

10 Jan 1950

Dear Aunt Eva & Uncle Henry,

Here I am back in Albuquerque after my Christmas vacation. Did I say "vacation"? Listen to what happened to me over the holidays!

The last year was going to be different. All Christmas shopping done well in advance -- mailings out on time -- nothing could be righter than the way we planned it. What we didn't plan was the snow ... what I mean is the roof. No, that's not it. What I really mean is what the snow did to the roof. No, that's not quite it, either. As a result of what the snow did to the roof, you should have seen Tedi's shop.

That Friday night I arrived home from Albuquerque I found Tedi in tears. Her entire operation was shut down -- both of her girls laid off indefinitely. It was impossible to work with water splashing around on the floor after it had bounced off of them or had drained out of the clothes hanging on the racks.

Well, now it is all over. The roof is fixed; the ceiling has been scraped and painted; the wallpaper has been all pulled off the walls and they have been kalsomined; all the trim and baseboards have been painted; new electric outlets have been provided which has stopped fuse blowing of overloaded circuits; furniture has been painted; the floor has been cleaned and waxed; 30 additional square feet of shelf space have been provided; a new work space has been built and equipped for her hand finisher; new draperies have been put in with the furniture upholstered to match. The shop is operating again after being shut down only two weeks. Oh, yes! ... and everybody is happy -- especially me! Why?

Well, here is the answer: you never saw two kids better than ours when it comes to cooperating. They cheerfully devoted all their time during their Christmas vacation to helping. And I really mean helping! They scraped off wallpaper, they sawed, they painted, they helped install the wiring, they mopped the floors of the spilled kalsomine and they got down on their hands and knees with gasoline-soaked rags and scrapers to get off the spilled oil paint, they ran errands, they helped prepare meals at home. For ten hours a day for two weeks all four of us worked like hell to get the place back in shape. Now we can all look at it and view the transformation as our own handiwork. It sure was a pleasure to see those kids dig in and help so cheerfully.

So that's how we spent the holidays. It wasn't quite the way we planned it. I was a month behind in bookkeeping what with the eight weeks in Albuquerque. But last weekend I caught up with that. Now Tedi is gritting her teeth and plugging to get some money out of the shop to start building that house. In line with that, did I tell you she was elected chairman of the Fashion Design group of the New Mexico Arts & Crafts Alliance? She is digging in with that job, too, putting on numerous projects to plug the cause. She is turning out to be quite a ramrod.

As for my job: I don't think I could have been luckier. The Albuquerque assignment has directed my attention to community planning in a big way. The need is terrific both here and in Santa Fe. Elsewhere in New Mexico, too. Request are coming for traffic studies from Roswell and Las Cruces to try to solve their congestion problems.

Say, here is our belated, usual, but nevertheless sincere and grateful thank-you for your kind Christmas checks. Our building fund is not impressive but at least it is growing.

I hope you will be kind enough to forgive us again for missing our schedule.

Early in December we acquired a various collection of rocks, plastics, small jewelry, and so on to make up a small box for the George family. Tedi promised to get it all in the mail this week. Sorry! When the riptide hit us, we had to lay everything aside. Anyway, Merry Middle of January!

Your tardy but appreciative relations!

Tedi, Jim, Kim, Bruce

P.S. -- At least one of us gets things done on time. I just found Kim's thank-you note in my pocket. She gave it to me some time ago to mail. Trouble is I haven't worn that coat recently.

Love
Jim