

November 2000.

Hallo there everyone!

It's letter writing time again! Why do we always do it at Christmas? You would think that June or July would be just as good really! Some of you will be saying 'Thank goodness for Christmas or we'd never get a letter!' Sorry about that - and thank you all for your nice greetings to me. I believe in some of my cards last year I made the rash promise 'Letter following' which obviously was a mistake.....well you could call this 'following' couldn't you?

Anyway, what's new here? Well after my letter in August last year, which was very eventful, I find that this year doesn't have very much to say for itself! My health has been OK, although I am beginning to think I must be getting older or something! Everything seems to be a big effort now. My dear little companion, Sunshine keeps me active anyway. She just loves to go for her walks, and always looks very offended when I tell her it's time to turn around and come back home! One of her favorite pastimes is chasing squirrels, of which we have dozens around here - both grey and black. She would be fast enough to catch them, but her leash is just not long enough and she gets very fed up with me when I won't run with her! Mind you, I don't know what she'd do if she ever caught one! She's not at all vicious. She'd probably just sit down and have a little chat with it!

The really BIG news as far as I'm concerned, is that Michelle and Marko are expecting a baby in January!!! The due date is right around Michelle's own birthday, January 25th but of course you never know just when it will decide to arrive. I am very excited, as you can imagine and Michelle gets quite put out with me when I want to take photos of her side view!! She had an ultrasound done some time ago, at which time she got several photos of the baby developing, which was quite fascinating! I threatened her that I would be on hand at the birth with the video camera, but she didn't seem to think that was a good idea! So it looks as though I will be consoling the cats (and dog) while she and Marko do all the fun stuff!!

Oh yes - I haven't told you that M & M have just recently moved again! (If it weren't for them I wouldn't have much news, would I?) They have moved into a really nice two bedroom apartment in Kitchener - actually not too far away from where they were living, so they can both still get to work OK. They needed the extra room now that the baby is on the way - I guess they will be busy fixing up the nursery once they get settled in!

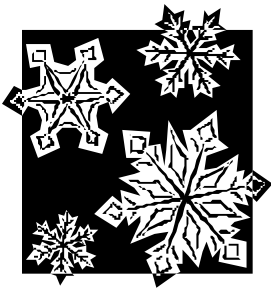
Unfortunately, highrise apartments don't come with gardens, so I have added their plants from the back yard to mine on the balcony here, which makes it a bit crowded. We have quite a few perennials between us, so I constructed what you might loosely call a coldframe to try and protect them for the winter. It consists of several 2x8ft sheets of styrofoam in a box formation, with chicken wire round the outside to try and discourage the squirrels from eating it! They just love all my pots of soil - perfect places for storing nuts! So eventually I had to cover each pot with plastic netting and tape it on with duct tape!! What a job! Those plants had better survive, that's all I can say!

Well, I suppose my main interest has been photography this year. (Wow! what a surprise, I hear you say!) I take advantage of quantity discounts when I get the films processed, so this week I have finally been putting the whole year's worth of photos into my albums! Starting off with the 'Happy Millenium' ones I took on December 31st - on a one-time camera which added suitable greetings on each photo! Needless to say, the message didn't always correspond with the subject, which made for some humorous results! Can you believe it's almost a year since then - when we were all worrying about Y2K and its problems!

As I am alone (except for when I visit M & M) -most of my photos are of flora and fauna. Out behind the apartments where I live, there is a lovely little creek which attracts all sorts of wildlife. This year I have seen beavers - turtles - muskrats - frogs - a whole school of fish spawning! - and so many different kinds of birds - bluejays - redwing blackbirds - cardinals - yellow canaries - mallards - and prize of the collection, a pair of blue herons who live here all summer! My goal has been to get good photos of the herons, and I have done quite well with my telephoto lens.

On my way to visit M & M, I drive through Stratford, and got some good photos of the town all fancied up for the Festival - they really make a gala of it! I take Sunshine for walks along beside the River Avon to stretch her legs, and she is so fascinated by all the ducks and swans on the river! One time she just plunged right in to swim with the mallards! Another time she was nose-to-beak with a very aggressive swan - and got such a shock when he hissed and flapped his wings at her!! She only wanted to be friendly and say hallo!

*Well, this is turning into a book, so I'd better stop soon or I'll need a publisher!
I wish you a Happy Christmas and a healthy and happy 2001!
With love from Lola (and Sunshine!)*



P.S. Instead of a Christmas card, I am enclosing some samples of the photos I have taken this year, which I hope you will find interesting and/or amusing!