

Christmas, 1983

Even though we are experiencing relatively mild 40-60° weather, Thanksgiving holidays and 3 blizzards out west tell me it is time to compose my yearly epistle.

This has been a relatively quiet, uneventful year with life loping along with gentle equanimity. The intense heavy work load of my new speech job and everything else before last Christmas caught up with me in January. A severe bout of flu kept me in bed a week - and "drug-out" for over 2 months. Then in June my doctor & I discovered several "colds" over the past year were really an intense allergy to smoke. It is almost at the "handicap" stage and has even changed by life style somewhat since summer. Other than that I am healthy and happy!

In theater I recreated my Mammy Yokum role in Lil Abner for a 15 min. scene at an anniversary review; and in June I did a 30 min. scene, again playing Aunt Trina in I Remember Mama for Community Theater contest. With my heavy fall speech contest and teaching load, I decided NOT to get involved in the fall TDW play, Morning's at Seven. Then 2½ weeks into production one of the lead women dropped out. Even though I did not go to tryouts, the director wined, dined and persuaded me into accepting the role of Arry. I learned over an hour's worth of lines in 4 weeks working only weekends (3), 2 other rehearsals a week and 4 days during the week before the opening. It was all made possible with a lot of help from many friends. One baby sat Brownie, 2 others helped me learn lines; Bill came in and cooked and washed a week's worth of dishes each weekend (called himself my "houseboy"), and 3 or 4 others helped at school and with a speech contest that conflicted with one of our performance dates. It was an exhilarating experience and the highlight of my year. My one regret was that I couldn't really enjoy working on this wonderful role because of the demands of school and the speech team.

My speech work is enjoyable, and easier since I've learned the system, but very time consuming - especially the contest coaching and judging. I am "breaking in" a new literature course and serving on the county curriculum & textbook adoption committee. The Univ. is also reviewing new texts this year. The best part of all these activities is the new and renewed professional contacts and friendships so long neglected when I was squelched and harassed by my supervisor (who happily is still on leave of absence.)

Most of the summer was spent sewing, thoroughly and methodically cleaning and working on my house (Yes! I burned the mortgage in July!) - and trying to survive the insufferable heat. Many nights I slept outside under the stars in a comfortable bed in the wide open hatchback of my car.

It's hard to believe Sue is already a junior at UC. Dad, now 92, has adjusted well to his partial sight loss and is as active as ever in Masonic work. He goes out 2 or 3 nights a week and almost every other Sat. I have a hard time catching him home to get in a visit! Brownie is healthy now and as dear as ever.