all for now. Another newsletter is enclosed. Keep writing. Your letters are appreciated.

Love from,
Margaret, Bill, Jeff, Linda & David.

Dear Mom and Dad,⁸

Thanks for your recent letters. We enjoy getting news from home. We were shocked to hear about John⁹. Please send him our best wishes for a speedy recovery. It sounds like the police and the news media really used it to put pressure on for two-man patrol cars. I wonder if it will do any good?

Your comments about Muffy have us worried. If you continue to spoil her the way you are now she'll never ever want to come back to us! She must really wonder what happened to be allowed to sleep wherever she wants practically.

School has been going a week now. The kids are making much more progress than they would in the first week in an Etobicoke school. They are a pretty bright group and willing to work - very enjoyable kids to work with.

All the family is well. David is enjoying school. He began his first reader on Friday. Linda is in Grade 3 but reading a grade 4 reader. Jeffrey is doing well in my class but he has a lot of good competition so he'll have to work hard to keep up.

I am enclosing a copy of our latest news letter for the family. I hope it is readable. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Love,
Bill, Marg & the kids.

P.S. As far as we can tell all your letters have arrived in an average time of 7 days. Stories about mail being lost or stolen are highly exaggerated (we think!)

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota, Rajasthan,
India,

⁸ The date of the letter was unknown as the upper right corner was cut off (maybe to save the return address).

⁹ My father's cousin, John Tranter, was a police officer who was injured in the line of duty pursuing a suspect. The story was in the local newspapers.

September 13th, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad:

It's Sunday morning and everyone has gone to Sunday school except me so I thought this would be a good time to write a note to accompany the latest newsletter. The kids (Linda and Jeff) went to cubs and bulbuls at 8:30 a.m. this morning so David and I got a ride over too and walked about a mile to the market in Rawat Bhata, I bought some nice corn on the cob (1/2 a dozen for about 18¢) three electrical plugs and an input jack for the school record player, As I've said before, you can get almost anything there. David and I had a cold Coke each at the local "restaurant" and we even bought two paperback comic books - Flash Gordon and Mandrake the Magician.

This is one aspect of India you would really enjoy – all the shops and outdoor stalls are really interesting. Just like "Swap Meet" only Rawat Bhata is three times as big and Kota has a whole city full of them!

I'm enclosing some of the results of my first roll of film so I'd better explain them. They are numbered on the back for your easy reference.

#1 is taken from the roof of the school. The stone wall in the foreground encloses the school's inner courtyard. The grassy area outside is also school property. The two men squatting in the grass are two of the school gardeners cutting the grass - by hand! The houses in the middle of the picture are Indian homes of the important Indians on the RAPP project. The houses on the hill are Canadian ones. The third from the left (marked with a little arrow) is our house. The stones in the right centre of the picture are being chipped apart by hand for use in building more houses, Notice the low clouds behind the houses. The clouds are often low on the hills at this time of year. When we first saw them we thought they were there because of our high altitude but I checked and township is only about 1250 ft. above sea level so that can't be the reason.

#2 is also taken from the roof of the school. It looks down on the inner courtyard where we have our assembly programmes, recess, etc. The boy on the left holds a paper airplane - a remnant of the paper airplane competition I mentioned before. Notice all the hand-built stone walls. Almost all good buildings in the RAPP area use these same building materials. Stone is very plentiful. Most of the ground only has a few inches of topsoil covering solid rock. That's grass in the centre there. The gardeners just cut it the day before. It took most of the day to do that patch by hand.

#3 is taken from the balcony of our house and looks down toward the school. The school is the complex of buildings in the left centre of the picture. You can see that it's pretty large, At the bottom right hand side of the picture are Indian houses. See the stairs going up the outside to the roof? It's just like the pictures of flat roof houses I used to hear about in Sunday school! Our stairs are inside the house. As you can see very few trees grow in the township unless they are in someone's back yard but back on the hills trees are plentiful This is not too usual in Rajasthan, but the reservoir provides enough moisture for them to grow.

#4 is taken from our driveway towards the road. It is a typical monsoon scene with Linda and David in raincoats and with umbrella. You can see lots of water lying on the road. It is not uncommon for roads to get washed out after part of a day's rain but it dries up very fast too.

#5 is my favourite picture so far. This Indian fellow in his tattered clothes brought a horse around and gave the kids rides. The Indian boy at the front is his son (we think). Please note the beautiful saddle (a burlap bag). The horse was nice though. It looked better fed than the man. He isn't poor though. He made quite a pile of money giving the kids rides at 1 rupee each.

I've got another roll of film ready to develop and a third one in the camera so I guess you can expect more pictures as time goes on too.

I sent different pictures to everybody on the mailing list so keep in touch. Maybe you can trade them around like bubble gum cards.

We received your letter of August 30th this week. We also got one from Auntie Dot so I'll try to get around to answering that one this week too. Glad to hear that everyone's fine. How's Pal¹⁰ doing. You haven't said much about him. Is he still hanging on? If he is, I hope Muffy isn't bossing him around too much. Have the birds still survived?

I expect some copy equipment in the school next week so we may be able to send the odd news letter to other members of the family as well from time to time if they write to us. We have to be careful. Writing can get out of hand, As you know it takes a fair bit of time and the cost must be considered with the amount of mail we are sending.

Well I guess I had better go now. I've got lots of "handyman" jobs to do around the house now that my tools have arrived. I was kind of hoping they would all get lost or confiscated at customs but they got through of course. Write soon.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David.

A LAST MINUTE REQUEST! (Sept. 13th)

I went fishing again tonight and caught another fish the same size as last night. A neighbour gave me a smaller one so we have over ten pounds of fish in the freezer. The only problem is I only have about two decent lures! Could you get me five or six and air mail them as soon as possible. I'll send a check to pay for them in the next envelope.

Kinds of Lures:

I've had good luck with red devils. Get me several large ones of those.

Silver coloured spoons also are getting good results particularly close to dark.

¹⁰ Their dog, one of several named Pal.

Plugs and spinners are not much good so don't send any of those,

Instructions for sending them.

1. Wrap really well. Maybe in a small box. The smaller the better.
2. Send it air mail.
3. Mark it "unsolicited gift"
4. Mark the value - including cost plus postage as something just under five dollars. If its over five (including the cost of postage) I'll have to pay duty on it. Note: It's quite common for useful articles like this to come in with about \$4.00 postage and a gift value of about 50¢. So be sure to stay under that \$5.00 limit on the declaration. It doesn't matter if the real total value is closer to \$10.00.
5. A few good strong metal leaders would also be appreciated.
6. I've got lots of line so that's no problem.

Thanks,
Bill.

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota, Rajasthan,
India,
October 11, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Just a quick note attached to the newsletter to let you know we got the fishing lures all right. Thank you very much. We've been fishing for a short while several times in the past two weeks but so far have only caught one small trout. Since it gets dark at 6:30 p.m. in the evening, you have to either switch your fishing hours to weekends or delay dinner until 7:30 or so.

I am sending another two reels of film by air mail registered mail. I hope they get through as well as last time. They are already addressed and ready for sending to Kodak. Just affix the proper postage and they should be back in about a week. As I said the films contain some great pictures of Kota, some of me on the motorcycle and some of the pool so I really hope they get through.

J am not surprised that Diane and Dick bought your tape recorder. We just got the school cassette tape recorder last week so we can now start making cassette tapes too. We'll try to get one out soon,

Well it's getting late, so good-bye for now. Write soon,

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda and David.

P.S. The radio gives good reception with an outside aerial at night. During the day reception is poor. Generally sneaking you are hard-pressed to find a station broadcasting in English though you can get news from the B.B.C. world news broadcasts in the evening.

P.P.S. Tell Diane that the boys did receive their letters from Stephen and appreciated them very much. There is one on the way to Stephen from David right now. Hope he gets it.

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota, Rajasthan, India.
November 5th, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I was really glad to hear that you got our films and tape safely. I am looking forward to hearing whether or not the films turned out. The tape we sent you is the only one we have made so far, so please pass it along to Marg's family and ask them to return it to Diane and Dick when they've heard it.

In answer to your questions. No we do not have a dog although several families in the community have adopted strays. To get gas, I have to go into Rawat Bhata to the Indianoil Station (there are also Burmah Shell stations and several other brands in India). That is a distance of about 3 or 4 miles. My gas tank holds 10 litres plus a reserve tank of 1 litre which will last me for about 40 kilometres so I just go for gas whenever I have to switch to the reserve tank. (Note that India is on the metric system for almost all goods so we get to know and use litres, kilograms and kilometres a lot.)

No the kids don't forget and drink the water. It wouldn't matter much if they did thought. The water goes through a complete purification before it is piped to the community. Most of the time it is an unnecessary precaution but we do it anyway. The Indians in the community all drink the water right out of the tap and they're not dropping like flies.

Margaret has a plea for you. She is worried about Muffy getting so fat. When we had her we fed her 1/3 of a can of cat food twice a day and that is all. No matter how much she meowed or complained we didn't give her any more. If you do the same, she may lose those ugly pounds. We want a cat back not a pig so please be firm with her.

This has been a bad week for colds. All three kids and I have a bad cold. So does half the rest of the community - Canadians and Indians. The Indians say that it is due to the changing weather (dry and cooler now). Anyway whatever the cause we are all stuffed up and driving Margaret crazy with coughing, sniffing, sneezing, etc.

The nights are cooler now. The morning temperature is in the high sixties. It still gets up over ninety during the day but the pool isn't getting as much use. We were using it every day until we got our colds, I haven't been in swimming for a week. The kids were in today.

Ernie Philip, the A.E.C.L. man who hired me arrived this week. He is supposed to be coming over to the school tomorrow to see how things are going. We have invited him and Elaine White and her family for supper on Saturday so he should have a good chance of getting caught up on the school and its activities.

We had one other exciting event this week. On Monday morning around 9:30 a.m. some Indians say they spotted a tiger down the hill about 100 yards from our house. One Indian said the tiger killed one of his cows (it cost him 250 rupees) and then was scared off by the men who saw it. All the gardeners and cooks on our street were hanging over the railing on the other side of the road from our house trying to get a glimpse of it. No Canadian saw it, so the story may not be true but certainly a number of Indians believed him. That's really something, eh? A real live wild tiger only a hundred yards from our house. You don't get those nice surprises in Canada.

Tuesday night there was a reception for the federal Indian government minister responsible for Atomic Energy in India. He heard about the Canadian school and asked to visit it the following day. So, the following morning he arrived at the school with a retinue of about 15 officials for a whirlwind tour of the school. He didn't really get to see much, but at least he was a very distinguished visitor to our pokey little two-room operation.

Well, that's all for now. Keep writing.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda, David.

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota, Rajasthan,
India,
Sept. 19, 1970.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Just a note. I'm sick of typing after making up the accompanying newsletter. We received two letters from you this week. The second we got today was dated Sept. 13 so that's pretty good timing.

A few answers to your questions. Air mail costs are about the same as in Canada. Last week Margaret mailed five letters and it cost about 26 rupees (\$3.75). So that you can check yourself - a rupee is about 15¢. There are 100 paise in a rupee so a paise is worth about 1/7th of a cent. Our radio gets nothing at all on short wave or F.M. Reception during the evening is pretty good on A.M. with the aerial left by the last people in this house. Muffy came with no guarantee. Just a suggestion - give her less food for a few days. If you can stand the constant meowing in the kitchen she might catch the mice. As I said in the newsletter, rainy season is just about over and so are the snakes and scorpions. Marg saw a snake on her way home from a neighbour's just 15 minutes ago though and the insects are still heavy. The last has been a plague of crickets. I killed 100's in the carport and dozens in the house for several nights in a row.

Mary is 25 years old. Her cooking is getting better. Today she made banana bread, shepherd's pie and an apple and cherry pie as well as looking after the kids for the afternoon so she really keeps busy.

No word on the boy's walkie-talkies. We may hear something when we go to Bombay next week, We'll let you know.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda and David.

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota,
Rajasthan, India.
Nov. 25th/70

Dear Mom and Dad,

We received your letter of Nov. 15th and your Christmas card. Thank you for the generous gift. We will try to use it for something special for the family. I was sorry to hear the flu is going around again. We don't get much flu here but almost everyone – Indian and Canadian has a cold at this time of year. I think part of it is the extreme change from extremely humid to extremely dry weather. It's just like a Canadian house in the middle of winter - you wake up in the morning with your nose and throat all dried out. A humidifier would be a real boon here.

It sounds like the food price war would be just great for us now we have a freezer. Food prices are certainly not cut-rate here. If you like Indian food you can eat well for very little, but Canadian type food is expensive. Marg bought a medium size can of Nestle's Quik in Delhi last week for Rs. 18.50 (\$2.50). A small can of Kraft cheese (less than a pound) was Rs. 10.00 (\$1.50) so you can see that imported goods are impossible prices. Fortunately most of the things we buy are Indian made and cost considerably less. Even so our food bill at the local store is usually 1,600 to 1,800 rupees per month. (\$250.00) Margaret has just checked on a few more prices:

Jif Crunchy peanut butter (U.S.) (18 oz.)	\$2.50
Del Monte Mandarin Oranges (11 oz.) (Japan)	\$0.80
Canned Chip Dip (U.S. 8 oz.)	\$1.00

How is Muffy doing? Have you put her on the diet yet? I am enclosing a picture of Margaret sitting on the fence opposite our house, David with his new bicycle and Linda and Jeff on the motorcycle. This is proof that we are all still alive (see Diane for picture of me!)

Hope you enjoy the accompanying newsletter. We have to start thinking of a general newsletter for Christmas now.

Love to all,

Marg, Bill, Jeff, Linda, David.

P.S. Dad, how about a letter from you? That is something I've never had!

H7/5, RAPP Township
Via Kota, Rajasthan,
India,
Dec, 4, 1970.

Dear Dad,

Sorry for the delay in sending your Christmas present. I hope by some miracle it arrives on time. If not, I hope you had a Merry Christmas and didn't think we'd forgotten you. That was certainly not the case! There are a few interesting facts about each of your gifts. First the picture. It is a water colour painted by an artist in Bombay who came up to Township to sell his paintings. We bought several including this one. I'm giving it to you because it shows a village scene very much like the ones we see whenever we travel in Rajasthan. The clear, blue sky is always there. The Rajasthani ladies. with their water pots can be seen every quarter of a mile or so and the Indian huts are typical. I thought you might like it as a reminder of us.

The tie and handkerchief are silk brocade. India is famous for its silk and the gold thread in the pattern is real gold! In India many of the women wear saris with gold borders of the same kind of thread. When they wear out, they burn the silk sari and pick out the little lump of gold from the ashes so it can be used again. If you ever wear out the tie or handkerchief you might try it.

Well, I hope you are having (or have had) a nice Christmas season. We got your Christmas card and gift. Thank you very much. We'll be thinking of you on Christmas Day.

Love,
Bill, Marg & family.

P.S. Did you know we get to celebrate Christmas before you do? If you go to church Christmas Eve at 8:00 p.m. our kids will be just getting us up at 6:30 a.m. on Christmas Day!

January 1st, 1971.

Dear Mom & Dad,

We got your letter the other day. We were pleased to see good old Muffy. The Polaroid should be great for sending us pictures. Hope you'll make use of it often.

I haven't received my birthday present yet but am looking forward to it. Fishing hasn't been too good

lately but something else has. Just south of submersible bridge about a mile from township we've discovered three big crocodiles! They live just off a point on the opposite side of the river but with binoculars you can get a great view of them. David and I were over there on Thursday and saw all three of them out on the rocks basking in the sun. The biggest is a real monster. He must be fifteen feet long including the tail. Your binoculars are great for that. We take yours and the ones the staff gave me and then we can both watch without having to take turns. It's getting to be a regular thing to throw the binoculars into the saddle bag on the way to Rawat Bhata in case the crocodiles are out. So far they're too far away to get a picture, but maybe some day.

Happy Anniversary. I couldn't find an anniversary card, but we were thinking of you. Did you do anything special?

I'm sending some more films. Two are Christmas films. Four others were taken on our trip through Europe. I'll be interested in knowing how they turned out.

Well that's all for now. Write soon. The latest newsletter is enclosed, of course.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda, David.

P.S. We used some of the Christmas money to buy brass in Jaipur. Thank you and Happy New Year.

Jan. 2, 1971.

Dear Dad,

It's been a long time since we took these films but here are some of the things you should find on them:

London Zoo (with a little bit of Kennedy airport at the beginning). Part of 2 reels.

Paris Bastille Day Parade taken from Tuileries Garden.

Athens, Greece - general scenery plus the ruins of ancient Greece.

Plus 2 reels on township (marked on boxes with a *).

This begins with movies of monkeys taken about 100 feet from our house - followed by a very short sequence from New Delhi. Then Christmas in township.

There are probably other things on them that we've forgotten too, but just write with questions and we'll probably remember,

Love,

Bill.

January 16th, 1971.

Dear Mom & Dad,

Enclosed is the latest issue of the Indian Newsletter. Please note the new air mail paper. The local store had a package of a 1,000 sheets of it so I picked it up. This will be standard size for a while. It will be interesting to see how long it will last. Since a single newsletter takes about 25 sheets of paper with all the copies and personal notes it still should last all the time we're here at the rate of one big letter every two weeks. Probably that's about how often they will come from now on. There isn't so much that's new now but we'll make a real effort to get one out at least that often.

Thank you very much for my birthday present. It arrived on January the fourth! Perfect timing! The box was in terrible shape, but the reel was in good working order with just one small dent and a corner off the cast metal stand on the base of it. It must have taken quite a beating to have that break but, as I said, it works very well. Thank you very much. I've tried it already but no luck so far. The fish haven't been biting for anyone lately - probably because of the cold weather we've been having.

Things are busy around here with lots of school work, writing scripts for the local variety show coming up, socializing, rehearsals for the variety show, photography and so on. We certainly don't have any problem finding something to do with our time. My time is all filled up and I still have about six other things I'd like to get started doing. It's still quite a bit like being on summer holidays living around here.

My class had an assembly on Friday. They put on some short puppet plays, played 7 songs on the recorders and did a ten-minute tumbling demonstration - lots of variety anyway.

The parents certainly seemed pleased with the school. They keep threatening to ask A.E.C.L. to ask me to stay a third year.

Well that's all for now. Hope you got the films I sent.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David.

H7/5, RAPP Township
Via Kota, Rajasthan,
India,
January 30, 1971.

Dear Mom and Dad,

We received the Christmas tape made on Christmas night this week plus your letter. It was really fun to hear everyone being their usual crazy selves on Christmas night. That was a good idea. By the way, the reason Valerie's tape cost less was that it was on a 3-inch reel and is considerably lighter and smaller than a cassette so air mail costs would be less. We answered your question about costs of stamps in the newsletter, but it's probably enough to know that air mail rates here are just about the same as those in Canada. You can imagine what we spend on postage every month.

Margaret has the following suggestion for you if Muffy says she doesn't like it outside:

1. Grasp cat firmly in right hand.
2. Open door wide with left hand.
4. Fling cat well out into the snow.
4. Close the door quickly.
5. Disregard all meowing at the door.

Muffy was out nearly every night all night last winter and it didn't hurt her, so don't let her get the best of you. She knows softies when she finds them. We were sorry to hear about Pal, but agree that it was the best thing to do. I would hate to see him suffer any more after a good life.

Jeff hasn't taken too many pictures in India. He did take a good one of me at the school with my motorcycle. The print is at school, so I'll send it along soon. In the mean time, here is one of me with my class at school.

I'm glad to hear that people at the church haven't forgotten me. Don't make any promises for me for speaking tours, though. I'm not sure I want to get involved in that. It can be time-consuming and very boring for the speaker. I'd rather save my slides and bore the family with them instead.

Hoping to hear from you again soon,

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda, David.

P.S. I was really happy to get a letter from you Dad. Thanks.

H7/5, RAPP Township,
India,
February 24h, 1971.

Dear Mom & Dad,

We received your letter of the 14th yesterday so I guess the mail service is just about back to normal. I guess you've been wondering why you haven't heard from us recently but that is explained in the accompanying letter.

I was glad to hear that my films are getting some use. I just hope everyone we know hasn't seen them before we get home or we'll have nothing to show that's new. Of course, I won't show them in the form they are in now. I'll edit them with titles, related subjects, etc. By the way, I would like to know of any errors you note in them like sequences out of focus or very light or very dark. Otherwise I could waste a lot of film if something went wrong with the camera.

Sorry you're having so much snow and bad weather. You know it's really strange how fast you adjust to none of that weather. I don't miss it at all. Living here is just like continuous summer. Of course from now on it will get hotter and hotter. You can laugh at us when the temperature goes up well over a hundred almost every day for a month or so before monsoon.

I hope Uncle Alan is feeling better. We sent him a copy of this newsletter with a note saying he might enjoy something to read while he's recovering.

We'll have to write to John & Sharon soon, too. We haven't written to them since we came to India so we're well overdue. Keep us posted on their baby.

As you suggested and as will be obvious from this letter life is certainly not dull here. It's just as busy in Canada. In fact, I think when we come home we'll organize a lot more parties than we ever did before. We've sure got a lot of good ideas for some. By the way, it's only 15 months until we leave for home. The time really goes fast!

It wasn't a surprise to hear that Davis got in as Premier¹¹. He's been working on that for some time, but he was a good minister of education. Who is his successor?

The children received the Battling Tops game. The box was battered but the game and parts were complete. They just loved it and have played with it almost every day for the past 2 weeks. They also received the book of Valentines just a few days before Valentine's Day so they were really pleased.

They all asked me to send their thanks for the gifts. They really appreciated them. You really can't buy any game like that in India. Indian made games tend toward very educational and rather dull things like construction toys, thinking strategy games and so on. There are practically no frivolous toys which are just fun so they were really happy to get one.

Now a note to Dad:

Dad,

I got your note and hope to do as you ask in two weeks when we go on our trip to Jaipur, Delhi and Agra. I should be able to get something quite nice very easily in Jaipur. We'll worry about cost when I get home but I'll stay around the price range you suggested. I know all the places to shop in Jaipur and in Old Delhi now so it will be fun to look for something. By the way, why don't you come out to India and I'll take you shopping personally. You pay your way out and I'll pay your way back in black market rupees for much less by buying the tickets after you get here for your return trip. You should consider it. I doubt if you'll have the chance again. Quite a few people do it you know. For the past 3 months there have been mothers of two families living here with their parents and several other families are

¹¹ Bill Davis was elected premiere of Ontario in 1971 and held the position until 1985.

arranging to have parents here as guests. Space is no problem – we have a spare bedroom and it would be a wonderful experience.

As the newsletter suggests we have our car now. I went outside with the kids tonight and put up all the beds, curtains, etc. and the kids spent an hour trying out all the accessories. They think it's just great. It will be good for camping and fishing trips when we get back to Canada. You'll find the bed much more comfortable than the air mattresses and cots we usually use. Of course the snoring would pretty bad in such an enclosed place with you and Uncle Alan!.

Well I guess that's all for now. Hope you are all well. How about some more Polaroid pictures? We really like getting those!

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David

March 26, 1971.

Dear Mom and Dad,

We received your letter the other day. This has been a funny week for mail (at least this week and last week have.) We've received three Christmas cards (Mrs. Norman, the Arrowsmiths and the Tomblinsons) a package of inspirational Bible reading booklets from Uncle Dan and Aunt Evelyn and a calendar and the children's Christmas presents from Diane and Dick. I guess all the Christmas card senders didn't realize that an ordinary six-cent stamp puts their letter on the slow swamp boat that crosses the Atlantic. Joan wrote a nice letter way back on November 21st which I just read tonight! That's quite a delay. Anyway it was nice getting the mail.

As you will read in our newsletter we had a very nice trip to Jaipur, Agra and Delhi. We bought a pure silk scarf for Dad (at least it was his request!) in the Red Fort in old Delhi. It is a very impressive and historical site and of course its filled with souvenir shops. It was pretty expensive so I hope, Dad, you won't get too upset when I tell you that it cost Rs. 6.00 (\$90). I might add I priced the same thing in our Delhi hotel and they were twenty rupees - what a gyp that guy was! Anyway, the flower pattern was pretty hard to find but I hope it's all right. At least it's genuine Indian silk made in India and purchased in a building that has housed the rulers of India for over 250 years. In fact, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Ghandi, still uses it frequently for speeches and public gatherings on important occasions.

We bought you a ring in Jaipur, Mom. However, we can't decide how to get it home safely. It's a little too expensive to trust to the mails. You may have to wait till we come home unless we can find a way to send it back with someone coming to Canada sooner. Anyway, we'll see. At least you know we've got it.

By the way, we'll send the scarf in a separate package, but at the same time we send this letter. It will go registered air mail, so it should arrive around the same time the letter does.

I hope you've seen the last lot of films by now. How did they turn out. Did you like the vultures? The snake charmer, and dancing bear are taken outside Claridges Hotel in Delhi. The roll with the vultures was all taken on the way from RAPP Township to Kota. Did you see the cart of round brown things? They are cakes of cow dung for fires. The Indians really do collect up the cow dung and pat it into patties and use it for burning. There's a real controversy about whether they should burn it or use it for fertilizer. Burning seems to be winning - at least in the villages. The third roll has some shots of the Taj Mahal as well as some of Claridges pool if I remember correctly. The Taj Mahal was really beautiful. You'd really like it. I'll sure be happy to see those films when I get home. I'm looking forward to getting them all edited, spliced, with titles, sound track, etc.

Well I can't think of anything else for now. Lots more news in the newsletter. Don't worry about the money for the scarf or ring. We'll settle it all up when we get home. I can't use the money here anyway.

Love,
Bill, Marg & Jeff, Linda & David.

P.S. Sorry to hear that Muffy has given up her dear Grandmother for her Grandad! Don't expect us to take the spoiled, fat cat back with us when we go to Canada! You deserve to keep her.

April 16th, 1971.

Dear Mom and Toothless Dad,

Dad, I don't know whether to say I'm sorry or glad you got some more teeth out. If you really do get around to getting some more it will certainly be a good thing. If you don't it will be worse than ever both for appearance and digestion. Please get false teeth. You'll be pleased with the results.

Sorry to hear about your car troubles. It sounds like it has just about had it. A broken tie rod can certainly be serious. Maybe you should get a full safety check or think of trading it in.

Glad to hear Muffy is still well. I'm not surprised she has decided that Dad is her best friend. Dad was always a sucker for animals. Please don't spoil her or we won't take her back. Remember that strict diet she's supposed to be on.

There are a few pets in township. Several people have dogs. One lady had kittens for a while. Several families have parrots - really cheap. One family returned with a baby monkey from Bombay last week, but it died just this morning. Isn't that sad?

I've been spending quite a bit of time on school work and handyman chores recently. At school we've had a busy time with Open House, report cards and standardized tests which take a lot of time to mark.

At home I've built two cus-cus's. A cus-cus is a sheet of wood fibres about 3 ft. by 5 ft. which you fit on an angle into a window. Then you let water drain from the top to the bottom and the evaporation that

occurs causes a cooling effect on the surrounding air which is then drawn into the room with a fan. I've spent two Saturdays building those darn things but they do keep the living room cooler and less dry.

Now that I've got Hindi lessons established at school I'm working on a swimming programme and a film programme using the new 16 m.m. projector which A.E.C.L. has purchased for me and is sending to India. It should be good - it cost them \$900.

Well, that's about all for now. Lots of love from,

Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David.

P.S. Please enclose 2 or 3 Canadian flag stickers for the car with your next letter. The one I had on the back of the car was stolen!

May 7, 1971

Dear Mom & Dad,

First of all, an Indian wish for a happy if belated Mother's Day to you Mom. I will be thinking of you this Sunday.

We were interested to hear about your dog, I see that you bought a nice little breed again? Muffy will get a big shock when that dog grows up to its full size if they still "play". She'll be pleased to have a friend anyway. We look forward to some pictures.

I'm glad you got the movies. It's quite a shock isn't it to see the variations we go through from posh hotels to barren road-side scenes like that one with the vultures and dead water buffalo. We were just sitting in a little outdoor shack they call a restaurant in Rawat Bhata the other night laughing about what you'd say if you saw us there after the shots of Claridges hotel in New Delhi. We are certainly seeing all sides of life anyway. By the way, if you ever want to order in a restaurant in Hindi just say *Mujay paunch tunda cokes cha-hee-yay* (I need five cold Cokes). Now there's a useful thing to know. Try that on your friends.

There really isn't much news this week. Things are going well at school. We're finishing up most units of work in preparation for the end in 2-1/2 weeks. It has been a very successful and interesting year. They've just begun work on a large addition to the school which will give us bigger classrooms and more space next year in case we get a few more kids. Actually though our numbers probably won't change very much. They may even go down a bit.

The school has been bugging me for pictures and I haven't been able to get a decent set of slides organized for them yet so I mentioned your phone number in case they wanted to borrow the movies for the staff or students. I don't know whether you'll hear from them or not.

I've got some good books about India you'll have to read, Mom. Got quite a collection and a few of them are just your type. One of them, called "Behind Mud Walls" is about a missionary's wife who spends a few years in a small Indian village. Just right for your missionary wife in Africa type tastes in reading.

We'll write soon. Love to all,

Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David

P.S. Also love to your new "Pal". Don't forget to tell him about his brother Bill!

July 27th, 1971.

Dear Mom, Dad, Muffy and Dog,

We haven't received a letter from you saying that you've received the Kashmir films yet but hope to hear soon. In your last letter you said Uncle Alan was due for his operation the following day. We've been hoping everything went well but haven't heard yet. We enjoyed hearing about your trip to Wasaga Beach. That's one place we would have liked to have gone this summer, but I guess we'll just have to wait until next year. Tell us more about Ontario Place - Will it be part of the C.N.E, exhibits too or is it entirely separate? What kind of displays do they have there?

Township is pretty boring at this time of year. I've spent most of my evenings doing school work, writing "Laugh-In" scripts, or just reading. The television reception isn't too good. Radio isn't too bad. We are following the American moon flight on Voice of America - Short Wave which is fairly clear with a roof antenna although it tends to fade and come back in. Of course, there is also newspaper coverage of it too and I subscribe to TIME magazine and NEWSWEEK so we get pretty good news coverage that way although its about a week late. A.E.C.L. has just begun to have a daily Globe & Mail sent to Township by airmail as well. It is circulated through the A.E.C.L. people and then on to the school for current events use. It's a good way to keep up to date on the local news as well – if it comes through regularly. We don't know whether it will or not yet.

I've been fishing a few times lately and fishing is pretty good again. Unfortunately I'm also losing plugs. I wonder if you could send some more fishing lures over by air mail? I could use silver-coloured spoons, three or four medium-sized red devil type lures in red and white plus some leaders and sinkers. I haven't even got one sinker left! Make sure under five dollars.

How are your new teeth now, Dad? Have you adjusted to them yet? I would sure like to see a nice close-up picture of both of you. How about getting Dick or Diane to take one with the Polaroid and send it along?

By the way, those pictures of the kids must be getting pretty old. If you will trace the size of the oval on that picture frame I will take some new shots of the kids and send them along to replace the old ones.

I'm also going to take some pictures in our back yard. We've built a really great three-hole golf course (putting only) with flags, holes, little ramps for the ball, etc. David just loves it. He'd be out there every day if we didn't have so much rain. Watch out, Grandad, or he'll be able to beat you when he gets back to Canada! Keep practising! Our first hole is right under our banana tree. When I have to putt a short one I hit my head on the big bunch of bananas hanging down. That doesn't happen in Canada, does it? Our back yard is looking pretty good now. The grass is coming along and we have quite a lot of lovely flowers and shrubs - planted by our Mali of course.

We've been using it for some barbeques lately, too. Th last two have been rained out. We cooked the food on the back porch and ate indoors but at least we are doing some barbequing. We use good old water buffalo steaks (they may be beef but no Indian store-keeper would advertise the fact) and they're quite good. The kids really enjoy them for a change.

Margaret read the lab report on the analysis of the cyst she had removed from her shoulder. It was a completely harmless type and nothing at all to worry about. Of course, the scar has all healed nicely by now.

I went out to plant site today to have a meeting with some of the Indian officials that are supposed to supply me with school furniture. It's a real fight to get new furniture for the school. The orders tend to get lost or delayed or side-tracked - mainly because they don't have much reason to be interested in the school. So I got after them today about a whole stack of stuff I had ordered or wanted ordered. I think I got somewhere with them. I'll know better in a few weeks.

While I was at plant site I had another tour of the site (my third). Things are moving along quite well. The first of the two atomic reactors should begin working (go critical as we atomic energy people say) around next April. It'll be a big event when it does. It'll be an even bigger event if it doesn't work properly. Boom! Just a mushroom cloud. Actually, there are so many safety features built into it, you couldn't make it blow up if you wanted to - and its about 20 miles from township (at least ten!)

Well, that's about all for now. Write soon. Let me know how the films turned out.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David.

P.S. If you feel like a drive some day, have a look at our house and let us know if it's still standing. By the way, how's the car running?

H7/5, RAPP Twp.,
Via Kota, Rajasthan, India,
August 16, 1971.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I was pleased to receive your letter of August 5th the other day. It certainly arrived very promptly. Then I had the added surprise of receiving my fishing tackle today. Thank you very much. It was exactly what I needed. I'll get back out there one night this week after the big ones. If I catch anything worthwhile I'll get some pictures. I'll get going on the pictures of the kids too. It will probably be several weeks before they are ready because I have to take them, finish the roll of film, develop it, make prints, etc. This is not a good time of year to do that kind of thing. The weather is really too hot but I'll do that roll anyway.

I've been wondering how long it would be before you wrote saying you bought a new car. I've been expecting it for a while now. It really sounds nice. How about getting a picture of it? What's the matter with that Polaroid anyway? Isn't it working anymore, or can't you afford to buy any film after getting the car and paying the postage on that package (\$3.15!). That automatic transmission will be a nice change. I miss it on the Volkswagen too. With all the stops, and hills and slow spots around here 4 forward gears is a real nuisance.

How is Uncle Alan now? What a disappointment - to have such a serious operation and find that there is so little they can do! Please tell him we've been asking after him and send our best wishes.

You say your dog, Susie is playful. You should see our crazy cat. When it plays with David it roars around the room tackling his legs. Fortunately it is beginning to settle down. It used to act that way with everyone. Now it's just with David.

By the way, we did get the Canadian and Ontario stickers. I'm sure I mentioned it months ago in a letter. We are using them on the car, They attracted several fellow Canadians on our trip to Kashmir.

I've been so busy on the slot-car track (see newsletter) and the boy's new go-cart that I just haven't had time to sit down and spend an evening writing letters. (School takes a little time in there too.) Anyway it's just about finished. Any more work on it can be done a bit at a time. I've got to start putting some cars together too. I've written a letter to Hong Kong requesting a catalogue from a large supplier of models. If we get a response, it may be possible to buy them very cheaply directly from Japan, or through a "free port" like Hong Kong.

School is really keeping me busy this year with five grades and about 27 kids. It's a lot of work. I certainly noticed a difference this year knowing all the kids well from the first day. You can really get right down to work with them without a lot of wasted time finding out where they are and what their capabilities are.

Everyone here is just fine. We are particularly fortunate. We seem to have a pretty high resistance to the local diseases. None of us have had any serious sickness since we got to India. Lots of other Canadians have as we have said. We just hope our luck, or resistance holds up. The hospital isn't the cleanest place in the world (a Canadian doctor that works in India told us she wouldn't send her dog to an Indian hospital). The only surgeon in the hospital has just gone away on a holiday for a month or two so that leaves us with no local service in case of fractures, appendix, emergency operations, etc. Of course, it is possible to go into Kota, but even the local doctors don't recommend the hospital there it's so bad.

Are dad's teeth getting any better? What with a full mouth of teeth and less weight we probably won't even recognize him next summer. How are you, Mom? Doing lots of swimming, water-skiing and so on as usual?

Well I must go. I have other letters to write and some Mathematics workbooks to mark so love from all of us,

Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David.
(And a big hello to Muffy and Susie from Mandu¹²)

P.S. No! We do not intend to bring Mandu home with us. It can stay here and catch mice and geckoes for someone else. Tell Muffy so she can stop worrying.

September 6, 1971.

Dear Mom & Dad,

It's 10:15 on a Monday night. I've just come back from several hours of slot car racing and car fixing at the track we built. As a result this letter will probably be rather short. Did I tell you in our last letter that we received the fishing lures? They came in good condition. I've already lost one lure and caught one fish with them. Right now the river is useless for fishing. The floodgates are open almost fully and the river is so high that you could never catch fish in it.

My class today got up to its highest enrolment ever. I have 32 pupils in 5 grades. That's a real handful! They took down the inside bamboo supports in my new classroom on the weekend and its really going to be nice when it's finished. I'll show you some pictures of it as soon as we move in (by October 15th hopefully.)

As you'll see in the newsletter we have made our decision about a third year. We are not going to stay. Two years of a small, isolated place like RAPP Township is plenty for adults and children. Right now the parents are pleased with the school programme, but as they go into their third year with all of the frustrations and little problems around here I think the morale of the whole place might go down and school would be a great target for complaints. There is no sign of that yet, but I think it could happen easily. Some of the women here get very depressed, Margaret hasn't but she has several friends who have been quite depressed for a number of days at a time. This is particularly true of people staying a third year. I think we'll leave after two years with really good memories and feelings about India. If we stayed a third year we might come away feeling bitter. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that, if I stayed, it was only for a bit of extra money. That's not a good enough reason to take a year out of our lives. So, we'll be home next summer. It doesn't seem very far away now. We'll have to begin planning our trip right after Christmas. Is there anything you want me to buy for you in Hong Kong? All kinds of electronic equipment, cameras, etc. are very cheap. Get your word in early! By the way, jewelry and particularly pearls are very cheap there. Let me know if you want anything.

¹² We adopted a wild or stray kitten and named it Mandu, short for Katmandu.

I haven't taken the pictures of the kids for your frame yet. I'll do it as soon as the weather cools down a bit. It's too hot for developing right now.

Well. That's all. The rest of our news is in the newsletter. Write soon.

Love,
Bill, Marg, Jeff, Linda & David (also Mandu)

H7/5, RAPP Township,
Via Kota, Rajasthan, India.
March 5, 1972.

Dear Mom and Dad,

Hi! How are you doing? What happened to that Polaroid camera? We haven't seen any pictures for a long time! You get movies from time to time but we seldom get to see you. I'm afraid that when we get home we won't recognize the new slim, toothy Grandad. Seriously though, try to get Dick or Diane to take a picture of you sometime soon. I know you'll like that anyway, Mom because you always love having your picture taken so much!

On the way home I hope to buy a new 35 m.m. slide camera that takes half-frame pictures - that is, pictures that are about half the size of usual slides. This is a more economical use of film - you get twice as many pictures - and still produces very good results. It doesn't affect the size of slides on a screen - you just move the projector back a bit.

We've got a real pile of slides now - we filled the box that John and Sharon gave us and I bought another similar box in Delhi and I have almost filled that one too. It looks like we'll have so many slides that it will take months for anyone to see them all! Undoubtedly you will have to spend a number of evenings between now and next Christmas watching them. You had better get your eyes examined and your glasses up to date for all that viewing!

We are thinking of making some changes in our trip home after hearing about a trip made by some Canadians on their recent home leave. We think this may be our only opportunity ever to see the South Pacific so we may extend our trip home a little to see places like the Solomon and Fiji Islands, New Guinea and so on. Some of the islands down there seldom see tourists. It could be really interesting. In fact I could write another book for your best-seller list - A Medical-Teacher-Missionary among the South Pacific Islands.

The only changes that we might make in other plans might be that we would fly into California and then fly home from there rather than drive home but we will have made that decision and probably have some definite dates for our itinerary by our next letter in a week or two.

Some questions for Dad - when spring comes, don't forget to get the yard in shape for miniature golf! I've done some practicing here and look forward to a big challenge match. Also - check with Dick and John (and Uncle Alan if he's well enough) about the possibility of a fall camping-fishing trip and think of some possible dates and locations. I still regret that you never got over here to see us, Dad. We could have had a great time fishing in the river, going for hikes and playing golf in the back yard. You know, in spite of some of the disadvantages mentioned, it would be a great retirement village. Lots of servants to do the unpleasant work and summer weather all year round.

Have you got a colour t.v. going all the time now? It seems that almost all of our friends have, from their letters. I'll guess that will be one of our first purchases when we get home, Have you had an opportunity to drive by our house recently? I would appreciate it if you get a chance some Sunday. It would be nice to know if it is still standing.

We got a letter from the new teacher that will replace us the other day. They sound just as enthusiastic as we did. A man and his wife will share the teaching responsibilities for the first year at least. I wrote them a long letter last night telling them a few of the things they would like to know. They are interested in buying our motorcycle and our freezer. Selling the freezer will help us keep our sea shipment weight within reason going back.

Has Muffy recovered from her fight? The family agrees that it is her own fault for getting fat and lazy. She used to be able to hold her own in a battle. She'd have a much tougher time over here with wild jackals and wild dogs roaming township every night. Every morning around 1:00 a.m. you hear unearthly screeches from the jackals, wild dogs, hyenas, etc. who scream back and forth to each other. If they didn't get her, the wild cats would. They're small but dangerous to a house pet as you can imagine.

Well, that's about all for now. Write again when you have some news. Hope you are enjoying the mild spring weather. It's starting to get hot around here again. Lots of love from all,

Bill.