

December 17, 1963

Dear Friends,

This year the Kokernots are later than ever! The excuse this time is that in trying to buck the materialistic trend in America which inaugurates the Christmas season two weeks before Thanksgiving, it slipped up on us entirely, and we are now completely caught up in the last-minute rush.

For those who don't know of our recent move (and the majority of you don't), here is a brief explanation. Bob came to the University of Illinois in September of this year to accept a position as the Assistant Director of the new Center for Zoonoses Research. In short, this is the study of diseases common to both man and animal. With the job goes the title of Professor, no less! At last he can correlate his work between his degrees of D.V.M., M.D. and Dr.P.H.

We were sorry to leave Cali, Colombia, after a pleasant and interesting two years there, and Bob was very reluctant to leave the service of the Rockefeller Foundation after a tenure of over ten years with them.

Since our arrival Bob has been busy becoming acquainted with the program, recruiting staff and making plans for the future.

I have had my busy times, too--learning how to run a house by American standards again. Fun, but hectic.

On top of all this we are building a house which should be ready for occupancy the end of January. We have lots of spare room for company. Please remember this if you are nearby. At our back door we have a beautiful lake which, in this zero weather, is just ready for ice-skating--so guess what we are all getting for Christmas! And sleds, too! After many years with no cold weather to speak of, winter is exciting! It is also expensive, for we just about had to start from scratch as far as wardrobes were concerned.

The children are all in school--missed Cali terribly at first, but now are completely at home in Champaign schools. Jan is in the 8th grade, Peggy in the 5th and Walter in the 1st. And Diana, 3 in February, misses them but enjoys the extra attention at home.

Life is interesting here with the University so close at hand. There is no end of cultural activities available at reasonable prices. The University Wives Club has numerous study and activity groups to join. One of these is Conversational Spanish, which meets twice a month--a good way to keep up my Spanish, since about a third of the members are Spanish-speaking.

A word about our vacation last summer. We returned to the States by ship--not always a relaxing experience with young children, but delightful anyway. After several days in New York we proceeded to Baltimore to visit friends. Then we visited the Champaign-Urbana area (these are twin cities--Champaign's population is 50,000 and Urbana's is 20,000) trying to locate a house. Then we visited my sister in East Texas where they have a beautiful quarter horse farm among the pines.

From there we went to Houston to visit our dear friend Ethel Dumbauld. My home town was next--Sonora, where I found my parents in good health. They later accompanied us to the ranch in the big bend area of West Texas where we spent a wonderful two weeks--looking for Indian artifacts most of the time, but also climbing, rock-hunting and looking at the scenery. We plan to return there next August, so if any of you are planning to be in the area of the Big Bend National Park, do let us know. Again, we have room for visitors there.

From Alpine we drove to El Paso to visit Bob's Aunt, Mrs. McCutcheon, whom many of our Cali friends met last Christmas, then on to Los Angeles to Disneyland. We had just as much fun as the children. One incident that was near tragic was the loss of Jacques, our dear little poodle--lost in the streets of Los Angeles--but he was miraculously found only to be lost twice again here in Champaign. We have him safely tagged now, with little chance to wander. The last leg of our journey was to visit Bob's parents, who live in Northern California in Paradise, near Chico. Most of our visit with them was spent at their mountain cabin near the high Sierras. You can imagine how hard it was to leave this life of ease--but come September--back to business. Bob dropped us five in Illinois once more and left almost at once for the International Tropical Medicine meeting in Rio de Janeiro, where he renewed many former friendships from all over the world.

And now, since the date is so late, that is all the news I'm going to tell you this year. To those of you who have already written us in Cali this Christmas, don't worry; our mail will be forwarded.

Our address until the end of January is: 6 Willowbrook Court
Champaign, Illinois

After that it will be: 14 Lake Park
Champaign, Illinois

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each one of you!!

Love from All the Kokernots

