

Christmas, 1988

Dear Friends,

Greetings from California!

This year has been very hectic and very rewarding. We have been married five years, and it seems like only a minute. We are extremely happy to report that our 1200 square foot addition to our home is now complete.

Our contractor departed in mid-July, leaving us to finish a few minor details. By the end of September we had finished moving in and landscaping. The only thing still remaining is to straighten out a few details on some window coverings.

We were confined to the den, kitchen and bathroom for about six months, as the living and dining rooms were stacked with our possessions. We even had a clothes rod hanging in the dining room!

We love our new space. On the main floor we added two reasonably large bedrooms. The smaller of the two we use as an office. We bought some Steelcase office furniture and finally have a really comfortable place to work.

The second floor of the addition is a master suite. We pampered ourselves and now have a very comfortable retreat, complete with picture window and skylight. We have even included a small "dressing room" which should be perfect for a nursery if that ever happens (see below).

The existing master bedroom shrunk in size as we had to put a corridor through the space. The old dressing room became a laundry. We now have our laundry right next to the main floor bathroom.

For those of you who know Richard well, you will be surprised to learn that we did have a general contractor (who was excellent), and we only did a limited amount of work ourselves. We wired the addition for power, audio, video and alarm. We upgraded the alarm, audio, and video systems throughout the entire house. All of our windows now have alarm screens. Richard spent too many weekends in our crawl space replacing the existing plumbing, while Mary Beth ran to the store to get a few more of this or that. We now have all new copper piping installed with lead-free solder.

Since home prices are continuing to escalate, we feel very fortunate in having accomplished what we did. We basically turned a 1565 square foot, one bedroom,

one bathroom home into a 2828 square foot, four bedroom, two bathroom home. It includes a den and eat-in kitchen.

We are planning to do something with the old laundry room. We think that we might turn it into a half bathroom and a walk-in pantry. It is off the kitchen.

Despite the encroachment of civilization, wildlife continues to thrive right in our own back yard. Once the Verdugo Hills begin to dry out in early summer, deer then begin to frequent the neighborhood. They are so good at shredding our new landscaping (especially geraniums), that Richard has named one of the younger ones Fawn Hall!

In June, we found a dead tarantula on our back patio. While Margaret (Mary Beth's Mother) was visiting in July, a Western Diamondback Rattle Snake decided to visit our patio. As you may know, the back of our house abuts wild lands. If you travel north-westerly from our house you would go about eight miles before seeing any signs of civilization.

We enjoy some of the wildlife, and Richard has started photographing some of them. He just got a new 500mm mirror lens. We both are becoming more interested in nature and the environment. We applaud the fact that Glendale has just started a city-wide recycling program for all glass and cans.

We continue to be happy in California. It would be nice, though, if we could be closer to our friends and relatives back East. Richard is doing extremely well in his job. His business travels have taken him to New York, Washington, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Seattle, and Auckland (unfortunately only one day was free for sightseeing).

Mary Beth keeps dabbling in Real Estate, although our major goal is to start a family. Unfortunately, we are discovering some road blocks. We are currently trying to understand the problems, and are seeing one of the foremost experts in this field. He has even written a medical text book on human reproduction.

Church activities came to pretty much of a standstill during our construction period since we wanted to concentrate on getting the house finished and getting on with the rest of our lives.

By the time September rolled around, we dove back into the swing of things once more. Mary Beth (and Richard whenever he can) went back to singing in the Choir. We have recently become deeply involved with trying to get a young couples/singles group off the ground. This group is for the 25—45 (or so) age group. On November 12 we hosted a pot-luck supper at our house for approximately twenty-five people. We plan to meet on a monthly basis.

St. Monica's Guild keeps Mary Beth busy with bake sales, a November Bazaar Luncheon, and rummage sales. The proceeds from all of these activities go to help St. Jude's Ranch for abused or abandoned children.

For our Fifth Anniversary in September, we spent a leisurely two weeks touring California. We drove up the coast to Ventana Inn in Big Sur. This is a wonderful place which caters to people who want to really relax. The food is excellent and the setting, a thousand feet above the ocean, is wonderful. Ventana is Spanish for Window, and it certainly is a beautiful window on the Pacific coast. On our way to Ventana we stopped on Moonstone Beach Drive in Cambria, where our room overlooked a seal rookery. We have fallen in love with Cambria, and are planning two nights there over Christmas with Mary Beth's Mother, Margaret, and Mary Beth's Brother, John. We have tickets for two Hearst Castle tours.

After Ventana we hiked in Pinnacles, and toured Monterey, where there is a new and fascinating aquarium.

The second highpoint of our trip was two nights at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite Park. Yosemite is definitely one of the wonders of the world. The Ahwahnee is a wonderful old hotel. Jackets and ties were even required for dinner.

Next year Richard gets three weeks of vacation and that offers some very interesting travel options.

We hope that this letter finds you happy and healthy. We send our warmest greeting for a Happy Christmas and a Wonderful 1989!

Love,

Mary Beth and Richard