

CHRISTMAS LETTER 1983

Dear Friends,

For years Pat and I have read the wide varieties of Christmas letters from friends and relatives. Year after year, they come bringing good tidings and all the good news from the previous year. They tell of Prosperity and good health. There is always a list of the many accomplishments of all the children and relatives. With all this in mind, it is obvious to us that everyone who takes the effort to write and send Christmas letters is always rewarded with another year of unlimited good luck. Now, we too will join this list of those who shape their own destiny by sending the Notorious Christmas Letter. You must keep in mind that this is our first year so you might say we are just priming the pump. Next year we can tell you about all the good things that have happened in 1984. This year we will just have to tell you the truth!

The year started off with Pat's being out of work and my business being next to non-existent. Fortunately, the winter was not too severe so it wasn't too bad without any heat. The Christmas candles we got for Christmas were a help, when they shut off the Power. The bean seeds that we had saved from the garden started to sprout in the basement; so we did have some green vegetables for a change. We let the dog out every morning to scrounge the neighborhood for his own food. By the time February came around, things started to get bad. The candles were gone, the bean sprouts were starting to mold and the neighbors started to lock their garbage can lids. It was right then we decided; NEXT YEAR WE SEND OUT A CHRISTMAS LETTER!!

Immediately things started to turn around. Just knowing that things would be better, seemed to help. My work began to pick up. Pat got a new Job with a local law firm as a legal secretary. For Fathers Day, Pat registered me for a drawing at a local Jeweler. To our surprise I won a \$200 Gift certificate. Krystal started back to school. Now she was in the first grade. At last she was going to school all day. This gave me more time to work and Pat didn't have to worry so much. Our bills were caught up and we were sitting on top of the world. Pat was on a roll; so she put our name in a drawing at a local department store and again we won first Prize. It was an all-expense Paid trip to Washington, D.C. Things were going so well that we decided to get a new truck for my business as we now felt we could afford the Payments. We took the trip to D.C. and enjoyed every minute of it. As the trip was for four People, we were able to take my Mom with us. When the time came to come home, we were simply overjoyed to think of how well everything was going. Things were so good, we didn't think we would need to send out a Christmas letter after all.

That was a mistake! Krystal's class at school was split up and she went into a new 1st-2nd grade split class. She had to leave most of her friends. She came down with a sore throat and since I was in the middle of a Job, Pat had to stay home with her! Pat's boss didn't like that, and she was laid off! PERMANENTLY!! I now we had a new truck and Payments, with one less Paycheck. Pat's Parents left for their trip around the world in 81 days so we lost that regular free meal. Then the teachers went on strike and the schools closed down. By the time Krystal was back in school, Pat was ready for the funny farm. You know how it is with forced vacations, when it is too cold to play outside - Disaster!!

It was obvious to us that it was the old Christmas Letter Syndrome. We had to make a firm commitment to send one out. So here it is.

Now, Pat has started back to work with the school district as a secretary. It doesn't pay as much as she is used to, but it is a doorway into the system. The work is enjoyable because she is working in the refugees Program and she can work with people. She needs to feel she is doing something for People, so this new Position looks to be very' rewarding in that respect. I had been keeping busy with my work until this month, which is always a slow time. It gives me a chance to work on my new computer and get my books in order for the start of a new year. It also gives me a chance to write this Christmas Letter. Krystal is back in school and she loves it. She has really taken to reading and is reading way above her grade level. Being a Poor reader in school myself, I really am glad to see her doing so well. It looks like we are settling back to normal. It is comforting to know; now that we have sent out our first Christmas letter, we will no longer have to worry about the future. Now we have our thoughts in order.

Next year we will be able to tell you all the good news this letter has precipitated. But for now, let us say,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

May the Glories of this Christmas Season fill you with love and Peace and may they stay with you throughout the coming New Year 1984.

**With love and Light,
I AM,
Dulany, Pat, Krystal
& Shep**