

P.S. The Grosbeak on the envelope is one of the flock of 50 which feed with us during the winter - makes the snow seem more gay. J.

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January 27, 1964

Dear Laura,

Des and I were delighted to hear from you and about your projects - we shall be first in line here for a copy of the Navaho book - keep us posted on its publication date.

We have lots of family news - some sad - some glad - as life goes on. Shirley has long been failing and her mind has now slipped a great deal. She remains in fine physical health excepting the usual touch of

arthritis which plagues many
her age but her mental capacity
to grasp reality is very limited.
She is calm, amenable and
cheerful but in a word senile.
After a great deal of soul-search-
ing Eliot decided that more
than the care of a companion
was necessary to ^{adequately} care for her
person and safety. She is now
living in a comfortable nursing
home in Newton, Massachusetts.

{The Clotwynde, 1650 Washington }
{Street, West Newton, Massachusetts}

As Des and I are settled in
New Hampshire along with Dwight's
(E's brother) widow Elvie who
is in Lyme, N.H. and the other

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brothers Fitch and Skidmore in
Peterboro - Brenda in Wilton,
my parents in Wellesley, Mass.
it seemed logical that no one
would be able to visit Shirley
easily if she were in Washing-
ton or elsewhere. This has
been a happy solution as
Eliot spends May and
September at Goose Rocks Beach
in Maine where we built a
new house last year and has
other trips to Boston to his
gallery there.

Eliot is in good health and form - he had a successful teaching stint in Louisiana and California Oregon, Washington this past fall and has spent the last two summers teaching at a school in Flat Rock, North Carolina near Asheville. He's working on a new book to be published by Putnam's and says he hasn't painted his best picture yet! He's now hoeing out the house on Oh St. in Washington so as to disencumber himself somewhat and is generally steaming ahead.

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Brenda has had two blows beside the failing of her sister this year. Just before Christmas Alice Campbell, her beloved friend, died suddenly. Brenda was very much down in the dumps. Then to add to the misery of ^{the} winter she slipped on the ice and badly bruised her sacrum which must have been a very painful affair. A practical nurse came in for a while and now a friend (whose name eludes me) is staying with her

for a month. She has been unable to write but is improving.

Des and I and the boys have had a good winter here and have changed direction somewhat. Last year when the US Public Health Service was about to assign us a new post we decided that we had moved our family about the country enough for the time being. We hunted and dug and Des found just the right job! It was sheer luck as we are among those who are a little too specialized to find a well paying job in New Hampshire.

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Des is now health educator
and director of public relations
for the N.H. Tuberculosis
Association. The work is challeng-
ing and exactly the thing he
had done for USPHS but, ^{now} working
on one disease instead of in
general health facilities. There
is much to be done for while
drugs now speed recovery of
those stricken-as many cases
as ever are found and the
families and contacts need
thorough follow-up care.
We are busy too building

a new house tailored to meet the needs of our growing boys and of our own habits.

We hope that it will be completed by March 1st and we shall move to Canterbury then.

This is a very old village near Concord and a lovely woodsy acre of it will be our headquarters.

Gordon, who was six in November, is a first grader this year. He's an outgoing, gregarious and alert youngster with an insatiable curiosity which he expresses with Why's of enormous

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proportions.

Evan is nearly four now and while equally alert expresses himself quite differently. He's more withdrawn so far as people are concerned expecting them to prove their reliability more than Gordon demands. Evan was a long time silent but now suddenly has a huge vocabulary and never ceases speaking! He will probably attend a nursery school next year so as to

become a little more used to people other than his family and to learn skills of life which can be learned only in a group situation.

I have been very busy this fall working out details with the builder for the new house and in general being a wife and mother. Both Des and I have been active in affairs at the Unitarian church here - Des has been particularly active in the formation of a Memorial Society and I in a Concord Civil Rights Group.

We send our best for 1964 and hopes for your good health and prosperity.

Fondly, Joan