



Christmas

Greeting from Hope Manor

Dear Family and Friends,

It is that time of year when we reflect on the events of the past year and remember old acquaintances with fond hearts.

This has been a very significant year in my life and I want to share it with all of you. As you recall from last year's letter, I met a special man from Canada, and over this past year, I have been to Canada three more times, during which, Larry and I have grown much more fond of each other. He is spending the Christmas holidays right here in Texas with my family, but more about that later.

Tammy got married again this year to Paul Eagleton, and she seems quite happy. She is a stay-at-home mommy now, and really enjoys her younger kids more than ever. Kevin is back in Grand Island, and I hear that he and his girlfriend, Megan, may be getting married soon. He has been working as a temp at Wal-Mart and hopes to make it a permanent position. He is hoping to get custody of Kai. Phillip will graduate this year. He works part time at a restaurant as a bus boy and has saved about \$2,000. Sure hope he considers going to college. Krystal will soon become that dreaded age, a teenage. It is so hard to believe that my little grands are about to be all grown up. Jonathon is still all boy, but Paul has been a definite good influence on him, and Jonathon seems to be responding favorably to a firm hand.

Tomaline is back driving for Celadon, her first love. At this moment, she is headed to Indianapolis. She just called in for a weather report. It is snowing all across the northern Midwest.

Jarrette is working at Plainview Healthcare Center as a Certified Nurses Aide. At their company Christmas party, she won a really nice stereo. She came home all excited, and now we hear the constant bump-bump of today's popular music throughout the house. She has a Mariah Carey Christmas CD that we all like, especially the version of "O, Holy Night."

Jarrette's husband, Thomas, is hoping to be promoted to assistant manager at the Kettle. He has been a cook there for quite some time.

And Emaryl, what can I say? She has completely stolen everyone's heart. She just turned the terrible twos and is quite the showstopper. When we go to Wal-Mart and someone starts to say how cute she is, she will chime in, "I cute. I cute." Larry taught Emi to say 'Hi, ya'll,' so here's a great big,



Hi, ya'll

Jarrette & Emi

Michael

Michael is really growing up. He is a junior in high school this year. He even has a girlfriend. But he still hasn't outgrown the video games. He can get a new game, and have played through it in about a week's time. In one class, he is able to work at Wal-Mart for a couple of hours. He really enjoys it and always wants to work in the pet section.



Rickey is still in Shreveport and continues as a civilian employ at Barksdale Air Force Base. He is still in the Air Force Reserve. He recently bought a house for himself and Shane. He and I are still partners in two properties in Bossier City. Rickey has made a good daddy and he and Shane always have a great time together.

I never imagined that I would be jetsetting, but I am becoming a seasoned international traveler. I have flown over Lake Ontario to land in Toronto, three times this year.

I never dreamed of going to MBL baseball, seeing the Toronto Blue Jays playing against the Boston Red Sox and the Oakland A's and my very first experience with lacrosse, the Toronto Rock against the Philadelphia Wings. I knew virtually nothing about lacrosse except it was a game played by the North American Indians. Since then, Larry makes sure I know the best players, past and present, like Gaylord Powless, who was an all-time great native lacrosse player to the rising star, 15-year-old, John Tavares, who will probably become well-known in hockey circles in the coming years. Lacrosse is a fast-paced game, with only two real rules, make a goal and knock the heck out of your opponent with the stick, called checking. NBC touted lacrosse as the fastest growing sport in North America. I attended two Brooklin Redman games (Larry's favorite team) when I was there last summer.



Twyla & Larry

Larry takes me to all the neat places and events that we can cram into my short vacations, like the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), a 5K walk along Oshawa Creek to Lake Ontario, sightseeing and shopping in Toronto (the New York of Canada).

We went to the Rainforest Café where Larry consumed an entire volcano dessert, three big scoops of ice cream, three huge brownies, dripping with chocolate and caramel sauce. It's served with a lighted sparkler on top. I don't know where he put it all. I checked out he shoes, but none of it was there.

We went to Peterborough with Larry's son Zak. It is a picturesque town along the Otonabee River which has locks that will take you from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean, lovely tree-lined parks, and the amenities of larger cities, a mass transit system, horse racing, stock car racing, zoo, hockey and of course, lacrosse. We looked at some houses and now Larry's son, Zak, wants to buy a home for Larry and I in Peterborough. Can't get any better than that.

We went on a very romantic dinner cruise on Lake Ontario, called the Symphony of Fire. Canada Day, July 1, is Canada's equivalent of our July 4. The food was sumptuous, served in courses. Topping off the evening was the fireworks display from Ontario Place.

We went to Medieval Times, where they serve a robust meal of roast beef, ribs, chicken, potatoes and bread, while the knights of medieval Spain, fought with clanging swords that sent sparks flying and the colorful jousts. Larry got right into the spirit of things cheering our black and white knight with shouts of, "Off with their heads." But, alas, our knight was killed.



Twyla & Larry

But, the highlight of this trip had to be Niagara Falls. From Skylon Tower, you could really get a sense of the awesomeness of the America Falls, the Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian border and the wide vistas of America and Lake Erie. We had lunch on the top floor of a nearby hotel, where we had a wonderful view of both falls, and even experienced a lake-effect thunderstorm where the sound of the thunder was drowned by the deafening roar of the falls as the water tumbled over the boulder-strewn precipice. AND we rode the Maid of the Mist that took us right next to the falls, but most impressive was when we were right in the curve of the huge Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side. The mist rose up, engulfing the little Maid in great swells of fog and there was no sound except for the tremendous crash of the water against the rocks.



Larry & Twyla



Horseshoe Falls



American Falls



Larry

Larry took me to the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame Induction dinner where I got to hobnob with all the wealthy supporters of lacrosse and some of the greatest names in lacrosse. I even talked Larry, who never dresses up, into wearing a sports jacket and slacks. He looked so nice.

Larry arrived via bus in Amarillo on December 4. I don't think he is too impressed with the flatness of Texas, and since I have to work while he is here, I haven't the time to take him sightseeing, but we went to Lubbock to Shogun Steakhouse where they cook the food in front of you. Larry is kinda finicky about food, so I ordered Calamari and didn't tell him that it was squid until he had already eaten it and said it was good. I figured anyone who can eat raw oysters can eat anything, and then he claimed didn't like it. Wait till I get him to a Rattlesnake Roundup and feed him snake.

Yesterday we went to Tulia and had supper with my friend, Sally and her husband, Jerry, at El Camino. Larry was in rare form, and entertained them with his stories. Even the waitress didn't want us to go because, "I like your stories," she said. Then we went to Kenneth Wyatt's studio which is right in his home, and really impressive. I took Larry to Christmas on Columbia, presented by the First Baptist Church, a drive-through play about the birth of Christ. Larry felt 'spiritual.' I had to showoff a bit and drive him through Westridge to see the Christmas lights.

Monday, Sally is taking us to Big Texan and Larry is going to take on the challenge of eating the 72 ounce steak. I just think he might be able to do it. Anyone who can eat a whole volcano ought to be able to handle a measly 5 pound steak.

Being the romantic that Larry is, he bought me a beautiful Comanche Indian War Bonnet for the Indian Room and to top it all off, he is getting me two vintage wooden lacrosse stick, "None of that Tupperware stuff for my baby," (That's slang for the newer plastic lacrosse sticks. "What's the good of a stick that doesn't break any bones," Larry says.)



I have not felt so Christmasy in many years. It makes a lot of difference having someone to share the holidays with. Larry certainly has made my life more complete. Wishing each and everyone the very best holiday season ever.

Love,