

Adopting your letter format. Here's my summer plans.

Box 1455,
Wawa, Ontario.
POS 1K0
Ph: 705-856-2033.

Dear *Ken*

With the approach of summer, and the end of my first year teaching I am making use of the temporary 'slack' period to contact all my friends to tell them my impressions of Wawa, high school teaching and my intentions for the summer. In order to say what I want, modern technology has come to my rescue with this form letter.

Wawa, my home since September, is located half way around Lake Superior on the Trans-Canada Hwy 17. Although somewhat isolated, 140 miles from Sault Ste. Marie (the nearest traffic light) the rugged Pre-Cambrian Shield base with its characteristic rocky soil, mosaic of small clear lakes, and ubiquitous black spruce forest, is proving to be thoroughly enjoyable. Autumn hunting is fantastic. On any day's hunting I was guaranteed two or three tasty partridge or a rabbit within two miles of Wawa. Although I myself was unable to shoot a moose, 76 were shot in the region, and I have seen many tracks as well as those of wolves and bear. Should any of you be interested in a hunting trip next fall, please let me know and I'll give you every help in organizing an expedition.

By the first snowfall in December the exodus of tourists has ended leaving a quiet town. Snowmobiling becomes the great sport until March, with the frozen lakes opening up the vast hinterland North of Wawa, a region normally inaccessible except by seaplane. Ice fishing is popular and profitable. Often I obtained two or three, one or two pound trout. Tourist activity again picks up with the departure of the last snow in April and Air Dale, and White River, the two charter air services begin their regular flights from Wawa Lake. Fishing is the main spring activity with most sportsmen being virtually assured of a full fridge of "smelts" during their run, excellent rainbow fishing during their spawning period, and speckled trout for breakfast every morning.

The immense sandy beaches of Lake Superior, only two miles from Wawa have also permitted me to enjoy a number of picnics, and midnight bonfires under the bright, colourful and ever varying Northern Lights. Watching the moon rise over the rugged cliffs of Old Women Bay, while the cold Superior waves crash rhythmically on wide sandy shores, is an experience not soon forgotten.

From a historical viewpoint Wawa, the focal point of an active gold rush in 1897, and again in the 1930's, has many remnants of the past. Surluga Road, two miles from Wawa, once known as the "Golden Mile", is the site of some ten abandoned gold mines. With the end of the mining frontier, the hunter now crosses many an overgrown field of an early farmer with its collapsed log cabin and barn.

Wawa's prosperity today rests upon the highly productive Helen Mine, source of much of the iron ore utilized by Algoma Steel of Sault Ste. Marie.

My first year's teaching has proven to be a learning experience. Coming from university, I had forgotten the degree to which it is necessary to simplify the material presented. Teaching for me is very enjoyable for the senior levels, particularly 12 and 13, but the lower grades, particularly at the general levels often becomes somewhat of a policing job. Some students at the grade 9 level still have serious problems in reading and few possess motivation to complete any work outside the classroom. With the present 'credit' system, which gives the students complete freedom to take (or not to take) any course available, the survival of the teacher and subject depends on his relationship to the students. Consequently the work load for most courses has dropped sharply since the days when I went to school, and many subjects such as Latin are no longer taught. History in my school is also in a weak position. I have introduced a new history-geography course dealing with the local area, which has attracted 100 students. Our school is entering the semester system next year whereby the students take only four courses for half a year, with each class being one hour in length. It may be somewhat difficult keeping the attention of some grade 9 students for an hour. Use of projects and individual assignments may overcome this problem.

My plans for the summer have settled on a 45 day trip through Europe. I am flying via Air Canada to Athens, Greece on July 5, and am having a friend from Sparta show me through Greece. From Greece I plan to fly to Istanbul for a short jaunt through Turkey and then take a boat trip to Italy, where I will purchase a second hand Fiat. From Italy I am heading north to Vienna in Austria, Munich in Germany, through Switzerland to Nice in France, on to Barcelona, Seville and Granada in Spain, through Madrid to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, then fly to London, to catch my return flight to Toronto, Aug. 19. If any of you are going to Europe this summer, send me your itinerary so we could arrange to meet. I'm looking forward to an enjoyable summer.

My brother George, having finished his M. Sc in electrical engineering at Queen's, has been accepted into medicine at U. B.C. My sister Margaret has quit teaching in order to look after new baby boy, Chris.

All the best. Should you pass through Wawa, be sure to phone and drop in.

Sincerely
Don Pugh.