



December, 1983

Dear Friends:

A cross stitch sampler I have been working on for the past two years best describes our feelings:

Never a Christmas Morning
Never an Old Year Ends
But we remember fondly,
Old Days
Old Times
Old Friends.

We are thinking of you at this time, and hope this letter finds you well and happy.

Here is a sampler of what our family has been doing this past year or two.

John, our youngest at 3½ started pre-school this Fall. He's an active, well-coordinated youngster, who loves hiking and overnight camping trips with his Dad. He thinks he's quite an adventurer, but is terrified that a certain fat man dressed in red might visit our house this year.

Erin, six, started first grade with tears, but is now well involved in school and loving every part of it. She loves reading, ballet, is taking piano with her mother, and learned to ride a bicycle this year. She started community soccer this year, and stood out on the field crying the entire first quarter of play, but now loves the game and wants to play every year.

Emily just turned nine. She, too, plays soccer, and takes ballet, piano and violin. Emily was the star of the school holiday program (which had nothing to do with the fact that her mother was the director--HONEST!) She has a sweet singing voice and wonderful stage presence. She and Erin were pretending to be "Wonder Woman" in the picture here.

Greg, eleven, is our baseball card wheeler-dealer. He has binders stacked four feet deep, filled with thousands of cards. He was the Most Valuable Player on his Little League team this year (which had nothing to do with the fact that his dad was coach--HONEST!) He is involved in scouting, Jr. High Wrestling (he attends a "super six" class at the Jr. High) and takes piano from his mom. He participated this Spring in the community production of the musical "Hans Christian Andersen." He would probably tell you that the high point of his year was when he won Catfish Hunter's uniform, by guessing the correct score of the Oakland A's Oldtimers Game for a newspaper contest.

I keep busy with kids, music lessons, and as a parent volunteer at the elementary school, leading a 3rd-4th grade choir. I continue to take voice lessons and sang the contralto solo in a tri-stake production of the "Messiah." I am involved with music at Church and am the Homemaking Leader of our ward. Afternoons are spent (between music lessons) driving kids to and from soccer practices. Three kids in soccer translates into six practices and three games a week. I can hardly wait until John starts, also. I keep up with the kids by race walking four miles three times a week and aerobic dancing twice a week.

Marty was Little League Coach extraordinaire this year. He took a group of raw recruits and turned them into league champs in a little less than three months (he's dictating this to me.) The Tournament of Champions game was lost in a defensive battle, 27-25. He is our ward's most popular Elders Quorum President because of his policy of giving big cookies for 100% Home Teaching. He continues to play basketball but is sitting this season out because of injuries. He broke his wrist and three teeth playing, but says he won't let little injuries get him down and plans to play next year. Marty was recently named Marketing Manager of Hewlett-Packard's Santa Clara Division and says we can all start calling him John Martin.

May your life be filled with love and joy this coming year.

Love,

John & Marty Neil

