

Christmas, 1987

Dear Friends,

Christmas 1987 . . . It seems that just yesterday was Christmas 1986. (Both of us have had a very exciting, busy, yet hectic year.) Last year, we were in Aurora, Ontario for a few days including Christmas Eve when we attended a large and wonderful family party at the home of Gordon and Michelle McIntyre, Mary Beth's Cousins, in Bolton, Ontario. We left Aurora early Christmas morning to fly to Somers, New York, to spend the remainder of the week with Richard's family. Once again, Jay prepared a delightful Christmas dinner for all members of the immediate family on the 26th.

Mary Beth had a very lucrative Spring in real estate, while Richard became involved in a very large project for Voice of America. Our spare time in the Spring was spent designing the addition to our home—two bedrooms on the main floor and a second floor master suite.

We are very excited about this addition. Our present house is approximately 1550 square feet, with one bedroom and a den. The addition is roughly 1250 square feet. We are planning to furnish one of the bedrooms with Steelcase 9000 series office furniture and use it as an office. This furniture along with some bookcases will give us the desperately needed room to spread out and file all of our papers and other "junk". We will be glad to return the den to being a true den and guest room.

The second floor master suite will include the stairwell (the door is on the main floor), a skylight, a bathroom and a "dressing room". We intend the dressing room to be a nursery for any children that might come along (this is NOT an announcement), until they are old enough to be alone in the main floor bedrooms.

The VOA project has involved a lot of travel to Washington, and Mary Beth came on one trip in June and another at the end of September. (Mary Beth missed the 6.1 Earthquake, but returned for the 5.5 aftershock. Richard missed both.) We spent our spare time in the summer talking to contractors, and going through the City of Glendale plan check. Richard's former ABC colleague John Gable is now working for VOA in

Washington. Mary Beth and Peggy Gable have had a great time sightseeing.

In June we also spent some time in New York City and were fortunate to see Scottie, Jeff, Ian, and Adria Twine, Richard's relatives.

Margaret (Mary Beth's mother) visited for three weeks in July. Cathie, Theo, Laura, Stephen, and Patricia Joyce from Sarnia, Ontario (Mary Beth's cousins) visited for two weeks in August. Richard and Theo had fun "toy" shopping. Mary Beth showed them many of the local attractions, while Richard basically hibernated in his office.

Richard's VOA involvement has, at times, been all consuming. He worked about 350 hours in the month of August! We both decided to take ten days off and drive around California. We had a wonderful time! Our trip included:

Solvang, which is a Danish-style community with shopping and Smorgasbord.

Hearst Castle (San Simeon) occupied an entire day for us. We took three of the four available tours. It is a marvel, and well worth the trip up the coast.

We drove up the coast past Big Sur. We had lunch at Ventana, a very inviting resort we would like to return to. We stopped at Point Lobos State Park to see Sea Lions and Otters.

Following this, we toured two Wineries in the Sonoma Valley, and drove through the Napa Valley.

After spending a night under the shadow of Mount Shasta, we drove dirt back roads to Lava Beds Park. On the way we passed an obsidian mountain. The dusty soil got into everything!

Lassen Volcanic Park is fascinating, scars of the eruptions at the beginning of this century are still visible.

We drove south on California Route 49 through the Gold Rush Country. We avoided most of the museums and towns, as our trip was primarily to view natural wonders. We visited the old Wells Fargo Office at French Corral and the nearby covered bridge (longest in the US), both near Grass Valley.

Yosemite Valley is truly a gem. We had too little time there, and we certainly want to go back. The road over Tioga Pass is beautiful. Unfortunately, sunset occurred prior to our descent into Lee Vining, while Richard's white knuckles brought the Jeep down safely.

Bodie is perhaps one of the best preserved Ghost Towns in the Sierra Nevada. It is held in a state of "arrested decay" by the State. It is tucked in an out-of-the-way place, at the end of three miles of dirt road, but well worth the visit.

The Tufa towers surrounding Mono Lake present a surreal landscape. These beautiful mineral formations only grow under water, and our now visible since the level of the lake is dropping significantly.

Finally, we drove into Death Valley, spent another night at Furnace Creek, and visited Scotty's Castle, which Mary Beth liked more than the Hearst Castle. It certainly is more "homey"!

We selected our contractor and pulled our building permit for the addition on October 27th. Construction officially began on November 2nd. This time, our contractor is doing everything except the electrical wiring. Richard is too busy for and Mary Beth is not interested in extensive do-it-yourself. Willowdean was enough do-it-yourself for a lifetime!

On October 8th, Mary Beth had a three hour operation on her left foot to correct some congenital structural defects. She has been recovering slowly, and spent almost six weeks on crutches.

We are planning to have Margaret and John (Mary Beth's brother) here for Christmas. I hope that they are prepared for the construction zone. We do not know quite what condition things will be in during their visit, but they were warned well in advance.

We hope that this Christmas season finds all of you well, and we wish you all of the best in 1988.

Warmest regards,
Richard and Mary Beth