

GREETINGS FROM THE VERMONT FAMILY “GRIFFES”

December 2009; Vermont's Northeast Kingdom had a late Fall with great foliage color this year. Winter will be here before you receive this letter. With sub zero temperatures a white Christmas is quite certain. Our businesses along with many others are having some “tough sledding”. (*horse and sleigh era term*) Our family has had tough times before. We were born at the beginning of the Great Depression which lasted ten years. Actually hard times teaches us many good lessons. With the Lord's help we will get by these lean times and political nightmare. If we keep our priorities right when all is said and done we will be the better for it.

Born in a barn?

"Close the door, were you born in a barn?" Some people don't understand what this means. Probably those that do had a rural upbringing. This is a common exclamation to someone who had just left a door open and cold was pouring in. Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus who was born in a barn. That barn, or stable, probably had no doors and yes it was cold. There were no doubt farm animals all around. Probably there was some fresh cut hay that had a pleasant smell but otherwise it smelled like a barn.

This was the best accommodations that Joseph could find for Mary, who was about to give birth to the most important person ever to be born. This is how the Angels described this event. "This very night in the city of David, (Bethlehem), the Savior is born, who is Christ the Lord. You will find the baby lying in a manger".

Did you ever sleep in a barn on new hay?

It was fun. Roosters crowing, cows mooing, cowbells dinging, all heralding the dawn of a new day. Nowadays there is no soft hay to sleep on, hay is bagged, baled, or chopped. Times have changed but the Bible says Jesus our Savior does not change. He is the same yesterday today and forever. He loves us all, forgives us our sins and asks us to follow Him. Jesus lived and died that we might have an abundant life here and for eternity, if we follow him. Having followed Him for over half a century, We know this to be true.

We had 18 of our family home for Thanksgiving. Beulah was the four star master chef again. We are gathering at Sharon's home for Christmas. There will be about 20 of our family there. We always have a great time at Sharon's and C.J.'s lovely country home. Sharon is a great cook like her Mom. She also is a talented decorator, as well as taxi driver. We are grateful for the many safe trips taking us to Burlington for treatment.

This has been a difficult year, health wise. Don had two small stroke's and carotid artery surgery. In May he had an x-ray of his spine which revealed a large malignant tumor on his kidney. It was necessary to remove the kidney along with the volleyball size tumor. In September he had the back surgery. These procedures required many visits to therapists. Last week's tests revealed that Don was free of cancer. He is doing much better now, thank the Lord.

Beulah still works at NEVTEC and is Treasurer of our Church, two businesses and two political organizations as well as Gardiner, housekeeper and nurse to Don. She is politically savvy and pulls no punches when she is talking back to the TV news commentators and their guests.

Mike and Debbie invited us to visit them in Washington, DC just before last Christmas. We met the Secretary of the Navy, Don Winter and Mike gave us an extensive tour of the Pentagon, the Air and Space Museum, and best of all a private tour of the West Wing of the White House all decked out for Christmas. (we were invited) It was a fun time, what a privilege.

OVER

The Griffes Clan now number forty five.
Shirley is retired to the Bahamas: Mike , Navy
Capitan retired to Virginia : Sharon on the
farm in Johnson, Vermont: Len is running the
family business in Newport, VT : Jay a Navy
Commander at Portsmouth, NH: Sheryl , a
very busy soccer mom in Newport, VT: then
there are 3 Sons-in-law and 3 daughters-in-law
and there are twenty four Grandchildren and
seven Great Grandchildren: THE LORD HAS
BLESSED US ABUNDANTLY

We only got to Michigan one time this last
year, to visit family and aunt Josephine "Jo".
She will be 99 in June and is still getting out
several times each week. She is the only one of
our family of our parents generation, still
living, and she is planning to live on to age
107, the age of her grandmother.

.Aunt Jo lives in her own home, with the help
of a live in caretaker who has two small grand
children. Jo had no children of her own but
has many nieces and nephews and a host of
friends. She seldom misses going to church or
accepting an invitation to go someplace

When Aunt Jo retired she did a lot of writing
to her friends and family. Often it was in
poems. Below are several of those many,
many Christmas poems .

CHRISTMAS AT FIVE.

That Christmas eve when I was five,
it was a wonderful Time to be alive,
before supper daddy spun us a yarn,
about mice living in Hellings' barn,
and when we were ready for our bed,
hands and faces washed, prayers said,
Mama read a Christmas story to us,
it was "a visit from St. Nicholas".

When morning came, I crept down to see
a doll and a crib Santa had left for me
he shouted instructions, so Mama said
look under the mattress of your doll bed
there I found the loveliest doll clothes
that my doll could be dressed in if I chose
he shouted, too, as he drove out of sight
Merry Christmas to all have a good night.

CHRISTMAS EVE

On Christmas Eve we'd try to wait

for Santa Claus, but he was late
and when at last he came, it seems
we were fast asleep in our dreams
although at times he did seem poor,
he never miss stopping at our door.

His thoughtful gifts were all quite choice
and once I thought I heard His voice
he was talking to my mother
about a toy for my brother
how wonderful it was to believe
the fantasy of Christmas Eve.

MY LIFE JUNE 2000

I have had such a wonderful life ,
so full of love and free from strife,
Love for good parents, sisters and brothers,
my loving husband and many others,
opportunity to live in this great free nation,
in a world that is God's wondrous creation,
The Lord has done great things you can see,
so dear Lord I give thanks to Thee

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Poinsettias gives us so much pleasure,
as do Christmas memories we treasure,
of family fun, delicious dinners
Of friendship, kinship, worship-all winners
of mother's helping bring joy to the poor,
although sometimes we didn't have more,
why need any one be lonely or sad,
with these thoughts to make us glad.

CHRISTMAS GOODWILL

Christmas is a time to spread goodwill
and start out the new year with a clean bill
I don't want to tell you what to do
that decision is all up to you
but if you're at odds with family or friends
now is the time to make amends
no matter who is really to blame
to carry a grudge is such a shame
say you're sorry and asked forgiveness
and wish them joy and happiness.

CHRISTMAS TIME

Christmas is a time for:
Love and Friendship, Families and Kinship
Music and Worship and for Remembering.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Beulah and Don Griffes, 12/09