

December, 1980

Dear Friends,

The Christmas season is going to be a very special one for us this year. Pat's parents will be here in Austin from early December to mid-January. Her father retired this summer after 40 years with Pan Am. They moved from New York to Hendersonville, N. C. this summer and will be traveling in their RV until late February. Also visiting will be Pat's brother Bob in early January and her mother's sister and her husband over Christmas. After years and years with no relatives at holiday time, this is pretty special.

Our girls are growing so fast. They are at three different schools this year which makes life interesting: Mardie is a third grader, a Blue Bird and is learning to play the piano. She has finally discovered that reading is a joy. We are always finding her curled up in a corner with her favorite book of the moment.

Sarah is having a wonderful year in the sixth grade. She gets on a bus very early (7 a.m.) and rides across town, but it is all working out very well. She is learning to play the cello and is continuing with her piano lessons. Her Girl Scout troop has been ushering at UT games which she enjoys, although she is really an ardent Pittsburg Pirates baseball fan.

Beth is in the 8th grade, an honors student, and busy with homework all the time. She made the regional orchestra and really enjoys her viola. She began babysitting this fall and has found that fun and profitable.

In June we did an absolutely spur-of-the-moment thing. We went to California for 16 gorgeous days. We stayed with Pat's brother Bob in his apartment in Santa Monica. Using his place as a base we did all the tourist things: Disneyland, Universal Studios tour, San Diego's Sea World and the zoo, museums UCLA, Jet Propulsion Labs, etc. After 10 days in the L.A. area, we rented a car and drove to San Francisco, stopping at Hearst Castle in San Simeon on the way. We can certainly understand the appeal of California after our trip. While in San Francisco we visited a high school friend of Pat's, Beth Nuttig Rebman, and had a lovely stay with cousins Dave and Ida Meikle in Walnut Creek. We walked for miles in San Francisco, rode the cable cars and ate seafood and Chinese food until we were ready to burst! We left the chilly cold of San Francisco, flew over the snow-topped peaks in Yosemite and landed in the HEAT of Texas. It was certainly a memorable summer.

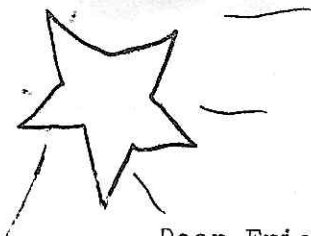
Pat made a quick trip north in February when her much-loved Grandmother Winter died. She stays busy with the kids, sewing, League of Women Voters, PTA, church and the weekly newspaper column. She ran in the Capitol 10,000 in March and finished in 57 minutes and 58 seconds. She is planning the winter family reunion for 1981 (the last part of June and early July) in the Smokies. Perhaps we will see some of you on that trip!!

Mel is definitely looking forward to seeing members of his family this summer. We haven't been home to Vicksburg since his father died almost three years ago. He has just returned from an APS meeting in San Diego. His greatest joy this year has been building a gorgeous solid rock maple work bench. He has decided to become a tennis pro in his next life. The UT physics department continues to thrive. Steven Weinberg, a Nobel prize winner, has joined the faculty this year.

Every year at this time we count our family's many blessings. The world seems to keep muddling through despite all the problems there are. It is a pleasure to reach out to you once again and wish you a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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