

Christmas, 1999
The Sienkewicz Family
The Bird's Nest West
1103 East Second Avenue
Monmouth, Illinois 61462
(309) 734-3543
birdnest@maplecity.com

This has been another busy year for the Sienkewicz Family. In January Tom was in Paris to gather information about several off-campus programs for Monmouth College. While there, he found some time to reacquaint himself with some of his and Anne's old stomping grounds as graduate students. In some ways Paris hasn't changed at all. In others it is a completely different city than it was in 1974. Then in May Tom led a small Monmouth College group to Turkey and Greece. This was Tom's first trip to Turkey and hopefully not his last. Istanbul is an incredible experience but the highlight of the trip for a Classicist was predictably Troy. The group also visited the World War I battlefield at Gallipoli, Pergamon, Ephesus, and the Greek island of Samos.

Tom barely got back to the States in time to witness Marie's graduation from Bowdoin College (B.A. in Classics, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa). All five of us somehow managed to make it to Brunswick for the ceremony. We were pleased that Aunt Frances Anne's parents, Marie's cousin Tim Waterman, and his mother Debbie were all able to come to the ceremony, too.

In March Marie (now 22) was accepted into the Master of Library Science program at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and was offered an assistantship in the Veterinary School Library. Since she likes library work but still thinks seriously about veterinary school, this all seemed to fit together quite well. Marie began the program in August and now has her own apartment in Champaign which she shares with her two cats Micia and Patrizia and a Baldwin spinnet piano. Needless to say, her parents are thrilled to have her so relatively close to Monmouth and fabricate any excuse to visit Champaign.

Julia (19) is a junior Art History major at Mt. Holyoke College, which she continues to enjoy immensely. In her spare time she has started playing trumpet in a jazz band and sings in the church choir. As president of the Italian and Art Clubs she has organized several field trips, including one to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, topped off with an Italian dinner in Hoboken (where else?). Despite her love for Mt. Holyoke, she seems to love Italy more and plans to spend the spring semester at an art history and studio art program in Siena.

Richard (17) is now a senior in high school and has begun applying to colleges. On his list are Colby in Maine, Lawrence University in Wisconsin, and Wabash and Hanover in Indiana. He continues to be active with music (voice, piano, trombone, and french horn) and has bought himself a fancy trigger trombone. He has also put his own computer system together from scratch. He is taking elementary German at Monmouth College in addition to his regular load at Monmouth High School. He definitely wants to work with computers someday but tells his college interviewers that he is undecided about his major because he is also interested history, music, foreign languages, etc. Does that sound like the son of professor at a liberal arts college?

Anne is still working part time for the United Way of Warren Co. but has also picked up a freelance job editing a British sociolinguist book on bi-lingual education for an American-reading public. If all goes well she will finish knitting the sweater she started in 1997 for Julia in time for her to take it with her to Siena.

Tom's long labor of love with Gabriel Adeleye's *World Dictionary of Foreign Expressions* finally came to fruition this fall as the dictionary was published by Bolchazy-Carducci in Wauconda, Illinois. He has been having fun being interviewed on the radio and even participating in radio call in shows across the Mid-West. His long-term projects include editing an Encyclopedia of the Ancient World for Salem Press.

1999 offered us an incredible gardening year, thanks, in part to the new plot made possible by the felling of our hackberry tree blown down in a windstorm in the summer of 1998. We have had nice crops of peppers, brussels sprouts, and lettuce and have raised almost all our own tomatoes. Usually we need to buy all the tomatoes we can as sauce, but this year we were actually giving them away! We still have more than 200 qts of sauce sitting in the basement pantry (even after filling Marie's and Julia's pantries), so if the Y2K bug really hits we can probably survive for several months on pasta and tomato sauce. We can think of worse diets.

As usual we all converged on Lake Damariscotta to commune with loons this summer. Richard spent a few weeks beforehand with his San Filippo cousins and their horses in Durham, North Carolina. Marie worked one last summer with Waldoboro Family Practice and also squeezed in some time at the Waldoboro Public Library. Meanwhile Julia served tables at the Pine Cone Restaurant in "downtown" Waldoboro, where Richard was also employed as a dish washer. The mysterious mushrooms which accompany our end-of-millennium greeting stem (sorry) reflect this summer's history. One morning in Maine a striking fungus caught Julia's attention. She captured the image in a watercolor sketch and showed it to her grandfather who recognized the same mushroom he had passed the day before only to remark "Oh, a mushroom." When Julia went back the next day to look at it again, it was gone, probably consumed by some ravaging beast. The watercolor, which Julia eventually gave to her grandfather for his birthday and which hangs in the living room on Main St. in Waldoboro, also became the focus of a series of etchings which Julia did this summer at the Round Top Center for the Arts in Damariscotta. (Marie also attended the same class, but her subject was crabs and seaweed.) Anyway, these mushrooms, which remind us of the dancing ones in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, offer a humorous way to extend all of our warmest wishes not only for a happy holiday season and a happy new year but also for the new decade, the new century, and the new millennium!