

Greetings from  
The Bird's Nest Vest  
Christmas, 1987

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The year marking the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution did not begin well for us. Tom's Dad barely had time to sell his house in January before he was in M.Y.U. Hospital with an inoperable brain tumor. He braved six weeks of chemotherapy before he died on March 3rd, three days after his 62nd birthday (when he had planned to retire). Phooey on Social Security! The Sienkewicz family slugs along without him. Doris, still a teacher at Hoboken High and a partner in a video store, plans to spend the Christmas holidays in Rio. M.B. and Billy bought a house in Clifton and are expecting their second child in a few months. Tracy, now 1 1/2, is a cute little bug who has her parents wrapped tightly around her little finger. Toni continues to work part-time as a medical technologist, but has gone back to school to get a teaching certificate. Her daughters, Chris (6) and Theresa (4) now make quite an impressive pair of sisters. Meanwhile Eddie bides his time in the casino while waiting for his big break in N.J. real estate.

In Monmouth Marie (10) is now in 5th grade and has started playing her father's old trombone in addition to the piano. She has become a guinea pig aficionado. Her first cavy, Silky, died on Mother's Day, but was swiftly replaced by Butterscotch, who shows all signs of thriving. Julia (7) is in second grade and is determined to follow her sister in everything, especially the piano. Richard (5), much to our surprise, is in kindergarten. We had planned another year of nursery school for him, but circumstances and his eagerness have landed him in a full-day program of reading and math readiness. He is an Asterix fanatic and will listen for hours to the books read either in English or French. He even was a credible Gaul for Halloween, complete with moustache, winged hat, and a bottle of magic potion!

Richard's entry into kindergarten was precipitated by Anne's invitation to teach French full-time at Augustana College in Rock Island from September through Thanksgiving. For ten weeks she taught two sections of Elementary French and one of Composition and Conversation. Despite the long commute, 60 miles one way three times a week, her eyes still glowed with pleasure when she came home at night.

Tom has spent a busy year. In early summer he ran a one-week institute for high school teachers "On Teaching Roman Civilization in High School." The rest of his summer was devoted to work on a West African oral epic called Sunlata. With the assistance of a federal grant, Tom even spent three weeks of August in Mali, where he traveled to the edge of the Sahara but never got as far as the proverbial Timbuctu. While Tom was in Africa, Anne and the kids stayed in Maine where waterfowl were particularly visible this year, including a family of loons, a bittern and lots of ducklings.

Anne's family welcomed a new member in April: Timothy, son of Jack and Debbie. Having persuaded two physicians to share a shingle and weekend calls, Jack now looks forward to family sailing expeditions along the coast in his boat to "Reuben Brown". Carl, who finally earned a B.S. this spring from the University of Maine, still divides his time between the fire dept., machine tooling, and the town planning board. Anne's parents are now relishing their roles as grandparents in residence rather than by correspondence and continue to enjoy their retirement.

At Thanksgiving Tom began a sabbatical from Monmouth College and has received a grant to work on his African epic at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor through May. After our invasion of "Aunt Arbor", as the kids like to call it, we plan to spend a few weeks in Britain and points East before returning to Monmouth in late August. Our address in Ann Arbor (1/1788-5/30/88) will be: 1609 MacIntyre, Ann Arbor MI48105. These moves are the only way we can escape the hype from the Iowa presidential caucus and the culminating chaos in Atlanta. Now if we could only extend a news black-out past Nov. 1st! To paraphrase the motto of Michigan, "Si Quaeris Vitam Amoenam, Circumspecte."

Anne, Tom, Marie, Julia and Richard  
Sienkewicz

Marie  
Tom  
Anne  
Julia

Richard