

CHRISTMAS
1985

Dear Family and Friends:

This has been an unusual year for us, one of constant change. There are so many of you whom we rarely contact but whom we rarely forget. We thought this would be the most expedient way of reaching as many of you as possible.

Tims's work at Bechtel suddenly picked up this year which led him to some unexpected places. As a result he spent February-May in Cairo, Egypt. It is an exciting city and his three month stay enabled him to work through the culture-shock stage and get to know the people, customs and some Arabic. The biggest test was learning to drive a car in Cairo and surviving!

Sharon somehow managed through the winter and spring with the usual amounts of flu, colds and pneumonia, meetings weekly allergy shots, and homework projects all with a very active toddler helping out. Fortunately it was a mild winter with no blizzards or hard freezes and we only locked ourselves out of the house once while Daddy was gone!

Early summer was a game of catch-up but we also had some welcome visitors: Tim's sister Kim whom we took strawberry picking, to the National Zoo, Wild World (a water oriented amusement park) and Baltimore's Inner Harbor where we had a fantastic Greek dinner (thank you Kim). We also had a visit from our friends Pat & Tony and Terry's friend Andy.

The highlight of Terry and Jocelyn's year was a solo flight (without Mom or Dad) to California for a month long stay with their grandparents. We are still hearing stories about that visit and know that the memories of that trip will be with them always. Amanda by this point was dazed by everyone coming and going and was very happy to see her brother and sister again. Our primary local activity during the hot season was going to the pool. Terry, Jocelyn, and Amanda are all swimming like fish.

Tim made several business trips to California this summer and fall. We managed in between travels to squeeze in one quickie sixteen-hour camping trip in mid-September, the night before Tim left for another five week trip to Cairo. Amanda, our little adventure, quickly discovered she liked camping and still asks, "Can't we go camping, pretty p'ease, Mommy?"

Terry and Jocelyn started third and first grades at our newly-built Lake Seneca Elementary School about 3/4 mile from our house. The school is solar heated and seems to have a good staff, although because of typical shortsightedness by county officials, the school was 40% over capacity before the doors opened.

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Sharon worked this summer and fall on a citizens committee to obtain busses for the kids in our neighborhood as they had to walk through a hazardous construction area on the way to school. The county finally consented to bus the kids.

Terry is doing well in school and has studied some exciting units so far this year. He has joined Cub Scouts and has a lot of fun at his den meetings. For his birthday in September, we took him and some friends to Great Skate, a local roller skating rink. After a morning of skating, the party returned home and continued for a total of eight hours. Terry has discovered bike riding and zooms all around the neighborhood now.

Jocelyn is a big first grader this year. She is reading well and doing well in math, sciences, and music. She is taking a dance class again and was in her first show of the season a few nights ago. For her birthday, the party was celebrated at a local gymnastic academy. The kids had a great afternoon and used a lot of energy. Jocelyn is learning to ride her bike, jump rope, and mostly likes to play with her friends in the neighborhood. She enjoys her role as big sister to Amanda and the two of them have their own special games and language.

Over Thanksgiving Jocelyn's pet guinea pig Squeaky, developed pneumonia and six days later died. Everybody liked Squeaky, but Jocelyn and Amanda especially considered Squeaky theirs. It was a sad time. We still have two hermit crabs, Spot and Pinchy, however.

Amanda, just two in November, is an amazing little person. She has always thought she was at least age four or six...after all, everyone else is. She looks forward to people coming home, Daddy from trips, Terry and Jocelyn from school, and Sharon from endless shopping. She has been speaking in mostly complete sentences for a few months now. When Squeaky died she said, "Mom let me tell you somet'ing. Squeaky was old. (she was barely a year) We'll get a new gimme pig." She likes to play with her friends, look at books, and gives lots of hugs. Although behaving typically two-ish these days, she actually has calmed down from a few months ago. She knows how to say, "Terry, stop talking!!!" "You're driving me nuts!" She often asks to visit her "grammas" even though she dosen't quite understand who they are!

We don't have any immediate plans to travel to California either for a visit or permanently but we're working on it. Were hoping in the coming years to see more of the greater Washington area and the East Coast.

We wish all of you a Merry Christmas, and a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

Tim, Sharon, Terry, Jocelyn, and Amanda Morgan