

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

from Don and Mary

1999

We are under a winter storm warning for sleet and then snow, maybe many inches, and we have great hopes because all early signs pointed to a snowy winter: caterpillars with wide brown bands (wooly bears), high wasp nests, and thick skinned apples, but it hasn't happened yet!

In our retirement 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 Florida, where each day we get our fill of tennis after a brisk two mile morning walk. Don plays duplicate bridge every day but Sunday when we spend the day visiting friends and family, and going on nature walks or boat trips. He became a Life Master in Bridge in March 1998, and went over 500 master points in November 1999 to become a Bronze Life Master. In Vermont, Mary is still an avid swimmer, a turtle (by swimming across the lake all summer daily) and exercising in the swimming pool at the college in Castleton when the lake is frozen.

In March we had a spectacular time skiing in The Three Valleys in France, staying in Meribel, the middle valley. This is the largest ski complex in the world, and was simply outstanding. There are over 200 lifts and 800 ski instructors. It is impossible to ski all the lifts in a day or to sleep with all the ski instructors in a season. We had dinner every night with new found friends, Denis and Helene Cote from Mt Orford, Quebec. Mary often swam in the Olympic pool across the street from our hotel. We then spent a delightful two weeks in Provence, staying in wonderful chateaus. Our friends, Steve and Sandy Earl, joined us for the first week.

In June, Mary turned 65 and wanted to go to Africa, so we took a two week safari to Kenya and Tanzania with Park East Tours. We saw many animals, stayed at wonderful places with great food (including William Holden's Mt Kenya Safari Club), met interesting people, and saw poverty at its most desperate.

The highlights of the year continue to be the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren. With the adoption of our second Russian grandchild: Alexei Jacob Sondergeld, by Eric and Cindy, we now have six grandsons and two granddaughters. Karla is expecting a daughter in March 2000, so that will improve the mix.

The whole family was in Vermont this summer to visit our German relatives. Don's cousin, Peter Sondergeld from Munich, two of his sons (Gregor and Lukas), and a buddy of Gregor's (Mike Wallner) were our guests here at the lake for most of August. We showed them NY City and Montreal, rented a houseboat for a day on Lake Champlain, went water skiing on Lake George, and lost Mike for awhile when climbing Camel's Hump (he went to the base on the north side and we returned to our van to the west). We went camping: two days near North Conway, NH, one in Boothbay Harbor and one in Bar Harbor. Only the crazy Deutchers swam in the ocean in Maine. We also spent three days in Massachusetts at Karen's: beaching it in Gloucester, and touring Beantown.

We loved visiting David, Shelley, Owen, and Kyle in SF for ten days at the end of October, and attending the 50th anniversary bash of the Society of Actuaries.

We wish you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful peaceful New Year. Keep in touch!

The Sondergelds

Eagle Rock Estates
469 Birch Road
Hubbardton/Brandon VT 05733
802-273-2251 (2245 FAX)

Naples Bath and Tennis Club
1518B Oyster Catcher Point
Naples, FL 34105
941-434-5840

<dsonder@worldnet.att.net>