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A brief update from the Bruces:

We're slowly adjusting to life in new surroundings, though we greatly miss old friends and New England. Chip's enjoying his work, especially the teaching. I am, frankly, still struggling to find the right niche---an important task, since most people here value the community for the work they can do, particularly those at the University. Otherwise, there are lots of jokes about how there is no There there, about how many people came for one year and stayed for 20, how "it's a great place to raise kids but you have to travel to do anything" and so on. I'm deferring final judgment until a year is up.

We recently moved the kids to a new pre school, one with a more project-based, open-education structure and they're having a great time. About half the kids in each class seem to be from some other country (Israel, Japan, China, Hungary) so in a funny way we parents at least feel more at home.

There's a new esthetic to get used to here: great sunsets, lots of wide-open spaces, totally bland architecture, nothing very old. We do too much driving, though we still enjoy the surroundings in our neighborhood once we get home. (For those who haven't been here yet, it's near the Sangamon River, a development built on an old cattle ranch so the trees have some age, with about 45 houses clustered around a lake, ours being one of the older ones at 20 years. As you leave the development, there are corn and soybean fields for miles in every direction. Mahomet, where the kids will go to public school, has a bunch of

antique shops, one grocery store, one hardware store and 4 fast food restaurants.) We're happy to find the occasional river for a canoe trip.

We're looking forward to having Chip's Great Aunt Polly from Cape Cod join us for Christmas, and later to a week in California with my family in early January. The kids will stay with grandparents for a few days while Chip and I repair to Big Sur for some much needed quiet time near mountains, trees and ocean.

Reading between the lines, you can see that we're still getting used to the new setting. The best thing about the past six months (besides the fact that moving anywhere is character-building), has been the many visitors who managed to find us in East Central Illinois. We hope more will.

My usual apologies for the form letter, but as most of you know, it wouldn't get done otherwise. Perhaps Emily and Stephen will help decorate these for the personal touch?