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Dear Family,

I started this letter on the 18th of February 1984 and having just found it will send it to you regardless of the lateness.

Well, day after tomorrow is President's Day. It so happens that it is also Mom's birthday! She often jokes that all important people are born in February. But it's no joke. At least in the case of George, Abe, Ida-Rose and David who are all very important to me. And let me tell you right now that I love them all. Let me hasten to add, however, that I love all the rest of you just as much even though you weren't born in February.

We're seeing a lot of the olympics on TV right now. I've been wondering if George still holds the record for the Potomac Coin Toss? I'll bet he does, and I'll also wager that Abe has not been surpassed in the Rail Split. I know for a fact that Ida-Rose still holds the record in the Child Call although, I must admit that Donna Hill is a very close second. The above well known medalist's achievements are merely a type and shadow of the true greatness in each. Take, for an example, that great Lady, Ida-Rose. She long ago won the gold in making a happy life for me. Just yesterday, I was thinking happy thoughts all day long as I kind of reminisced on our adventures together. We're grateful to you children for letting us "escape" once in a while to go on genealogy trips and to just be together alone on occasion. I remember such a trip while we lived in Schenectady. We left you with friends and went to Montreal. We, indeed, had many wonderful trips with the entire family that we fondly remember. But the children do grow up, marry, and have their own families. In the end, it's just man and wife together and we are fortunate to enjoy each others company. We have had so many interesting experiences together, especially as we have traveled. Let me tell you (from my diary) of a memorable experience in Japan. "We started up the trail from Hotel Fujiya to the Fuji View stand. It was about 8:00 o'clock in the morning, mostly cloudy, with occasional patch of blue sky. The clouds were moving more rapidly than I have ever seen clouds move. Yet on the ground, the breeze was only slight. At times, clouds at different levels in the sky would move in opposite directions and sometimes they would rapidly descend or rapidly rise. Meanwhile, the sun's rays would play on the luxurious mountains, the white hotels across the valley, the waterfalls and all else through the constantly changing pattern of holes in the overcast.

Combined with the wonderful fall colors of vivid red, deep cut maple leaves, some yellows, and the verdant greens of Japanese cedar (cryptomeria) and other abundant growing trees, vines, and bush, the scene was lovely. All was still wet from the rains of yesterday and last night and the air was very damp but as we worked our way upward along the trail that we alone possessed, we were not cold.

Fallen leaves fully blanketed the way, softening our step and making it slippery at times. Soaring effortlessly and seemingly uninfluenced by the high winds aloft were large Japanese birds. Along the trail were strewn black, moss covered volcanic rocks. The smaller flora contained a kind of large leafed holly and a smaller leafed variety with bright red berries. We went without raincoats and constantly wondered if we would be soaked by a sudden downpour. Occasionally, we wondered if we should turn back but something moved us onward. Suddenly the Fuji View Stand appeared and checking the time showed that we had reached our destination in 35 minutes. The marker at the bottom of the trail had indicated a hiking time of 40 minutes. At Fujiya, The altitude was 1300 feet above sea level. At the view stand it was 2000 feet. We could not see Mt. Fuji. It was hidden by the clouds.

Ida-Rose and I knelt in this idyllic setting and had our morning prayer.

With the shifting pattern of the fast moving clouds, we thought Fuji might come to view so we waited at this spot for thirty minutes. Fuji continued to be hidden. Now that we were not hiking, we began to chill so we tied a handkerchief around our heads and tightened up the clothing around our necks. At the end of our wait, we started down the mountain. About half way down, the mountain that was ours alone was no more for we met three young men coming up the trail.

Muscles not ordinarily used in everyday activities were required in our downward journey and they began to ache. The descent required the same time as the ascent-- 35 minutes.

As we crossed the electric railway tracks near the hotel and returned to "civilization", we realized that on this morning we had one of the most beautiful experiences of our lives.

Well, we've had many more beautiful times. Just simple things, but beautiful. Like the time that we first saw the incomparable blue, clean, beauty of the Indian Ocean and its miles of virgin white sand beaches at Port Elizabeth. We took off our shoes and stockings. I rolled up my pant legs and Ida-Rose hiked up her dress. And then we ran in the surf and splashed and played for an hour. God's earth is wonderful and we are certainly privileged to be here.

I could go on and on but must close now. **WE LOVE YOU !**

*Dad*

Feb 12, 1986

Dear Mom + Dad,

Byron is settling in at his job in San Diego. They have him working on a training program and he thinks he'll be there for 3-4 months. I'm going to try to sell this home so the kids + I can join him. We would rent a furnished apt. and put our things in storage.

Things are going quite well here. We're all ~~have~~ a viral infection that we can't seem to shake. The nights have been hard with the kids coughing so much they sometimes vomit - other times wet beds and so forth. I've missed having Byron here to help out but feel that the Lord has blessed me to be able to meet the needs of the children.

Sarah plays the part of a flower in the "Wizard of Oz" Missoula Children's Theatre production this Friday Saturday. This is sponsored by the Cultural Council. If you would like to come see it we'd love to have you. I understand you've had snow up there. Didn't hit us down here, fortunately. Hope all is well there! Love, Charlotte

P.S. Byron + I decided to buy 400 shares of Smith. We bought at 3 3/4.