



India Newsletter

By Dolores Stykel - March 2010



DOLORES STYKEL (DODO) – (present editor)
HAPPY EASTER!

I have taken a few items from some Christmas letters which we received and several e-mails and letters, which came this past month. Mel and I are continuing to “hold our own.” I have personally been blessed with good health, and we are thankful that Mel recovered from his lumbar fractures. We are also thankful for the medical profession, which continues to monitor his chronic conditions. We have been at Parkview for 8 years and enjoy the activities and people here.

ELMER & ANNE BURRALL – I tell people I wear my name badge at church, not so others will know who I am, but that I can check and see who I am. I have reached the beginning of my 82nd year; so I guess I’m entitled to a few lapses of memory along the way.

There are some things I would like to forget. We were struck by a tragedy on Oct. 3 by the death of Anne’s oldest son, Bruce, who was killed in a motorcycle accident in southern Georgia while on a trip to North Carolina with three other cyclists. He was only 48, married only two years to his wife, Joy. He will be truly missed.

Our families continue their life journeys. Karen’s son Sidney is currently in Iraq. Her other son, Cole has finished his first year at Full Sail University in Orlando. Daughter, Leslie, is about to graduate from high school. Bob and Sharen are still in Oklahoma City. Alan and Tommy in Chicago, Linda is starting a new career in physical fitness, and Carolyn resides in Heber Springs, Ark., working as a church office manager and choir director.

MARY RIBER - The Gardens 2910 E 16th S Des Moines IA 50316 – Dec 9 The Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark came to Grand View for a visit this spring and I was invited to be there. Seventy years ago when I was 12, this young Crown Prince’s grandparents, Crown Prince Frederick and Princess Ingrid came to visit Grand View College. We lived nearby in Snusville and Mom lent me her precious Brownie camera to get a photo of the royal couple. As they came out the front door of Old Main, I stepped in front of them and snapped a very nice photo. A copy of that was presented to the young couple that day and I was introduced as the one who had taken it so many years ago.

Kris and Wendy with son Kai, wife Sky and baby Owen are now teaching in Islamabad but will be leaving there at the end of the school year. Their son Karl works in Harare Zimbabwe, daughter Rani lives in DC working on a nursing degree.

Emmy and Bengt are in Portland, daughter China and family nearby. Son Niklas is on assignment in Nepal. Bengt has recently been in Laos for the UN.

Karl and Sarah are doing well in Australia. Karl is a nurse and works in an assisted living campus similar to this one and refers to it as “God’s waiting room.”

Johnny and Louise’s three kids and families all live near them in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and are involved with their filming company.

ELAINE LOMPERIS OLSON –January saw Elaine off to Kodai, her alma mater in the beautiful Palni Hills of South India. As a volunteer for the January to June semester she taught ESL to 7th grade mostly Korean boys (a new and somewhat difficult assignment) and she was the Elementary School Nurse-located on our former Lutheran Compound. To be back at this

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idyllic setting involved in familiar school activities like hiking, Field Day, the all school play, and graduation was truly a dream-come-true! If you'd like to hear more she can send you copies of the occasional e-letters she sent from Kodai.

Martin and Jessica are enjoying their new house in suburban Virginia. Esther started a grooming section for the animal hospital where she works as a vet-tech in suburban Philadelphia, while Dax continues his on-line college program. Karl left for New Zealand in October with an exchange program that helps him find room and board, jobs and insurance. After working with four European girls on a kumara (potato) farm, in December he was harvesting oranges. Working in tourism or hotels turned out to be problematic because they have trouble understanding his accent. His return ticket is for Jan. 2011.

SHIRLEY WOOD KOCHER – This was a year of anniversary celebrations, but if you live long enough, you're bound to have anniversaries to celebrate. Bob celebrated 55 years of ministry at a banquet at Synod Meeting. The congregation brought tears to our eyes when they honored us with a rose bush on either side of the front door at church.

I also celebrated 60 years since I graduated from Kodai high school. There were only four of us classmates and Bob that gathered at classmate Pat Thomas Becker's house in Madison. With so few of us, we had time to share a lot of memories, but we also went to see Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin East. Alan kept bonking his head on the ceiling because FLW built for people of his shorter stature.

Last summer, grandson Phil, who'd just finished his first year at West Point, was taking a course involved in learning to secure items for a helicopter to haul. One of these items mentioned was a water buffalo, and besides wondering how they got a water buffalo to NY, I had a wonderful picture of Phil flying a helicopter with a water buffalo dangling below. "Oh, Grandma", says Phil, "a water buffalo is a vehicle that holds water," but I refuse to give up my picture, which is much more interesting.

In July, Jeannie left for Moshi, Tanzania to teach English/Creative writing at a university. If you want a hilarious, insightful account of her adventures there, check out her blog at ayearintanzania.blogspot.com. She is dealing with classes of 200 that get along with 20 textbooks and an erratic electric supply. We plan to visit her in Feb.

ERIC REBLE - 421-141 Father David Bauer Drive Waterloo, ON N2L 6N9 Phone 519 783-3221. (Some excerpts from Eric's annual letter) –Of very recent vintage dramatic changes have taken place in my life. I sold my home 6 months after Jean died and moved into the apt. at Luther Village. I feel very much at home and an integral part of the whole community. I knew many residents before I came. I have come to know many more and have tried to take part in activities here.

The most dramatic change recently has been a heart attack, which was discovered just before Christmas. I ended up in the hospital for 2 weeks and was diagnosed with congestive heart failure on top of a longer standing blood disorder. This leaves me subject to breathing difficulties and attacks of angina, which led to a second hospitalization. On top of this I have an enlarged prostate (no cancer) which has me constantly running to the bathroom. This is not a letter of complaint but I have learned how much a person's life changes in a short time. I have also discovered in all these changes, the gift of care and concern that is expressed on every side.

My youngest daughter, Carol, is arriving from Colorado while I sit here in the hospital (January 23). Her cardiac nursing experience will help inform several decisions to be made about my medical care. Jane and her partner Jane live nearby. I'd be lost without Jane. Son Peter and granddaughter Rhea drop in more often now from Toronto.

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One of the highlights of 2009 was the reunion of the Kodai class of 1964 that took place on the beautiful property of John and Evie Aung Thwin along the Onawa River, near Hawkesbury, Quebec. Now there was a gift, seeing and visiting students I taught and a staff colleague, John's mother, Margaret.

As I reflect on my life, the years Jean and I and our children spent in India were a bonus. I do not know what the future holds. I do know that God is going to call me into a new dimension as he has called Jean and Brenda and many other loved ones. And with that I am content.

Again, thank you for the part that you have played in my life. P.S. It is now Feb 20. I have been in the hospital for more than a month and I am anxious to get home. The hospital has wanted to discharge me for several weeks but cannot because there is an outbreak of a virus in my retirement home and I am not permitted to return until 5 days after the last new case.

SHIRLEY HOLMER – Mar 1 – The latest news with us is that Matthew has moved to Chicago. Jon went to Rock Island to get him last Saturday. He will be with Jon and Vernita for a week or so. Then Jon and his son, Jon will go back to Rock Island to get his belongings.

His address is Eden Supportive Living 940 West Gordon Terrace, Apt. 322 Chicago IL 60613. He will be in an efficiency apt. – all meals served in a cafeteria, cleaning, laundry and medication reminder. It will be like going into a nursing home as they will take all his Social Security check and give him a \$90 allowance. The state will pay the remainder of his rent. His place is 2 blocks from Lake Michigan and 4 blocks from Wrigley Field. Vernita's school is one block from the ball park. They have lots of activities and field trips. He hated to leave the Mississippi but now he has the lake.

ROSELLA KAMEO – Mar. 13 – How great it will be to see so many of you at the reunion in May! I'm flying around the world to attend, leaving Indonesia at the end of April. Unfortunately Daniel will not be able to come with me since university classes here are in session until mid-June. Someday he hopes to be able to attend.

At the last reunion, I was about to retire from my 34 years with LCA/DWME/ELCA-GM. During one of our first days at Lutheridge, Carol K. came up and told me how much she was enjoying retirement. That really helped to set my mind at ease. I'm glad to say that I am enjoying my retirement, too!

Retiring as the wife of an Indonesian professor in Java is a bit different than retiring stateside, though, as you can imagine. For one thing, since I no longer have a work permit, I can do no work or even volunteer for work that might be perceived as something requiring a permit. This has been a blessing in some ways and a problem in others. The good thing is that it has forced me to find fulfillment in other ways. One way has been through writing.

Years ago my parents suggested that I could use the letters I had written home for a book someday. In 2008 my brother handed me thousands of letters that my parents had kept for me down through the years. Daniel helped me to arrange them by date, and we brought them all back to Indonesia. Around 300 of those are letters from India with detailed descriptions of the life of an I-3 at Schade and a 21-24 year-old in Rajahmundry. To be able to relive that part of my life through those letters has been so rewarding. I have typed them all up now so that I can do keyword searches to find what I need. I am also photocopying them into a book so that I can donate most of the originals to the ELCA Archives.

As for writing, I am just finishing up a book of devotional reflections based on my own personal experiences around the globe. I hope to get it published in the States this year or next. Daniel and I also plan to write a book together on cross-cultural understanding to be published in Java. Universities teaching CCU could use it as a resource, but our main purpose would be to help

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Indonesians who are going abroad for the first time.

Church and social activities take up a lot of our time. Daniel is an elder at our GPIB church and is assigned to serve at one of three services every Sunday. Being an elder also means preaching once in a while at one of four village churches connected with ours. I, too, am frequently asked to preach at the English service of the GKI church. I enjoy doing that.

Daniel has just been appointed head of the Dewan Reset Daerah or Regional Research Bureau for Central Java, which advises the governor on policy matters. His office is an hour away in Semarang, and he goes there several times a week for meetings and office work. Many times I go along for the ride and the chance to shop and enjoy a meal out together. Daniel's main job, though, is to teach Economics and Regional Planning to undergraduates and graduates at Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga. Sometimes he invites his students to have their class at our place. Yesterday we had 28 over for coffee and fried bananas after class.

Thanks to Virginia, Mary and others who are busy organizing the May reunion! From the last one, we know just how enjoyable it will be. We look forward to hearing what we can do to help.

Fond greeting to all!

SHIRLEY FRANKLIN – Mar 18 -We enjoyed this winter's India trip, Franklin for four and a half months, myself for two, before returning to the MM tundra mid February. Small tribal communities in four more Guntur District villages have joined our NGO's efforts to encourage and enable their children's education, and two of the original groups contributed sweat equity to improve the simple community centers which we have sponsored and for which we supply evening school teacher/tutors. The sewing center graduated several students who are purchasing subsidized sewing machines, and community elders are practicing leadership skills. It's a relatively small project, but an effort to make a difference. You can read more at <pushpapoproject.org> .We stayed in Brodipet with Franklin's younger brother and their 99 year old dad. There's a multi-story wedding/holiday clothing store right next to the North Parish church, and a three star hotel right next to that. From the plate glass window in a wooden-floored luxury suite, you can look down on the busy, paved street between Brodipet and Arundelpet, where the heavy traffic...auto rickshaws, motorcycles, cars, buses and vans...moves in a more orderly fashion than in the 60's. Goodwill store has long been replaced by a number of shops with, yes, toilet paper, and everything from magazines to frozen foods, plastic ware to breakfast cereal. At the same time, some lanes in the old bazaar have changed very little.

Despite increasing incidents by certain elements, the large Christian population in Guntur gathers to worship faithfully and at length. Lenten worship draws crowds spilling out around the building, while holidays witness crowds in the thousands under shamianas. Speakers and evangelists hold open air meetings for a sea of people in public venues. Church properties and programs are still at risk from preying administration, while the laity are rallying to seek solutions. Let us pray sincerely and unceasingly for integrity and courage to turn things around, with the new president and church leadership, as well as pastors and laity. Many people remember and thank God for the missionaries who worked among them, and they wanted us to convey their genuine appreciation for what you have given them. You are not forgotten.

On a sad note, a housekeeper who worked for Anne and me and later Ruth Sigmon, went to her reward shortly before I went to India this time. God bless her memory, and that of all those who served us so tirelessly and well. (People there still call their helpers 'servants', but I wonder whether it isn't time we gave up the term.) Apartment buildings are going up everywhere, including across from the deteriorating LEMS, where the homes of Dr. Kanthiah and Luther Benny once stood. Times are rapidly changing.

The old issue, pro and con, of dividing the state into two (or three, or four, as some proponents

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suggest), erupted after the Chief Minister's death and a premature promise from the Central Government. There were bandhs, agitations, transportation disruptions, and suicides, while companies began moving elsewhere. It will be a long time before the issue is settled and losses can be recouped--if ever. As one businessman said, the damage has already been done.

While we did not witness any of this going on, we did think twice about side trips, and breathed a sigh of relief when a weekend bandh was relaxed two evenings while we were in Hyderabad en route home. We did manage a short trip to Goa (mistake...you want to spend longer, and in Old Goa, not new) where we stayed a beautiful but modestly priced resort. And the car trip from Guntur to Hyderabad on our way back to US was one of our most memorable days, including an impromptu lunch sitting under a tree on the roadside cot of a hospitable stranger, and a stop for fresh cool air and the sight of Ethipotala Falls from a promontory in a beautifully kept park near Nagarjunasagar Dam.

Of course we also visited relatives and friends, Franklin took a few more classical vocal music lessons, I submitted some work to an educational publisher in Hyderabad, and we enjoyed just a 'bit' of shopping. "And a good time was had by all."

Hope to see you all in Ashville in May!

IF WE RECEIVE NEWS FOR A NEWSLETTER, I SHALL SEND ONE OUT AGAIN IN JULY.
DEADLINE FOR NEWS JULY 15.

[Web Steward Note: If you know of any of our India Mission Family who would like to receive this newsletter by email, please have them sign up at: http://althouses.com/india_newsletter/indianews.htm. If you have any questions or problems with the web site newsletter, please let me know at: kodaistaff@althouses.com.]