

"What a thing friendship is, world without end."

Robert Browning

Christmas 1994

Dear friends,

2600 E. Division #78 Mt. Vernon, WA. 98273

GREETINGS AGAIN FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. WE WELCOME THIS TIME OF SHARING.

LIVING NEAR THE MOUNTAINS HAS PROVIDED ANOTHER SEASON OF GOOD SKIING AND A SUMMER OF INTERESTING EXPLORATION. MY RUSSIAN STUDIES WERE NEGLECTED AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BECAUSE OF ABSENCES. I SPENT TWO WEEKS IN UKRAINE, THOUGH, AND THAT DID GIVE ME A CHANCE TO USE MY LIMITED VOCABULARY. I WAS WITH A CHURCH GROUP FROM MINNESOTA WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING SMALL INCUBATORS FOR BACK-YARD POULTRY GROWERS. THAT WENT FAIRLY WELL EVEN THOUGH I WAS RELYING ON EXPERIENCE OF 25 YRS. BACK. I MUCH ENJOYED VISITING COLLECTIVE FARMS, STATE-RUN AGRICULTURE, AND A FEW NEWLY-STARTED PRIVATE FARMS. AND I ALSO WAS ABLE TO VISIT OLD FRIENDS IN KIEV.

AS I WAS ABOUT TO START THE FALL CLASSES IN RUSSIAN I WAS ASKED TO GO TO ZIMBABWE FOR HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL (HPI). THAT ASSIGNMENT EXTENDED INTO SIX WEEKS. IT WAS GOOD TO BE BACK IN AFRICA AMONG FAMILIAR BIRDS AND PLANTS. I HAVE TO ADMIT, THOUGH, SOME OF THE TREE SPECIES WERE NEW TO ME. MY MAIN TASK WAS TEACHING FARMERS HOW TO BUILD TREE NURSERIES AND HOW TO GROW MULTI-PURPOSE TREES TO BUILD UP THEIR DEPLETED SOIL AND TO PROVIDE BROWSE FOR LIVESTOCK AND FIREWOOD AND BUILDING POLES. THAT GROUP OF FARMERS WERE NEWLY-PLACED IN A 'RESETTLEMENT SCHEME' OF NINE VILLAGES. THEY HAD RECEIVED DONATIONS OF SOME 50 DRAFT CATTLE FROM HPI. THEY WERE VERY RESPONSIBLE FARMERS AND WILL BECOME EXPERT TREE GROWERS. NEEDLESS TO SAY THE TWO BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN FINDING SUITABLE SITES FOR NURSERIES WERE THE LOCATION OF WATER FOR THE SEEDLINGS AND THE PROVISION OF PROTECTIVE FENCING FROM FREE-RANGING GOATS. MY LAST TWO WEEKS WERE SPENT IN VISITS TO A DOZEN OTHER ON-GOING LIVESTOCK PROJECTS INCLUDING DAIRY CATTLE, RABBITS, PIGS AND FISHPONDS. MY CONCLUSION WAS THAT HPI IS DOING A COMMENDABLE JOB AND DESERVES ALL THE SUPPORT IT CAN GET. I PARTICULARLY LIKED THE WAY THEY TRAINED PEOPLE IN ADVANCE OF RECEIVING THEIR DONATED ANIMALS. THEY ALSO HAVE GOOD RAPPORT WITH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AGENCIES IN AGRONOMY, FORESTRY AND VETERINARY SERVICES. IT WAS FUN DRIVING TO WORK EVERY DAY AND SEEING HERDS OF IMPALA OR ZEBRA WITH OCCASIONAL WART HOGS AND BABOONS DASHING ACROSS THE ROAD. AND I HAD A FREE WEEKEND TO VISIT VICTORIA FALLS WHICH IS CERTAINLY A GREAT NATURAL WONDER.

We did travel together this year. We met two of Lester's army friends and their wives in Hawaii for a 50th year reunion. We spent a week on Kauai before meeting them on the island of Hawaii for a pleasant 3 days of sight-seeing and remembrance. Each island had its unique attractions

including the Waimea Canyon which rivals the Grand Canyon in its beauty and the ever-present evidence of active volcanoes on Hawaii.

I made one minor foray on my own to York, Nebraska, where our college class of '44 had its 50th reunion. The gathering included persons from all classes. The response and the spirit was wonderful, reminding us again of the special place Y.C. held in our hearts.

I keep myself busy with various volunteer activities. This year I took training and became a volunteer for Hospice. I received an award as volunteer of the year for my work with the adult day care. Two days a week I tutor Hispanic children in an elementary school. We are both much involved in activities of the church.