

December, 1977

Dear Friends,

Feliz Navidad y Feliz Año Nuevo!! We are very busy practicing our Spanish since we will leave on December 30 for a month's stay in Guatemala (with a two day stopover in Mexico City on the way down). Mel will be teaching a three week physics course (we will use the other week to be tourists!) under the auspices of the OAS (CURCAF). All five of us are going down--the most adventurous thing we've done in a long time! We are most fortunate as we will be staying in the home of friends, Jorge & Miriam Antillon. Mel has spent time with them in years past and the Antillon family has been here several times, too. We think that it will be a marvelous experience for us all.

It has really been a good year for us--and it has gone by so fast. This summer we were delighted to see many members of both sides of the family, plus a number of old friends. The Winter family held its reunion at Lake Cumberland State Resort Park (near Jamestown, Kentucky). What a lovely spot! Only five of the six "original" family were there as brother Bob had to be in Europe doing research on a book he is working on (poor thing), but with Mom & Dad and all our spouses and children and Aunt Florence and cousin Nick, there were seventeen of us. We spent a wonderful week visiting and swimming, visiting and hiking, visiting and eating, visiting and ... It was so much fun--and only two more years until the next one!

Both going and coming to Lake Cumberland we stopped and visited in Vicksburg. It was particularly special to have two opportunities to visit with Mel's dad as he has been ill this past year. We had a great time visiting with more cousins and old friends. The kids really had a chance to get to know their cousins this year.

This year we celebrated our tenth year in this house--and our tenth year as parents. My, how time flies when you are having a good time!! The girls are all growing so fast I can hardly keep up with the hems (they really enjoy jeans rather than dresses). Beth (10) is in the fifth grade and is enjoying Girl Scouts, campouts, piano lessons and reading. Sarah (8 1/2) is in the third grade and keeps busy with Brownies and piano lessons--she is always making or doing something. Mardie (5 1/2) started kindergarten this year--she loves going to "big" school with Beth and Sarah (it is marvelous having them all in the same school).

This fall has been quite an adjustment for me--having all the girls in school--no 11:30 nursery pickup! (Refer to PASSAGES and the crisis of the mid-30's housewife whose last child enters school!). It is nice and strange at the same time. I am keeping very busy--still 4th VP for the Austin League of Women Voters, also program chairwoman for the PIA and participating in several committees whose main interests are aspects of the Austin school system. My frivolous activity for the year was taking a course in cake decorating--horrible for the diet, but lots of fun.

Mel continues to enjoy his work at UT, teaching, working with graduate students, doing some research and working on some committees. He just returned from a week long conference in Atlanta (that was the week the mouse died in the attic and the children got the flu). He is keeping up his interest in woodworking--we built a whole wall of cabinets and shelves in Mardie's room (I'm the assistant). He is also teaching Sunday School at church.

We are both still jogging in the morning (6:45 AM) although it will soon be too dark and cold. It's crazy, but we both enjoy it.

We hope that this has been a good year for you. Although there seems to be less and less time for correspondence it doesn't mean that you aren't thought of often. A blessed holiday season and a peaceful and happy New Year!