

People all over the nation, from California to Maryland, not forgetting Minnesota and Tennessee, will soon be reading the latest small-time magazine, Murdock Muse. This magazine, published monthly, will self-destruct in 12 months, when it turns into a pumpkin, or whatever the editors decide to do for 1992.

If you want to see your drawings or writing in print, send them to the editors in Baltimore. You can send anything up to 8 1/2 by 11 inches that you think will copy well. The publishers will be using state-of-the-art cut and paste techniques, so no special format is necessary.

Come one, come all. Send us your neat stuff, so we can share it with all those fine readers. Initial distribution for the Murdock Muse is all of the children and grandchildren of Robert D. and Nancy A. Murdock, married 40 years and with the family to prove it. This shipping list may be expanded if the publishers' funds can support increased distribution.

No increases to the list of family members is currently expected, with the exception of a possible wedding, complete with two more grandchildren— provided all participants survive the sub-zero winter in Minnesota.

CHRISTMAS QUOTES

Robert: " I know it's really late for me and really early for you, Grandma, but I wanted to wish you a merry Christmas, and Carl is taking me to Michigan." They were planning lots of skiing.

Toy: "And I hope you have a good year."

Sean: "I gave Meri L.A.-opoly. It has Stonewood Shopping Center on it!" (Stonewood is where Meri shops.)

Meri: "I'm having a great Christmas, Ian decided to give a party last night, so he invited everyone to come here!"

Ben: "Know what we're watching? The Tchaikovsky competition!" (Van Cliburn became famous after winning that piano competition.)

Ian: "I swear I don't know how she did it!" (Meri bought a mug he admired, when he thought he was with her every minute of her shopping.)

Val: "I finished my Christmas shopping in October."

Roy: "Last year we got away with not having a tree, but this year, Khendra insisted."

Bob: "What a poinsettia plant! I'm honored being in the same room with it!" (Gift from Louise Carlson.)

Darrel: "It finally got up to zero yesterday!"

Nancy: "As soon as this mountain of is gone, we're going on a diet. Would you please pass the chocolate truffles?"

NINE DAYS WITH CHOPSTICKS-

BY Nancy Murdock

Almost 30 years after Val's friend Judy Sakanari taught us to eat with chopsticks, I had the opportunity to test my ability to rely on "hashi" instead of forks for general eating. We even used them for scrambled eggs in Japan!

It was a wonderful trip in November, 1990 (Thanksgiving week). We flew by All Nippon Airways from Dulles International Airport outside Washington, D.C., to Narita Airport outside Tokyo - nonstop - in 14 hours. Twenty-eight of us went from Maryland to strengthen the sister relationship between the Diocese of Maryland and the Diocese of Tokyo, and the sister relationships between our own parishes and the ones in Japan.

My friend Earl Hagan and I found many similarities between our sister, Tokyo All Saints Church, and our own Christ the King Church in Woodlawn, MD. The people at All Saints were very warm and friendly. They showered us with gifts, fed us until we burst, and showed us around Tokyo.

I really liked the Japanese women. They laugh when something goes right, they laugh when something goes wrong, and they laugh because they enjoy being together. My kind of people!

Everything was carefully planned by the diocese. None of us ever wandered alone. If we needed to go on the subway to get somewhere, someone went with us. When we traveled to Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, a priest and a church member traveled with us as interpreters.

We had superb tour guides. In addition to describing the places we visited, they gave us historical and other background material as we rode along. Each tour bus had fresh flowers in a vase behind the driver. In each bus, a young woman in a smart uniform seemed to have the sole job of greeting us as we arrived and sending us off with a smile as we left.

On the Shinkansen Train (known as the "Bullet train" to Americans) we passed through the countryside - at a fast clip. At first we thought we were seeing backyards with grass that had gotten a little scrubby as the season was finished, but then we realized that those small plots were rice paddies. One tour guide said most rice farms were only

about two and a half acres.

The merchandise in department stores looked the same as in Baltimore or New York, except for the silk kimonos. Kimonos are very expensive and are used only on rare occasions. Everyone wears Western clothing, mostly rather conservative. In our honor, a couple of women wore kimonos to some of the meetings and to church.

We had a short form of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. They whisk the green tea in the big, handle-less cup with sort of a whisk broom, turn it two and a half turns, and pass you the cup with a bow. You drink the tea with a slurping sound and compliment the owner of the tea things.

The food in Japan was wonderful! One afternoon my hostess and I, along with a young man who had studied in the U.S., ate lunch at a noodle restaurant. I had a big tray with a wooden rack of cold udon noodles and various accompaniments, such as a small, raw quail's egg. Very different! Another time, we went with the whole group to a department store restaurant in Kyoto, where we had the best meal I could imagine. I had so many different items that I began to think they'd made a mistake. Someone had, as usual, made excellent arrangements for vegetarian food for me, including vegetable tempura.

I stayed mostly with a very nice woman, Michiko Kurosu, from the church. She knew very little English, but her sister, Akiko Matsumoto, had given us instructions to call her when we needed a translator. Akiko was a teacher of English. We mostly communicated by cutting out all but the essential words, and using plenty of gestures. I felt that Michiko was a very brave lady to take on an English-speaking vegetarian.

Earl was well hosted by Akiko and Jiro Matsumoto and others.

At the hotel in Kyoto, we were given a ukata, a cotton kimono, to sleep in each night. Each day, we also received a fresh toothbrush and toothpaste. I guess the Japanese tend to travel light.

I took eleven rolls of film. It's been fun looking over the pictures, but it will be a big job to put them into an album and say enough to do justice to the trip. It was a lifetime dream for me, and I'm really glad Bob encouraged me to go.