

Dear Richard, Renee + kids
CHRISTMAS 1991

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1991 is all but gone - but where did it go? It seems impossible that the year has disappeared so fast and in just a few weeks we will be celebrating Christmas again. The year has been less exciting and eventful than some of the more recent ones.

The children are now growing up fast - Ryan about to celebrate his 9th and Lauren having had her 5th in August. They continue to delight us with their changing personalities - most particularly Laurens natural acting ability. Ryan is doing exceptionally well at school and is a keen academic - although following in fathers footsteps as far as sporting talents (he has however been picked for the school cricket team and swims well). He is going to a very good local school from next year where the concentration appears to be on individual character building. He is a natural with computers or anything technical and loves reading technical manuals and then making things work. He hasn't yet started taking things apart to see how they work but I am sure it wont be long!

Lauren is thoroughly enjoying school and enjoys wrapping the entire world around her little finger - she has had ample practice with her father. She has a natural dramatic ability and never has small problems. They all assume horrendous proportions which require much posturing and heart-rending anguish on her part. Inevitably some smitten adult comes to her rescue and is rewarded with a wonderful smile. She nearly always gets her way. She has been in ballet classes this year culminating in a concert which was right up her street. She started going along to watch Ryan at his guitar lessons and has ended up as the star of the Christmas shows with her brother. They are currently performing every Saturday and Sunday at Christmas parties with their music teacher. Fortunately Ryan and Lauren are still getting along with each other very well - Ryan maintaining his big brother role to good effect.

Sadly at the beginning of this year Cheryls mother passed away. She had been with us since the middle of last year after she had ended up in hospital in PE. She had become quite frail and had a fall which put her into hospital. She in fact never recovered from the op to repair her broken leg.

Cheryl's business is flourishing. Still being a home-based business means that she has time to spend with Ryan and Lauren (and to act as Mums taxi for the afternoons) but she has expanded her client base. During the course of the year she bought a partnership in the timeshare rental business and acquired 4 new secretarial clients. To a degree these replace declining custom from 2 of her other clients but the income is up very nicely. She has also joined International Training in Communication (the old Toastmistresses) and is doing very well with preparing and delivering talks and speeches (more normally my preserve). Cheryl has remained a very active member of the school management council (used to be the PTA) and was involved with the switch to non-racial education at the school this year. All in all she doesn't have a lot of time to sit idling but manages to keep up to date with her TV viewing (thanks to the wonders of video recording).

My year has been somewhat uneventful. I have continued with Sage as National Marketing Manager for their bureau services and we have had a reasonably successful year. During the course of the year VAT was introduced into the country and this caused a fair amount of program conversion and the consequent headaches. I didn't win the election as District Governor of Lions and am undecided as to whether to have another shot at it next year. I am still very involved as national Treasurer and have taken over chairmanship of the local Lion Mints project. I intend scaling down my activities over the next 2 years (assuming I don't stand as DG) and spending more time developing Cheryls business to the point where it can sustain my full-time involvement. Meanwhile I shall plough on at Sage and keep avoiding the attempts to get me to Johannesburg.

As you will have seen - no matter where you are in the world - there have been great changes in South Africa. We are on the way to a significant reform but the transition is proving every bit as difficult as I expected. At the root of most of the problems is the severe economic recession which has been around for close on ten years. Although the signs are that the economy has bottomed it will be late next year before the benefits of the upturn begin to flow through. Meanwhile the unemployment and consequent violence and lawlessness are getting to really serious levels. The repression of black leaders over the years has prevented them from establishing good personal power bases and effective local infrastructures and they appear incapable of controlling the mass of their membership. There is of course also much jockeying for a good position ahead of the multi-party talks due before the end of the year. However at least we seem to be headed in the right direction.

And that about wraps it up for this year. The letter was late despite frequent and increasingly threatening reminders from Cheryl and as a result the Post Office will benefit. We all hope that you have a wonderful Christmas and a happy and prosperous 1992.

All our love
 Tom, Cheryl, Susan & John

Sny hierdie klap eerste oop

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From Van

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To/Aan
 Mr and Mrs Pobltzer
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 Australia



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