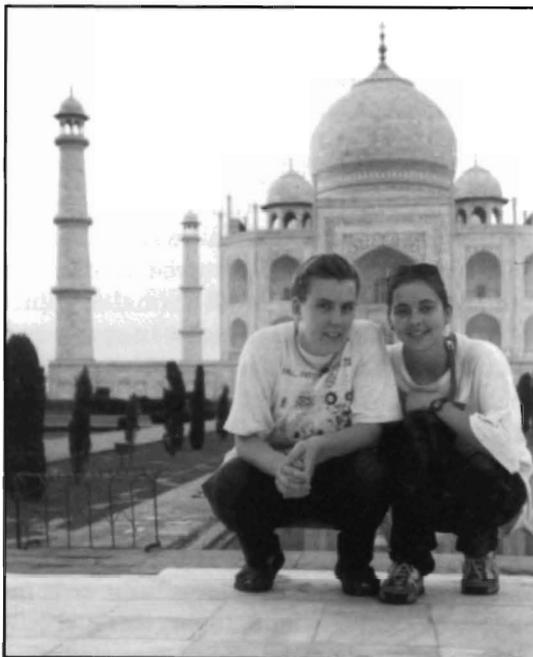


# Cherri and Lisa Go to India

*Cherri Trusheim and Lisa Reising<sup>†</sup>*

We spent 30 difficult days in the beautiful but impoverished country of India. Prior to the trip we made a small attempt to acquaint ourselves with the Indian culture and prepare for the shock of visiting a third-world country. Neither of us had traveled overseas before. We came to the conclusion (after the *first* day) that this was something that had to be experienced to comprehend, and reading a few books, watching documentaries on the Discovery Channel, or listening to others speak of their experiences while visiting the country did not do the job. Knowing a second language is always a plus while traveling, and we tried to learn a few phrases in Hindi (what we thought to be the national language) but discovered that each state had its own language. Impressively, many people were fluent in English and we always found someone to communicate with.

One of the objectives of our trip was to collect blood samples from horse populations in three different geographical locations throughout the country. The blood was then shipped back to the United States where Dr. Peter Timoney at the University of Kentucky conducted serological testing to determine the prevalence of Getah virus. This virus was originally isolated in Japan, but can now be found in many Asian countries and Australia. Getah virus produces a febrile condition with anorexia, serous nasal discharge, urticarial rash, limb edema, and submandibular lymphadenopathy. These clinical signs closely resemble, and cannot be clinically differentiated from, those seen in typical cases of equine viral arteritis or the mild form of African horse sickness. With the ever-increasing international shipment of horses for breeding and competition purposes, it is unlikely that Getah virus will remain foreign to the United States. Therefore, Dr. Timoney, Iowa State's Dr. Christo-



Cherri Trusheim, ISU

**In addition to their experiences with veterinary medicine, Cherri and Lisa took time to see the historic sites in India, including the Taj Mahal.**

pher Brown, and others are interested in learning more about the virus and its prevalence.

We stayed with three different veterinarians and their families during our visit to India. All were involved with Thoroughbred racing, one at a racetrack and the other two on breeding farms. All three of these veterinarians practiced high quality medicine and had taken charge of their own continuing education by visiting and learning in other countries, including the United States. On the breeding farms we performed various procedures, such as rectal palpation, ultrasound, caslick surgery, vaccination, and venipuncture.

While we did gain valuable veterinary experience during our stay, more importantly, our trip to India gave us insight into life in a country far different from our own, and without a doubt, served as a tremendous character builder. From our first exposure of witnessing people asleep on dirt piles and in the median of the street at night, to trying to adjust to the 115° heat, our trip was a

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challenge. At times we felt like celebrities when small children, as well as adults, would want to have their picture taken with us. The celebrity status even proved to be somewhat scary. For instance, while in a "small village" (approximately 100,000 people!), we walked out onto the street, everything came to a halt, and all eyes were fixed on us. People would literally stop walking and stare at us out of curiosity. It was altogether unnerving at times.

During our travels throughout India, we struggled with such simple things as the heat, walking down the crowded streets, and indigestion from the spicy food (not to mention adjusting to Indian toilets), but it was the people of India that made our stay so enjoyable. The veterinarians and their families had many interesting ideas and experiences to share with us far beyond veterinary medicine. We were enthralled by marriage customs, education systems, foreign government, religion, healing powers, and much more. The Indian people were eager to share their experiences with us and gain insight into our lives as well. We would strongly encourage anyone with the opportunity to travel to a foreign country to go and reap the rewards of discovering new things and people, as well as veterinary medicine, outside of the United States. ♦



Lisa Reising ISU

**Lisa Reising dresses in the traditional Indian sari, attire often worn to wedding celebrations.**

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