



Greetings for the second time in 1999! We are both very proud of our two children—as most parents are. Robert (6) started Kindergarten in September at Verdugo Woodlands Elementary School, our local Glendale Public School. In his first month there, he was chosen as Student of the Month, demonstrating the theme of responsibility. Robert's basic skills are blossoming well and rapidly (reading, writing, coloring, and drawing), and he is the tallest in his class despite his food allergies. Michael (5) is in his last year of pre-school. His abilities are also beginning to kick in, and we are beginning to notice his rapid progression also. This spring, Michael started to wear glasses. Both boys continue to enjoy their music classes as well.

Mary Beth had foot surgery at the end of January to repair a hammertoe on her left foot. To give her a chance to recuperate, we found someone to come to our home four afternoons a week from 3 to 6 p.m. for eight weeks.

Richard's career at National TeleConsultants continues to go well. He has now worked there 16 years. In April, he was co-chair of a seminar at the National Association of Broadcasters Convention in Las Vegas.

Richard and Mary Beth have managed to attend several concerts again this year, including The Austin Lounge Lizards, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen, Marie-Lynn Hammond, Hart Rouge, Anne Hills, and Christine Lavin. Our very reliable babysitter, JoAnne, has helped out on most occasions.

As Margaret, Mary Beth's mother, does not like to travel much now, Mary Beth, Robert, and Michael spent three weeks in Aurora during the early part of the summer. She enjoyed seeing some old friends and having time away from the usual home routine.

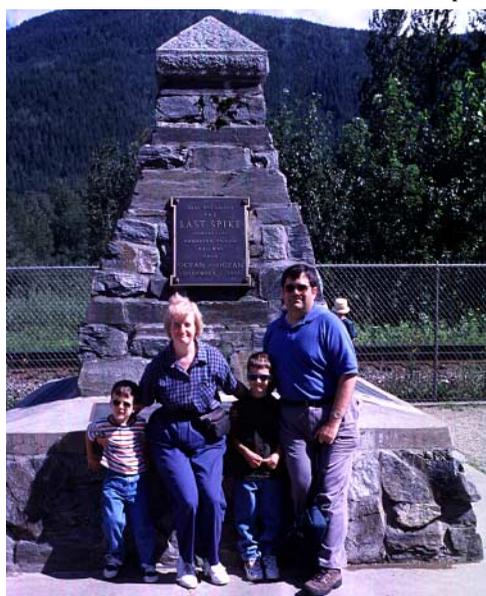
Richard has traveled on business a little this year, but certainly not as much as other years. In early June, Richard was able to attend his 30th high school reunion at the Kew-Forest School in Forest Hills, New York. He was also able to visit his Dad twice while on business (once in March and once in June). Tied in with these trips, he managed to meet Marie-Lynn Hammond, Priscilla Herdman, and Nancy White, three of the singer-songwriters he features on his Web pages.

The July 4th weekend was spent in Cambria, our only weekend there this year. Later in July, John (Mary Beth's brother) visited us for two weeks, traveling via Amtrak.

August was a wonderful family vacation time together. On August 11, we left Glendale for what became an 8200-mile driving trip. Our trip began by driving up the West Coast to begin our ferry rides in British Columbia. On the way, in Toledo, Oregon, we attended a concert by Anne Hills. In Puyallup, Washington, we saw a long-time friend from St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Penny Hix.

Our first of four ferry rides was a magical sunset sailing from Tsawwassen to Nanaimo (both in British Columbia). After a very brief night in a luxurious hotel in Nanaimo, we set out on the short ferry ride to Gabriola Island to return the Stringband master tapes to Bob Bossin (see below in music). Gabriola is a wonderful artists' colony with some beautiful, if understated scenery. All the people we met were very warm and friendly, and we stayed in a great Bed and Breakfast. The next day saw us back through Nanaimo and on our fourth ferry back to Vancouver where we had a great visit with Mary Beth's cousins, Julie and Bruce Hamilton, and their new baby, Holly Michelle.

The drive through the Canadian Rockies included gorgeous scenery as well as several rainbows. We passed the point at Craigellachie where the Canadian National Railroad's last spike



was driven, and stayed in beautiful Lake Louise that night. Our next stop of interest was the Royal Tyrrell Dinosaur Museum near Drumheller, Alberta. It is very well done and highly recommended. The boys were totally enthralled by the dinosaurs.

Next, we rushed across the prairies and stopped in Rolla, Jamestown, and LaMoure, North Dakota. Mary Beth's grandfather, Dugald McIntyre, was a Presbyterian minister in these towns. It was great to see some family history.



While we found the day touring North Dakota tiring, and the bugs hitting the windshield made driving intense, we didn't allow any time to rest and moved on to Lancaster, Pennsylvania to spend an entire day with Richard's parents, Jay and Dick Hess. We also saw Chris and Don Hess, Richard's aunt and uncle.

The next day saw us driving to Aurora to visit with Mary Beth's Mom and brother for almost a week. While in Aurora, we saw several friends, and the whole family attended the Eaglewood Folk Festival in Pefferlaw to hear Marie-Lynn Hammond perform.

After the festival, on August 30, we drove to Sarnia to see Mary Beth's cousins Cathie and Theo Joyce, their children and grandchildren. After leaving Sarnia, we drove through Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska and on into Colorado. We started a glorious day of sightseeing in Colorado by driving from Idaho Springs to Central City on the "Oh My God Road." We continued the drive through Rocky Mountain National Park and celebrated the end of our fantastic trip with a formal dinner in the historic Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs. We awoke early the next morning, chased trains through the Colorado River Valley and drove 875 miles home that day.

Richard has had a very full year of music projects. Our really big music news is a new CD on our own label! Mary Beth and Richard had met last Christmas with Marie-Lynn Hammond and were

loaned the masters of her first two solo albums, produced in 1978 and 1983. When Richard started



sharing the music with his friends and colleagues, they weren't listening to his restoration work, but rather kept commenting on the quality of the music. Well, one thing led to another, and Vignettes Media was formed by Richard to release Marie-Lynn's (and possibly others') music on CD—we'll even have this in Amazon.com! Marie-Lynn was cofounder (along with Bob Bossin) of the seminal Canadian folk group, Stringband. This legendary band was active in Toronto, across Canada, and around the world from 1971 through 1986, releasing six albums. Marie-Lynn had two national CBC radio shows and has released five solo albums. None of this fine material was in print on CD.

Using our home computer, Richard digitally re-mastered the two albums and made the master CD for replication. A new 20-page CD insert was also created which includes eight original pen and ink drawings by Marie-Lynn.

Richard attended the CD release concert on November 21 in Toronto. The audiences there and at Eaglewood were very welcoming to Richard and appreciative of the work he is doing restoring and archiving Canadian folk music ("Where are the National Archives when you really need 'em, eh?"). We've already received many favorable comments about the CD, and sales are going well.

In reflection, this has been an exciting journey that started four years ago when John (Mary Beth's brother) gave us a copy of Nancy White's essential CD for new parents, *Momnipotent...Songs for Weary Parents*. An unbelievable amount of chance and Internet-based serendipity has led from one CD to our new record label. A more detailed version of this story is in the press release on the Web site at www.marielynnhammond.com that also contains more information on the CD and Marie-Lynn's work in general.

In the beginning of the year, before the CD project crystallized as such, Richard had been working on a variety of other music projects. We have decided to minimize these other projects and concentrate on promoting and supporting Marie-Lynn. Richard is focussing on honing his expertise in analog tape and vinyl restoration and has completed about two dozen projects this year, including all of Marie-Lynn's, all of Stringband's and some of Nancy White's albums. He also restored and mastered Kristin Lems's latest CD release. Richard believes he's doing his share of what needs to be done to preserve a portion of North America's cultural heritage.

We are leaving to go to Aurora again on December 18th and plan on returning on January 1, 2000. We're not worried about Y2K—we're flying on that day! We wish you all a very happy holiday season in whatever way you celebrate it, and hope that 2000 is a happy year for each and every one of you.

All our love,
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and Michael Hess**
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