

27 Dec '99

Dear Frances, I do hope Christmas has passed well for you, though of course some of the Christmas letters bring news of sad things. We three as a family are still alive! I told you I was about to have a morning get-together of games or Christmas Eve at our Centre, & I expected about 8 to turn up if they had nothing better to do. There were 15 - rather too many, but some of my ideas, rather unwieldy & not too co-operative on account of deafness & other problems. But we battled with "My Uncle Went to Paris" & one or two other things, & I felt rather a failure, but I don't think they thought it was too hard, as I met many of the age on Christmas Day at the church Christmas Dinner & they were very affable. That dinner was very well done except for a young woman thumping on the piano & deafening us all. By six o'clock

I was with Maria & the family - Mark, Leone & the 2 children - ~~and~~. I've never made much headway into Jeremy & Megan & didn't expect to last night. But I was chatting with Leone & telling her about my Christmas Eve effort, & Jeremy announced please could we play Jane's game. So we all did "My Uncle - - -" & it was a riotous success. It has to be done with children. Maria had laid on a wonderful spread, & I took shortbread & sprouts - a very mere contribution I thought.

There have been lovely Christmas radio programs except that I do get very tired of repetitious nostalgic descriptions of people's memories of the Christmas trees of their youth, & the magic of it all etc. etc.

I think there is far too much emphasis on that. I don't really remember that we had much in the way of a tree - I think we managed quite nicely with your little artificial tree! Carols & lovely cards mean far more

Maria thinks you could

to me. To my surprise I had a very nice letter from Edward & I must reply. Obviously, family means more there now, though I don't think Pamela G. is interested in us.

Just to keep you on the alert about terrorism, a suspicious character was caught at Port Angeles (just across the Strait) having boarded the ferry from Victoria. He had a car-bull of nitroglycerine & other stuff for making bombs & planned to make an unobtrusive entry into the States. This has put the U.S. on high alert at all border crossings. He could have accidentally blown up the whole ferry! and it brings the fears of terrorism very close to home here. We are just a quiet little gateway into the States.

Today I went for quite a good walk around by the water front to work off my two Christmas Dinners - as you can imagine I tackled them both very moderately,

Leona's contributi~~on~~ was creamed onions, which is very traditional in their family, & very delicious. I decided to try phoning Sandy & Joa on Christmas Day in the morning & to my amazement got through at once & they were here. I'm so glad they'd got Barbara back to Lougher. I have forgotten to mention that we had a lovely midnight service at St. John's & many came too. All manner of young people are always there for that service, having come here from all parts of Canada. The trumpets were much too loud, they should have been off stage somewhere. I heard of Peggy Andler - she had been in a car accident which has greatly affected her eyes.

Much love to you & l

Sam