

OF UNITED STATES' POSTINGS

Harvard — Canadian Studies Centre: If you want to meet "Who is Who" in Canadian public life and political science you should frequent their seminars and lectures. (After all, who in Canada would refuse to speak at Harvard?) I remember memorable speeches, in the days preceding the Referendum, by Mr. Levesque, Mr. Davis and many others.

Private Schools — an industry in New England; fascinating for me, as a teacher, to analyze the myth and realities of these institutions and a topic discussed in detail at any social gathering with parents of school-aged children.

And last but not least, the beauty of the New England landscape. There are the mountains of Vermont for skiing and hiking and miles of sand shoreline for beach-combing, sailing and swimming and all of this is within easy reach from Boston. A sea of wild daffodils followed by apple blossoms and rows of creamy magnolia trees on Boston's main shopping street, are my memories of spring in Massachusetts.

I could go on and on but...psst...a secret tip for a great posting, is Boston. (That's what we Canadians agreed, anyway, when we were there.) And did I say "not exotic"? Perhaps not, but I did use Spanish with the cleaning-woman, German in lessons taught at a local school, French with other Canadians and Franco-Americans and a form of English with the canny, proud, democratic and friendly descendants of early Bostonians in the city "where it all began".

SAN FRANCISCO

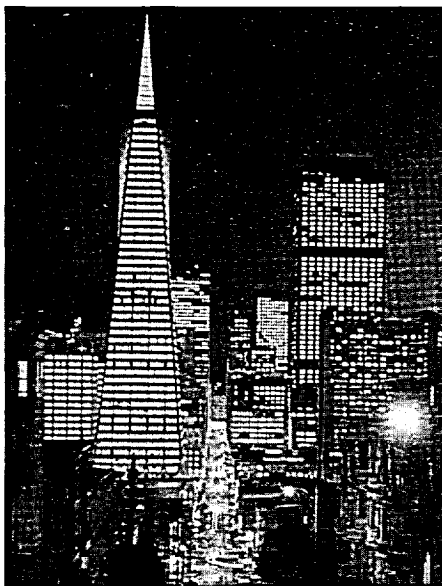
by Carolyn Sunquist

Carolyn, Ken and their sons, Stephen, 9 and Sean, 7 were in San Francisco from September 1980 to July 1983.

Arriving in San Francisco after a three year Eastern European posting is truly an experience to awaken one's senses. The Golden Gate bridge is as striking a structure as the pictures paint it to be. The city is the old of the Victorian facades and the new of the Transamerica pyramid. The mingling masses of left over Beatniks, Hippies and Yuppies have made their identifiable marks of generations past and the urban sophisticated business class points to the future of the financial center of the west coast. Where does one Canadian Foreign Service family expect to fit into this fascinating but multi-faceted city on the Bay?

Being a typical family on the move, our first priority led us to seek shelter.

Temporary accommodation at the Mark Hopkins Hotel was a wonderful beginning made all the more exciting by a hotel union workers strike — dragging ones dirty laundry through the hotel lobby can make you feel conspicuous to say the least. Our next effort was to find a permanent place to plant ourselves for our posting, taking into consideration personal preferences and rent guidelines as Bay area housing is expensive by any standard. The first big decision was between the strong lure of the city with accessibility to its many attractions or family life in the suburbs which meant a time consuming commute. Our family of four — dad, mom and two young boys left the fog of the city for the sun of the suburbs on the peninsula and a comfortable home in the hills.



San Francisco

Settling into our new community presented many revealing experiences which were our own personal symptoms of "culture shock" and readjustment. Traffic was a new word in our vocabulary, navigating our own neighbourhood required a map in hand and a trip across the Golden Gate and through Sausalito was a days venture. The consumerism was baffling; everything from quaint boutiques to sprawling malls. Stores all around offered tempting horizons for an already straining budget, add Sunday shopping and you fall into a favourite pastime of the locals. The choices for entertainment were overwhelming; the endless variety of restaurants, the opportunity for art lovers to browse, and weekend outings to the beach in Carmen or the slopes of Tahoe beckoned the outdoor enthusiast.

Once adjusted to home, school and California living, life in our community was a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

One of our prime concerns was in the area of education. Proposition 13 was voted in by the taxpayers in the late 1970's to curb rising community expenditures. The trickle down effect consequently eliminated several municipal services and restraint in educational budgets resulted in cut-backs of staff, deletion of programs and a lowering of maintenance in the schools. Many people in the San Francisco core turned to parochial and private schools and the innovative boards of the public schools in the suburbs sought ways to compensate for their dwindling resources through fund raisers and heavy recruitment of volunteer services. The newest and seemingly effective booster was the soliciting of residents and businesses to donate funds with the parents being requested to give a suggested minimal contribution (83's was \$400.00 per child). The incongruity of it all came to light on seeing five Apple II computers in a ten room school.

Few postings offer the pleasures of life found in California and while you may not leave your heart in San Francisco you will take with you a treasure of fond memories.

DALLAS, TEXAS

by Beverly Valentine

Beverly, Doug and two of their three children lived in Dallas from September 1978 to July 1980.

Texas is unique. Texas is more than J.R. and Sue Ellen. Texas is a composite of many impressions. Football, be it the high school game, the midget tournament or the Super Bowl, generates enormous genuine enthusiasm and involvement.

Concurrent with the Southern establishment, "old money" and the expansion of the oil industry, is the world of technology, of computers, of fighter aircrafts. Advancements in the field of medicine and the international reputation of hospitals and doctors, like Dr. de Bakey, are impressive.

No less important is the Texan's regard for the Arts, be it music, museums, ballet or universities and their well-endowed libraries. The Mark Rathko Chapel in Houston is an example of artistic endowment. Symphonies have their seasons and art galleries not only boast worthwhile collections but foster revolving exhibitions, such as Pompeii.

Southern friendliness is not superficial. In this very open society where wealth seems omnipresent, there is not only keen civic pride but a great sensitivity to the encompassing responsibility of being nationally an American but primarily a Texan.