

#3

12. Meisner Drive.
Salem NH 03079.
Mon. Dec. 5th 1988.

Dear

Armed with egg-nog, liberally laced with brandy, I sit down to write to you all. Greetings from the land of "Donkin Donuts" and George Bush lovers. (Sigh!) At least the election is over, though - 2 years is a long time to listen to the drivel that constitutes election coverage over here. And another 4 years of glorious Republican government to anticipate. I'd come back, but you have your own version over there, in Mrs. Thatcher, it seems.

Enough! Is this any way to start a jolly Christmas letter? And I've not got very long before at least one of these children disturbs me, so I'd better press on. What news do I have from this time last year, which is when I last wrote to most of you? We're back in the throes of the New England winter again, but only had our first snowfall last night (Dec. 4th), which is very late. It caused tremendous excitement in this house, of course. Andrew just had to try out all his new snow-gear, and rushed out after breakfast to try & make a snowman with 1" of snow. And Ellie followed suit, but only after fighting with her mum over wearing/not wearing a dress to do it in. Stephen sat by the front door, watching them in the driveway: he tried it later, and was very unimpressed with how cold snow is. At 18 months, it's hard to appreciate the finer points of playing in the stuff - you just fall over and end up with a freezing face. Mick tried hard to pretend that the place wasn't in total chaos, and rushed off to work for a rest - the

weekends at home, en famille, really take their toll. And Mum sat and fed the baby - something I spend a lot of time doing just now. Yes, the final (honestly!) addition to the Brown family has arrived. Gregory David Brown (we chose a name that had the ring of a president of a company to it - it just sounds a little odd, for now, on an infant.) Born November 7th, 18 days late and induced, weighing in at 9lb 7½oz. Trough to convince me to have no more, if I hadn't already thought about it. He looks like a line-backer, and feeds like one, too, and is making his presence felt amongst us all, beautifully. Looks just like the other 3 did at his age - no mistaking Mick Brown offspring - and the rest of the children seem very pleased with him, even Stephen.

So, now we are 6 (good heavens!). It's hard, right now, to imagine how life will really be with 4 children: what with night feedings, an 18-month old nooble-maker, winter and the approach of Christmas, I'm subject to the odd fit of panic!! So is Mick, I suspect. But then, I remember feeling this way after Ellie was born, and we recovered in the end. (This does not mean, however, that I'm having 6!) Once the baby sleeps through, I'm on my way back to sanity and a permanent sylph-like figure.

If this letter sounds a little disjointed, you can blame Ellie & Stephen, who have been bickering off and on, in the background. The baby is now winding himself up for a good yell, too, and Andrew's due home from school any minute. (Conjures up a cosy picture, doesn't it?) So, I'll fly through any other news we have.

3. We were back in England last spring, but stayed almost all the time with family. I'm very sorry I didn't call any of you up, but I was there on my own mostly, with the 3 kids, and pregnant, and really hadn't the energy to get myself round the country (excuses, excuses). In retrospect, I'm annoyed with myself for not just ringing up for a chat. Mom was saying to me, the other week, how disappointed they used to be, when they found out that old friends of theirs, that had emigrated to Canada, had been back in England & had never even got in touch. It was a silly thing to do, I apologise, and it won't happen again - promise. Mick's had a few business trips out there, actually, on his own, as the firm now have a U.K. division, so you may get an unexpected phone call from him one day. He's still with Octacore - it's been over 3 years now - hard to believe how fast the years out here have gone: we'll have lived here 8 years in summer!

Andrew and Ellie are much easier, now that they are 5½ & 4. They go to the same Montessori pre-school, as well, which makes my life much easier. I'm even in a car-pool - very suburban. Andrew starts 1st grade in September. I still have big doubts about the American school system, though I'm sure I shall have a better perspective once we are involved. Mind, from what my old teaching friends tell me, the English system seems to be suffering, as well.

Anyway, there's not a lot else to tell you. We're still here and still have plenty of bed-space to offer, in spite of all these extra

4. children, so the annual offer of "please come and see us" still stands - thought someone might have taken advantage of the £199 return flights on British Airways this fall. Pretty good deal, that. And it just remains to say hope you have an excellent Christmas and New Year - and I look forward to hearing from you in 1989. Take care.

All our love,

Chris, Nick,

Andrew, Ellie, Stephen & Gregory.

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