

CHRISTMAS 2000

Dear Family and Friends,

Last year at this time, we were at home again, adjusting to life-after-a-bypass-operation, with all its attendant discomforts, but also enjoying lots of attention and visits from friends and the children, as well as a rare at-home over the christmas period complete with a dreadfully sheddy tree and the typical riches in atmosphere and good music that go with the season.

Getting away from the bleak and cold and snowy misery was high on the list of topics in our daily conversations and a powerful incentive to "do-as-the-doctor-says". Under Linda's very close supervision and loving care for the patient and his many and varied needs, we managed to get into a position of safe and doctor-permitted long-distance travel by the end of January and, with surprisingly good weather conditions around our part of the world, we were on our way to the sunny and warm South!

Florida proved to be of great benefit to the recovery process, as it had an unusually dry and warm winter, permitting daily prescribed walks in warm and sylvan settings, with lots of pretty fauna and flora to make these efforts, all of which at variance with the patient's basic inclinations, sufficiently attractive to "stay with the program"! By the end of March, it became possible to indulge in some of the tamer parts of the golf game and a month later the full game.

After a blissful three months of Florida, we had less than two months in Toronto to catch up with the kids, friends and doctors, get the garden, but mostly the deck, organized for summer pleasures, and make all the preparations for our much longed-for automobile trip across the Continent.

We had a most successful and rewarding trip across the United States to San Francisco. It proved wise to have planned on numerous occasions for 2-3 day stays to take stock, rest up and sightsee, including stops with Linda's family, Salt Lake City, Lake Tahoe (July 4 weekend !), Mendocino and Bend, Oregon as typical highlights of great interludes for golf and relaxation. In San Francisco, we enjoyed a whole week in a grand condominium hotel(the Club Donatello) downtown, from where we made the most wonderful excursions into the town, a source for Linda of many fond memories, having lived

there for a few years in the sixties. We also found the quaint town of Carmel very romantic and a delight to wander around in. Of course, we could not resist visiting the famous Pebble Beach golf course, so magnificently located along the Pacific Ocean and with such a grand history. One of our big and pleasant surprises was the discovery in a San Francisco gallery of a fabulous exhibition of the wide-ranging art of Anthony Quinn, something we had no previous inkling of, but, more importantly, something we found truly excellent in originality and quality. Very exciting and ,unfortunately, expensive enough to ward off impulsive purchases !

One of the highlights of our journey was the opportunity to meet Henk's brother Ab and his wife Will at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where we shared a suite for a couple of nights, permitting us to enjoy enough time and experiences together to give us a chance to get to know each other a little bit better, something that simply had never happened over the past 50 years !!

So. we returned safely to our Toronto home after our glamorous 5-week journey, in late August, for another hectic period of lots of fun social activities, golf outings, doctors' visits, and just lazing around.

Unlike many other grandparents, we do not see Matthew weekly, but rather more infrequently, so every time we do see him is like a very special treat and, at sufficient intervals especially being in Florida for half the year, that we cannot help but note the startlingly quick stages of development, probably more so than those who see him regularly. Chances are that, when we see him next, he will talk our heads off, fully expecting us dummies to understand everything he has to say. Is he in for some frustration ! Meeting up with him and the children ranks with the true highlights of our year and those occasions are a load of fun. We saw them all just before our departure for Florida, when we celebrated birthdays for Matthew, Lance and Haig, all more or less around that time.

We are now well entrenched in Florida "for the duration" and look forward to a healthful period of exercises, beach-and parkwalks, good golf and, hopefully, maintaining some measure of mobility for Henk, whose leg arteries have seen better days and keep him from walking as vigorously as he undoubtedly should. We are more than well stocked in good books, magazines and music , have joined a golf league with more chances at golf than either our bodies or our wallets can handle, and have planned some mini-vacations in other parts of Florida, one for our birthdays near Kissimmee with a number of fabulous golf courses attached to the resort, and another one for later this winter at a place yet to be determined.

We expect to see some family here over the holiday season and also early in the new year, as well as some friends coming down to stay in this part of Florida, permitting some fun get-togethers. As in several previous years, we'll be spending New Year's eve etc. with friends in Naples. So, as you can

tell, we have not yet reached that time of life where we spend the day sitting behind the lace curtains looking at the world going by !

If all goes "as planned", we should be spending at least four weeks in Europe next summer, with the only fixed dates of July 7-14 when we have reservations near Salzburg and hope to see quite a bit of that city and its music festivals. We also hope to visit with the Dutch family, of course, and with a bit of luck should be able to visit Vienna and/or Prague. A recent article we read will undoubtedly tempt us into visiting Leiden as well. So, it should be an exciting summer.

We wish all of you the best of health and happiness in the New Year !!