

## Christmas, 2001

### The Sienkewicz Family

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The Sienkewicz family began the year with Richard in the middle of his freshman year at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, Julia finishing her senior year at Mt. Holyoke College, and Marie finishing her Master of Library Science at the University of Illinois in Urbana. Anne was settled in her new job at the Western Illinois Chapter of the American Red Cross in Galesburg, and Tom was starting a semester-long sabbatical at Monmouth. The first months of 2001 were hectic as Marie dealt with the new, "stream-lined", and nation-wide electronic application process for veterinary schools while Julia applied to graduate school programs. Tom was busy on several sabbatical projects, including an *Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*, which he was editing for Salem Press. His guidebook to mythological sculpture in Florence, a project started there in 1992-1993, provided him with an excuse to spend some of his sabbatical revisiting the city of flowers and bringing his work up to date. Meanwhile, Richard decided that he really wanted to study Japanese, which Lawrence didn't offer, so he was searching out summer school possibilities. Tom helped him pursue an opportunity to study in Japan as a Monmouth College student in the fall. Our Parisian "maman", Mme Fouché visited us in late March and enjoyed adding "le profond Illinois" to her list of places, along with China and Africa. By April all our lives seemed to be settling down. Richard would be going to Japan in August, Marie had been accepted into the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois, and Julia had also been offered an attractive scholarship for the doctoral program in Art History at the same university. The girls had decided to live together and had found a nice little house to buy in Champaign (307 South New St., 61820—in case you want to write them).

Our whole little world was turned upside-down on April 26<sup>th</sup> when Anne was struck by an automobile while crossing the street (with the light and in the crosswalk) in downtown Galesburg. The culprit was a seventeen-year-old high school drop out in a hurry to go nowhere. She certainly changed Anne's life in a hurry, gave our families a big scare, made Tom an expert on patient advocacy, and brought his sabbatical to a screeching halt. Anne was thrown up against the

windshield and blissfully knocked unconscious by the impact. Fortunately, her only significant injuries were in the bones of her lower left leg (tibia and fibula), which were shattered. She was brought by ambulance to the St. Francis Hospital in Peoria and was operated on 24 hours after the accident. A permanent titanium rod was installed in her leg by a very skilled orthopedic surgeon, who is now quite proud of "his leg." She left the hospital four days later to begin months of slow recovery and therapy, while being utterly spoiled by friends and family. Anne felt like a Blue Plate Special laid out in a hospital bed under the dining room chandelier and our house was filled for weeks with a wheel chair, walker, bone-growth stimulator, aides and therapists. Due to the accident Anne was unable to attend either Marie's or Julia's graduation ceremonies in May. Instead, Julia brought her college chums Jhenya (from Russia) and Raluca and her mother (from Romania) to visit us in Monmouth.

In June, Julia flew off to visit Jhenya in Moscow. When she returned she took up a summer job at the Pine Cone Restaurant in Waldoboro. Anne was well enough in late July for Tom to drive her to Maine to spend three weeks visiting her folks and swimming daily in the lake (great therapy). During that time we had a happy visit from Nicole Bérubé, Viv Edwards and Chris Morris. Anne, Nicole and Viv had met at Laval in 1971, so this visit celebrated thirty years of friendship. Marie also came to toss sticks into the lake for Allegra the poodle mix. It was Sydney the dachshund's first visit to Maine, and he had a ball. Richard never made it East. He spent the summer at Beloit College where he earned straight A's in first-year Japanese. By mid-September Anne was back to work half-time, by late October, full-time. She still uses a cane occasionally, but is mostly back to normal. The only family member who misses the hospital bed is Sydney who thought it was bliss to have Anne laid up and serving as a permanent dachshund pillow.

As Christmas approaches we are now expecting Richard back from Japan, where he has had a wonderful experience. Marie is surviving veterinary school and Julia is having a ball in graduate school. They have adopted a ten year-old blood donor dog named Ellie Mae. Allegra also visits often with the girls in Champaign. Tom is back in the teaching saddle at Monmouth, planning a quick student trip to Rome in January, and yearning for a replacement sabbatical. We will all be glad to say good-bye soon to 2001 and to ring in a new, and hopefully calmer, year.