

BUON NATALE, 1992
dalla famiglia SIENKEWICZ

Il Nido dell'ucello Italiano
Via Palestro, 11
Firenze 50123
Italia

Saluti da Firenze! While the Italian Columbus sailed for the New World in 1492, five hundred years later we have reversed his voyage. Having welcomed 1992 in Monmouth with the knowledge that we would sing this year's Auld Lang Syne from Italy, we spent many winter evenings studying Italian together. In March Tom led a Monmouth student group to Italy and managed to find us satisfactory lodging in Florence, a three bedroom apartment in a palazzo between the river Arno and the train station. It has certainly taken us some adjusting to the smaller space and especially to the limited kitchen facilities, but Anne and Tom just think back to their minuscule pied à terre in Paris in 1973-74 and quietly breathe a sigh of relief. Fortunately our apartment is on the fourth floor, since Florence experienced a very wet fall and several times the Arno reached dangerously higher levels than any year since the disastrous flood of 1966!

Our spring in Monmouth was not without its memorable moments. Widely erratic swings of temperature limited the blossoming of daffodils and tulips, not to mention flowering fruit trees. As the year progressed we noted with concern the physical decline of Chatouille, our 16-year-old beagle who was deaf, mostly blind and increasingly incontinent. We were saddened when she had a fatal stroke in early April, but also relieved that she would not have to suffer from our departure for Italy. The spring also brought a special visit from Tom's sister Toni, who came to Monmouth as Julia's sponsor for confirmation. Meanwhile Anne found herself teaching full-time temporarily at Monmouth College and had no time to organize for the family exodus, but, somehow, we managed to get all our things packed and the rest of our pets to good foster homes before we left Monmouth in mid-June. Our journey east included a harried, tornado-haunted visit with friends in Ann Arbor as well as stops in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore and Washington. We spent about a month visiting our families in Maine and in New Jersey before leaving Kennedy airport on July 17th, overladen with thirteen pieces of luggage, including an electronic keyboard, a trombone, a French horn and a trumpet.

On our way to Italy we lingered in Britain for two weeks with our friends Viv Edwards and Chris Morriss and their children, who live in Reading, near London. On this visit to England we saw Stratford for the first time and also revisited Stonehenge. Tom and Anne also saw an unforgettable production of Miss Saigon at Covent Garden.