

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Christmas Among The Big Trees**

Several years ago, Nell Power was a member of the Staff of the California Division of Beaches and Parks in Monterey and he and his wife, Lois, and two sons, Jay and Gary, were most beloved by all who knew them. This much-admired family is now living in Calaveras Big Trees, Arnold California, where Neil is still enjoying life with the Division of Beaches and Parks.

Today a Season's Greeting has come to me from them and this column is coming from Mrs. Power to our readers from their mountain home, as a Christmas Greeting.

"This has been a busy and happy year for us in our mountain home. The change, of seasons has been exciting, the boys love their school, Neil enjoys his work, and I have some wonderful coffee drinking neighbors and numerous hobbies to keep me busy.

We did have snow last Christmas morning as I had wished! Our snow fall was spasmodic the rest of the winter, but enough for the boys to try their hands at skiing and tobogganing. For the boys and I each snowflake was an adventure as this was our first year in the snow country. My big thrill was snowshoeing through the forest of Giant Redwoods after a heavy snow fall. It was fairyland!

"Spring has its own charm in this country with the dogwood blossoms snow plants, fewer clothes, and dry ground.

"Summer was another busy time for all - Neil arranged and presented the campfire programs before the Naturalist arrived for the season, the boys and I would rush through or chores to enjoy an afternoon at swimming pool. Then perhaps a swim and picnic at the river after Neil's busy day. Many a happy hour was spent with family or friends who were camping in the park or dining at our picnic spot under the trees, in our yard.

"In early June the game warden brought us an orphan fawn just two weeks old. We all took turns with the three-hour bottle feedings and trips to buy special goat's milk. "Princess' developed into quite a little lady and was most photographic for all the summer visitors. It will soon be time to take her down to lower elevation where she can be on her own and a wild deer again. The

children will all miss their companion, but this is best for her and perhaps next year we can mother another one.

"It is hard to bid goodbye to summer and put away the well-used bathing suits, but autumn has a special place in our hearts. The tourists are gone - the mountains are quiet - and the air is crisp and cold.

"We are always asked the question - 'What do you do with all your time in the mountains?' With the number of families living here there is always an excuse for a party, barbecue, or potluck supper at the recreation hall. We had many farewell or welcome barbecue this summer, a delightful costume Halloween party and now are planning a Christmas party complete with Santa Claus. Neil is always busy in his spare time with weaving and wood working, the boys many hobbies and interests, and this fall the wives and I had quite a long session of decorating pinecones for Christmas gifts.

"As I write this the dark snow clouds are moving in, the house is warm and bright, the food cupboards and freezer are full and we settle down for a long winters nap.

"This is the life we love!