

Because we were in Germany over the holidays, this letter is not late, but rather your first holiday letter of 2012. Or a greeting for Valentine's Day, expressing our affection for scattered friends and family, some of whom we have gone years without seeing, but with whom we'd like to keep in touch.

We were in Germany because Chip taught a short course in Marburg, a lovely old city near Frankfurt. That made great sense because Emily is in Berlin this year, with a fellowship that requires transcribing German handwriting from 1800, for her dissertation on how the reading and writing by children at that time changed the way we see childhood. She spends a lot of time in archives trying to puzzle this out. She'll finish up next year, probably returning to Minnesota to write this very big book.

Stephen also joined us, to enjoy the holidays, and to do his own work on Russian history. He's still refining his research interests, but they include the influence of language on Russian history around 1800, as well, and that means courses in French this semester, and learning Turkish. He's still in Urbana, and in charge of taking care of the relics of our former life there.

That's because, as many know, we moved in October to Wellfleet on Cape Cod, in Massachusetts. This was motivated by a desire to return to a region where we spent a score of years, before the score we spent in Urbana, and out of some hope that our kids might eventually find jobs within 500 miles. Though as you well know, nothing's certain, especially when it comes to academic work. We also thought it might be a place where many friends would be inclined to visit.

We've enjoyed re-connecting with three former Children's Museum colleagues, another friend we've known since childbirth class in 1985, and through them have met many interesting folks. I've already committed to working on book sales for the very wonderful library here, and developing activities for the Historical Society. We're finding more than enough entertainment, even in the deep of winter. Of course, this has been a balmy and sunny one, with only one day of snow allowing us to get out for a ski. Skiing one day, walking on the wintry beach the next. On this narrow spit of sand there are endless places to walk and we're still finding more.

The frequent hikes are Chip's reward for the work he continues to do. He's still advising some students, writing, editing a special issue of a journal, and leading an online class next spring on Global Informatics---focusing on how new technologies serve to further or thwart political movements around the world, among other things.

Our families continue to do well, with both mothers holding their own at 91 and 94. We spent time in California and Texas with almost all our extended family in January, and especially enjoyed meeting two new grand-nephews in Austin. We'll meet another when he comes to visit us with his parents in July. All the Texas and California clan seem to be thriving and we plan to see them often in the coming years.

I just checked back to see what I shared last year and realize I sent a letter on this very day in 2010, just as late as this one, and again because of travel, in that case to China. I can see I'm establishing a new tradition.

Moving pretty much wore us out, and we're still recovering. By summer we hope to have accumulated furniture and perhaps put a few pictures on the walls. Chip will have a new work space by then, which means I can vacate the guest room, and thus you can plan a visit. We have a calendar on the basement door with only a few slots filled in.

Best wishes all around,

Our new address:

130 Daniels Drive
Wellfleet, MA 02667
home: 508-214-0250
portable: 217-840-9120

A dated photo from our last race in Urbana. Maybe this is the year to organize photos?

