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Dear Passyent + Mrs 'P' + letters -

1985 must qualify as the fastest disappearing year known!

It almost seems like yesterday that Cheryl was nagging for the year-end chronicle of happenings for 1984. And yet, looking back to events of the first half of the year they all seem so long ago. Must be something to do with old age.

No major changes have taken place in our lives this year with the exception of a reasonably big alteration to the house. Otherwise I continue to be employed by Leo Computer Bureau (name changed to Sage Computing in August) and Cheryl has her odd jobs - the main one still being with a retired investment consultant. Ryan has of course just turned 3. Sadly, we were forced to have Prince (the Alsatian type of the 2 dogs) put down in April due to old age and now have only our 1 year old German Shepherd - Ryans constant companion!

At the beginning of the year, we were very involved with Lions as I was in the second half of my year as President of our local club. We both became very involved in the committee to run the local Umhlanga Festival - I ended up as Chairman of the Servoce Clubs committee, a position which I wasn't able to shake off this year! The festival took place at the beginning of March and was an outstanding success for the local Borough who promoted it. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the clubs did not make as much money as anticipated but that will be remedied in 1986. In May we went to Port Elizabeth for the Lions Convention and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves for a week. It was good to see so many of the old faces although many have now left. Walmer Gardens has still not lost any of its appeal, and Uncle George is still there!

In July I took over as Zone Chairman for Lions to look after the 9 clubs in the Durban area. I must say I am really enjoying the exposure to the the hierarchy of the organisation and, of course, I have a star Zone Secretary in Cheryl. All things being equal I shall be taking over as Deputy District Governor in July and will include the Zululand clubs in my area. As you can see the Lions organisation is an important part of our lives now.

Ryan has started play-school during the year and thoroughly enjoys it. He goes from 8.30 till 12.00 each morning and has made a lot of friends. He also picks up a lot of interesting tricks and habits - some of them good. He was totally mis-cast as an angelic choirboy in the Christmas Nativity play but played in true Theatre Club fashion to the front row. He is now on holiday for a few weeks and is very bored. He has avoided any

serious sickness during the year and finally succeeded in convincing himself that using a toilet was preferable to the rantings of Mother.

Cheryl has continued with her main job as part-time Secretary/P.A. to the investment consultant and regularly move millions of rands from bank to bank but so far has not found the magical way to make a million when you only start with ten. In the last few months she has started a new part time job for a lawyer typing up his bills of costs. Its not the most exciting work but pays well and does not tie her down to regular hours. Cheryl is also very involved with Lions and has her own activities with the Lady Lions as well as helping me.

As I mentioned earlier the only significant change this year was the alteration to the house. This entailed the conversion of the existing dining-room into an enlarged family room, the creation of a new dining room and also a new entrance hall. The result is a lounge and dining room area which we can keep reasonably tidy and a family room which contains the constant mess of the the former dining-room and lounge. Along with the alterations we renewed and enlarged our covered patio and of course put in a new pub. We have only just finished the final bits and pieces in the last few weeks and are both very happy with the end result.

Work-wise I avoided narrowly a transfer to Cape Town earlier this year. It really wasn't worth my while and we are so settled in Durban that it would have been very difficult to move. The South African economy has of course been in an absolute recession this year and all businesses have suffered as a result. Durban has escaped most of the unrest which has occurred in the rest of the country, mainly due to the strength of the Zulu leadership. Nevertheless we have been affected by the general downturn and unemployment is reaching scary levels. There is no real reason for optimism about next year other than an apparent realism in some of the recent government announcements. We can only go on keeping our heads above water and hoping for some relief from a general economic recovery. Life is still very bearable!

Well, I think that about wraps it up for this year. Don't forget the open invitation to come and stay if you find yourself in this part of the world. Otherwise, look forward to hearing from you again next year!

With very best wishes for a happy Christmas and a jolly prosperous New Year.

Love,
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