



December 4, 1996

Dear Family and Friends,

I have never been a great fan of newsletters in place of Christmas cards, but I am beginning to understand why people like to do it this way. It seems as we get older and are involved both in more things and with more people, it becomes ever more difficult to keep up to date with everyone and this is a good way to do it. I never thought I would be writing a Christmas newsletter, but here it is:

This has been a busy year for us. We started off the year with a new job. Texas Tech University has "seen the light" and decided to keep me here. (Another thing that is uncomfortable to me is letters written in the third person, so I am writing in the first person.) The collections manager here quit in August 1995 and moved to Baylor University. I filled in until December when I have been hired as a full-time, permanent collections manager. I care for six collections: mammals, with almost 75,000 specimens; birds, with 4500 specimens; reptiles and amphibians, with over 11,000 specimens; fish, with about 10,000 specimens; insects, with 250,000 specimens; and frozen tissues, with about 50,000 samples. Currently, we have a staff of 12 persons, plus 6 curators. We also deal with about 6 volunteers. Needless to say, this keeps me pretty busy, but I do enjoy the work.



This summer, I interviewed for a position (Curator of Collections) at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. I didn't get the job, but Texas Tech made a counter-offer anyway. I am being promoted to

Curator of Collections here. They have also promised to give me a teaching position as soon as I finish my dissertation (which will be in May, 1997).

Ann is still working at home designing and sewing southwestern-style shirts. She has been doing this for 4 years now. Actually, she works too hard. It's not like just being a mother isn't a full-time job by itself. Ann's parents have been here visiting since the middle of October. They



come so seldom, that they have to stay long enough to make it worth while. The kids are really enjoying them, and they are enjoying the kids. I'm sorry to say that the kids don't understand Korean, but they are learning pretty fast. Michelle, especially, is learning quickly.

Suzie is seven years old and is in second grade. She is doing very well in school and enjoys it– that's the important part. They had a reading contest at school this year and she won the prize for the second grade. She enjoys reading very much. (I guess she really does belong to us!) Suzie has been playing piano for three years now and is doing wonderfully. For a long time, we had trouble making her read music rather than play by ear, but she just changed to a new teacher who allows both. She is playing so well now that Ann and I have to practice her music first so we can show her how to do it. Pretty soon, she will be so far past us that we won't be able to help her– she'll be helping us.



Andy is in the first grade. He is six. We were very surprised this year when he showed us that he is a good student too. He has always liked building things with Legos and the like, but he never acted like he wanted anything to do with books. Well, we were wrong. He is doing just as well as Suzie. He has a different teacher than Suzie had, so different subjects are stressed, but he is "performing" just as well as her. Andy started playing the violin when he was five. He is learning the Suzuki method (which is just a fancy name for playing by ear, in my estimation). Apparently he has a talent for this because the other children who started when he did are now learning their 10th song. Andy is on number 18. Needless to say we're pretty proud of both of them.

You may be interested in knowing that Suzie and Andy are attending the same school that Buddy Holly attended.

Ricky is four. We started him in preschool this year to help him with his speech, which is pretty much unintelligible. He is making excellent progress, and (surprise) he loves school, too. He was sick one day and had to stay home– he cried the whole day because we wouldn't let him go to school.



Michelle, who will be three on Sunday (Dec. 8), knows that she is the youngest child and has learned to use that to her advantage. She's a perfect doll as long as she gets her own way, but when she doesn't: look out! It's still too early to tell what she will be like as she gets older, but for now, it looks like she's going to be the "cute" child. She has already learned how to use her smile.

The big news for this year is that we have bought a new house. It is only eight blocks from our old house. The new house is 2800 square feet and has five bedrooms, two baths, and a two-car garage. There is also a rear apartment, but it needs major work. The extra space will certainly be nice as the kids get older. The girls will each have their own room, but the boys will share, since we are going to use the biggest bedroom as a family room.



We have spent the past month remodeling the house. It is a 58-year old home and was in good condition, but there were a lot of things that we decided to update before moving in rather than trying to do it while living there. If all goes as planned (knock on wood), the remodeling will be done the week before Christmas and we will be moving in at the end of the year. We are really looking forward to being done and moving in. Our new address is: **2911 20th Street, Lubbock, Texas, 79410**. The telephone number at the new house is **(806)799-0886**. As always, friends and family are welcome anytime. Actually, you're even more welcome now than ever before since we have more room.

All in all, I have to say that this has been a very good year for us. We hope that it has been a good year for you, too. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you whenever we have the chance. Merry Christmas!

Love, Richard, Ann, Suzie, Andy, Ricky, and Michelle.

P.S. I guess that wasn't so painful, after all.

P.S.S. At work, we are trying to do everything we can to improve our visibility and to increase the amount of use the collections receive. One of the ways we are doing this is through the World Wide Web. We have created a web site for the Natural Science Research Lab. The URL for this site is [<http://www.nsrll.ttu.edu>]. The site contains some information about what we do and why we do it. If you have Internet access, why don't you drop by for a visit?