

January 8,11,12, 1993.

Dear family,

We're into a new year already. May God grace us all with a happy and productive one spent in good health. I see by my notes that come April 24th, I will have been at the saga of my life a whole year. There seems to be a more to share. For sake of brevity (already too late for that!) perhaps I should make it a goal to be through by April of this year. My count takes me to 45 written pages. Of course I did tend to digress from time to time so not all is about my life. Anyway, I remember stating something to the effect that you "may be waiting with bated breath" for the next episode. You would be dead if that were true. Much has happened between letters and it is almost 2 weeks since I last wrote. For one thing, Mary Batcke Masters's husband died and was buried in St. Augustine, Fl. Es was gone for over a week during Xmas and after. What a tough time to die for the family. My brother Al died just before Xmas; I can identify with bad feelings for Xmas for a few years after. Time passes all too quickly. I can hardly believe so much time has elapsed between letters.

So----let's say goodbye to Scotia. When the final package was hoisted aboard the moving van, there was still a house to clean for the next owner. I tried to clean the upstairs as it was emptied. The basement stuff was last to go so it was the last cleaned. We believed you would be picked up at school around noon, but it was mid-afternoon before the car was packed for our overnight stay at the motel in Endicott. We gathered Mary and Teri from the Lominis and headed toward for St. Joseph's school. It was not too difficult saying goodbye to the house (I delighted in anticipation of a new house with 6 bedrooms etc.) but I knew I would miss the neighbors and friend we had made those 10 years in that area.

Maybe you remember this was another December move so that boots and winter gear had to be gathered from each classroom as you departed. I went from one classroom to the other. This meant 5 set of classroom goodbyes to friends and teachers. I remember Mrs. McCarthy saying to me, "Why is it the good students leave and the problem children stay for-ever?" I could have hugged her! One by one you assembled into the car. Dad was there with the 2 youngest and settling each of you entered. You may not remember but the Ford wagon had the back seats facing each other. This meant boots and gathered school stuff crowded together became hard to handle! Seems waiting at school, the anticipation of things to come, no after school snack, and heaps of other dissatisfactions among you made that drive to Endwell the longest drive I could remember---to that time, that is. We were to have others equally trying as the years went on. Mrs. McCarthy's remark about "good children" seemed foreign to me. Could be that I was tired too from a hectic day of packing and cleaning. Patience was in short supply.

Being winter the days were short. Dusk had already fallen when we got to Endwell. However late it was, you HAD to see the house before we went to the motel. The truck was due in early morning. I remember a bunch of squealing little kids going from room to room making claims of possession. Long before we left Scotia I had planned who would be where but that made no difference. It did delight my heart to watch your enthusiasm and excitement! I knew I would have my way about the house arrangements so I let you dream away. Getting you back into the car was a job. Only the promise of food put some order into our leaving the house. We had 2 motel rooms; one for each sex and a door between. We ate that night at the motel in a private dining room. Thank God! My normally good eaters in choosing their own menus made lots of mistakes and there was a lot of dissatisfaction among you. The chosen sphagetti was not like mine, the chicken was different (of course!), the meat tasted salty---what have you!!! Even Teri who was normally a very good baby and had baby food was out of sorts, tired and irritable. Everything that could go wrong did and life seemed anything but worth living. When even dessert was unsatisfactory, that was it!! Early bedtime was in order and not fought. Anticipation of a new home tomorrow was all the incentive needed to get to bed for early rising. Doubling up in beds was a new and not welcome experience but we did make it through the night.

Breakfast the next morning was better---and again in the private dining room. Management probably would have insisted anyway from the prior experience. Even in the private dining room last night's dinner was an embarrassment to your parents.

We had to be early at the house to open up for the movers. Again the flush of excitement was clearly in evidence. The wild enthusiasm for "helping" the movers was quickly squelched! New schools had to be assigned and entered. That took you out of the way. Mrs. Dean (then in the house the Stoklases later bought) came across the street and took Teri into her house for the day. What a wonderful thing for her to do. The crib was quickly found and moved there. Teri seemed quite content and had a good day. Mrs. Summers came over too and offered help. Mary made some trips with her father so I was left to do my thing with the movers.

No more bunk beds! It was a pleasure to have all the beds where I could get at them easily. No more banging my head changing sheets or kids falling from upper bunks. There was privacy. Your Dad especially had a thing about that. I had not known much in my life but he was brought up that way and wanted each of you to have a place of your own. He insisted upon a desk, bed, and private possessions that you did not have to share. 2 in some bedrooms gave a lot more privacy than 4 in one room. Lee Ann and Teri even had a room to themselves. Mark's room had a bed for Dzia-dzia when he was there.

Settling in was a busy time. Lee Ann had to go into Johnson City to school and had to take a city bus to get there. There was no room for her at Christ the King. That was quite brave of her and a lot of responsibility. It was probably a good half mile walk to the bus stop while the rest of you had to venture just up the street. She could have gone to Homer Brink but we wanted a Catholic education for all of you. We wanted to give you a solid understanding of your Faith that we lacked in our education. We were affirmed to any sacrifice to make that possible.

The furniture we owned was not quality stuff. A lot was mail order put together by your Dad. You will remember the sturdy boxes he made to house the blocks we amassed those years. I believe other things from that era of our lives are scattered among you. How dearly I coveted new furniture for our much newer house! It was a stretch in the budget just to get the house. I remember buying some cheap drapes from the Rogers (neighbors next to us) to fill the windows that would have otherwise gone without. They were a very poor fit and had to be pinned when closed to provide privacy at night. The living room was a sad sight! The one decent chair was a platform rocker that swiveled. You kids would use it as a merry-go-around. The replacement years later did not swivel! My Dad was sure you would kill yourselves on it. Sometimes it did tip over when the momentum was too much for it! Since we had no prior family room, we were short of furniture. The TV was located there. If memory serves me right, we got 3 molded plastic chairs and later a roll away bed. Dad's next raise got us drapes (that fit properly). A few years later we got new living room furniture and the old stuff went down stairs. When we started to replace, we bought quality and a lot is still with us today.

We had a very pretty view from our big living room window! You will recall we lived at the foot hills and could look across several miles up and unto the hills of Vestal. Fall and winter were especially pretty. This area was so beautiful! Driving those steep roads in the winter with snow falling was not a challenge I wanted but had to accept time after time. Our 100 by 150 foot corner lot meant we had a lot of snow to shovel. We had plenty of it those days; we all have memories of sore backs as we cleaned those walks. The two hills of our yard made grass cutting very difficult. We must have been there about 5 years before Mr. Stoklas gave us his old gasoline engine mower to make it easier on us. We all took turns at mowing, too.

Dad and I still marvel at how well you all adjusted to the new school and area. You made new friends rather quickly and seemed happy. Likely you still have a friend or two you hear from at Xmas. My guess would be that those 10 years in Endwell did a lot to form you into the people you are today and may even regard Endwell as "home". You surely did not look forward to leaving when we had to move to Florida.

There is still a lot to say about Endwell. It occurs to me that this is hardly my autobiography any more. It is more of a family history as I remember it. It may be interesting to compare what you believe to be true and what this parent understands. I find it very difficult to remember a lot of details. Right now it seems like I am painting a picture and I have the basic scenery all plotted out. Putting in the details to paint the essence is much more difficult. I want to be accurate but my memory fades and sometimes it is impossible to reconstruct. I guess I am not senile. In senility old memories seem to flood the mind and recent events are forgotten. Essentially you know all about me. Nothing hence forth is new material. I would like to share with you my feelings in the gradual emptying of the nest. Likely I'll be through before my self-imposed April deadline.

As always lots of love, Mom - *Hugs for everyone!*