



Dear Friends and Family,
Seasons Greetings!

We've finally had some dustings of snow and some COLD weather (9 F. one night) so now it seems like Christmas.

Since we didn't send any cards last year some of you don't know that we spent some time out of the country.

Tim left for Florianopolis, Brazil in November, 1986, returned home for Christmas and stayed for a few weeks before returning to his Brazilian job site. Sharon, Terry, Jocelyn and Amanda waited the rest of the winter to hear some kind of OK to start packing while busily maintaining their schedule in school, Scouting and planning for a possible departure. Finally, in mid-March Bechtel generously (?) gave us two weeks to get passports, visas, immunizations and make arrangements for the house, car, finances, clothing, the children's schooling, etc, etc.

Since this was during Carnival in Brazil Tim--besides getting an apartment, keeping up with his work, negotiating between the U.S. and Rio Bechtel offices--was having a rough time getting a suntan and "sambando" (dancing) in the streets of Floripa (Florianopolis.)

After a 24 hour flight and a warm, thorough welcome to us and our 11 bags by the customs agents, we arrived on the beautiful island of Sta. Catarina. Floripa sits on the bay side and stretches across to the mainland, but the rest of the island is mostly rural or wilderness and draws many "surfistas" because of its beaches. We spent as much time as possible at the beaches, but since we were there during the fall and winter, which is about the same as San Francisco, it was a little cold for suntan weather. Not bad, but when it hovers around 60 F. inside (no heat) and it rains for a week straight (no clothes dryer) daily life has its challenges. We're glad we packed some of our Maryland winter clothing.

Terry and Jocelyn picked up Portuguese words everyday playing with the other kids in the apartment building and were also studying their regular lessons daily at home. But much to their great dismay, in mid May they started going to school with their new Brazilian friends. After a few rough weeks, they were doing most of their assignments themselves all in Portuguese. It was more difficult for Amanda to grasp the language in large groups so she was home everyday and played with one or two friends in the apartment building. Pretty soon they had their own language: Port-English.

Because Tim had already been in Brazil for 6 months he also spoke Port-English and his Portuguese continues to improve. Sharon, having a background in Spanish, was able to carry on a conversation in Portuguese after a few weeks, although she was teased unmercifully about her accent and asked by taxi drivers if she was Argentine. (Floripa is a big vacation spot for Argentines.)

So without a summer or summer vacation the three kids had a whole different education. Terry was active in Boy Scouts and learned to play soccer, Jocelyn was in a dance class and a fabric painting class.

Seeing migrating penguins and so many other exotic plants and animals, Terry's class field trip to a coffee factory, days spent at a friend's farm where there were fresh tangerines, papaya, bananas and sugar cane; the music, people, food and the beaches--there were so many experiences that we will always remember. It was difficult when we--minus Tim--had to return to the States in September not knowing if we would ever see our Brazilian friends again and not seeing Tim for another 3 months.



Tim has been home for a year now. It's a record! He's keeping busy with several major jobs at Bechtel, working sometimes 40 hours of overtime a week. He's also an assistant Boy Scout leader, is a Navy Lieutenant once a month and tries to spend time with his fan club (Terry, Jocelyn, and Amanda) in his spare time.

Sharon has been spending many hours a week this fall at yet another new elementary school in Germantown, Waters Landing, where Amanda is in kindergarten and Jocelyn is in fourth grade. Terry is still at Lake Seneca to finish there in sixth grade. Their mom has also been writing a weekly column covering Waters Landing activities for the local paper and recently started writing for Lake Seneca also. She is also teaching two classes a week for an after school science enrichment program and is helping with Amanda's Girl Scout troop this year. And finally, after many months of reading, writing and research, Sharon has been awarded leadership in La Leche League and will soon be busy with phone counseling and helping to lead the local group meetings.

Our 9-year-old Jocelyn is having a great year in school and is going all out with her activities. Even she admits it is sometimes too much. She swims once a week, is in a Spanish class, Girl Scouts and is studying both violin and piano. So far she's still finding time to play, sleep and do her homework.

Terry is having a pretty good time in sixth grade, too. He is also active in Boy Scouts, and may be nominated to the Order of the Arrow, a lifelong society. His two other main activities are reading and using the computer, both of which he will do for hours at a time if not stopped. He is in a science class which meets on Saturday mornings and oh, yes, "Tech" Morgan has a new pet, a hamster named Microchip.

Both Terry and Jocelyn were on swim team last summer and spent some time at Scout camp.

Amanda is enjoying her first year of school and making new friends in kindergarten. She's learning to read some words and loves art and music. She's also in Scouts--Daisies--and attends her favorite class of the week--gymnastics. The love of her life right now is our time-share cat, Violet, a little black stray who tried to adopt us a few months back but whom we couldn't keep full time because of allergy problems. So our neighbors are her official owners but she spends her days with us.

Even though Amanda's having fun as a 5-year-old, we've decided her main goal in life is to be a teenager. Whenever life is too much for her, her solution starts out with "When I'm a teenager..." And she already loves clothes and rock music!

We had some visitors earlier this year. In May, Sharon's parents, Don and Marion Joslin of California, saw Germantown for the first time and quite a bit of Washington, D.C., too! While here they made a side trip to N.Y. state to visit a cousin and see Niagara Falls. Not long after their return to California they left for a trip to Alaska.

Some other friends stopped by, even a friend from Brazil, here on business.

We all hope that all of you enjoy this holiday season and that 1989 is a good one. We're certainly thankful for the many friends we have in several states and even in other countries. We don't write to all of you as often we'd like, but you're never far from our thoughts.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

*Tim, Sharon, Terry, Jocelyn
and Amanda*

