

HOLIDAY GREETINGS
from Don and Mary

Mid December, the sky is blue, the sun is shining, the fir trees are a wonderful green, and the fall berries are still a vibrant red. We walk in the woods, sometimes worrying about the hunters, but enjoy a very unseasonable warmth. Still we savor a dip in the hot tub and a quiet time in front of the fireplace. Last weekend we took our annual shopping trip to the big city, Montreal, such a wonderful place, colorful, exciting and full of fabulous food and good friends. The lake is just beginning to have a slight skim of ice; we are wishful that by Christmas, we will be able to skate.

Retirement continues to be wonderful. Some of our younger friends say that when they grow up, they want to be like the Sondergelds! We continue to spend almost six months a year at the lake in Vermont and about four months at our condo at Naples Bath & Tennis in Naples FL... where we get our fill of daily tennis in the morning, after a brisk two mile walk. Don plays duplicate bridge every day but Sunday when he is forced to spend the day visiting friends, family and on nature walks and boat trips. In Vermont, Mary is still an avid swimmer, a turtle (by swimming across the lake all summer daily) and exercising in the water when the lake is frozen.

In March we had a super time skiing out West : staying 10 days with Stan and Harriet Joseph at their place in Sun Valley and skiing Don's favorite mountain...and then having a great time skiing with David, Shelley, Owen and Kyle for a week at Lake Tahoe. We stayed two more days in Reno and at the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) National tournament, Don earned his final "Gold Points" (with Mary) and he proudly became a Life Master.

Mary ran away with the "Old Broads" to Greece and Turkey in April, so Don played more tournament bridge. He is set on racking up many points, and has become a very thoughtful player. In June we spent three weeks in Europe: two in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, one day in Helsinki, a week in St. Petersburg and Moscow and two days in Rome. Scandinavia was lovely, Russia so poor, and Rome so religious.

Highlights of 1998 are certainly visiting our children and grandchildren. We go to Ryan's basketball games, Sara's soccer games, and playing with Caitlin, such a character. Aleksey is full of vim and vigor, such fun; Amy and Lou have parted ways but are having great joy in raising him. Owen and Kyle who live in San Francisco are best of friends and budding skiers. The whole family was in Vermont this summer, such a joy to see all the siblings and offspring playing together. Our newest and seventh grandchild is Zachary (February 1), almost walking now, full of laughter and good spirits. We spent Thanksgiving with Karla, David, and Zach in their new home in North Carolina...so different from Naples, Maine.

We now have a new E 911 address: with 1000 numbers/mile, 469 Birch Road is 469/1000 of a mile from Route 30...about one half mile.

We wish you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful New Year.

The Sondergelds

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