

Greetings from
The Reed's Nest 111
Christmas, 1984

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We had gotten too involved, you see, in Mt. Rainier. Tom was over his head in PTA work. Together with a few hundred souls he had just gotten a municipal newspaper recycling program off the ground. We were part of a great baby-sitting co-op.... So, when "the call" came to accept a one-year teaching position in western Illinois, we took a deep breath, rented our beloved house in Mt. Rainier, and "went west." Tom is now Visiting Associate Professor of Classics at Mormon College, a very small (c.640 students) liberal arts college with Presbyterian roots (but few leaves). He has taken a leave of absence from Howard and is hoping that Mormouth will offer him a permanent position and an endowed chair in March.

The move to Mormouth was sudden and hard on all of us. Julia still gets tears in her eyes whenever we mention Mt. Rainier, which we all miss very much because of the friends we left behind. And we never realized before how far away 900 miles could be from family and from the life we knew in the East. Sometimes we feel as if we are living in a foreign country rather than in Mormouth, Illinois, a town of 10,000 in the middle of corn fields and pig farms, about 20 miles from the Mississippi river.

Marie (age 7) seems to have adapted the best to the Midwest. She is learning how to ride a two-wheeler and is enjoying her new school, Garfield Elementary (named after the president, not the cat). Marie has made great progress on the piano in the last year, and her growing interest in music, combined with our long distance move, persuaded us to sell our faithful old upright and buy a 64-year old Baldwin baby grand. Three days a week Julia (age 4) attends an excellent, parent-directed pre-school called Mormouth Early Learning Center (MELC), where she has made several new friends. Richard (age 2) would also stay at MELC if they let him, but, instead, goes home with Anne, usually to nap, while Anne pursues her book work. Anne is still prodding along with her translation of a 17th-century pharmaceutical text, the end of which is finally in sight. She has also been reacquainting herself with her old friend Mme de Sevigne, about whom she has recently written a book review. Anne has also found the time to co-lead Marie's Brownie troop. Richard has shown us all what the "terrible two's" can really mean. He is literally into everything and his sisters have taken to calling him "Little Hands."

The watermen are fine. Anne's folks have acquired a new canine, a "used" male (for a change) Labrador (what else is there?) named Biscuit. Anne's father was particularly proud of his potatoe this year. Anne's mother had a spell of sickness earlier this year but is now feeling well enough to become one of the directors of the Waldboro Public Library. Carl is busy designing and building monster wood-chippers and buying up used tractors all over Lincoln Co. This fall Jack and Debbie took a trip west to Kansas City, with a mandatory inspection tour of Mormouth.

The biggest news in Tom's family is that his sister MaryBeth and her husband Billy have gone off to the deserts of western Australia for about two years. Billy, a new Ph.D., is working there for a mining company while M.B. gardens, sails and gives swimming lessons. Doris has given up travel agency work, but not traveling. In addition to a Thanksgiving visit to Mormouth with Aunt Frances, she traveled through the Orient this summer. She is teaching fifth grade in Hoboken this year and is planning to open a videotape store in Jersey City Heights in January. Tom and Steve are kept very busy with their two very active little girls, Chris (age 8) and Terry (age 1). Brother Eddie is making an annual tradition of changing his address in Atlantic City, where he is still dealing on the Boardwalk. Tom's Dad and Josephine enjoyed a trip to California this summer to visit his sister Rose. Now he is threatening to retire to sunny California, but we are confident and glad that Josephine will have the last word on that subject.

The worst part about western Illinois is that it is teeming with Republicans. We are glad, at least, that we won't be in D.C. for the coronation in January. All the best in 1985!

Richard
Oscar
Tom
Anne
Marie
Terry
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