



Dec 19, 1991

Dear Friends,

It all happens so fast, it is difficult to keep track. This year Brian graduated High School and set off for college. The entire family participated in a number of exchanges with Russian friends from just across the Bering Straits, and have been personally wrapped up in the events in the Soviet Union (or, as Rich calls it, "Six Flags over Russia.")

Graduation: The biggest change in the family was Brian's graduation from High School in May. He graduated on the honor roll, and won a scholarship from "Natural Helpers," a peer counselling group, for his work with the organization. Brian's graduation helped boost the state's tourist economy as Suzi's dad, stepmother, and sister Nancy; Rich's mom and cousins Normae and Johnny, and a college friend all arrived to celebrate. After graduation, the Randalls set off on a cruise of Alaska and the M^cClear side, along with Dale Constantine, set off by state ferry for Skagway and Juneau.

Brian headed for St. Olaf College (Rich's old School) in August, and registered in the paracollege, where he can take non traditional classes, seminars and tutorials.

Russians: This was the 250th anniversary of the Bering-Cherikov voyages of exploration from Siberia to Alaska. 1990 ended with a trip by all four of us to Vladivostok in the Soviet Union. In April some of the people we stayed with joined us in Alaska. In July a squadron of 5 Russian sail boats made it to Sitka from Vladivostok, recreating the Cherikov voyage, and we were involved, as members of the welcoming committee, in laying a commemorative plaque. In August we all watched the coup in the Soviet Union. We were brought closer to events when Rich got two FAXes from a Russian friend who was with Yeltsin in the "White House" in Moscow. Part of the time we followed events with a the legislative correspondent from "Neveski Bremya" (or "Neva Times") of St. Petersburg, who was stranded in Sitka. In early October, a month and a half after the coup, Suzi, Kevin and Rich went back to Vladivostok; Suzi and Kevin as part of a delegation to lay a plaque there, Rich as a reporter. We stayed with Russian friends.

The changes in just ten months were amazing. You have all read about the food shortages and price hikes, but for us the most amazing things to watch were changes in education. Suzi and Rich sat in a literature class in a public school, and watched the instructor lead a class in bible study. We had dinner with six English teachers who were thrilled to be able to assign readings in American Literature of other than Hemingway and Jack London. So help me, one was assigning Harlequin romances to try to keep teenage girls interested in the language. A teacher we stayed with was very disoriented because she did not know what to teach anymore. Suzi, Rich and Kevin are now taking Russian at the University of Alaska in Sitka.

Work: The public radio station Rich manages was accused of being too "Green" because of its coverage of pollution issues, by some people at the local pulp mill. They circulated a petition to cut the station's funding. The controversy got coverage not only in the Sitka press, but the Anchorage papers and the "Greenpeace Magazine." As a result we had the most successful fundraising drive ever. Obviously much of the community did not buy the charges. That triumph was dampened by the fact that State public broadcasting funds were cut in Alaska, and Raven Radio had to lay off people and cut programming to keep afloat. It is still on the air, and has not cut its local news coverage.

Interests: Suzi continues to work in watercolors, and was part of a show in a local art gallery entitled "The Gang of Four." She sold some of her work this summer. Kevin is involved in "Natural Helpers" and has started High School, and Rich, uncharacteristically, has gone on a health and exercise kick. It must be all the rain.

It has been a year of change and growth. It has been a year of making new friends and a year to rely on old friends. We are blessed by the fact that we have a strong family and good friends. We leave you with this Quaker Christmas Blessing.

*When the song of the angel is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
and the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins.*

*To find the lost.
To heal the broken.
To feed the hungry.
To rebuild the nations.
To bring peace among brothers.
To make music in the heart.*

С РОЖДЕСТВОМ И НОВЫМ ГОДОМ or Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Rich, Suzi, Brian and Kevin M^cClear

Rich Suzi Brian Kevin
