

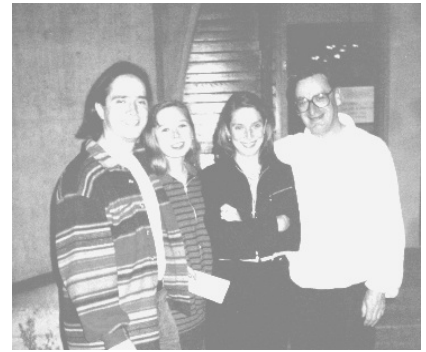
8 Dec. 97

1173 Rushbrooke Drive,  
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Dear FIELD(1),

A rather more up-beat year, with possible problems not happening, health remaining good, everyone in work (except for the cats), and weather fair to good. At least I think that is a good picture of what has happened. Every work year is busier than the last (no, its not just that we are getting older?), and it gets difficult to separate out the real year from the year at work. Of course John and Wendy are still a long way away in Vancouver, but we are somewhat more used - if not reconciled - to that than a year ago.

It seems a long time ago now, but we did have a good holiday in BC in the late Spring. Nearly a week with the kids in Vancouver (on the mainland coast), and about the same on Vancouver Island - which, just to be confusing, is where Victoria is. Vancouver is a bustling multicultural city, and we had a good time seeing the sights with and without the kids. We met their latest fairly significant others, particularly Liah, (next to John). A very nice



girl, though naturally quite focussed on her graduation next year. Wendy had just moved Departments, off the sales floor - with its attendant odd / long hours, and into the buying office. Quite a challenge for her, and one she was very happy with. By now it has got rather more routine, and does not attract overtime money like her previous work, but none the less, a change for the better.

Our time on the Island was very interesting, and quite mixed. Almost constant surf and rain on the west coast - most of which is inaccessible by car. A few small, quiet, friendly, tourist communities. We went whale watching here, and unlike our try off Maine a few years ago, were rewarded with good sightings of killer whales - and a couple of eagles as a bonus. The east coast is much more sheltered, and drier, full of small towns and retirement estates. The interior is forest, mountains, lakes, streams, waterfalls, clouds, and rain. We also stayed a few days with some friends



who lived near Victoria on the south east corner, which was very nice.

Sue is now with a company called "Compuware." They are a very large company as software companies go, but they are just starting in Canada, so there are only three dozen here now - maybe ten dozen by April, branch offices in the West and / or East of Canada soon after, and on and on! It is quite exciting, even though we are not quite sure it is real.

Canadians generally seem to be slowly / slightly getting better off. Certainly the country's debt problem seems to be under control, and unemployment has started to fall - though still high at about 9%. Some Canadians have suffered though as a result of the cuts, and I am afraid this will continue. On average though, things are definitely brighter.

I said a year ago "The garden is now nearly to Sue's liking, and we are looking forward to little more than 'maintenance mode' from now on." Now I am able to say "The garden is now nearly to Sue's liking, and we are looking forward to little more than 'maintenance mode' from now on." Which is not to say that there have been no improvements, maybe its just a definition of a gardener that the garden could do with 'just a little change here and there'. Come to think of it, maybe that's a definition of being human!

Our mortgage continues to be one of the things around which our planning resolves, but we now have some real hope of paying it off within the term of the current contract, that is, the interest rate is fixed for that term, so if we can pay off in this term, we no longer care how interest rates vary.

We joined a boat club at last, and entered quite a lot of races, did very badly, and enjoyed it a lot. sailing around separately from the people in the other boats is not very social, but we are starting to get to know a few people.

I think there is a general rule that up to a point, people write longer letters as they get older, so just to prove that we are getting younger, this letter will be rather shorter than usual, in fact -

All  
Sue & Pete our Love