

## Christmas 2004

Dear friends and family,

It's so good to write a letter at Christmas because it makes one pause from the busy-ness of the season, and think about "Life, Christmas and Everything" (with apologies to Douglas Adams!) For myself as I grow older, I find that the real meaning of Christmas becomes increasingly significant and central in my life.

From my perspective, all the dazzling commercial display of glitter and 'Ho, ho, ho' is becoming increasingly overdone and meaningless, not to mention expensive!! I find more pleasure in joining with friends to go round the houses carol singing 'Silent Night' and 'Joy to the World', and reminding people of that first special Christmas Day.

Well, enough of my deep thoughts!! Let's get back to the fast-breaking news bulletin! As usual I lead rather a quiet life, so I can't compete with a lot of your newsy letters, ( which I enjoy reading very much of course!) - but I'll do my best.

The most astounding piece of news this year is that I have a new car!!! I finally had to give up my poor old Volvo after 20 years of faithful service, as it was costing too much in repairs. (However, I've been told that it's still on the road – owned by someone who can do the work himself. I'm so glad! I really loved that car.)

Michelle kindly helped me negotiate a lease on a brand new Toyota Echo hatch-back! It's a very bright blue and you can sure see me coming!! I keep the back seat down, thus making a perfect spot for Sunshine to stand and check my driving! It's small compared to my wagon, but there's plenty of room for the two of us. The only problem arises when I need to collect bushels of compost from the landfill site. Now I have to make extra trips with smaller loads.

I received the car in the Spring, and the first out-of-town trip I took was to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton! Each year the Ladies' Auxiliary holds a huge sale of plants, and I bought a lovely collection of tall bearded irises – all different exotic colours! So we should have a gorgeous show next year!

Talking of lovely shows, you may remember last year I went wild planting Spring flowering bulbs – well they were quite stunning this Spring!! What a display – and for hardly any work. Just plop them in and wait for Winter to leave! Actually I must admit that my flowers took over the vegetable garden this year! Those of you who knew the wonderful vegetables that Dick used to grow in Thunder Bay would be surprised at how the bulbs and perennials have spread here! I guess I have no self-control!!

The other major addition to my life has been a digital camera! I never thought I would learn how to use it, but Michelle and Marko had one, and produced such beautiful results that they persuaded me to try it. I'm still very much a novice and need Marko to download my pictures for me, but I'm improving. It's quite different from using the 'old' style of

camera, but at least I don't waste film when I take not-so-good photos. I just erase them and start again!! Now I feel I'm really part of the Computer Age!

I still have the pleasure of looking after Daniel for three days a week, and he really keeps me occupied (and entertained!) He is three now – well nearly four actually, and he is quite a young man already! It's amazing how fast they grow up. He attends Pre-School classes three times a week, and is learning to socialize with lots of other children around him. That's hard when he has been at home with only family around. It will prepare him for J.K. next September anyway. Those of you who have a computer can look up Daniel's website, which has lots of photos from this year! It's at <http://daniel.isfoundhere.com> .

For a treat, my friends, Leottia and Gavin, took me (and Sunshine) for a day-trip to the seaside this summer!! Well, actually it was Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay which is part of the Great Lakes, but it seemed like the ocean. Lots of lovely waves to paddle in – and guess who had the greatest fun in them?..... Sunshine!! She adores chasing the waves as they roll in, and trying to eat them!! (I call her King Canute!!) Leottia and I even went in swimming too! Then I collected lots of tiny little shells along the shore. And we rounded it off by having good old English fish and chips for supper!! It was a great day!

Oh yes, I must tell you – I made it into print this year!! The fact is, a lady in my home village of Chesham Bois has started to publish a local magazine named “Bois Own” and she asked me to write a short (!) article for it! I described some of my memories from school there and tried to compare them to life today, including a photo of me in my school uniform! Then I sent it all to my friend there and said 'Please edit this'- as you know I'm not good at being concise! So when she had dealt with my ramblings, it turned out to be quite a respectable article! Wow! My name in print!

Well, having said that I really should bring this to a close, shouldn't I? If you would like to read some of my early reminiscences, you can go to my website which is at: <http://lola.isfoundhere.com> . I'm hoping to have the latest chapter added to “My Vignettes” shortly – it's an on-going process. My tech support (Michelle) has to set it all up, as that part of it is Greek to me!

Thank you all for your lovely cards and news. I do enjoy them so much. Sunshine joins me in wishing you a very Merry Christmas and happiness and good health in the New Year.

With love from Lola and Sunshine.

Fast Breaking (!) News Bulletin!!!

I'm sorry I can't add a personal note this year. Here it is a week before Christmas, and I am writing to you from my bed of pain, having just suffered a compound fracture of my 'write' wrist!!! This will teach me to do my newsletter early next year!

Thank goodness Daniel helped me to get my tree and my Dickens Village up already. Now if I can just figure out how to make a Gingerbread House with one hand..... Oh well, a good O.T. should be able to do that, right?

Anyway, take care, and have a great New Year! Lots of love from Lola.