

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China

March 23, 1989

Dear Ma and Pa:

Greetings from the celestial kingdom!

It's a very cold and wet day here, the rain has been falling for the past week. I like the cold and I like the rain but I also like to be warm inside when it's cold and damp outside. I have gone to the homes of some of my friends. They are not really homes in the American sense of the word, they (an entire family) have just one room and not very large at that. The room has a bed a large cabinet for their clothes and a small cast iron barrel used to burn coal. I don't often go to visit my friends, I ask them to come here. They burn coal, in the open, with no flue to vent the smoke outside. You can imagine what the rooms look and smell like, I have learned several phrases in Chinese, one that I use all the time is: Wo bu dong, I don't understand. I don't understand why they burn coal in their homes and not vent the smoke outside. They leave the windows wide open to let the smoke out so the result is you freeze as you choke to death. It has to be seen to be believed, a group of people sitting around a smokey fire caughing, hacking away and enjoying it. Wo bu dong. Most of the young people (and by young I mean anyone under 40) have only a single room so they must do their cooking in the corridor. You can burn coal in your room but you are not permitted to cook there, I don't know why. As a result the corridors are jammed with people cooking their food, talking to their neighbors or just sitting around. There are no lights in these passage ways so it is very difficult to get around. I enjoy walking in them because I like all the various odors and smells from the different stoves and the stares from the people as I pass by who always say "Wai gua" which means "foreigner" it's a new slice of life and I enjoy it. Every apartment building is jammed to the rafters with people. This does not seem to present a problem to the Chinese, they enjoy being close to people, they like to touch each other. When they talk to me they like to stand nose to nose, after class the students like to come up to me and ask questions they are literally all over me. You often see two or more men holding hands walking in the streets the same goes for the women.

As I said it's cold and wet. The roads in Wuhan are paved or I should say ~~were~~ paved at one time. They are now in a state of ruin with huge pot holes every where and I mean huge I have seen some holes several feet across and a foot deep. Any car or truck tire that hit that hole would be destroyed, I can't imagine what would happen to a person riding a bicycle. The roads are more mud than asphalt. There are no sidewalks in this part of the city so people just walk in the street or on the side of the road which is unpaved. Because of the rain the roads are now rivers of mud several inches deep, no gutters or drainage ditches here, the rain just collects in large pools every where. Getting around has become a real chore, going to the market requires a lot of energy and hard work. From what I understand this (the rain) is pretty normal for this time of the year. It even snows here, several days before I came here they had a foot but it melted quickly.

I like my job. The students are wonderful and we have a lot of fun together. I teach 14 hours a week to over 240 students, it's hard to be exact because the number of students seems to fluctuate, I don't know why. I work six days a week this semester, next semester I only want to teach Monday through Friday. I am quite busy I have 240 papers to check and correct each week, this does not leave very much time for anything else. The class rooms (I have several) are cold and dirty and the windows are always open. I enjoy my comp classes very much, the students are very good and a real pleasure to teach. The administration is extremely happy with the way I teach and relate to the students, they have asked me whether or not I would stay here this summer to teach the other English teachers. I will have to think about that for awhile, I know Wuhan is very hot in the summer, I am planning to take off for several months this summer and go to Xinjiang and Mongolia, I would love to go horse back riding in Chinese Turkistan. I digress, my director a Mr. Yu has been sending the other teachers into my class to listen to me speak and see the way I interact with the students. The Chinese method for teaching English is to play a tape and have the students listen to it, I like to speak with the students and ask them questions about what I have said. The students like it better and I think it helps them with their development. In any event I like it here so far, I will have to see how hot it gets in the summer. Wuhan is known as one of the "three blast furnaces" of central China.

I have had my first experience with the criminal justice system here in China. After my class last Friday I returned home with a young Chinese friend (all my friends are Chinese, there are no other foreign people here) who was going to help me buy some plastic bags and matches

for my gas stove. I went into my bedroom to take off my boots and put on my sneakers, I noticed that the covers on my bed had been thrown about. Since it's very rude to invite people to a messy apartment, I always make sure to clean up everything and fold up all my bedding up before I leave for my morning classes. I thought this was strange and made a mental note to make sure that I arrange everything in the future. I went over to my desk to get some money which I keep in the middle drawer. I noticed some mud on the floor and lot's of little wood chips scattered around the base of the desk. I then realized something was wrong. I opened the drawer (which was locked) to make sure my money and passport were safe. Once I checked on that I took a quick inventory of the rest of my things. My Sony Walk Man and my Maglite (flash light) were missing as well as all my stamps and American coins which I wanted to use in class. That was all. The thief did not touch my computer or short wave radio or camera. I was very lucky in that respect. The person who was with me called the police who came rather quickly. Within an hours time there were over

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China.

April 16, 1989

Dear Uncle Walter & Aunt Patsy: Greetings and Salutations from the Middle Kingdom!!

I made it, I have been here for some time now and am fairly well settled in. After a rough and rocky start things have calmed down and I am now enjoying China very much. I will give you a brief summary of events up to now. I flew out of Seattle, Wa in the middle of December and landed at Shanghai International Airport which took 14 hours. I was the only white boy on the plane, the rest of the passengers were American or Canadian Chinese going to the mainland to visit relatives. The airline offered free drinks all the way to Shanghai. I have never seen so many drunk people in one place in all my life. The man sitting next to me, an engineer, could out drink anyone I have ever met, including me! This guy drank at least 18 cans of beer! Every other can I had to get out of my seat to let him pass by so he could go to the loo. By the time the plane landed there were 400 extremely drunk Chinese.

Upon arrival in Shanghai I found out one of my bags did not make it, this was a real drag. My camera, Gore-Tex winter jacket, medicine, 20 rolls of film and tapes were stolen. I waited for hours thinking it would just take awhile for someone to find it. Around midnight a policeman came up to me and told me in Chinese I would have to leave the airport because it was going to close. Bummer. I am still waiting for the airline to do something about it, no word yet. It's hard to believe that a city the size of Shanghai, 20 million people (no one really knows for sure how many people live there) could have such a small airport. They have a bigger one in Ft Wayne, Ind. You would not believe how crowded Shanghai is. I have been to Rome, Paris, Berlin, London, Athens and N.Y. City they are all small towns compared with Shanghai. 20 million people!! I spent three days there waiting for a flight to Wuhan. Nanjing road is the "main street" in Shanghai, it is also the most crowded. I went for a stroll along this road in the early hours one morning to look for something to eat, by 9 AM it was impossible to do anything but just keep moving forward slowly. People pressed into one huge mass of humanity. I had to force my way out of the crowd and into a hotel where you had to use foreign currency (i.e. no Chinese) to get away from the crowd. I sat down in the cafe and drank several cups of coffee and watched all the people go by. I have never seen anything like it. I flew out of Shanghai on an old Russian twin prop plane which was so loud you could not hear anything but the roar of the engines. I will never forget that flight. The person who was sitting in front of me had a defective seat and every time we hit a patch of turbulence the back of the seat would come lose and fall on me. The first time it happened I was shocked the second time I just had to laugh at the absurdity of the situation. The bathroom on the plane was filthy beyond description, just use your imagination and think of a toilet that had not been cleaned in 30 years. I read in the press that China plans to scrap all these planes in the next few years and replace them with Boeing and McDonald-Douglas jets, I hope they do before I have to fly again.

Wuhan is a small city by Chinese standards. (only 7 million people) It is actually three cities that were joined together in 1958 when the government built the Yangtze River bridge. The three cities are Hankow, Nanning and Wuchang. I live on the South bank of the Yangtze River in Wuchang. Although Wuhan is not as big as Shanghai it is extremely crowded and over populated. Have you ever see any of those Cajuns in Louisiana trap Crawfish? They would put a small piece of fish in a large chicken wire trap and place it in the swamp and wait for the crawfish to come. I saw one of these traps by a dock in Morgan City, La. You simply could not put one more crowded inside, packed, stuffed to the brim, full. That is what a bus looks like here. I have taken the bus only twice since I have been here, I don't like them. The bus driver never stops at the bus stop, they always stop 50 metres away. The entire crowd of people runs like mad to get on, God help you if you fall down, you would surely be trampled to death. You really have to fight your way on, you must push and shove and force your way through the mass of people. It's not fun. I much prefer to walk or ride my bicycle. Wuhan is very crowded but not as bad as Shanghai, give it another few years and I am sure it will be.

I am teaching English composition and Aural comprehension to 240 undergraduate and graduate students as well as some of the professors. The Wuhan institute of Chemical Engineering is a small school of around 3,000 students. I am the only foreigner here which makes me very unusual. None of the students or staff have ever seen or spoken with an American or for that matter a Caucasian. Whenever I walk to class or go to the market to buy some food, people stop and stare at me. If I want to buy something at a stall or shop scores of people will gather around to watch me do it. It bothered me at first but not any more, I just expect it to happen and am now used to it. Teaching the students is a lot of fun and very interesting.

They can read very well but they have real problems speaking and understanding spoken English. I spend hours and hours talking to the students, I speak very slowly and enunciate very clearly. I am not the motor mouth I once was, although I know you may have your doubts about this. I teach 14 hours a week which is a lot of hours. Teaching so many classes requires an enormous amount of preparation and grading the papers is extremely time consuming. I have 240 very bad papers to grade every week. I have asked the students to write just one paragraph, one good paragraph. They like to write and write and write. Page after page of bad uncorrectable paragraphs. I spend hours trying to correct them, after awhile I just give up and rewrite it for them. I like teaching it's really a lot of fun, the students really enjoy having a native speaker teach the class. They are all very interested in America. At least 5 people come over to my apartment every day just to talk to me and find out what America is like. Many people want me to help them get into American schools, this is a very complex and time consuming affair. They must take the GRE and TOEFL (test of English as a foreign language) exams. These are both very hard and extremely expensive. The student must pay the exam fee in American dollars. The average person earns 100 Yuan per month, that is less than \$30. When they go to the bank to buy U.S. dollars for the exam they must pay 290 yuan to buy the \$30. The GRE and the TOEFL cost around \$80, that means they must spend the equivalent of eight months salary to take these tests!! They save up money for years just to take the tests.

Tonight is bath night. The bath house is only open on Friday and Saturday evenings, as a result the people tend to be a little rank. I have been told (I have my own tub, no shower) that these showers are pretty strange affairs. For one thing they are huge, they hold around 500 people and are jammed on these two nights, thousands of people line up to go in. Nobody has a private shower (except you know who) they must all use public ones, young and old alike, I have not heard one nice thing about them. I went to visit the parents of one of my friends last week in Hankow. They live in a small two room apartment, when I asked them where the bathroom was they walked me to it, it only took twenty minutes to get there. It was a huge public restroom capable of serving several hundred people at one time. You urinate in large plastic barrels and if you had to defecate you squatted over one of several hundred holes in the ground. No stalls here. I don't want to describe what they smelled like I think you can imagine the odour. In the hot summer months they must be really bad.

For nearly two thousand years people in the west have wondered about China, I now understand why. Simply put, there is no other place on earth like it. There have always been too many Chinese, even in the days of Marco Polo. Mao Zedong believed that there would be a nuclear war and that for the Chinese people to survive they must increase their already large population. In 1949 the Chinese population was around 490 million people only 40 years later the population has more than doubled to 1.2 billion. Therein lies all the problems that now beset this great country. There are just too many people. No matter how fast or how many apartment buildings the government builds they can never keep up with the demand. People wait years for a room, not a home or a house just a room, 10 square metres per person. The Chinese way of life and their standard of living are directly related to the size of the population. There is little refrigeration here as a result people must spend hours each day shopping for food. Just about every one stops work around 11 A.M. and goes home to eat. They don't return to work until 2 P.M. There are some shortages in food such as cooking oil, flour, rice and salt. Every one has some but these things are rationed, if you use more than your allotment you will have to pay a very high price to get more. However there is a lot of food in the markets. You can always buy pork, beef and chicken (which are both alive and very expensive) as well as a wide variety of strange but delicious fresh vegetables. However there are no "quick" foods here, everything must be washed thoroughly and cooked. The farmers use "night soil" so you must be careful about how you prepare your food.

Wow!! The weather is changing, it was cold last week
it's now very warm. China is a strange and wonderful
place, but you just wouldn't believe the many people there
are. I hope all is well in Sleepy Hollow.

Take Care, love
David

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May 10, 1989

Dear Ma and Pa: Greetings and Salutations from the Middle Kingdom!

The weather has changed dramatically, the cold, damp days of winter have given way to warm and very windy spring time like weather, though not like any spring I have ever experienced before. It's the wind and dust. Those once muddy, broken down streets I mentioned in my last letter have turned into incredibly dusty avenues. From midday until 5 in the afternoon the winds blow strong and steady around 15 to 20 mph with gusts up to 30mph. All of the mud in winter has turned into dust, a howling, choking, blinding cloud of dirt, leaves, other debris and dried sputum and childrens urine. I now understand why upper respiratory problems are the main afflictions affecting the health of the Chinese people. The air is extremely dirty. A pall of dust hangs over the city of Wuhan, (I have been told that it's much worse in Beijing where the winds pick up silt and sand off of the Gobi desert and blows it into nations capitol.) In any event, one of the most annoying habits the Chinese have is spitting. Young and old, male and female alike all spit anywhere and everywhere, even in the class room. This is a much discussed problem in the Chinese press and is discouraged by the government. In an effort to end this problem the government has employed little old ladies who stand on the street corners and fine people they catch spitting. The problem is that the fine is very low (5 Jiao which is around 2 cents) and most often the people just ignore the old women. Because there are so many people in this country the ammount of spittle on the streets is enormous and when it dries it is blown around with all the rest of the dust. I have been trying to buy some of those surgical masks but like many things in China they are very hard to find.

Inflation has hit China. Up until last year the government controled the price of almost all goods and services. But as part of their economic reforms price controls have been lifted and as a result the cost of just about everything has increased dramatically. The official inflation rate has been placed around 18%, however outside sources say it is closer to 37%. This is a very new and shocking problem for the Chinese people. Since the wages of most people are established by the government and fixed at a certain level, usually around 70-120 Yuan (372 Yuan= \$100.00) inflation just makes them poorer and poorer, and they know it. I was going to write more on this subject but there is a lot of ground to cover in this letter, so I must move on. Just bear in mind the enormity of this problem, it is causing a lot of problems and social unease, the people are not happy at all!

Two weeks ago an event occured in Beijing that has had a profound impact upon this nation, Hu Yaobang died. I don't expect you to know who this man was, except that he was a Chinese leader. I know quite a bit about Mr. Hu. I read many of his speeches and studied the political and economic reforms he proposed while earning my B.A. at the U of M. He was a man beloved by the young intellectuals and the urban educated, he pushed very hard for reforms in the Chinese Communist Party. He wanted to open up the party and end the rampant corruption among the party elite, many of whom only have a 6th grade education. (A Chinese farmer (i.e. peasant) can, and does, make ten or twelve times as much as a doctor, teacher or any other educated person. They (the educated) are not only angry but extremely unhappy with this situation. I have been besieged with requests to help young people trying to leave China for the west, and by west I mean America. Almost to the one, everybody in the English department have asked me to write letters for them to American Schools. It doesnt matter where the school is located or what field of study they wish to pursue, they just want to leave China. They have lost hope in the Chinese system, it's very sad. A lethargic atmosphere has settled upon the educated population in this great country.)

Like a stone cast into the middle of a placid pond, the rippling side affects of Hu Yaobangs death has spread throughout China. The first outpouring of grief took place in Beijing but quickly spread to all the major urban centers in China, including Wuhan. Every morning I awake around 4 A.M. I have many things to do and so little time to do them in. Two weeks ago I got out of bed and turned on the radio, and listened to the YOA (it's the only English station I can get, the BBC is not clear and NPR can only be heard in Canton.) They had a long commentary about the death of Mr. Hu. I realized something of great importance had transpired and grew quite excited about the implications of his death, I was not to be dissappointed. Almost at once the students at Beijing University (the best school in the nation) poured into the streets using the pretext of grief over his death as a means to promote reforms they organized mass demonstrations to press for speeding the reforms so long promised by the party. After my 8-10 class, I rode my bicycle to Wuhan Univeristy (Wu Da, as it is known in China, it's the third best school in the nation, as well as the third largest) to see what might be seen. Thousands of students were standing, chanting slogans, singing, shouting, demanding to see the leader of the CCP (Chinese Communist party, Deng Xiao-peng.) There is a great statue of Mao Zedung with arm raised in greeting at the entrence of this school, it's perhaps 20 metres tall. Surrounding the statue is a small park with many flowers and small shrubs. The students were posting slogans on his statue and the plants surrounding it written on long strips of paper.

Some said "We grieve for you comrade Hu" others said "You left us too soon" and still others said (most ominously) "The wrong person died". I stood there for hours trying to understand what was being said, I cursed myself for not studying my Chinese harder, I only picked up a few words now and then, but I got the message loud and clear, THINGS MUST CHANGE, AND NOW!!!

Everything came to a head yesterday. I had watched and listened to all the movements during these past two weeks and was ready for May 4th, 1989. May 4th, 1919 was the day the students in Peking rioted to end the feudal system that had kept them in bondage for thousands of years. This May 4th was the 70th anniversary of that great event. I had no classes this day so I made plans to go downtown. When I tried to leave I found the gate to the campus had been locked to prevent the students from leaving! Several thousand students were shouting and demanding to leave but the police refused their demands and told them to go back to their classrooms. I feigned ignorance and told the police that I must go to the main market to buy some food (which was true, there is a store in the city center that sells peanut butter of which I eat a pound a week). They let me pass. Wuhan was the birth place for modern China. Dr. Sun Yat-sen made it his capital. There is a statue of him very close to the Yangtze River, perhaps a mile away. All of the students in the major schools of Wuhan marched toward this statue, I was with them. Over 50,000 people were there, it's hard to know the exact figure, one can only guess, but I have seen large crowds before and I know this was a large one. At one point I ran ahead of the marching crowd to take some pictures of the following procession only to have my arm pulled to the side and have my camera pulled from my shoulder! The police wanted to know what I was doing! My Chinese friend told them I was just watching the march and wanted to take some pictures. The police said I must leave and took the film from my camera, a great pity, I had some good shots, I am sure. I left the protest march around dusk and returned to my school to think things through. There is an old Chinese curse: "May you live in interesting times". This usually meant plague, famine and war. I am here, living in "interesting times", and you know what; I love it!!

There have been some other very important developments these past few weeks. My good friends Karen and Craig Schiedermaier have succeeded in locating my lost luggage and have sent it to me. During the ensuing weeks they were able to convince the airlines to send me another box of things I left behind at their home. I now have a plethora of winter clothes just as the summer has started. It seems that there is no spring here, it just goes from winter to summer. It is now very warm, 70 to 80 degrees during the day and not much cooler at night. I am growing concerned about how hot it will become in July and August. Wuhan is known as one of the three blast furnaces on the Yangtze, I have been told that the temperature in the summer never drops below 100 degrees!! The mosquitos are out in force, for over a week I could not sleep at night, there are no screens on the windows in my apartment. The school bought me a mosquito net to hang over my bed and I have bought screening to put on the windows, this helps a little but there are still thousands of the little buggers in my room. Sheer agony at night believe me. The police (I have been told) have caught the thief who stole my Sony Walkman, tapes and flashlight. It will be some time before I will be able to recover these items because they are needed as evidence in the upcoming trial. I hope to get them back in a month or so. I have no idea how they caught these people but they did. So things seem to be going my way for a change.

I am losing a lot of weight, it's hard to say how much because they have no scales to weigh myself on at this school. But I would guess that I have lost over 20 lbs. Trousers that used to fit me very snug now hang down by my hip bones, shirts that I found tight at the collar now are slack. I have given up using a belt and now resort to using suspenders. The food here is just that food. Rice, noodles, vegetables, and pork. Beef is not as common as I once thought and chicken is very expensive and rather tough. There are no snack foods here, no cheese, crackers, butter, it's a nation wide fat farm. I think the thing I miss most is a good cup of coffee, the tea here is extremely boring, it's like drinking green water, the best tea comes from India and Ceylon, you can't buy that here. Ah well, life goes on.

Dear folks, I am very busy, I am working over 70 hours a week, grading papers, teaching and special lectures on Defects I never thought I would ever teach. Futures market, Beer Brewing, how to make pizza, Baseball etc. etc. The Chinese want to know everything about America, not France, Russia, just the U.S.A. I have been sick several times here, I have been to the hospital, it's very dirty here. The Chinese love to give injections for every kind of illness. Please send me those needles, I don't trust the ones they use here - very unsanitary - Hepatitis is rampant here, there is no way to cure it. I saw into an American nurse here in Wuhan, she told me that every single person she has seen at her hospital here Hep!! Please don't wait any longer. I hope all goes well for you. I miss you very much, please write and let me know how you are. I would love to see you. Time Magazine

P.S. yes I am getting all your mail, it takes nearly 3 weeks to reach here. Please write more often. I look forward to the mail.

Good news, much love
H

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China

June 1, 1989

Dear Ma & Pa:

Greetings and Salutations: It's hot here. Hot and muggy and it's still early spring, I have been using my air conditioner during late afternoon and early evening. My air conditioner is located directly under the bed room window of my neighbour up stairs. He is a rather cantankerous old man, a retired teacher with not much to do except sit out on his porch and read. Unfortunately for him the school installed the air conditioner just below the room where he sleeps and next to his chair on the porch. I resisted using it during the cold weather in March and April (it's not only used to keep my apartment cool, but warm as well) because I didn't want to antagonize him and upset the relationship we have with each other. However I can handle the cold far better than I can the heat. As I have mentioned before, Wuhan is known as one of the three "blast furnaces" on the Yangtze river. It kind of reminds me of a crowded Chicago bus in the middle of August, and it's only June. My director, fellow teachers even the President of the University have all told me to use it as much as I want or need to. I turn it off around 10 PM so my neighbour can get some sleep. I don't know how long I can do this. I have never had an air conditioner before and never wanted one but here in China I find that it's indispensable.

I live on the ground floor of a five storey apartment building, you might think this is great at first I thought so. I thought it was kind of an honour, you know, being a 'foreign guest' and all. Well, I now know by talking with some of my friends that living on the ground floor is really the worst location. There is no breeze so close to the ground. The building I live in is an exact duplicate of the one next to it and it is a duplicate of the one next to it and so on. There are endless plain grey apartment buildings in China, on this campus they are presently constructing six more. There are a thousand teachers here waiting for an apartment, in any event there is no breeze because the wind is blocked by buildings. Living on the ground floor also has another serious drawback, mosquitoes and other flying insects. This is the way the School administration views this problem. 'Yes', they acknowledge the fact that there are a lot of mosquitos in my apartment but 'no', they don't want to put screens on the windows, why? Because I have an air conditioner and should close all the windows and shut the back door and turn on the machine 24 hours a day. We have been through this conversation time and time again. I have told them of my desire to leave the windows open so as to catch what little wind there is and besides, I like to hear the birds and children sing (the kindergarten is right across from me and the children sing lovely Chinese folk songs all day long) and most importantly I don't want to cut myself off from all the life that's going on around me. As a compromise they bought me a mosquito net, a round one to go over my square bed. I must toss and turn while sleeping because every night around 2:30 or 3 AM I wake up scratching my ankles and arms which protrude from under the net, agony. I can't think of anything more annoying than having a mosquito bite on the web of skin between your toes, scratch, scratch, scratch. Once awake I spend the next twenty or thirty minutes killing all the mosquitos that have managed to get inside the net, each one containing one drop of my blood. By this time I am fully awake so I don't even try to go back to sleep, I just get up and prepare for my classes or read. Some friends bought me some screening to put up but like a lot of things in China there was not enough to go on all the windows.

I am sure you are aware of all the demonstrations that are now going on in China. I have been to several very large demonstrations here in Wuhan. The students have been on strike for the past two weeks and the class rooms have been empty. The policy of the school has been to hold class if even one student showed up. The students have been pretty well united and have kept up the strike although things seem to be going back to normal and by next week I think all the students will be back in class. It's very sad, the tide seemed to be swinging in favor of the reforms the students as well as workers and teachers demanded but now, with martial law imposed their hopes have been dashed and their spirits crushed. I think they realize that there is now little or no hope for Democracy in China. The hard liners seemed to have won out over the reformers. Li Peng has ousted Zhou Ziyang and Deng Xiaoping still remains the most powerful man in China, but for how long no one can say. There is a genuine feeling that things must change here, the economic reforms have worked well, things are much better now than ten years ago, everyone agrees with this. The problem now is the lack of political freedom. The Chinese want the same thing everyone else wants, freedom of the press, speech, association, etc, etc. They want to control their own destiny. The problem with all this is that there are just too many people. There are an estimated 300 million people living in the cities while the vast bulk of the population lives in the countryside some 900 million people. It's also important to note that there are over 250 million illiterate people here in China. The problems that this large population creates are enormous.

The school provides me with the 'China Daily' an english language newspaper published in Beijing. It's not very good but it's all there is. Every day it presents new problems and few solutions. Energy production is up by 5% but demand is up by 25% the result is industrial shutdowns, less coal to heat the homes of the people in the winter, less imports of electronic consumer goods, radios, refrigerators, tape players, washing machines the list goes on and on and on. Two years ago you could buy a color TV for 3,000 Yuan, they now cost 5,500. Considering the fact that most Chinese only make 1,000 Yuan a year the prospect of obtaining one grows dimmer as the years pass by. They are just now beginning to understand how polluted the country really is. Every major stream and river has been found to be seriously polluted, there is not a city in China where you can drink the

water from the tap. Raw sewage from homes and industry are flushed untreated into the rivers and lakes, how long this can go on before some disaster strikes? Over the past ten years the government has broken up the large communes that Mao Zedong organized and allowed the farmers to have individual plots of land where they can grow their own crops. The problem with this is that the amount of land allocated to each individual farmer is quite small which means that the farmers income will constantly remain low. Because farmers now have their own farms they have some degree of freedom to plant what they wish. Because of this freedom many farmers now concentrate on growing more expensive fruits and vegetables which has brought about a serious shortage of rice, wheat and corn. These grain crops are bought by the state at artificially low prices so the farmers are naturally reluctant to grow them. In years past China was self sufficient in grain production, today China imports more than 15 million tons per year and the figure seems to be rising. China, after the Soviet Union is the largest purchaser of American grain which must be paid for in hard currency thus depriving China of funds desperately needed for its modernization program. One might think that problems in the production of beer would seem minor in light of the other pressing problems facing China today, however that is not the case. As the country grows more wealthy (and some segments of this society are) many people now have more disposable income and one thing they are spending it on is beer. Consumption has increased dramatically and the number of breweries now number in the thousands. This is a cause of great concern to many government officials because the same grains that go into beer production could also go a long way in feeding hungry people. It's a topic that has appeared in the press many times in the past few weeks. The government has said it may stop beer production this August if the situation does not improve. Just another small pleasure denied to the Chinese people.

No matter how pressing these problems may be the most depressing problem as I see it is the spirit of the people. The people are so unhappy with their lives and so poor it just makes me cry. It's important to understand that these people are not ignorant of the living conditions in the West as well as in Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. They know they are poor and they don't understand why. The people I associate with are all college educated and extremely bright, many, if not all have advanced degrees. The school I teach at is a school of the hard sciences, math, physics, chemistry and engineering. In their respective fields these students are every bit as good as or better than their Western counterparts. I am constantly impressed by the GRE scores some of them bring me to look at. I told you in a previous letter how many of the teachers and students wish to go to America to study. To do this they must take two examinations, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and the GRE. These tests must be paid for in U.S. \$. It takes years to save up enough Yuan to pay for the exams, but they do it gladly. Most of the students who take these exams do okay on the English portion of the tests but on the math portion they do extremely well. I have several students (post grads) who have had near perfect scores of over 790. They all have friends in America and they know what life is like over there. They all want to leave, they have resigned themselves to the fact they can never improve their standard of living in this country. They were born poor they live like paupers and they know that they will die poor. Life for these people consists of working six days a week, no vacations, no real fun, no excitement, no variation of the central theme which is that old socialist call to arms "work hard for the good of the people". 'What people', they ask themselves. The leaders? The peasants? Just who should they work hard and suffer for? They know it's not for themselves. Their life does not improve as does the rest of the world's educated people. This sense of hopelessness produces an apathetic lethargy towards conditions which they themselves could help improve. There is not really any sense of "Loving Your Country" here as we know it in the West. They all say they love their country but don't want to do anything to help make it better because they simply have lost faith in life. Most of us would never throw trash out the window onto our neighbours yard or porch, yet they do it here. I get very angry when I go outside to sit on my porch and see all the trash and garbage that people have thrown on it. I just don't understand it, I guess they just don't care and figure that it doesn't matter 'this is the way things have been, and thus they way they will remain the same'. I don't know what will happen in the next few weeks, things look grim. I love you all very much, please write when you have the time.

Love David.

Dear Mark Pa: I don't really know what else to tell you. I am getting your mail. It takes 3-4 weeks. all rail traffic has been delayed, flights are few, the situation is very grim. Please send time and the NY TIMES. There is no news on TV. only the radio. I miss you both very much. Give my love to Austin. Love David

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China.

June 6th, 1989

Greetings: The situation here is very serious. Most of the Americans and Canadians have cleared out. There are huge demonstrations now going on in the streets. I have just come back from another university and ran into a huge throng of angry students and workers who were marching on to the 'Great Bridge' which crosses the Yangtze river. There are only two bridges which span this famous river, the other one is in Nanjing. This bridge is the major link between North and South China and has been the focus point of the demonstrations here in Wuhan. Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life have jammed the bridge to prevent the movement of government troops and commercial cargo.

All traffic has been stopped for the past week, the students have torn up the rail road tracks cutting off all access into and out of Wuhan. The rail roads have been forced to shut down! There is no way to leave Wuhan except by air. Yesterday and today the students have erected roadblocks all over the city. They commandeered 34 busses and parked them at odd angles in the two major intersections and then slashed the tires. When I tried to pass by on my way home I saw thousands of students picking up huge concrete slabs and placing them in the way of trucks sent to remove the broken down vehicles. It was a very impressive sight. Remember these are just young 18 and 19 year old kids. No busses, trucks or automobiles are running, the foreigners who want to leave cannot get to the airport. From what I have heard there are very few flights out of Wuhan. The American who is sending this letter has been waiting for two days to get through to the airport. He told me he will try again this evening so I must rush this letter off. His campus has been deserted and only police can be seen in the area. He is very frightened and wants to leave very badly. All the Americans are leaving for Hong Kong because there are no direct flights to the States. He may have to wait there for a week or more, there is just no way to find out for sure. It's impossible to call the American embassy in Beijing because all phone lines have been cut.

All my students have gone to the countryside to talk with the peasants and workers to tell them what has happened in the capital. All you here on the news is that the government cracked down on some 'hooligans' and 'thugs' and that the Red Army has had a "smashing victory for the people" and that 23 students were killed "accidentally". No one knows what has really happened because they don't understand or receive the VOA or the BBC. The Chinese depend upon these two sources for all their news, the government is saying nothing. I don't know what is going to happen now, the situation could stabilize or deteriorate depending upon how the Government responds to these latest problems.

There is a lot of talk about troops coming into the city. There are reports that the students in Wuhan are preparing for a confrontation with the army at any time. The students here say they are willing to die for their cause. They seem to mean it. Even though there are thousands of police opposing them they just keep marching on. Many of them are beaten by the police but usually only at night when there is no way to photograph them. I have seen many people in the clinic here with lacerations and contusions all over their heads and arms. The doctors here have been kept pretty busy patching the students up these past few days.

It's very hot here today, I am sweating up a storm, water is literally dripping off me, the keyboard is glistening with sweat. I am beginning to understand why Wuhan is called a 'blast furnace', it's 90 degrees and it's still early June. I hate to think what August will be like. I have been able to get all the needles I need from the fleeing Americans I now only need the hepatitis vaccine, please send it as soon as possible.

There are still a few Americans here who intend to stay and I am one. I don't see any danger to myself as long as I stay out of the confrontations between the police and the people. My campus is located several miles from the bridge. I don't feel I am in any imminent danger and I don't want

you to worry, I am fine. I don't want to leave right now, I want to stay here and observe the events as the situation unfolds. I find the events that are now transpiring here interesting and very exciting. I wish I had a picture of one of the demonstrations to send to you. Hundreds of thousands of people carrying colorful banners, shouting slogans, chanting, laughing, crying, it's all too much to put into words. It's a feeling I have for the Chinese people. I want so much for them to succeed in their endeavors. They want a just and fair government and they want to breath the air of a free people. They have always had the hope that sooner or later their country would be free, they are no longer willing to wait for that to happen they want it now! It makes me very sad to see the look on the faces of the people, they hate their government and the want to kill the leaders.

I have to end this letter, it's getting late and I must get it into the hands of the man who is going to leave. By the time you receive this I am sure the situation will have changed. If I feel in any danger I will leave but not before. I doubt there will be a civil war but there will be radical changes taking place in the next several weeks or months and I want to be here to observe them. I miss you very much.

Love David

P.S. Pa, I think your the greatest, Happy Fathers Day. Love D.L.

P.S.S That goes the same for you Ma, happy belated Mothers Day.

P.S.S.S Pa, I received three letters from you today, I just got them and have not had a chance to read them yet, I think the delay was do to four factors. They dont understand the abbreviation P.R.C. you must spell out the People's Republic of China. My zip code is 430074 not 4307. I can understand your writing but perhaps the Chinese have some problems (to put it kindly) and lastly the name of this school is: Wuhan Institute of Chemical Engineering.

I will read your letters as soon as I get back from delivering this letter. One last thing, could you please call Jan Schiedermayer and tell her I am OK, thank's. Love D.L.

Don't Worry!!!

Mr - I have 6 needles, send
many more, perhaps 2 dozen

I love life,

David

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China

July 8th 1989

Greetings and Salutations:

I have been remiss in my correspondence of late, most of my letter writing has been in my head, I hope this has not caused any of you undue worry or concern, if it has please accept my sincere apologies. I am really at a loss for words in trying to put on paper my feelings over the events of the past two months. Needless to say I have never had this type of experience before and like a computer which has had too much information proccedssed into it my brain and emotions were over loaded and everything simply shut down. At one point, several weeks ago I couldn't even get out of bed. I was physically and emotionally exhausted, I just lay there in my underwear sweating and watching the sweat bead up and roll off my stomach onto my already damp sheets trying to tell my legs to swing over the side of the bed and get up, it took enormous will power to force myself to get up and have something to eat. I kept thinking about the panic I was seeing every where, all the Westerners, no, not just Westerners all foreigners were fleeing in a blind and quite terrifying panic. I went to the airport one morning to see what the situation was really like, I had heard that there was quite a 'commotion' going on, 'commotion' is a gross understatement and absolute chaos would be nearer the mark. Americans were fighting Americans, people of all nationalities were fighting each other trying to get a seat on the twice weekly small jets that fly directly to Hong Kong. I rode my old, battered, black Chinese bicycle home in deep sorrow and in real fear for my safety and freedom because I knew I was not going to leave China in this fashion. I have been summoned twice now to appear before the provincial 'Weiban' (foreign affairs director) to hear the 'official' party line which is "nothing happened in Tienanmain Square". In the words of the official "it's just a rummor, don't pay any attention to it." The meeting was attended by all the "foreign friends" now staying in Wuhan. I sat there in a large meeting room with all the other "foreign friends"; the four of us looked at each other asking in words unspoken 'do you belive all this'? Two Germans one Swede and I sat looking into a TV video camera blinded by the harsh klieg lights which filmed this meeting. The official who held the meeting (who is of course a senior party member) was dressed in a natty, dark blue, Western buisness suit and repeated over and over again that there was "nothing for us to worry about" that we are "safe". The young Sweedish woman has since left Wuhan for Stockholm the two Germans who have a brewery here still continue to run their buisness on the far outskirts of the city. I sat alone in my apartment the next evening watching myself and other foreigners on the nightly news smoking cigarettes given to us by the Chinese and looking nervous. I now know I am the only American now living in Wuhan a city of seven million angry and sad Chinese. Alone, a "stranger in a strange land".

After the death of Hu Yao-bang the former Communist Party General Secretary and would be reformer, events in Wuhan began to slowly accelerate in numbers and in volume. It was at this point in time that I really began to explore the city and understand its historical significance in Chinese history. It was Wuhan where Deng Xiao-ping came to garner support among the militay to put down the student protests in Beijing, it's the linchpin that connects Northern and Southern China. Sun Yatsen made Wuhan a base in his struggle to unify China during the early part of this century and Mao Zedong would also base his operations here. If Beijing is the brain and soul of China and Shanghai the muscle then Wuhan must be likened to the heart, all the grain, foodstuffs and industrial products of the south and west pulse through this city like blood in the human heart on its way to the north. The Yangtze river (hereafter called by its Chinese name, 'Chang Jiang' meaning 'Long River') acts as an artery of the heart pumping these same said goods east, down the river to Shanghai and then on to ports unknown in the West. Wuhan might be characterized (if there were a Chinese Carl Sandburg) as a city of "Big Shoulders". It's a big, massive, brawling industrial city of huge proportions spreading out for miles in all directions; it's not just one city but three large ones combined. Like any large city in America, construction is going on every where, roads are being built, water mains and sewage pipes are being laid, buildings by the score are under construction the sound of pile drivers is deafining. Most of the vehicular traffic coursing through the city streets are busses and trucks hauling coal, bricks, cement and strangely enough, beer. The sounds of the city are deafining, people shouting, screaming, talking the blaring of truck, automobile and bus horns the sound of construction equipment and hundreds of thousands of bicycle bells constatly assault the audio functions of the human brain, it's a grand cacophony that shatters your nerves and leaves you drained. It's something you just have to hear to understand clearly how it affects your central nervous system, the pulse rate increases, blood pressure rises and nerves are frayed. Whenever I go to the central buisness district which is in Hankow, across the Chang Jiang river I always drop by a small 'cafe' to sit and rest after the ninety minute bus ride and drink some mineral water and that God-awful Maxwell House

instant coffee which is always served luke warm. I'll never understand why the Chinese prefer this brand of American coffee, in my opinion it's bland, boring and expensive costing nearly 10 Yuan a cup.

Wuhan is the largest of China's inland ports and before the government built the bridge at Nanjing ships of over ten thousand tons would regularly dock here. I don't know the exact amount of cargo shipped out of here but it must be significant because whenever I go to the Great Bridge ships can be seen in vast numbers steaming both east and west. This is an old city even by Chinese standards dating back some 3,000 years when it was then known as the 'walled city of Wu'. Its role in the landscape of Chinese history was minor until it became a concession to the foreign powers in 1861. It was opened up as a Treaty Port where foreign merchants could live and trade. England, France, Japan and Russia all set up concessions here and their influence can still be seen by the magnificent Victorian era buildings they constructed in the heart of Hankow. The history of modern Wuhan is drenched in blood and scared by many years of violence, war and revolution. The 1911 uprising in which the broad mass of the Chinese people revolted against the hated and doomed Qing dynasty destroyed most of Hankow which was almost totally burned down. In 1923 the railway workers led a massive group of people in riots that were bloodily suppressed by government troops. Again in 1937 the Kuomintang based its operations here in its war with both the Japanese and the Communists. As late as 1967 Wuhan saw fighting again when it became a base for a movement opposed to the Cultural Revolution and their Red Guard leaders; the rebels controlled much of the city until it was crushed at great cost by the PLA (People's Liberation Army) perhaps as many as 5,000 civilians died. The events of recent days should be understood and looked at in this historical context. Wuhan has had a long and troubled past and the future looks to be more of the same, I fear that the people of this boisterous city are in for many more years of social unrest.

Hankow, Hanyang and Wuchang make up the collective city of Wuhan which is the capital of Hubei Province. I live in Wuchang which is on the south bank of the Chang Jiang river. After Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, Wuhan is the largest industrial center in China. It's a city of heavy industry with all the old smokestack factories included; steel, cement, automobiles and petrochemicals. Most of the industrial production takes place in Hankow and Hanyang while Wuchang might be thought of as the cultural center of Wuhan. Almost all of the institutions of higher learning are located in this section of the city which means 95% of the students live here, and that's a lot of students, over 70,000. It was here, in this section of Wuhan (in fact on the very avenue outside of my school) that saw the birth of the demonstrations which rocked this capital city to its very core. The WICE (my school) is located 1/2 km from Wuhan University (Wu Da) and Hua Zhong respectively the two largest and best schools in Wuhan (as well as two of the best in the nation.) It was the students of these two schools who helped to organize, support and otherwise coordinate the students of the other schools in the early days of the demonstrations. On the morning of the day that Hu Yao Bong died I rode my bicycle down those broken down Chinese roads through an endless sea of Chinese people over to Hua Zhong to see what might be seen. There was a large crowd of students and other people standing around a huge white marble statue of Mao Zedong with hand raised as in salute to the masses. They (the students) were pasting posters and hand written slogans all over the base of the statue and on the surrounding shrubs, there were literally thousands of them every where. Another unique feature of the Chinese protests was the symbolic use of wreaths which are made of brilliantly colored silk flowers and are normally used in funerals. These too were everywhere.

Several days passed and nothing much happened in Wuhan we were all waiting for May 4th which is of course an important day for Chinese students. This May 4th represented the 70th anniversary of the famous uprising which took place in Beijing in 1919. On the morning of May 4th I awoke to find the gate to the school locked and thousands of angry students milling around the area shouting slogans. Because I was a foreigner and because I told the security police I needed to go shopping I was allowed to pass through. The students from the other schools had met the same type of resistance and were forced to remain on campus. However most of the students did leave campus later in the day and I watched them pass by as I rode back to my school, it was a small group of several thousand but this was the beginning of something I will never forget. On the following days the students protested being denied the right to leave campus by boycotting classes. This lasted several days during which time protests and demonstrations in Beijing began in earnest. As things heated up in Beijing the students here were organizing themselves as well. The focal point for student led demonstrations here in Wuhan has always been the Great Bridge which spans the historic Chang Jiang river.

The "Great Bridge" is Wuhan's Tiananmen Square in terms of the destination and focal point of the student and worker led demonstrations. The Great Bridge is one of those massive construction projects which 3rd world countries love to boast about with pride like the Aswan high dam in Egypt or those huge cement, steel and tractor factories in the Soviet Union. The Chinese government started construction on the Great Bridge (this is the way it always referred to by all the Chinese) in 1956. Over 300,000 people helped in its construction which took two years and cost 10 billion Yuan. To say it's impressive looking would be an understatement, it's

colossal. There is nothing graceful about its appearance it's a huge steel and cement monolithic life line which connects Northern China with the South. Standing several hundred feet over the brown and turbulent water of the Chang Jiang The Great Bridge looms as monument to China's socialist development. Its nine huge concrete pillars support a two tiered six lane highway and pedestrian walkways on the top and two rail road tracks below. It's a kilometer and a half long and connects the three cities of Wuhan and provides the central authorities with the means to feed the enormous Chinese population to the north and to transport its 3 million man army. Its importance to the government is incalculable, during the Cultural Revolution the Wuhanese shut down traffic on the bridge and destroyed the rail roads thereby shutting off the food supplies and industrial goods that keep this nation of a billion plus people alive; the PLA came in and shot the hell out of the protestors; over 5,000 civilians were killed. To underscore the point I am trying to make you should know that in the historic and unprecedented meeting between Li Peng and the student leaders Wu'er Kai'shi and Wang Dan in Beijing last month he demanded that the students stop the protests because they were influencing events in other cities in China and he said (and I quote) "There is no food, vegetables, grains or edible oil or other products crossing the Great Bridge, shortages of everything are now taking place; the students in Wuhan have blocked all rail traffic, no one, that is nobody can travel in China, Wuhan is the the connecting point for all rail traffic in China all transportation has come to a halt because of their violent actions, you must stop this reckless action now!". Wow, heavy, very heavy. The Great Bridge was the scene of action here and the burned busses, the destroyed rail road tracks, the hundreds of thousands of workers and student demonstrators that I saw and participated with on this truly Great Bridge have made an indelible mark on my memory, it was simply put a magnificent, terrifying, wonderful and exciting experience that goes beyond words.

On May the 12th the events in Wuhan began to really heat up and when I use that term I mean that the sheer numbers of people and the tone of the language and volume in which it was shouted increased on a daily basis. It quickly passed from a student only protest until it encompassed the whole broad spectrum of Chinese society, I started to see factory workers, teachers, professors, middle school students and, well to confess I could not identify the other myriad groups of people carrying beautiful banners and shouting slogans. It was really all too much to understand and I did not dare to take any more pictures because I had had my film confiscated twice by the security police and did not want to provoke them further.

There were about 1,000 students from this school who participated on a daily basis in the demonstrations. In the early days the students would gather in front of the administration building early in the morning, unfurl their banners, don head bands with Chinese characters written on them and shout slogans. Cheap bullhorns were everywhere they were not very loud and seemed to distort the speakers message, but they too were a symbol of this unique event in Chinese history. Each group of students from the various schools had at least one bullhorn. After twenty or thirty minutes of venting their spleen they marched off to the gate of the school and passed through it to join the students from the other schools who were passing by. As I mentioned earlier Wu Da and Hua Zhong had many more students than WICE, and when they passed by it was really something to see. Thousands upon thousands of students all of them carrying those beautiful and uniquely Chinese banners, it looked like an army marching off to war and in a sense that is exactly what they were. After checking to see if any of my students were showing up for class (which they were not) I got on my bike and rode down to the bridge to watch the events and listen to the speeches that were going on everywhere. The Great Bridge everyday for over a month was blocked for at least part of the day by tens of thousands of students and onlookers. As the students jammed onto the Great Bridge all traffic was forced to come to a halt. Busses were commandeered and used as grandstands for the student leaders, scores of them were everywhere along the entire expanse of the structure. A path only a few meters wide was allowed to remain open for wave after wave of new protesters who marched on to the cheers of the those who had already arrived.

On the morning of May 28th I heard from several of my friends that the teachers were going to go out and demonstrate to show their support for the students. This was a very brave act considering the pain and suffering some of them had endured during the Cultural Revolution. Most, if not all of the professors or teachers are party members and for them to show support for the students was either very brave or very foolish. Up to this point I had just been an observer at the demonstrations not an active participant, however I felt the need to show my own personal support for these young people and as a teacher myself I decided to march along with them. As the students gathered in front of the administration building once again shouting slogans and taunting the President of the school I prepared my own small banner. It was a small triangular shaped red crepe paper one which had the Chinese character for "Democracy" written on it. It looked much like a baseball pennant which I attached to the handlebars of my bicycle. Thus prepared I waited by my room for the teachers to pass by. This was the largest demonstration I saw leave the campus; nearly all the young teachers and many of the older ones now rode by. When they saw that I was going to join them they started to cheer and clap. I felt excitement in the air as we rode down those dusty and dirty streets which I have described to you before. Oh.

what a day it was!

As we slowly rode on our group of demonstrators joined hundreds of others until the line of marchers was as far as the eye could see in either direction. Each school was identified by the leading guidon bearer and in turn each department in the respective schools was identified; the School of Law, Chemistry, Engineering, Education and so forth. I was waiting for the moment when we were to pass by Wu Da, I expected this school (the third best in the nation) to have something special to show. I kept asking my colleagues to tell me if any of the banners we had so far seen indicated whether or not they had yet joined the march, no banners indicated that they had yet done so, so I asked one of my friends to wait with me by the gate to watch when they would do so. We didn't have to wait for long. With a great shout the ongoing line of students gave the first indication that the 'Cremate le Crem' of Wuhan's students and teachers had now entered the foray. It was impressive to say the least. It was the professors and not the students who led this this schools demonstration, I was literally moved to tears. At the forefront of this prestigious university were the professors from the school of law who carried a massive banner, perhaps 40 feet long and four feet wide which read "Wuhan University Law School Professors Support the Patriotic Students". The teachers came and they came and they came again, I tried to keep a count but this was not possible, there were just too many. After the teachers came a legion of students all carrying banners and fantastic flags, the likes of which I have never seen and perhaps will never see again. I was impressed, moved, thoughtful, nervous and excited beyond words. With my friend in tow we quickly rejoined the demonstrators from our school all the while being passed by an endless convoy of busses and trucks all ferrying shouting, singing, laughing demonstrating students to the Great Bridge.

By noon it was hot, a brilliant blue sky with just a trace of wind graced the day, I had once again brought my camera but was warned repeatedly by my friends not even to bring it out of my pack. Nervousness began to ring a small bell in my brain. As we approached the "Bridge" ten's of thousands of onlookers began to appear on either side of the road, some just looked while others cheered as we passed by. The road to the foot of the "Bridge" makes a sharp 90 degree turn, once we had passed this bend the scene of the bridge was clear, and what a sight it was!! I have not seen any of the film footage you have seen of the action in Beijing's Tienanmen square so I can't compare it to that, I can only say it was the most impressive sight I have ever seen anywhere in the world. The entrance to the bridge was jammed to the breaking point, only a small passageway remained open, we filed through three abreast and whenever they (the already encamped demonstrators) saw me (a foreigner) pass by, wild cheers and clapping ensued, I was amazed; my friends told me "they are cheering you"!! Moved by the spirit of the moment I too, shouted some slogans in Chinese: "Long Live Democracy" and "Down with Bureaucracy." It was exciting to say the least, I was a "foreign friend" showing my solidarity with the youth of China. Hundred's of busses were parked along the road which were used by the people as grandstands to watch the protesters file by and for some to seek shelter from the blazing sun.

It took nearly three hours for me to pass through to the midway point on the bridge and it was there that the tone and composition of the demonstration changed quite dramatically. Workers from the steel mills and construction sites had marched south from Hankow and Hanyang to show their support for the students and to demonstrate against the government. These people were not at all like the students they had theroretically come to support, they were middle aged men who looked rather tough and not very friendly. There was no laughing and singing to be heard amongst this group, their members were organized by the 'work units' they belonged to at their various places of employment and their banners and flags were of a completely different nature than those of the students. The students were having fun demonstrating, these men were angry!! It was a crush of unbelievable proportions, ten's of thousands of people marching north and ten's of thousands people heading south. It was a huge traffic jam of humanity, I was crushed into a crowd of (estimates of crowds are hard for me to make and no official total was given but I think the largest crowd of people I ever saw was at the annual University of Michigan V.S. Ohio State Football game held in Ann Arbor when there were over 106,000 people, this was larger by far) perhaps 200,000 or more people! The student and worker organizers were trying to divide the bridge into two lanes which was barely possible but was somehow managed. The factory workers were directed to pass on the right (heading south) just like vehicular traffic. As the two groups passed each other the laughter died away and the 'fun' for me began to change into a mild fear, these men passing to my left were no youthful energetic and idealistic students or teachers, these guys were working stiffs, and they were, I believe, not there to support the students but to tell the Communist Party and in particular Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping that they were tired of their leadership. They were (are) angry about the low pay they receive, the terrible working conditions the endure and the corruption amongst senior and lower party member cadres. They didn't look very friendly, they were bigger, stronger and more dirty looking than the fashionable and well dressed students. After slogging along for awhile two workers broke ranks and joined my group of demonstrators and walked along for about ten minutes and they quietly asked a friend of mine standing beside me some questions. She translated for me: "What was I doing at *their* demonstration" that "I was not

welcome" and that "this was a Chinese protest and Americans friendly or not had no business taking part" and "the police were filming all of this and that I was foolish to risk being filmed with my banner". After this dialogue the workers rejoined their comrades and I quickly furled my banner and put it away.

I had not looked at my participation in this demonstration in this light, I realized then and there that this was their demonstration and that I could observe from the sidelines but should not participate. I had no option open to me I just had to keep going with the flow until I could find a way to leave this mass of humanity and take the ferry back across the river. The rest of the demonstration remained the same, thousands of people waving flags and banners and chanting slogans. As we neared the end of the bridge I, along with a friend rode our bikes down to the ferry and crossed back over to Wuchang. Tired and a little nervous I quietly rode home alone in the cool of the evening. I learned the next day from some students that a score or more busses had been turned over and trashed and that the workers had been the main instigators of this action. There are just too many demonstrations to describe in detail but the rest of them I went to I went as an onlooker and when acts of violence took place I quietly and quickly left. My feelings and emotions turned 180 degrees between June the 3rd and June the 4th.

I awoke early on Sunday, June the 4th and turned on my radio to find out that the students in Beijing had been massacred. I was in a state of shock as were all my friends and students, we never, ever thought that the People's army would murder the people. Almost at once the students marched out of the campus towards the bridge but not before they threw away their Communist party youth cards. I watched as an administration official picked them up and placed them in a box. I went back to my room to listen to further reports on the radio, everything I heard was bad shootings and murder going on all over Beijing. I spent the day consoling my friends and talking with them. The situation here in Wuhan started to deteriorate and turn ugly in the following days. Public transportation came to a halt as the students commandeered all the city busses and used them for transport and as barricades. I was curious to know what the other foreigners were going to do so I rode my bicycle over to Wu Da, it was raining quite heavily and by the time I arrived on the campus, I was drenched. As I approached the road which leads to the building housing the foreign teachers I met a man running in the opposite direction he glanced up and saw a foreigner and asked quickly in a nervous way "are you American" to which I replied "yes, I am" he told me to follow him to the "Weiban" (Director of Foreign Affairs). His haste and commanding nature suggested to me that he was a person of some authority although I had never met him before. When we reached the office of the "Weiban" we were both soaking wet and after we introduced ourselves I asked him who he was and what he did in Wuhan. He told me he was a professor of political science from Ohio State and was now teaching political science at Wu Da. I walked with him up two flights of stairs and into the office of the "Weiban", I will never forget the behavior of this man. He demanded the Chinese government provide Wuhan with two possibly three jets immediately to evacuate all the Americans and other foreigners. Pounding his fist on the desk he refused to listen to the young Chinese women who tried to calm him down and tell him that everything would be done to help those who wanted to leave but since China has less than 100 jets for the entire country it simply would not be possible to get three here so quickly. His behavior was deplorable, the Chinese never, never yell at foreigners and take great offence at being yelled at. He insisted that calls should be put through to Beijing and Washington to facilitate the evacuation. The young women to which he was yelling at asked him why he was so worried, he responded that he had "information" that the 15th army group was on the verge of entering the city. A rumour and I knew it.

I walked back to the foreign teachers compound with this guy who was going on and on about the terror which was to fall upon Wuhan at any minute, I began to worry, up to this point I had never thought of leaving. The students and workers here were rioting but marshal law had not been imposed and only a few soldiers could be seen in the streets. I told him that I did not intend to leave in a rush, he called me a "damned fool." When I entered the compound I was shocked to see chaos and commotion everywhere, people (these were grown men and women) were running around holding meetings, organizing flights with Chinese and Western officials. I sat in the apartment of the director of the English department and listened to him while he spoke of the danger we were all in. He spoke of civil war, hostage taking, imprisonment and even death. If I wasn't scared before I was now! He told me I should go back to my school gather one bag of clothes and come back immediately, there was safety in numbers he said. I decided that no matter what they said I would not panic and do something foolish, I had just come to China, why should I leave when I felt it unnecessary.

To be truthful I was and still am quite concerned about events in China but let me continue. I rode my bike home in the coolness after the heavy rain but before I got there I ran into a huge mob of people heading north along the main street and these people were angry. They had very few banners and I didn't understand the slogans they were shouting but it wasn't necessary these people were out for revenge. I found out the next day that they had burned a number of busses and trolley cars on the Great Bridge. Having nothing to do the next day I rode down to the Chang Jiang to see what was up. Once again I was amazed by what I saw, a huge mob was tearing

up the railroad tracks that cross the bridge. Tens of thousands of people were jammed on top of the bridge and an equal number were busy below. Traffic had now been completely shut down there was no way to get across the river. The transportation center of China had broken down, the railway station, which is just a few miles from my school was a scene of a riot, tens of thousands of people were trying to leave but no trains were running. I saw this and tried to keep calm, I just watched as the people were fighting each other for trains going anywhere. It was really too much to take in so I went home. After a short rest I rode over to see an American friend of mine at another school to ask him what he was going to do but on my way there I ran into one of my students who told me there was a riot taking place on the road to the airport and that the road had been blocked by burning busses, trolley cars and thousands of angry people! I was beginning to feel a little trapped, you couldn't leave by train and the road to the airport now seemed closed! It was really exciting but terribly nerve wracking at the same time.

The next morning I turned on the radio to hear a message broadcast by the State Department to the Americans living or working in Wuhan which stated that they were requested to leave immediately and that the United States Government was planning an evacuation! Boy oh boy did that ever send a cold sweat down the back of my neck. I was really tired by this point, I wasn't eating or sleeping very well it was hotter than hell and I must have put 300 km on my bike in the past few days but once again I rode over to Wu Da to see what I should do. A teacher there had been put in charge of organizing the evacuation and it was her I went to see. Absolute chaos and panic were to be seen everywhere, people were really scared and frightened by this point and their fear began to rub off on me so I decided that I should seek out some cooler heads to find out what *their* plans were. They didn't see any reason to flee in this fashion and neither did I. So I told the organizer of the evacuation that I was going to remain in Wuhan for the time being and if things really got bad then I would fly to Hong Kong. She did not try to persuade me one way or the other she just said "it's your decision." As I left the building I was feeling very sad and frightened, everyone was leaving I was soon going to be the only one remaining behind. As I rode my bike home I decided to go and have a look at the road to the airport.

In the center of Wuchang, just a mile from the Great Bridge lies the main intersection: Da Dong Men (Great East Gate). All the traffic intending to pass over the bridge must pass through this intersection first as well as any east-west traffic. The road that leads to the airport passes through this intersection and it was blocked. The students had forced the bus drivers to park the busses in a great circle and slashed the tires of some and pushed some over while others were set afire. To prevent fire trucks from reaching the scene they had torn up the road and placed huge concrete blocks and steel beams used to separate pedestrian from vehicular traffic in the road. Da Dong Men was completely blocked there was a long line of trucks, cars and busses all backed up for miles. It was the students final fling and what a grand finale it was. There were thousands of people gathered around the burning busses just looking and walking around, I counted over thirty busses either destroyed or very badly damaged. No one could leave Wuhan even if there was a flight ready to take them away. The wreckage was cleared by the next day and the planes from America were at the airport ready to take the people away. I said goodbye to a couple of people I knew and rode my bicycle home sick at heart and thinking I was a fool for staying behind while everyone else was leaving. This feeling did not last for long however and I soon regained my composure and decided to make the best of the situation.

It is now several weeks later and the political crackdown has been going on for some time, everyone is terrorized, scared and frightened. The government is calling the protestors "counter revolutionary thugs" (which at one time it called "patriotic students"). Three students from this school were killed on June the 4th, they are three of the 26 the government said died accidentally. I knew one of them, a boy, he was not a very good student and I didn't know him well but I feel very sad for his family, he was their only son. Oh, the suffering Chinese, when will their troubles end? The student and party members who threw away their party membership cards are in for real trouble. There have been endless political meetings these past few weeks and everyone must attend. The latest one lasted for three whole days, they sit there and study the thoughts of Deng Xiaoping: everyone hates it. The city is quiet, those once crowded busses are now a pleasure to ride and I use them often. The streets of Hankow are only half full and shopping has become a breeze and fun as well. All the people are scared and those who were old enough to have lived through the cultural revolution are staying home, the secret police are everywhere. Armed soldiers carrying AK 47 assault rifles now occupy stations on the Great Bridge. You now often see troops marching through the streets on their way to who knows where, I think they are doing this to let the people know who is in charge. The railway station is now under army control and to get a seat you must go through a physical search and show your identification cards, they are looking for the student leaders who must pass through Wuhan at some point in time. It's kind of frightening at times and I have no one to talk to about my feelings, my last friend left for Hong Kong last week.

My mother has written to tell me that she has received no mail since May 10th. This is strange, I sent two more letters in May and I gave letters to two Americans on their way to Hong Kong. Please let me know if you

have recieved any news from me. I am all alone here and I really look forward to the noon mail call it's the highlight of my day. My mother has a really great system for corresponding with me. Her letters are short and to the point and I do mean short one paragraph. However whenever she see's anything interesting in the news paper, Time, News Week, Mother Jones, the Progressive or New Yorker she clips it out and puts it in a manila envelope and sends it off. This is really great for me, it gives me a chance to see what you are seeing, and anything about China I would love to read or look at. I understand you are all very busy but this method only takes a few moments and I would love to here from you. Dont send any rolled up magazines or newspapers they will not get through customs but envelopes will. I hope you will all correspond soon.

I hope all of you are happy, healthy and enjoying life, I miss you all so much, take care.

Love & Peace

Dan

P.S. I am making this letter from Hany Hany. It's a beautiful city but too many westerners, am leaving for the most remote corner of China in a few days - I hope this letter finds you all happy and healthy.

A wish Raver & Hugh many years of happy life together and am sorry I was unable to attend.

Granny - I want you to know how much I miss you and hope all goes well for you, A last know if any of my mail has gotten through - but

Happy Birthday!!

Love to all

P.S.S. Dan - happy Birthday.

Dan

Wuhan, Hubei Province People's Republic of China

August 29, 1989

Dear Ma & Pa:

Greetings and Salutations from the Middle Kingdom!

I just got back from Chinese Turkistan, and boy is it hot in Wuhan. I have an air conditioner in my apartment and have been reluctant to use it, but not today. Sweat is pouring off me, I am sitting here in my underwear thinking how cool and comfortable it must be in Chicago. The last time I checked the thermometer it was 109 degrees and the humidity must be at least 100%. It's strange how this oppressive heat affects the inhabitants of this huge city, you notice instantly the differences in behavior between the people in the North West and those living in South Central China. The people here argue and quarrel a lot, there is more pushing and shoving on the buses and the people are generally more short tempered and rude. This is entirely understandable considering the fact that they get very little sleep during the summer. Unlike other areas of China the temperature during the night does not fall much, it still hovers around 93 to 98 degrees and no wind to speak of. Many people sleep outside to escape from the oven like atmosphere of their apartments. They have these narrow bamboo cots they place in the alleys and streets and sleep on them till late in the morning. It's hard to understand how they can continue to sleep when trucks and buses go roaring past blaring their horns. You even see people sleeping next to the railroad tracks, the Chinese can sleep anywhere, and every where. I sat next to a person on the bus for four days on my way to Kashgar from Turfan who continued to sleep even though the person sitting next to him threw up all over his neck and shoulder. That's a story for another letter, in any event it's very hot here and the people don't sleep very well so they tend to be pretty touchy.

As I mentioned I just got back from western China, (if you are looking at a map I basically followed the old Silk Road from Xi'an to Lanzhou, Xihe, Jiaguan, Dun Huang, Hami, Turfan, Korla, Luntai, Kuqa, Hotan, Aksu and on to Kashgar) and am now resting and catching up with my mail. The trip was very interesting and educational. I had the opportunity to see another side of Chinese life which few people get to see. The area I traveled in is mostly Moslem and populated by Hue, Uygur, Kazakh and Mongolian people. These minority groups are very different from the majority Han people. They look and dress differently eat mostly mutton and noodles and speak a variety of strange sounding Turkic languages. I am finding that the differences between Eastern and Western ways of thinking about society and personal conduct are profound.

In the day's prior to my departure many people advised me not to travel in China these days. They all said it was not safe and that gangs of hooligans were systematically robbing passengers and then jumping off the trains (which was an American spread rumour). The bomb blasts on the trains to Shanghai and Chengdu (another American rumour) gave some support to their arguments but in the end the high temperatures and the lack of students here in Wuhan outweighed all other factors. Traveling in China is unlike anything I have ever experienced before, there is nothing easy about it. It seemed at times as though the Chinese authorities did everything in their power to confound, confuse and otherwise drive mad any foreigner who attempted to travel in this vast country. According to the Chinese press over 4.5 million people use the trains every day which means they are as crowded as the buses only worse because you must spend more time in such cramped conditions. There are three classes of tickets available. Hard seats, hard sleeper, soft sleeper. The cheapest are hard seats, which are just that, bench seats and they are not comfortable at all. Six people sit facing each other with a small table in between which is usually jammed with bottles of beer, water melons, peanuts and various types of edible seeds. Across the aisle is an identical booth set up for four people. Because there are so many people traveling, seats are sold when in fact none exist so the passage way becomes jammed with people who have no seats. People either stand or sit on the floor, when this happens going to the toilet can take hours. I have ridden in the hard seat section enough to last me for a long time. It's the people that make the hard seat section fun and interesting to ride in if you speak a little of their language, at least this was my experience but this sentiment was not shared by the other foreigners I met on the road.

Because of the "Counter Revolutionary Rebellion" in Beijing there were very few foreign travelers on the road and none of them were American. The political situation here is still uncertain because there are many "hooligans", "thugs", "bad elements", "capitalist roaders" (?) and various other people (who listen to the YOA and believe in "bourgeois liberal ideas" still angry with the government and express their anger by relieving people of their belongings (and bucks) and placing exploding things in the toilets of trains. Some of the Europeans I ran into had ~~mislaid~~ their luggage and ~~lost~~ their wallets, fortunately, nothing like this happened to me. China is a complex country in many ways and to understand how traveling works here I need to explain the currency system and my status as a foreign teacher.

There are two types of currency used in People's Republic, the Renminbi (usually referred to as RMB) and Foreign Exchange Certificates or FEC. The official exchange rate for FEC is 3.71 to the dollar, there is no official exchange rate for the RMB because it is not traded on the world market but the Chinese government claims its value is the same as the FEC but, on the black market you can exchange \$100 for nearly 900 RMB (something I never did)! Foreign visitors and businessmen must use FEC for all forms of transportation, hotels, museums, tours and meals. This is not true for foreign teachers who have something known as a white card. A white card is just that a card with a photograph and place of employment written on it. This card enables the bearer to use RMB for everything and theoretically pay the same price as a Chinese citizen. Without a white card you must use FEC and pay 5 to 7 times the stated price for Chinese people, so far as I know China is the only country in the world who make visitors pay many times the normal price, and it drives most people mad. An example of this practice took place at the Xi'an rail way station (I could give you dozens). I was in line to get a ticket to Lanzhou. After spending several hours fighting my way through the thousands of people also trying to purchase tickets I finally got to the window after several hours. Behind me were a couple from Germany. I asked for a hard seat, gave the woman my white card and work permit, paid 22 RMB and had my ticket. The Germans asked me to help them get tickets but because they had no white card the woman at the window told them that there were no more hard seats left and

that they must buy tickets in the soft sleeper car. It's a well known fact that they never run out of hard seats but the women insisted that there were none left and if they wanted to get a seat on the train they must buy this class of tickets which also happen to be the most expensive. I did my best to help these people but to no avail and they had to pay 190 FEC. I got my ticket for a couple of bucks while they had to pay nearly \$30 apiece. Perhaps more important than the monetary aspect of the situation is the feeling among tourists of utter frustration, once the Chinese make up their minds about something there is no way to change them or to convince them otherwise. Imagine yourself in a huge crowd of people with a back pack on, sweating in the heat, waiting for hours, constantly pushing and shoving your way to the front of a line only to find you are in the wrong line even though you were told by railway personal that that was the line to wait in. Then, getting in another line and going through the same process again and then being told you can't buy the cheap tickets and that you must pay 5 times the price the Chinese pay for the most expensive ticket available. I've seen people cry and scream at the ticket sellers, it has to be experienced and seen to be believed.

The Chinese have a different concept of courtesy than foreigners when buying tickets, waiting in lines or buying food, this is especially true among the young men. Because of the enormous population there are huge crowds of people everywhere, no matter what you want to do, or when you want to do it, regardless of the time of day, there are thousands of Chinese wanting and waiting to do the same thing, this causes a lot of problems. Buying a ticket for a bus, train or plane is a lesson in frustration and anger. Foreigners, women and old men will wait patiently in line but young and middle aged men will always try to cut in front and push you aside and they are always smoking. The scene at the ticket window is bedlam, with dozens of people shouting and thrusting their cash filled hands through the window trying to get the attention of the attendant. No matter how you behave or what you say to these men will do any good, when the situation gets really bad the police or soldiers (who are always at the station) will push their way to the front and start pulling and pushing these men to the back of the line, but as soon as they leave (and they always do) these same people will rush to the front and start the whole process all over again. I can't really say I have gotten used to this, it still makes me very angry when I think about it. The same is true when buying food at the many food stalls that are a main feature of all Chinese cities. With the on-going economic reforms people have been permitted even encouraged to start their own businesses so there are now thousands of small roadside restaurants that sell a wide variety of noodles, fried vegetables and many types of indescribable and delicious fried and steamed breads. These restaurants are extremely popular especially in the morning when they are jammed by people going to school or work. To buy the food you must first purchase a ticket(s) from the cashier, this is the hard part because nobody wants to stand in line and wait they just jam around in a circle and shout their orders and shove money in the face of the women selling the tickets. I refuse to behave like these folks so it usually takes me quite awhile to get my order in.

I was going to say something about my trip west in this letter but it will have to wait until later when I have the time and money. Sending letters to all my friends and family takes up 1/4 of my income, the heavier the letter the more it costs so I try and keep them to two small spaced pages, I hope you understand. I also hope you understand that even though these letters seem to present a negative impression of China this does not represent my own feelings about living here. I like it very much but want you, to know as much as possible about the conditions here. I had a wonderful time trekking through the vast desert in the west but I found that getting there was far more interesting; it's the people, no matter where you travel that give the flavor, the spice to life. I can spend hours, days just watching life walk by. The road from Dun Huang to Kashgar will be the focus of the next letter. The scenery, people and the art would take days to describe; it was a dream come true for me.

The changes (and or lack of) now taking place in this huge country provide endless hours of fascinating observations and speculations about the future. I have learned to be more objective about the evolving political situation here. All the teachers and students have been required to attend endless hours of political re-education, the meetings have been going on now for the past 10 days. I went to one meeting where they showed a video tape of the demonstrations in Beijing. It was the first time I was able to see what you saw on a daily basis on American TV. Fascinating to say the least. It's also fascinating to think about the impressions you carry away depending upon your point of view and political persuasion. I thought the video was highly objective even though it was compiled by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party). I went away with a sense of excitement and exhilaration about the prospects for democratic reforms the youth of China were demonstrating for. The older and more conservative party members held the view that these were 'Counter Revolutionary Hooligans' bent on destroying China and bringing Ronald Reagan out of retirement and placing him in power in the Great Hall of the People!! Everything Beijing say's is swallowed hook, line and sinker by most people. They still make the same claims about events in June as they have in the past and that it was the United States that was responsible for getting the students to protest. The hilarity of the claims is matched only by the absurdity of requiring the people to attend endless hours of political meetings; enough said on this subject.

Ma, I could have told you that trying to do anything with the Bank of China would be a lesson in frustration. They have no idea about any money for me here in Wuhan. I have been told it could take up to six months for it to get here. Here is what you need to do. Send me every single document you have concerning this transaction, omit nothing! Get the bank in Chicago to Telex the Hankow branch about the transaction. I know you are doing your best and believe me I appreciate it. Please try again. Also, I never said I don't like your letters, I do, very much. You and Pa are my most faithful correspondents keep the letters coming. Am taking cooking lessons from a young chef in exchange for English lessons, have learned how to cook most things in the market including Hedge Hog! The students are back on campus but classes have not yet started because they are involved in political re-education meetings. If you see anything interesting to read send it my way, there's not a lot to read over here. I miss you. Love and Peace from DL in the PRC.

I miss you love DL