

THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER

VOL X NO 3 JANUARY '92

When icicles hang by the wall, And Dick, the shepherd, blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall, And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul, Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whoo; Tu-whit, tu-who -- a merry note... Shakespeare

LEGUIN COMING TO BELOIT

WILL TEACH FOR 6 WEEKS; PUBLIC READING IS MARCH 26, 8PM (CHAPEL?)

Beloit, WI. What more can I say? I'll get to meet her at last! She'll be MacKey Scholaz, Beloit's most prestigious visiting honor. 30 students applied to be in her advanced writing class; 15 were appointed. Tom McBride, chair of the English Dept., pulled this coup I know not how. As many ENNL readers know I have an Earthsea bathroom -- map covered, you can lie in the tub and view Havnor at the naval of the world, and Selidor is on the wall above your left eider. I own & have read practically everything she's written (never could hack Orsinian Tales) and regularly teach Earthsea and Left Hand in my Fantasy classes. This semester the grads read the whole Earthsea cycle -- it used to be a trilogy, but there's a new final volume 18 years later, that finally does right by the Earthsea women -- and 5 or 6 undergrads were so fired up by Vol. 1 that they read all 4 books & joined in the grad discussion. Interesting that my two living heros, Stephen Jay Gould and Ursula LeGuin, I will have both met/heard at Beloit. What an Alma Mater! Appropriate at this point, I guess, to print a bit from Tove Jansson's Tales from Moomin Valley; it's translated from the Swedish, to British English, hence "creep" where we'd translate "creeper." Snufkin is a loner, composing a tune, and the creep flounders through a brook to approach him. The creep's eyes glow with admiration: "I know who you are. You're Snufkin. I'm so happy to meet you." "Hello," Snufkin answered coldly.



"May I warm myself by your fire?" the creep continued, its wet little face shining with happiness. 'Just think of it, then I'll be the creep who has sat by Snufkin's camp-fire. I'll never forget that.'

The creep edged closer, laid one paw on Snufkin's knapsack and solemnly whispered:

'Is this where you keep the mouth organ? Do you have it here?'

'Yes,' Snufkin said, rather crossly. His tune was lost, loneliness was gone, all was different.

'Now, don't mind me,' the creep said innocently. 'In case you'd like to play, I mean. You'd never guess how I long for a little music. I've never heard any. But I've heard about you. The hedgehog, and Toffie, and my mother, they've all told me ... Toffie has even seen you, once! Yes, you can't imagine ...'

'Well, what's your name?' Snufkin asked. The evening was spoiled anyway, so he thought it easier to talk.

'I'm so small that I haven't got a name,' the creep said eagerly. 'As a matter of fact, nobody's even asked me about it before. And then I meet you, whom I've heard so much about and always longed to see, and the first thing you ask me is what my name is!'

'You can't ever be really free if you admire somebody too much,' Snufkin suddenly said, 'I know.'

'I know you know everything,' the little creep prattled on, edging closer still. 'I know you've seen everything. You're right in everything you say, and I'll always try to become as free as you are ...'

So -- I'll sit at Ursula LeGuin's campfire, listen to her tune, the evening won't be spoiled, and I hope to be less transparent than the creep! For a few LeGuin words, see p. 2

TO EVERYONE WHO SENT ME HOLIDAY GREETINGS-- THANK YOU! If you're a regular peruser of ENNL, you'd be blind not to know that like Shoe (below) I'm pretty poor at controlling the paper-flow in my life, though I work at it constantly. I seem to generate it rather than decrease it! I haven't managed Christmas cards in years, and this newsletter isn't a Christmas letter but a regular issue.* Maybe when I'm retired Please forgive, & don't forget me!



I haven't managed Christmas cards in years, and this newsletter isn't a Christmas letter but a regular issue.* Maybe when I'm retired Please forgive, & don't forget me! (* pp. 1 & 2, at least)

I printed, I think, four of these "Fantastic Things" several years ago, but feel like printing them again. I gave this as a scroll to the members of this fall's outstanding Fantasy class, at our final evening, our Tolkien elven banquet. I do not know what the Elvish runes mean.

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FIVE FANTASTIC THINGS
Fantasy Class, Fall, 1991

For the
Fantasy Club
members from
Jackie
Lott's
Banquet,
Dec. 17,
1991

Fantastic Thing #1:

That there is anything at all. That there is space, and matter, and time, and electrons, and neutrinos, and atoms, and suns and stars and planets and rocks and interstellar dust clouds, all whirling around; that there is simply the verb, "to be." That "is" is! . . . There's not a blessed reason for why there should be anything, and it absolutely boggles the imagination, and whether your answer is God, or chance, or you simply shake your head in amazement, it's still just as unlikely and improbable and enigmatic and inexplicable and fantastic.

Fantastic Thing #2:

That life exists, on this rock, or anywhere else--and since we now know that there are millions of galaxies it would be remarkable indeed if it happened here only--life, as opposed to inert matter, rocks, atoms, etc. How unlikely. How mysterious. How fantastic!

Pantastic Thing #3:

That cognizant life exists: i.e., that we're here, knowing, and knowing that we know. Thinking life that can entertain a String Theory, build a particle accelerator, compose Bach cantatas, Middle Earth, Selidor. Reasoning life, that can look on a situation and problem-solve.

Fantastic Thing #4:

That there are such things as emotions and spirit that go along with life and cognizant life--that we experience compassion, empathy, reverence, a sense of justice and fair play--and that we are capable of that most unlikely, most improbable, most un-think-up-able blending of emotion and spirit, love.

Fantastic Thing #5:

That I, that you, individually, a self-aware self, am/are here, now, alive, reasoning, creating, weeping, worshiping, loving, dancing. The odds of this particular occurrence must be one to infinity.

Ursula LeGuin writes, in Farthest Shore, " . . . This is. And thou art. There is no safety and there is no end. The word must be heard in silence; there must be darkness to see the stars. The dance is always danced above the hollow place, above the terrible abyss." May we all, with joy and wonder and faith, continue to dance the Great Mysteries, above the Unfathomable Abyss!

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Ursula K. Le Guin is the much-honored author of more than fifteen novels, approximately sixty short stories, poetry (including chapbooks and three collections), seven books for children (one a winner of the National Book Award), criti-

cism (including two collections), and screenplays.

Born in Berkeley, California, the daughter of writer Theodora Kroeber and anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber, she has degrees from Radcliffe College (B.A.) and

Columbia University (M.A.) and lives in Portland, Oregon, with her husband, historian Charles A. Le Guin. In 1991 she was honored by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters with the Harold D. Vursell Memorial Award.

← For ENNL readers who don't know: She won the Nat. Book Award for *Farthest Shore*.

(Beloit Daily News, Nov. 1991)

Treble Clef celebrates 90th

Treble Clef will mark the 90th anniversary of its founding on Nov. 20 with a 6:30 p.m. dinner at First Congregational Church.

The music organization was locally founded on Nov. 19, 1901.

The dinner is by reservation, with members, guests and friends welcome. Reminiscences and reading of congratulatory correspondence will follow the meal. Govert Vercooter, past president of the Wisconsin Federation of Music Clubs and Treble Clef will speak, reflecting memorable times in music. Esther Vercooter, president of WPMC District One will add remembrances of Treble Clef in this branch.

The program for the evening of Nov. 20, entitled "Come Reminiscence With Us" will include selections by Carrie Jacobs Bond, a composer born in Janesville. Her compositions are those songs which were such an integral part of music in the early 1900's when Treble Clef was founded.



Dougan



Wolfe

Eudora Shepherd will accompany members of Treble Clef singing the Bond songs. Vocalists are Helen Buehl, Debra Ramsey, Kaaren Torkelson, Betty Bohenek, Tom Freeman, Gary Cook, and Govert Vercooter. The narrator is Bernice Glodowski.

The social committee is chaired by Jessie Wendorf and Fridola Kindschi assisted by Irene Petrych, Lois Lenz, Margaret Howe and Dorothy Harrison.

Hostesses are Betsy Anderson and Elizabeth Reinholz.

History and highlights of the founding of Treble Clef at the turn of the century surround the setting of the marriage ceremony of Ethel Morris to Rolf Rosman in the old Baptist Church which stood on what was then School Street but today is East Grand Avenue. Wedding songs were prepared to be sung by friends of the bride and lighter songs were also presented by the group at the reception.

These women so enjoyed the presentation they vowed to meet six days after the wedding to form a music society which they called Treble Clef. The date was Nov. 19, 1901. Since that date, 90 seasons of Treble Clef programs have been presented to audiences interested in music. The club is the only performing club for musicians of all instruments and drama in Beloit and is the largest in the state.

Former members

Through the years, operas, oper-

ettas, skits and concerts have been presented to the public without charge.

The late Vera Wardner Dougan was perhaps the most illustrious member, having been Treble Clef president, she went on to become both Wisconsin and National Federation of Music Clubs' president. She spoke in every state of the union and continued her concern throughout her life.

The late Harry Wolfe, pianist, was a favorite performer that pleased audiences of all ages and walks of life. In the past he and Maurice Schuster were duo-pianists in great demand.

There are hundreds of performers who have been loyal members during the ninety year span.

Treble Clef has a scholarship program for seniors of high school and 84 awards have been given since 1954.

Bebit Dad went to this event. When Craig was a small boy he said to Mother, "Mommy, what's all the trouble about?" VWD: "Why, what trouble, Craig?" Craig: "The trouble is Treble Clef." ... Jackie, probably Craig, had Harry Wolfe for 7th grade English. He was a godfather to the Walsh girls, and a life-long friend. He was always fun, so upbeat & cheery. And his piano playing!!!

NEWS BRIEFS

West Bend, WI Katie Yde writes to Grandpa, "Since I can't call this to the attention of any of my friends, I'm going to show you! High honors means a 4.0 -- the 6th grade is approx. 330 students."

December 10, 1991
Badger Middle School's honor roll students for the first quarter include:
6TH GRADE High Honors
Greg Gromowski, Frances Liu, Angela Maney, Nicholas Palmer, Katherine Weichsel, Nicholas Wiedmeyer and Sonja Yde.

California, Reno: Over Christmas break, Elle visited her sisters Gillian & Megan & their families, skied, gained strength for next semester!

Beloit From Grandpa: "So much to read, so much not to understand, and me with only two ears to scratch!"
Reno When EANN Ed was visiting Gillian in Sept., she returned to the house to find Gillian busily threshing amaranth seeds, from which she planned to make flour, & then bread. The Ed. has always maintained that GPJ is a most interesting -- and interested -- person! (Amaranth is an edible "weed" that grows wild and you can eat the young plants in salad, or cook as spinach, as you can lamb's quarters, aka pig weed. Both tasty.)



CULTURE VULTURE CORNER

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

All his life he tried to be a good person.



Many times, however, he failed, for after all, he was only human.



He wasn't a dog.

Or Mommy Dougan!



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TOM, JEREMY MOVED TO VERSE BY GRANDFATHER'S PLIGHT

Now the story can be told, and I'll let Tom Schmidt tell it: he's writing to his grandfather on January 30, 1991, from Wyoming, and the troops he refers to are himself and brother Jeremy, with perhaps some help from wives Terece and Wendy. "As frightened and concerned as we all were out here by your 'glimpse of the cloven hoof,' and the discomfort--all right, AGONY--of recuperating from your heart attack, I developed a peculiar queasiness very time I thought about your removing--nay, RIPPING-- your catheter from that staff of life to which we all trace our lineage. There being only one reliable purgative for such mental anguish--and I mean THAT ONE woke me up at night a couple times--the troops here immediately indulged in a limerick jag, the results of which follow:"

It was late on a night in December
With Gramps contemplating his member,
To be more than frank,
They'd run a tube up his crank,
That prevented some much needed slumber

And what's more of this ill-tailored drain
It caused puddles, some itching and pain.
Poor Gramps pulled his light
For the nurses that night
But his signalling all seemed in vain.

"Well," he thought to himself with a sigh,
"If I wait long enough I might dry."
But there's limits to patience
With cantankerous patients
And Ron's had run out by and by.

In a flash good man Ron thought it out.
"What's the harm? Disconnect! Do not pout."
"In or out, goodness gosh,
"The sheets'll still slosh
"But I'll banish the pain from my spout."

What poor Ron certainly did not know
Was the tube that led in down below
At the end had a bubble
Which, inflated, meant trouble
Should he suddenly unstring his bow

SOME HORRID NEWS ITEMS I DON'T FIND STRANGELY HILARIOUS

From here & there. I guess I've been repressing them. Vermont: The POT HOLE is GONE! Oh, it's still there but it's lost to our picnics, & sliding down the rocks into the icy cold deep pool. Someone's bought the land (I thought it was all part of the Green Mt. Forest Preserve), built a house w/ back porch, ghetto blaster within sight & sound of the pothole, & erected huge signs & lots of barbed wire, NOT TRESPASSING, Phyllis Waldo's. I trespassed, of course, but our stay was very uneasy & brief. So there goes our mountain brook, unless we climb all the way to Buchanan Lodge, that those fools burned down years ago by building a fire on the floor. But the stream is still there. Then, Chez Nous; the cloverleaf-strip off I-90 where the Freemans outlet is, and all those other bldgs & neon etc that desecrate the rural night: Last year, within a FEWDAYS (one visit to the farm & the next) they built one of those huge water towers like a bull on a stick, and from the highway it looks

"Well, we've been through a lot, my old friend,"
Said dear Gramps as he grasped the end.
"But you know it's quite true
"This hurts me more than you,
"So now to this task let us bend."

Now Gramps girded his loins in his pond
And endeavored to break the dread bond.
With one mighty yank
He distended Ole Hank
Which impressed his health aide, a young blonde.

Now the sight of his magnified wand
(An effect of which Ron grew quite fond)
Soon startled his relatives
They shrieked, "Oh my God it lives!"
And laughter rang clear down to Ultra Sound.

Now the moral of this grand char-ahd,
Is to spoil a child spare the rod;
'Tis better to bend
Than to break, my old friend.
No man is an isle, pass the grog!

The above I think is mostly by Tom, for there is a note from Jeremy saying, "A small contribution from me to accompany Tom's epic limerick. Obviously this action by Grandpa made a big impression on the male members of the family!"

He thought that he felt a leak
From the tube someone stuck in his beak.
So he gave it a yank
From out of his crank
Which caused all the nurses to freak.

Ron discovered that day in December
They'd stuck the wrong tube in his member.
And hating the trickle
That came from his pickle
With a tug himself nearly dismembered.



That night, their revenge was meted out on both Farmer MacDougal and his wife. The next day, police investigators found a scene that they could describe only as "grisly, yet strangely hilarious."

fairly ordinary, but from the farm its horrid, & its especially horrid from the back pasture, where as you walk the bull part begins peeping over the brow of the hill and like a full moon is magnified so that it's HUGE, & like a GREAT EYE (ie. creeping Beloit--galloping Beloit) is watching you. You simply can't believe its size & intrusion from Chez Nous! THEN, down at the Dairy, the guy living in the Big House went to the Milk House & BURNED hundreds of DOUGAN seed bags, with the big ears of corn on them. He said they were wet, but only part of them were, and each one (even the wet, dried out) was a collector's item. I was going to paper one wall of the cottage with them. ALSO, the side barn has been helped to fall down, it's a pile of rubble w/ beams being salvaged. The Round Barn will go, next. There's more, but I'm out of room & can't remember; still repressing.

WHILE we're publishing overdue Occasional "poetry," here's some more:

Hinesburg Pond. Eva Walsh found these verses, this summer, going through various folders in Grumkin. The occasion is the Walshes' Fortieth Wedding Celebration, where throughout the evening many toasts were given, songs sung and poetry (ahem) recited, each offering washed down with a copious liquid draught. These lines are a joint effort by the Empty Nest editor and Carol Dell.

"Twas the Fortieth Feast Day and all round the lake
Was a hustle and bustle that made the hills shake.
Jackie was out raiding the gardens at dawn
With owners asleep or conveniently gone.
The Dells were green-beaning with onions and cheese,
Cracker crumbs, almonds, and no time to sneeze.
The dusty green Dotsun was stuffed full of trash
And off to the dump it careened in a flash
With Chris'tina, Peppie, Chad, Melanie too,
Picking through garbage to admire the view.
William and Alison, Burlington bound,
Were sure than on Main Street a cake could be found.
Now time out for sailing, for blue skies and wind,
Sun on the water and Madeline's grin.
Sarah's serenely absorbing the sun
While watching the kids at their squabbles and fun.
Peppie and Chad wildly paddle the mats;
Marcus is languid, stretched out on the slats.
Christina is picking her way o'er the rocks
(Remember dear Uncle Fred, washing his socks?)
Megan and Caitlin and Demie and Don
Arrive here at 3, and the party is on.
Megan picks flowers for a super bouquet
Katie makes place cards in colors so gay,
When up on the road there arises a clatter,
From Bowkers, Moores, Munfords--

And at that point the party really did begin, and Jackie and Carol never finished their poem! Here are some shorter ones from the same occasion, by the same literary team, no doubt written earlier, but judging by their quality, between the soup and the salad.

To a couple named Walsh let us sing,
From whom most here assembled did spring.
The vigor and wish
That accomplished this
Is attested by this gathering.

ENNLED • DEMI HEAR NOSE SINGING

Mips. Or is it "throat"? More than one note by one singer at once; sung/chaunted by 20 or so Tibetan monks in yellow mulberry robes. Jere & Wendy went half way around the world; Demi & I stood with our chins practically on the monks' shoulders while they chaunted, then swept the most colorful, intricate sand-painted mandala into Tupperware (transferred to an ornate brass pot), played their drums, tamborines, & great long horns that sound like a moose in heat, thence processed (with hundreds of people) to a bridge, where with more chaunts, & ceremonies between them & St. Paul, they poured the sand into the Mississippi. A traffic stopping event, thrilling! and Demi & I in the front lines. I enjoyed my several days in Mips, eating at Japanese, Thai & Vietnamese restaurants, D's church, D's friends Ned & Wendy & Judy. And I helped make

To a couple named Walsh let us ditty,
Who daily, and bitty by bitty,
Through loving and caring
And giving and sharing
Are building the Heavenly City.

To a couple named Walsh let us raise
Our strains of harmonious praise,
Without whom, at the least,
We'd not have this fine feast
Or our addled alco'hollic daze.

(alternate lines:
For without their creation
There'd be no celebration,
Or this fine alcholic daze.)

(For this next one, you have to use the Vermont pronunciation of Eva, with an "r" on the end.)

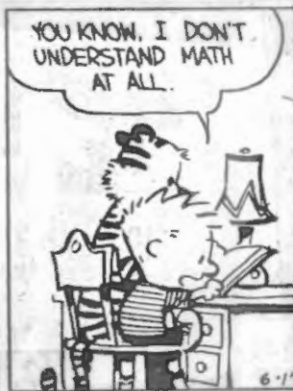
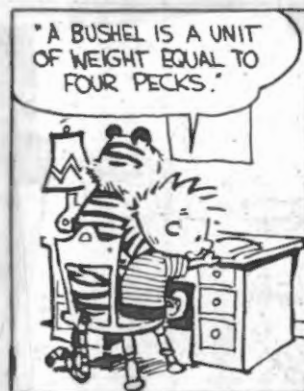
"I am leaving at seven," says Eva,
In a laundry-dump-grocery store fever.
We arrive before dawn
Lest the car should be gone:
For we've learned we must more than believe her!

(And then, this final one may be in bad taste, but I swear it's the honest-to-God truth. Chad's study, that first year at Rockhaven, wasn't in Grumkin Hall, but in the largish and busy anteroom to the toilet. I think we read this one at the party after everyone was well loosened and oiled, themselves.)

Chad wrote his first verse in the toilet.
This venue did not seem to spoil it--
The rushing and gushing
And mushing and flushing
Served only to loosen and oil it.

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

Mips. Bill Hathaway, long time friend and ENNL reader, and known to all you ENNLites who were on the Mystery Trip, had a heart attack on Weds. Jan 8. Dorothy reported that from the Cardio-Care Unit that very night he was calling for history books to read, and on Sat. was writing letters to the Editor of the main Mips newspaper on some political matter that needed his erudition. Monday the 13th's angiogram shows some artery blockage; Bill's not a good candidate for bypass, so it'll probably be angioplasty + medication. You can write to him at 111 Orlin Ave S.E., Mips., MN 55414, and Dorothy'll deliver.

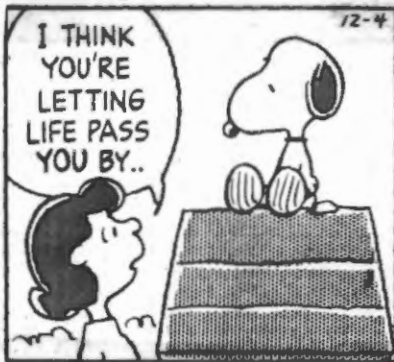


And a quick Valentine smooch to all of you! I won't get an issue out before then, not with term starting, & me drowning.

Demi has a cat Cheswick that talks all the time!!!

CHICAGO'S WFMT LANDS DULUTH'S DANSCHMIDT ("BARNY" to GRANDPA!)
 Chicago Dan wasn't looking for a job, he was happy managing his Duluth public radio stations, and doing a good job. Such a good job that when he was called as a reference for the Chicago job, the caller called back, later, said they were broadening the search, asked if Dan would throw his hat in the ring. Sure, why not, said Dan, figuring it'd be good experience to go through the process. The first interview lasted 7 hours! was followed by a 2nd interview, & then Dan was offered the job. He & Julie had to decide whether to uproot. Chicago was attractive with expanded musical opportunities for Julie, the job a great challenge -- so they took it, & are buying a house in Winnetka. WFMT is Chicago's Fine Arts Station, broadcasts not only music but poetry, fiction, radio drama. It's FM, 40 yrs. old, has an annual budget of \$5.2 million. Dan is Sr. V.P. for Radio, & I think manages the whole shebang. They're all settling into Winnetka, but are missing friends in Duluth. CONGRATULATIONS, DAN!

Belsit Elle, taking her mom(ma) clothes shopping: "No, you don't want that. It makes you look like the sort of person who puts plastic over her living room furniture." (I didn't buy it.)



KATIE COOKS FOR THIRTY-ONE!
 West Bend, WI And what was the menu, on that gala Christmas Day? BEEF WELLINGTON!! Now in case you've never had it, it's a long beef tenderloin sliced with some sort of thick gravy between the slices -- then it is encased in dough; laid on a flat oval, and an upper crust put over it & down the sides, then the top decorated with dough to resemble King Tut, the whole thing baked, and when golden brown the lid is sliced around the base, lifted off intact, and there is the beef-mummy in its fragrant, tender glory. She made 3 of these! And appetizers: shrimp, etc.; wonderful individual salads; bacon & almond beans; Jo brought a stew with pesto, & there were several different cakes for dessert. Incredible! It was a sit-down meal with elegant china, crystal, etc. (Jo & hula & I brought some). Loads of children, lots of talk & laughter. Jackie brought RAD, great grandpa to be there, & we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. On our side of the family were the Danschmidt family; the host family; & Dad & me; the rest were all Dick's family -- his parents, & 7 brothers & sisters & their families! Katie, Dick, Sonja, Josh & Ben relaxed the next day by driving to Wyoming to visit Jeremy & Wendy, Tom & Terese, & to ski. Thanks, Kate, Dick, Jo, for a great time! (I'm gratified that Sonja, now Josh, are enjoying my books.)

Chicago Maddie (Hambling) got on an elevator, an entering man caught his foot in the crack, flopped & flopped. "Help him!" a woman already on the ele. kept insisting. Maddie knelt & did, the foot came loose surprisingly easily. He limped away to "walk it off," the woman got off too -- and too late, Maddie found her wallet gone.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR, & ONE TO GRANDPA

Dear Jackie, June 20, 1991
 What a work of love! And what a treasure for us all! I relived the service and had a good cry as I thought of the wonderful times I have had with Chad and Eva. They came to me here at Juniata at a very dry time in my life, and, as you know they can do, got the springs flowing again. They could open up a heart as few people can. Their edition of the Empty Nest must surely be the greatest you have done. . . . My thanks for a superb job that helps us all to relive that very special time.
 As ever, Esther (Doyle)

Dear Grandpa Dougan, July 17, 1991
 Thanks for the money. I bought the Lego Space Shuttle!!!! It's awesome. I built it right away. I plan on using it when the U.S.A. launches the shuttle. I'm going to launch mine while they are. I play with it about every day. I love you
 Love, Joshua Yde

READ THIS, YOUSE GUYS!!!

I'm going along as Second in command, on a Fantasy Trip to England, May 23-June 8. Last year some of you came up with friends who wanted to go on the Mystery Trip, but too late. Who are they? What about you? Do you know anyone who'd be interested? The price is cheap, & my trips, so far, are unusual, personal, and FUN! (Helen K. is patterning this trip closely on mine -- we'll even have Cecil, our coach driver, for the 4th time. ©) SO WILL YOU PASS ON THE ENCLOSED BROCHURE TO SOMEONE LIKELY, or who would publicize? I don't have to do all the recruiting this year, & we already have 12 going, (out of 23 spaces) but I'd love to travel w/ friends, or w/ friends

of friends -- PASS ON THE PAMPHLET! -- that is, if you get one. I may not have enough & each one will cost me a 23¢ stamp to enclose. But if you don't get one, & are interested, ASK!!!

