

We finally arrived in a very sultry Florence on August 3rd and suffered from heat and culture shock for several weeks. During the fall most of our family energy was spent settling the children in Italian schools. All three have adjusted better than any of us hoped. Richard (10) is enrolled in fifth grade at a scuola elementare just around the corner, takes piano and trombone lessons from his sister Marie, and watches a lot of Italian (and French) television in his spare time. He has also been reading voraciously, especially Brian Jacques' Redwall series and anything by Gerald Durrell. Julia (12) is in a scuola media, also around the corner, where she is taking a variety of subjects, including Italian language and literature, ancient history, and mechanical drawing, and is making lots of friends. We had hoped to enroll Marie (15) in the musical conservatory in Florence, but this was not to be. Instead Marie attends a liceo scientifico on the other side of Florence and has probably had to work the hardest of the three to convince her teachers that she could understand enough Italian to take school seriously. Somehow she still found time to finish reading War and Peace last month. Both girls are also taking piano lessons from a pleasant woman who lives within walking distance.

During the past six months we have seen a lot of Florence and of Italy. Highlights include a visit to Tom's cousins in the south, a performance of Puccini's Tosca at the composer's beloved Torre del Lago, and field trips with Tom's students to Pisa, Padua, Venice, Rome and Pompeii. Life in Italy is a continual adventure which defies advance planning. One never knows what will be open and who will be on strike from one day to the next, but that is part of the fun.

Both our families are thriving. Tom's Aunt Frances is visiting us for Christmas and in the spring we hope to see his sisters Doris and Toni, as well as Toni's two daughters Chris (11) and Theresa (9), here in Florence too.

Tracking the American Presidential campaign via the Italian press was an experience not-to-be-forgotten. The astute Italians had written off Mr. Bush by mid-September and are looking forward to the changes in Washington, as we are. While 1993 will not bring Europe either its predicted open borders or the opening of the Channel between France and Britain, we hope the new year brings you joy and prosperity. BUON ANNO E BUONE FESTE!

*Anne Tom Marie Julia Richard*

Anne, Tom, Marie, Julia and Richard  
SIENKOWICZ