

CHRISTMAS 2004

Dear Family and Friends,

Where does the time go ? Here we are back in warm Florida, fully settled down and feeling like we never left. Yet, this was the year we decided that we should spend the whole summer at our Toronto home, in order to spend more time with the children, grandchildren and our friends, for all of whom we had so little time the year before.

It turned into a very busy summer, where we managed to mix numerous good times entertaining and being entertained with a time-consuming and hectic agenda of renovations and improvements to our home, which responded gratefully to these initiatives.

Having lost the benefit of an oversized beautiful maple tree to the zealous saws of our new neighbour, we also had no choice but to have a large awning installed, covering the width of our deck. At first upset with the loss of the tree, the end result was in fact quite pleasing, as the deck now is cosy and we are more aware of the delights our backyard has to offer in terms of fauna.

After a neat time seeing all the Kreugers, on our way North from Florida, our Grand Marquis got us stranded in Ohio, needing costly repairs to get us home, so we also ended up doing a lot of research towards a more reliable and suitable replacement car, and a car that promised to be quiet at highway speeds. So, by mid-summer we got ourselves new wheels in the form of a comfortable Lexus, which so far has kept its word.

As usual, we concentrated all our medical procedures into our Canadian period as well. By and large, we can claim to be in good health, though Linda had to endure a whole range of tests to find out what might be the cause of her as yet unresolved her stomach discomforts, but happily no serious problems surfaced.

We carry the most wonderful memories of the various opportunities to spend time with the children and grandchildren. We even combined a stay at the Almonte home of our friend Bryne with a visit with Albert and his wife

Anoush, who had just moved to Ottawa and who are getting close to making us grandparents again some time in January !

Lance has been rather busy with the extensive renovations he is undertaking in his newly acquired home. Knowing him, the result will be a reflection of the perfectionist he is and undoubtedly will give him much gratification.

We had some memorable times with Marina, Haig and their children, Matthew, now six, and Zoie, already over three. They certainly grow up fast and it's amazing to see the speed at which they soak up new knowledge and skills, and develop very definitive personalities.

Later this month, we look forward to having Linda's mother, Ruth, join us for her escape from the winter. We keep in daily contact and are delighted at how well she is doing and how active a life she still leads. At 92, she is an enviable inspiration to us. We'll have a bit of a time keeping up with her !

So far, we have had two Thanksgivings and are now moving into the hectic season of birthdays, anniversary, Christmas and New Year's. In fact, we will have two friends come down who also are Sagittarians, so there will be a lot of toasting !

If all goes well, there is a good chance we will be traveling to Holland next year to "live the Dutch life" and spend time with the Dutch family.

We sincerely hope this letter finds you in the best of health and wish you good times over the Festive Season. Health and Happiness for you and yours in the New Year.

Linda and Henk