

April 15, 2016
(February Letter)

Hi Samantha,

With the receipt of your February and March letters it's now my turn to play catch-up! I guess it was to be expected now that your semester is finished. I'm so pleased with how you managed to work through all the challenges it created for you and that you feel good about your accomplishment. Congratulations!

Fran and I are now in Stowe, Vermont – at the Village Green time-share. I expect you don't remember being in Stowe as a young child since you were so young (see the photos). We stayed at the Village Green in 1988 but at a nearby Stowe resort in 1999.

Fran bought the Village Green timeshare many years ago (in 1986) after we spent a lovely New Year's Eve at Smuggler's Notch – a ski hill nearby. We had such a great time that when we were invited to a presentation about a nearby timeshare we decided to check it out. The salesman did his job and Fran did hers so we left with a week in perpetuity at the Village Green. I, as usual, was skeptical, but after 30 years of great weeks I have finally agreed that it was a wonderful decision.

It meant that each year we would come down here for a week – usually around spring break – and get in some skiing and just hanging out. They have a pool, hot-tub, and games room at the Village Green but most of the time we were on the ski hill, at the Stowe Library, or nursing our aching muscles. Mostly, it was a chance to get our attention away from courses, exams, and school responsibilities. It even meant that the day-to-day demands around the house were left behind so the level of bickering and complaints were



nicely reduced. It made our hearts very happy.



One of the most memorable trips we made was the year when Daegan and JP were unable to join Fran and I because they had jobs and basketball practices that conflicted with the week chosen. This was a year when the week at Stowe coincided with my birthday, so I was somewhat disappointed that the whole family would not be around to celebrate. It would be okay, however, since Fran promised to make me a special dinner.

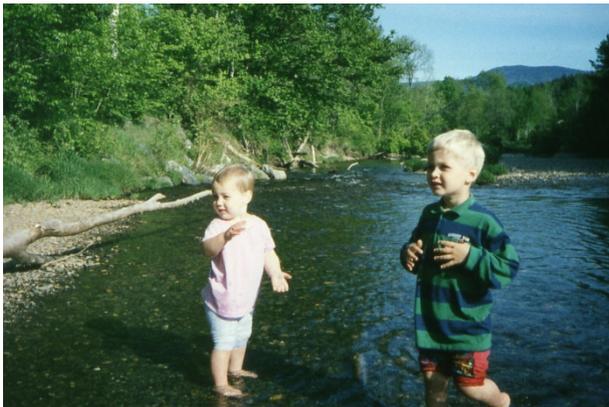
As we were ready to sit down to one of Fran's spectacular dinners there was a knock at the door. She asked me to answer it as she put the final touches to the feast. I thought it might be someone from the office since Fran always had business with them on our yearly trips.

When I opened the door – there was Daegan with a smile on her face and a home-make cake in her hands. JP was right behind. What a wonderful birthday present!!

The two of them had hopped in Daegan’s car as soon as her work shift was finished and driven down to join us for my birthday dinner and the night. It was a very special time.

The next day, they left early to get back in time for Daegan’s job and left me with a warm glow that has survived ‘til today. We heard later that they had trouble at the border since it took some time to convince the border guard that they would make such a trip – and not use it as a cover for some cross-border shopping.

Here are some photos of you with us rollerblading at Stowe. I like the one where we have harnessed Daegan so she can pull while I push you and Zach in the buggy.



Our Stowe visits are now a bit more laid back. Usually the Yates and/or Linda join us for a couple of days and we have the rest of the week on our own. Since we usually come at the end of the semester, the ski hills are often closing down but the recreation path is clear, so we bring our bikes and make use of them on the path and rural roads. Our daily bike trips usually end up at the Stowe library (where we check our internet) or at one of the coffee shops in town. This year most of the shops are closed or on limited schedule since it’s “mud season” – the time between winter and summer activities.

Love,