

GONPA GAZETTE



Moonrise over the condo

Well Toto we aren't even in India any more...we're in America! It's been almost a month of long-awaited, well-deserved 'holiday': quality time with friends, discretionary time (staying in my pjs as long as I want, staying in the house as long as I want, hot baths every night)! For 3 ½ months my time will be more or less my own, which is a precious gift.

I know everyone thinks their friends are the best, but MINE are, hands down! Old friends, new friends...I can't thank you enough for your support since I arrived!

Eugene weather is the opposite of Bylakuppe: nine months of cloudy skies and rain; and three of sunny, blue skies. No dog to walk, job to go to or vehicle to drive; I am acutely aware of the cold and damp, and often see no reason to

Even go as far as the supermarket across the street. The world is infinite shades of gray, sometimes subtle, sometimes not; nothing captures my attention, calling to be photographed.

I know I have been away a L-O-N-G time when there is nary a plastic bag in the house to use as a dust bin...it takes one repair man to show me the garbage disposal works fine as long as the fuse is on...and another to show me the washing machine works fine as long as you push the 'power' and the 'start' buttons.

Handicapped in India because I didn't grow up learning how to wash clothes by hand in a bucket of cold water; and now handicapped in America because I have forgotten how to use a washing machine!

Last month there was so much to write about Chauari Village that never got written, so now is the time. Before I arrived the students had the good fortune of a full day of two guest volunteers teaching them about animal compassion and how to be safe around street dogs. Next year we hope to have the street dogs de-sexed and vaccinated against rabies.

I had two wonderful days in Chauari, visiting the school and clinic as always; and walking through the village distributing prasad (blessed food offerings). I met many villagers for the first time, including Muslim elders. I saw their school and new temple construction; as well as a Hindu temple.

I had my annual meeting with the school principal and teachers.

We decided a boundary wall around the school and clinic is highest priority, to keep animals and vandals out, and children safe during the school day. Next in importance is the free-standing self-contained, kindergarten classroom so the youngest and eldest students can attend school full time, at the same time; without their learning/studying disrupting each other. Third on the list is new uniforms and book bags for all 165 students. Three years ago 143 student received new uniforms, but all students should have two sets: one to wear and one to wash. Statistics show the dropout and teen pregnancy rates are lower when students wear uniforms.

Here is our complete 2016 wish list, in order of priority:

• Boundary wall around school & clinic	\$ 5,341
• Free standing, self-contained kindergarten classroom	\$ 4,871
• School uniforms (\$503) & book bags (\$475)	\$ 978
• School trip	\$ 176
• Hand pump repair (8)	\$ 206
• School roof repair	\$ 215
• Multi-vitamins for 1 year	\$ 2,377
• Menstrual pads for 1 year	\$ 115
• 3 sewing machines to learn self-sufficiency skills	\$ 257
• 1 lockstitch machine to learn self-sufficiency skills	\$ 103

Ashish Nayan is half way through his junior year at Lee Academy in Maine. He is the eldest son of Anirudh Prasad, the founder and director of the Chauari Village Project. Imagine, growing up in Chauari Village, moving to Bodhgaya, then to America for high school.

This year he is has a course load I could never fathom: including, Algebra 2, Physics and Chemistry! A perfect year for Current Events class, he is getting the 'full monty' of American politics.

In addition to the heavy academic schedule, Ashish is delighting students and staff by making Indian meals. I think he is delighting even more in the positive feedback he is getting for his cooking.

Only a few months after he arrived at Lee Academy in 2014 Ashish told me he wanted to stay in the US and attend college. Next month he will come to Eugene to look at several. We joke that he must have been American in a former life and I must have been Indian!



Barefootin' it in the snow!

**Thanks to Joy & Martin, Linda, Geraldine, Mary, Patty, Lynn,
Sherrill, Geraldine, Andrea, Mary, Kiva, Stef, Kacey, Lisa, Elaine Julie,
Julie & Ken**





