

Washington Grove Christmas, 1990

December 17, 1990

Hi everyone,

We are looking forward to the Christmas gift of your PRESENCE in a few days. Just a few thoughts:

There will be quite a few here. You do not have to get a gift for each individual. Give not because you must, but because you may. And please don't keep track of who did, and who did not give you something. It's more important to make sure that everyone has a good time.

According to our present information, Donald arrives on the 20th. Norman and Carol arrive on Friday the 21st. That is Simone's birthday, so we are planning a get-together dinner that evening. Donald and Carol leave Dec 31, and Norman leaves the next day. So you three are well coordinated this year. We don't have definite dates for Alan and Faby, but we hope they can make it.

Davi is coming here a few days before leaving for Brazil. Jô, Susie, Tim, and Joy will have their jobs, but we hope will join us now and then. Susie has to work Christmas Eve, and Tim is trying to get out of working Christmas Eve.

Sunday evening, Dec 23 the New Hope choir will be carolling at Montgomery General Hospital, and Washington Grove also has carolling. GPC now has three Sunday services, at 8:15, 9:45, and 11:15. I think Norman may get an invitation to speak on College Sunday, the 30th, but I'm not sure. GPC Christmas eve services will be 4, 7, 9, and 11 PM as usual; I don't know of any family commitments, but the bells play at the 7 PM service. As before, Christmas International has their trips to DC on 21, 26, and 28, and Eleanor Munch is always glad to have Gordons along. And I'll be glad to go canoeing if anyone's interested.

Amid all the festivities, there will be kitchen work. Mother will appreciate any help, so please think in terms of doing a complete meal, -- or two.

Have a merry Christmas,

Baltimore, Maryland, January 18, 1990

Dear Family, *Grandfather*

Over two thirds of those who participated in Grandmother and Grandfather's Rio Verde Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary were re-assembled on December 25-27 for a grand Gordon reunion in Aunt Doris and Uncle Gary's home. This might have been the largest such event since 1974. In any event, *it was a blast!* (For you Southerners, that means "plenty of good downright fun"; Californians, "we're talking cosmic party--to the max"; Brazilians, "cara...foi o maior barato!"; and for the Cosby fans among us, "it was a happenin' place to be.")

It was a full house. Aunt Alma and Uncle Alan were the proud grandparents of a little bundle of joy Sylvia brought up with her, someone a few of us still hadn't met: "Little Alan" Woodall (judging by the father, the "little" should drop off soon enough). No, *not* Woody Allen; Alan Woodall. Please let's keep that straight. Sonia also had someone to introduce to the family: Steve Dettweiler, a very friendly Canadian and fellow-Wycliffer she met this past Fourth of July in Dallas and to whom she is now engaged. *Somebody* in Texas wasn't paying too much attention to the firecrackers this year....

Refusing to kow-tow to their potential Tokyo tutoring demands over the holidays, Sandra and Susan, the two "globe-trotting" sisters, travelled over from Japan for the (pronounce with a French accent) *reunion de famille*, "wise women from the East, bearing gifts" (quoted from a feminist translation). Simone, with a few sandwiches in her lunchbox, managed to sneak off school grounds during recess, and, like a Peter Pan in real life, took a long air flight to North America which seemed to Never Never Land. ("Split infinitive," you claim? Ah yes, but I claim "poetic license.") In spite of the hardware specifications of her job schedule in Virginia, Joy programmed out her week so as to be able to log-in to the fun up in Maryland. It was a real happiness to have her there. (I was going to say it was a real..., but, of course, I don't want to risk sounding corny, if you know what I mean.)

Donald also connected up from "Silicon Valley", California. Like his father, he proved to be a *key component* in the all-around fun (as they say, a real "*chip off the...*"). The two seminarian brethren in the family, Alan and Norman, both made their journeys homeward to be thus enabled to strengthen those special ties and relationships that draw us all together and breathe some meaning into our hurried, day-to-day existences, and just to "share" a little something of what they've experienced in their personal lives with those gathered there together at Oak Manor. Fabi was as warm and friendly-like as always; she's originally from the deep, deep South, ya know. (Imagine! Dey say dat where she comes from it be even *more* farther south dan New Orleans!)

Nearly dead from work in the necropsy lab, Carol's last wish in 1989 was to spend a few moments interacting with her own family, genus, and species. As early as the 26th, though, her boss said her time was up. No escape. "Rats!" is but a specimen of what she said at the time. Still, when at work the clock struck the hour, every evening bar none, she would escape out the front door and hop on home. Jonatas already estava speaking bem the lingua English na gathering, mas pretends falar much melhor after iniciar his estudos linguistics in o College Montgomery este month. As they say by means of encouragement here in the States, Jo, "Continue-o para cima, bode-nene!"

(Translating as faithfully from the original as possible, of course....) Davi, presently in the "nao sei se caso ou compro bicicleta..." stage, was spotted on Cloud Nine, yet insists he was merely spending a "friendly" Christmas vacation with Sharon and her family. Likely...? I'd buy the bike before buying that story.

Stan and Marcia (who have perforce made similar choices in past years) drove down together from the Senior Winstons' residence in New Jersey on the 26th. Agreeing on a work-study partnership this first year of marriage, Marcia studied and Stan worked this past Fall, and this Spring they're switching roles. Additionally, Stan and Marcia plan on a joint move para o Brasil this coming summer/inverno, the former to teach mathematics at PACA, the latter to secure a job using her degree in Economics. Seems clear that when it comes to human relationships, one plus one doesn't always equal two after all, huh?

Tim (your CCC correspondent reporting *alive* from Baltimore), when the news Goethe ("22-name pick-up," anyone?) to his ears that the Gordon family was being convened, immediately thought to himself, "This is no run-of-the-Mill family gathering, and the \$6 bus fare I can for sure Handel. What a Steele! I Kant believe it!--a whole New-ton of cousins and relatives only a Swift hour away!" So, after calm, rational deliberation with himself in this slow, reasoned manner, he finally arrived at the realization that his former plans were now, in good, plain English, History (good-bye Mathematics and Computers), and made the journey faster than you could Shake-a-spear. Quite Franklin, the truth is that no Locke or Key could have held him Bach.

It took him a Dickens of a time, though, getting down to D.C. on the bus, and he later admitted, "I'll be quite Candide with you, I'd take the Twain, but it's wather expensive." In the end, though, Tim did arrived, and got to Pope in and surprise everyone like he Donne come out of Haydn. Norman had gone out to Carroll with friends around the Frost-covered town, but most everyone else was there, around the living room and kitchen area or in the dining room, laughing, opening presents, talking, playing games, joking, and enjoying the company of some of the few people we cousins have known since our childhoods and still have managed to keep up with in a meaningful sense over the years, despite our families' rather nomadic settlement patterns.

When asked if it had been worth the long trip to come to the Gordon reunion, one cousin replied, "To Thoreau away a chance like this to be together as a family would be unthinkable!" Amen! (That's Hebrew for either, "You said it, bro'!" or, "You better believe it, sis'!" or, "Ain't *that* the truth!"--depending, of course, on the particular school of metalinguistic thought one follows regarding the familiar question of the delicate interrelationship of anthropological, sociological, and cultural realities within the larger context of progressive chronology on the one hand, and, on the other, on one's guiding theory concerning the actual significance of determining the historically authentic interpretive framework by which to ascertain the communicative connotations of each phonemic unit, especially in light of well-documented discrete variations in the subtle pronunciation of the ancient Hamo-Semitic tonal guttural sound...or was that the labial fricative?...one of those...I'm quite certain, if I'm not mistaken.)

For the record, the CCC (Council of Concerned Cousins) voted unanimously to continue supporting and encouraging these Gordon Family Reunions. The following is a brief selection from the rather lengthy session minutes: "Resolved, that the great times we've had together in past reunions shall not have failed to teach us their importance; that this organization, under God, shall have a new birth of Cousin support; and that reunions of the Cousins, by the Cousins, for the Cousins, shall not perish from our collective memory."

Gordon Reunion Winter '89. This is CCC correspondent Tim Dole reporting *alive* from Baltimore City in Maryland in the U.S. of A. (I suspect you may not have gotten your Wordsworth, but I hope the reading's been at least somewhat enjoyable.)

Your grandson. With love, Tim