

CHRISTMAS, 1996

We spent much of the first half of this year helping Anne's brothers prepare a surprise 50th wedding anniversary party for their parents. They were actually married in January, 1947, but we decided that July was a better time of year to celebrate and to surprise them. Marie "stole" her grandmother's address book for a few weeks and Anne sent announcements to old friends and relatives, many of whom sent memory letters even if they could not attend. We were pleased that Anne's aunt Bernie Worthy and her husband George were able to travel all the way from California for the occasion. The honored guests were so surprised that they almost didn't make it to their own party because they were enjoying their visit with Bernie and George so well.

In June we spent about ten days camping in Colorado with our friends the Tylers. We stayed mostly around Colorado Springs and Rocky Mountain National Park. The highlight of the trip was not the tram ride up Pike's Peak, which was too short, but a eight-mile hike almost up to the continental divide at Rocky Mountain. Tom and Ron started out with five kids in tow, but the youngest gave out and Ron took her back to camp. This left Tom and the others to trudge, often over four-foot snow banks, up past the timberline and onto some spectacular tundra. Poor weather forced them to turn around before they reached the top, but they were surprised they got as far as they did.

At the end of June we headed East. We went directly to Maine so Anne could be with her mother as she recuperated from her first major surgery of the year. (She has also had a knee replacement this fall and is mending well.) Anne stayed in Maine with Marie while Tom took Julia and Richard south, first to New Jersey, and then to Washington, D.C., where he attended a classics convention while the kids devoured the museums. They did manage to visit the zoo together one afternoon and were impressed with the new orangutan brachiating towers.

Eventually everyone was reunited in Maine where we spent several pleasant weeks on Lake Damariscotta. We were pleased to have a visit from Tom's sister MaryBeth and her family--her first since our wedding in 1972! MaryBeth's husband Billy gave the kids kayak lessons. We also rendezvoused with them for a pleasant day at Acadia National Park. We had lots of loon sightings this year, including a congregation of nine, a record number. Tom and the kids also had their first sighting of wild moose in Maine, right on Route 1 in Waldoboro. A good year for wildlife.

On our way back to the Midwest we stopped in Ithaca to help our friends Joel and Sally celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary. Tom had been best man at their wedding and it was good to see them again after several years. The parties for Anne's parents and Joel and Sally have fixed us in our determination to avoid a similar extravaganza for our 25th anniversary next June. But we may go to Worcester to participate in Tom's 25th college reunion. Tempus fugit.

Marie is a sophomore at Bowdoin College where she is taking a heavy load of Physics, Calculus, and Intermediate Greek. She still wants to be a vet but has decided to be a Classics major in college. Guess where that came from? She takes piano lessons at Bowdoin and sings in the college choir. She works in the stacks at the library and is a grader for the math department. Last summer she worked in her Uncle Jack's medical office. She has not been back to Monmouth since last March, but we expect her home for Christmas. Marie's guinea pig Nod, the offspring of her beloved Marguerite, died this fall. We brought Nod to Maine this year so Marie had several good weeks with him during the summer. Her cat Micia amuses her on her frequent weekend visits to her grandparents in Waldoboro.

Julia is now a senior at Monmouth High, where she is editor of the school newspaper and president of the National Honor Society. She is taking Calculus, Latin IV, Art, Civics, Physics, and an independent world literature course. She is also taking Greek for credit with her father at the college. She now has her driver's license and still enjoys piano, plays french horn in the school band and municipal orchestra, and sings in the Junior Ecumenical Choir. She is still undecided about college. At this point she plans to apply to Knox in Galesburg, Lawrence and Beloit in Wisconsin, Sarah Lawrence in New York, and Mt Holyoke in Massachusetts. Julia's triumph of the year was successfully breeding her parakeets. Would you believe that we took the entire brood of four adults and four babies with us to Maine? We will pass over in silence the trauma of temporarily losing one of the nestlings behind a heating unit in a hotel in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Richard entered high school this fall and is taking Latin, Geometry, World History, Earth Science, Honors English, and band. He has switched to french horn for band, but still plays trombone in the municipal orchestra. He spends every spare moment (and some not so spare ones) in front of a computer screen. He is now as tall as his father (and still growing). His voice is changing into a deep bass and he has started singing in the Junior Ecumenical Choir with his sister.

We still have quite a menagerie. In addition to Julia's parakeets, Richard kept one of the babies (the one which had the crisis in Pennsylvania) and still has a guinea pig. There are also two cats and a cage of zebra finches, as well as our poodle Allegra and the miniature dachshund Sydney, who was on loan last year but who had become a permanent member of the family and the source of great amusement.

Anne has lost her part time job at the college and is now looking for a new career, no easy task in this part of the country. She has started writing and has resuscitated several manuscripts which had been in mothballs for years. Meanwhile she goes to interviews for clerical jobs and ponders life.

Meanwhile, Tom putters along at Monmouth College, where he had his best freshman seminar class ever and is pleased to be teaching elementary Greek for the first time in several years. Last spring his annotated bibliography *World Mythology* was published by Salem Press, and a sequel *Theories of Myth* is scheduled for next year. He has also finished editing a Festschrift in honor of Charles Speel, a retired MC professor of religion. Charles and his wife Emma Janis have been good friends for many years and often spend Christmas Eve with us.

We were all very happy with the results of the Presidential election. Marie attended a Clinton rally in Portland and got within a few feet of the president. When one of her Bowdoin buddies asked him if he was going to send Chelsea to Bowdoin, he gave a stereotypical politician's reply: "Well, I hear it is a very good school."

As 1996 draws to a close, we can look back over the many activities of the year, some happy things, like successful classes taught, time with friends and family, the overwhelming beauty of the spring flower garden, some disappointments and worries, and see that we are truly blessed. Tom has already started searching for the right table cloth and runner for Julia's graduation party. Anne is hoping to find a new job, and, if she's really lucky, to finish Marie's high school graduation sweater before she graduates from Bowdoin. Richard gets to register for Driver's Ed as he goes into his Sophomore year next Fall. We hope that 1997 is joyous for you and that it brings time for us to get together with YOU.