

How often I think of you
John. Wish we'd had more time at INQUA.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

One morning last March I was awakened at 2 a.m. by a half-frozen Mexican truck driver banging in through a screen door beside my cot and shouting "¿Hay café?" On another cot snored Sir. Daggett, our driver, and in a tumbledown adobe room across the muddy courtyard of Rancho Grosso a half-wakeful hen was plotting how she could sneak into Les' and Gene's adobe hovel to lay her egg in comfort on Gene's sleeping bag while we were absent at our customary huge breakfast.

We were in Baja California.

We had been surveying for archaeological sites about the turquoise blue Bay of Los Angeles, sleeping on a screen porch within sound of lapping waves and screaming gulls, 300 miles from any smog or traffic. At Rancho Grosso (which we named the Chapala-Hilton), we had continued our survey inland for early and middle period sites. There is little early material on that coast, although I suspect that sites of this kind could be found under 50 fathoms of water.

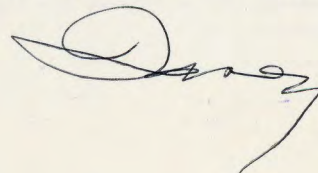
We were in Baja California because last year Red True and I got an NSF grant of \$21,500 to test-excavate Early Man camps around Panamint Dry Lake and to survey more widely for similar evidence. The excavations at Panamint prospered beyond our hopes. First, we hired an insolvent contractor to put in six long bulldozer cuts through our sites around Panamint playa. We batted 350 on these. We transected unexpected bits of organic mat dating something more than 10,000 years B.P. Above the beds there begin traces of hearths and activities of primitive people who probably were chopping cattails and harvesting ducks before the last lake dried out. This work is producing several publications and I have applied for a new grant.

During the early summer I had the privilege of playing hostess for a week to a most delightful Hungarian guest -- Lasló Vértés, archaeologist from Budapest. I hope to go abroad next summer to work with him at a Middle Paleolithic site and also to see my sister in Paris.

In August I attended the INQUA meetings in Boulder and from there went on a polyglot field conference and talked fractured French, German, and Russian with people who were struggling with fractured English.

As soon as I got this grant, I found myself cast into the unwanted position of being a fifth-rate executive -- letters, bills, telephones, visitors, and, worst of all, a growing mountain of humanly-altered rocks. To solve this problem, I hired a gem. The first full-time assistant I ever had. This is the only way to live. Barbara runs the Panamint Project and I am just the window-dresser and the outside man. I thoroughly enjoy her. One of the many delightful aspects of the past year's work has been the fine new friends I have made in connection with the work. The little project seemed to be a natural which attracted the younger and more energetic scientists. I just returned from a week's tour of the Mojave Desert with one of them. We had a blast; long talks beside blazing campfires, conversations and discoveries, the finest seafood dinner of my life in Las Vegas and the (to me) astonishing disclosure that the barren deserts of eastern California are a rich province of varied plant and animal life and of hidden springs and pools of unbelievable beauty.

I look forward to your Xmas letters and cards, and a happy, happy season to you from



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90024



Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cat-tru

Rt. 1

Kimberly

Flora

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