Greetings from sunny Arizona,

Each year we think that the new year will be less
hectic than the old one, but somehow we are always wrong!
Someone told me that the older one gets, the faster time
passes. Guess that puts Jim and me somewhere around the
hundred mark!

We have had a very interesting, busy, and challenging
year. Jim is now in his third year as Assistant Archaeologist
for the Arizona State Museum. He is often called away to do
surface surveys, so he has an opportunity to see much of
Arizona--sometimes parts that none of the rest of us would
care to see!

This past summer he was again the Assistant Director
for the University of Arizona Archaeological Field School,
at Grasshopper, Arizona. This nine week session imposes a
rigorous schedule of supervising students, directing the
writing up of field notes and observations, taking hundreds
of photos of burials, and lecturing or attending lectures
in the evening. Jim enjoys the challenge of working with
these graduate students very much. I have been the hostess
for the field school for the past two years and am looking
forward to the experience again this year.

We took our yearly field trip to the Grand Canyon and
to the Second Mesa to see the Hopi Niman Kachina Dance.
This is the last dance of the summer season, and after this
dance the Hopi believe the kachinas go back to their home
at the San Francisco Peaks. The rhythmic precision, grace,
and elegance of the kachina dancers and their costumes are
always an awesome experience. The kachinas performed an
unusually effective dance, for rain followed us all the way
back to our field school. In fact, we had to sleep in our
vehicles overnight because the first arroyo we cross
approaching our field school was flowing and we couldn't
pass through it.

This fall Jim is working on the downtown urban renewal
project. The unsightly slum area in and around downtown is
being demolished and new modern civic buildings will soon
be erected. This project has just begun, so artifacts of
great importance or of particular interest have not yet been
discovered.

Jim also finds his name in print. He has published a number of archaeological papers and this coming spring a paper which Dr. Longacre and Jim co-authored will be published in a book discussing new archaeological approaches.

He is taking a course at the U. of A., too, so you can see he's trying to stay out of mischief.

Fourth graders, 34 of them, are keeping me busy this year. I have a delightful class and am thoroughly enjoying them. I think at least one youngster has a mutual feeling for in her autobiography she wrote,"Of all the teacher's I've had this year, Mrs. Ayres is the best." Needless to say, I've been the ONLY teacher she's had this year!

I also have a student teacher. She is a senior at the University of Arizona, and after this semester, she will have only three units to take to meet graduation requirements. She student teaches during the morning and will be with us until the middle of January. She is fast learning that teaching is a very complex and busy job.

Nine o'clock Sunday mornings find me in the kitchen at church teaching the Intermediate (1st and 2nd year) High School Sunday School class. I am enjoying this very much. This age group is a real challenge.

I hope I've studied my modern math adequately for in January I take office as Secretary-Treasurer of our Ladies Guild at church. On second thought, I might fare better by trying to forget modern math!

On Tuesday evenings, I tutor a sixth grade youngster for an hour. I'm certainly getting experience in teaching various grade levels, but my heart belongs to fourth graders.

Little Peanuts is just fine--getting fatter and sassier. She surely keeps me company when Jim is away. In fact, she's not always happy to see him because she enjoys a few extra privileges when Jim is away.

Guess that brings us through another year--and speaking of that--we wish all of you the joys and blessings of the holiday season and the best of everything in the new year.

Did the coat arrive okay?

Sincerely,

Joyce & Jim