

Running several weeks behind  
December, 1979!

Dear Family and Friends,

Some years ago it seemed a long time between Christmas letters, but now Christmases seem to come very close together. We've all had a busy and productive year.

A real high point in 1979 was the Winter-Brown family reunion which was held in beautiful (centrally located!) Ely, Minn. We converged on the Lodge of the Whispering Pines from New York, Vermont, Rhode Island, N. Carolina, Texas, Massachusetts, California, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The whole week was a real happening--the number of us fluctuated between 32 and 38 people, about half of them children. There are 15 cousins in my generation and 11 of us were there. It was a busy wonderful time full of fishing (delicious!), hiking, visiting, cooking, and doing dishes. One day brother Bob was 15 minutes late for lunch and it was all gone! The only bad thing about the reunions is that after such a long time planning and anticipating, they are over so fast. We really enjoyed our drive through the heartland of America to northern Minnesota, despite having to search for gas several times.

Our children continue to grow at a rapid rate. Beth is 12, an honors student in the seventh grade. Her life is filled with music right now as she is continuing with both the piano and the viola. She is involved with the UT String Project in the intermediate orchestra. We heard them play last week and it was just wonderful!

Sarah is a busy ten year old. She's in the fifth grade, plays the piano and enjoys Girl Scouts a great deal. She went on a 3 day, two night campout this fall, came home with a terrible cold, but loved every minute of it. She was the narrator for the school choir's Christmas program this past week and did such a good job.

Mardie is seven, almost 8, and is thriving in the second grade. She has started piano lessons this year and is happy as a lark being a Bluebird. She has just gotten over a bout with the flu. The eternal optimist that she is, she found something good in that. She determined that since she hadn't eaten anything in two days she didn't need to brush her teeth!

We've all gotten involved with bikes this year. Mel and I bought ourselves new bikes and Mel has rebuilt several with the help of the girls. My bike was purchased in commemoration of my 20th year out of high school. We've only had time for one longish (10 miles) trip, but we are planning some over the holidays if the weather is OK.

Mel and I had a wonderful 10 day trip to Boston in November. Mel's annual professional meeting was there, so we combined business with pleasure. I made up my mind a year ago that I'd save my money from the weekly newspaper column (neighborhood news) that I do, so that I could go along, too. We spent a weekend in Newport with Aunt Florence and Uncle Nick and cousins, plus my folks who came up from New York. We toured several of the glorious "cottages" there. I visited relatives during the week while Mel was at his meeting. We spent the next weekend on the town in Boston and with my cousin Lois and her family. Boston is a terrific place!

Mel is still working hard at UT, helping with homework here at home, enjoying woodworking and is rapidly improving his tennis. I ran in the Capitol 10,000 meters (6.2 miles) race in March and finished in 1 hour, 3 minutes and 55 seconds--under an hour is my resolution for this next year. I finished up a two year League of Women Voters study on federal funds and programs in our school district. I'm PTA president of our elementary school this year, a particularly difficult task since our district is involved in the end of a 9 year old court ordered school desegregation case. A real challenge this fall came when I sat in on a marvelous history of science course taught by John Wheeler, a physicist and teacher par excellence.

As we start a new decade, we wish you all of joys of the season. We hope that you are surrounded by family and friends in this very special time of love and anticipation. We think of you all so often and enjoy hearing from you!

Mardie

Beth

Sarah

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Pat & Mel

