

25 May 1982

Dear Bp. Hansen, PV 1st Ward, Children, Grandchildren, etc.,

We rolled out of our respective sides of the bed at 6:15 this morning. I don't know how it started but Ida-Rose has always slept to my left. Then we popped our pills (antimalarial) and prayed that we wouldn't get bilharzia, phuttsy fly maggots, taeste fly disease, cholera, tick fever, the plague or leprosy. Next, we put on our jogging clothes in preparation for our morning walk. This morning I also wore my wool stocking cap and a sweater. You see, it is now autumn in Zimbabwe and temperatures are falling. Yesterday's high was only 84 and last night the mercury plummeted to 70! It really felt good in bed last night when Ida-Rose, great missionary companion that she is, let me warm the bottoms of my shivering feet in the middle of her back.

The blacks are now wearing sweaters, hood coverings, coats, and blankets even when the sun is shining. Heaven knows what they do to keep warm at night!

Even though the lowest night-time temperature recorded in Harare (Salisbury's new name) so far this fall is only 65° F, the deciduous trees have shed their leaves.

You may think that I'm kidding, but I'm not. Last night I wore my down-filled quilted thermal underwear to bed and the temperature in the house was 70° F. They say it's a matter of adaptation. During January and February, the hottest part of our summer, Sister Hall and I could hardly bear the heat. (Homes, automobiles, and buildings are neither heated or cooled. You just take what nature gives you.) We were so hot, miserable and exhausted that we wondered if we had contracted some of the exotic tropical diseases available here. But after adjusting to 95° temperatures at high humidity, we are like the trees and other flora. We think winter has arrived when it's 70° at night. The worst is yet to come. They say that next July night-time temperatures will sometimes fall to 40° F. And we left our electric blanket in Provo! Oh, well, it wouldn't work anyway. Everything here runs on 240 volt electricity (I should tell you that electric blankets, washing machines, dryers, disposals, microwave ovens, color TV's, butter, cheese, laundromats, corn syrup, K-marts, Grand Centrals, Big Macs, Sears, Skaggs Drugs, and many other absolute necessities including color film processing do not exist over here.)

Although we are quite near the equator, Harare is 6000 feet above sea level (2000 feet higher than Provo.) Humidity is high year round so you can steam-cook in the day time and are clammy cold at night.

Another interesting phenomena resulting from our proximity to the equator is that sunrise and sunset remain rather constant year round. The sun comes up abruptly at 6 a.m. and sets just as abruptly at 6 p.m. Sunrises and sunsets are both lovely, but brief. I've been wondering if this is what Kipling was referring to in his poem "...on the road to Mandalay---where the sun comes up like thunder o'er China 'cross the bay..."

Well, I have wandered; let's get back to walking. We found the milk man and his push car over on Ruth Taylor (really) avenue near Tomlinson drive, returned five empty bottles I had carried over in a plastic shopping bag and purchased three milk, one guava, and one orange juice. The bottles contain 600 mililiters (a bit more than a pint). It's good to pick them up early because they are not refrigerated after leaving the plant. The milk industry (called Daribord) is nationalized in Zimbabwe. We swing home, wash off the very dirty exterior of the bottles in soapy water, dry them, and put them in our small Frig. Then we are off walking again. We pass a Eucalyptus tree with a branch just the right height for chinning so I do a couple. Ida-Rose passes on this one. Then we do a bit of race walking which we learned from our daughter Liz. We revel in the fresh morning air, the dew, the endless varieties of shrubs, trees, flowers, cacti, etc. Dogs bark at every gate we pass. (All yards are high fenced, usually with stone) and the gates are of ornamental iron). Premises are also protected by electronic devices with such trade names as "Chloride Alarm", Chubb Alarm", and "Radio Alarm". House numbering is individual to an area such as Gunhill, Highlands, Borrowdale, or Eastlea. Once you catch on, its a good system. Most homes, in addition to having a house number, also have a name. For example, No. 6 "Nervana", or No. 68 "Century". The number, the house, and the family name, such as Grammur Lodge #6 (Tomlinson Ave., Gunhill) D. Barnett (really) are all prominently displayed in large letters on or near the gate.

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After half an hour, during which time I've scuffed out a hundred beginning anthills along the roadside with the sole of my shoe, we're back home again. There was a horror movie here recently about ants taking over the world. I'm sorry we didn't get to see it. Incidentally, my brother Wendell who is president of the Argentina Buenos Aires North mission has written for me to send him some ants that can eat cockroaches. We are grateful that Ida-Rose's feet now permit such walks. She had a great deal of foot trouble for four months following some foot surgery in October 1981.

We pass many blacks on our morning walks and give each one a cheery "good morning" trying to do our part for black-white reconciliation. They are often startled that a white would speak to them. They usually answer, "good morning, sir," and "good morning, madam."

One day when we went after milk we found the milk man smoking a cigarette. We had not seen this before. Ida-Rose, in her motherly way gave him a good scolding, telling him he would get cancer, it was an expensive habit, etc. He retaliated that he was smoking to keep warm. Ida-Rose rebutted by asking him if he could read English. He said yes, so she gave him a tract on the Word of Wisdom. We haven't seen him smoking since.

The milk men wear a blue jump suit trimmed with green. Their hat is blue with a hemispherical top and large floppy brim that goes all the way around. The detailing can only be described as "definitely afrikan". I wanted one and offered to buy, but the milk man wouldn't sell. He said I could get one at Paramount Uniforms--hope to get one soon. Reminds me of a time recently when I wouldn't "sell." A group of crochet hawkers descended on me one day as I pulled into a parking stall near a TM store. One lady was very insistent that I had to buy a dress from her since she had so many children, had school fees to pay, etc. (They are very good actors and sometimes their stories alone are worth \$5.00). She wanted \$18 for the dress. I showed her that my wallet contained only \$10 and that I had groceries to buy. She then begged me to take off my shirt and give it to her together with the ten dollars for her dress!

We encountered many other interesting things on our morning walks. Wherever you go you see police and army personnel and army and police vehicles. The vehicles are very strange in appearance; for sure "out of this world." I've been hankering to take some pictures of them but am afraid of getting shot if I do. We live near police and army barracks and also a prison. We sometimes see prisoners dressed in white jump suits working along the roadside under armed guard. We also see Zimbabwe Republic Police cavalry going up the road four horses abreast, there being about fifty horses in the formation. A most interesting sight is a cadre of fifty young army recruits dressed in white, sleeveless t-shirts, white shorts, and white tennis shoes running down the road, in step, and in precision formation, chanting as they go, under the direction of a leader running alongside. Two of the men in the cadre, one behind the other, carry a heavy log, about ten feet long on their shoulders. At the leader's command, they toss the log (while still running) to another pair of recruits and continue, on command, to do so until each person has had his turn at one end of the log. In the distance, in the early morning mist, one does not see black. There are only tee shirts, shorts, and tennis shoes, pumping up and down to an ever fainter afrikan chant as they vanish into the morning.

Well, so much for our morning walk. Maybe next time I can tell you about breakfast.

Love,
Tracy (and Ida-Rose)

P.S. We have had many cheery letters from home recently, particularly from Pleasant View First Warders. We thank you for building our spirits. It's easy to get discouraged here. Among the people we've heard from in PVI are Julie Nielson, Helen Jonsson, Bishop and Kathryn Hansen, Myrtle Joy Free, Elaine Duke, Pat Higbee, Donna Hill and Carolyn Finlayson. Forgive me if I've forgotten someone and thanks again. We were saddened at the news of Sis. Jennie Myer's death, but gladdened by Pat Higbee's news that she is expecting.