

Dear Leslie

Thank for your card and kind remarks. Yes I believe I held  
quite well @ the practice period @ Tassajara. From the way  
I feel now, I could probably do it again. I just had my physical  
exam and all tests passed muster. Events happened so fast  
in the past months that I am still catching up. I came for a  
visit last November and bought a 7 room condominium here in  
Sarasota, put my condo in SF up for sale and the day after I  
bought it, my condo in SF was sold - So the dice was cast. I  
returned to SF, packed up and moved here in January.  
This is an Independent living Community with a large swimming  
pool, club house and gym and on a very good bus line  
which takes me to several shopping centers and to downtown  
Sarasota within an hour's time - this means I don't have to drive  
my car very much which suits me just fine. Sarasota has a  
first rate Opera company; Symphony orchestra; Ballet company and  
several theatres some of which present Broadway musicals, so  
don't lack for culture. During the summer months when it's too  
hot here for my niece horses, we go to NC for 5 months  
where she has another ranch in the mountains (Blue Ridge)  
we just returned - It's interesting - deja vu - my childhood  
years were spent growing up on a ranch in California and here  
I am in my later yrs cleaning horse stalls and hauling manure  
into the pastures with a manure spreader! I love it. I do have  
a dog! Jack-Rat (classy Stun Jack Russell and a Rat Terrier  
and I call him Da Da after that radical art group in the early  
20's. He will be a yr old in January and gives me much pleasure  
and something to be responsible for and companionship in my  
elder years. My niece also just bought me a horse - a

Tennessee Walker so now I can go on trail rides with her. The ranch in NC has many trails to ride and is very isolated. The nearest town is on the other side away and the people - real mountain folk, are very friendly. They have a strange habit of parking their old vehicles in the back yard where they are completely overgrown @ weeds, the neighbors had 25 old wrecks in a field behind his house and I have never been able to find out why they don't take them to a wrecking yard - strange -

within a 10 mile range of my niece's property I counted 36 Baptist Churches and many of the homes fly the Confederate Flag. Hollow is pronounced Hallat and Bare pronounced Boar.

The countryside and mountains are beautiful and in the springtime rhododendrons (Spl?) are in bloom (they grow wild) and @ night the trees light up like Christmas @ fire flies - Awesome -

While in NC I was able to go to Chapel Hill and visit Pat Phelan, Deacon and Dan and the Jaffes and also Joe Harman.

Les by the way has a companion (very well off from a southern family - a lawyer, rather retired but full of southern charm) and they live in a huge house @ swimming pool and three dogs! Les is a nurse practitioner and works @ Duke Medical School in the HIV ward. Richard is a tenured professor and Elaine works with UNC press and their daughter is a beauty! I don't know what the Howes do and I gather Chaney is a typical unfocused teen-ager but clean cut and drug free. The Citizens is very nice and has a peaceful atmosphere and they are developing a nice garden.

It was nice to see the group and next summer I will visit again. I am in touch with Norman Fisher and hope I can take in his retreat @ Mar Jade in Mexico. I introduced friends of mine in Guadalajara to him and we may go together to the retreat.

which is on a beautiful beach not too far from  
 Punta Vallarta - I visited there a couple years ago when Eric Ross'  
 mother and I were in PV. I don't miss the bay area @ all,  
 there just isn't anything there for me @ all and I'm happy to  
 see blue skies, trees and water here and not have to put up  
 with the cold SF weather and homeless people.  
 I haven't seen many homeless here @ all, could be the community  
 I can compare Sarasota with Palo Alto in a sense - the  
 downtown section particularly. I'm certainly not interested in SFZC  
 now that I have some perspective, I observed that the city center  
 was being overrun with hangers on and a predominance of  
 angry women (mainly Asians) and I didn't see too many men  
 appearing on the scene and I have a feeling in time it will  
 be completely dominated @ women and the stress will be on for  
 and like a pebble in a stream it will lumber along with no  
 inner dynamics - just a imperal, cold ritualistic ceremony, a place  
 to go and see how things were done in Japan in the olden days.  
 I do miss Tassajara, the daily morning ZZ, the creek and  
 night sky, I also miss Carmaldoli - there are no retreat centers  
 here that I have been able to find. However, my spiritual  
 life now is very settled - meditation is sound and I can  
 honestly say I have found the inner contentment one needs about  
 and it seems to stay with me all day - oh sure, I get  
 pissed off, angry and resentful but am quickly able to see where  
 that comes from - see it, admit it and go on with my life.  
 My reading now consists of a couple TIT's books (can't recall his  
 name but you know who I mean - the walking meditation monk) and

and Sizing of the Buddha as well as a couple  
Christian tomes - The Cloud of Unknowing (a <sup>very good</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>compared</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>cloud</sup> @ Z <sup>emph</sup>  
- essay by Suzuki in the Tassara Library on the Cloud of  
Unknowing and the Practice of the presence of God by the  
18th C monk Brother Lawrence. Also as part of my  
morning devotion I sing songs from the Anglican Prayer Book  
as my devotions daily are meditation (zz) reading and  
poetry. This weekend I will connect with an alumni  
group here from Stanford and we will go to St. Petersburg  
to a sports bar and watch the Big Game. I don't socialize  
much with people here in the community, most are married and  
all they talk about is family, kids and grandchildren. It's interesting  
to observe @ the pool especially - they bob up and down in the  
pool and gossip and NO ONE SWIMS - and I swear to GOD,  
one day this HUSBAN woman gets in the pool and the water  
rose up and spilled over!!! It's time to take Dada out for his  
pee and poop. I will send you pictures of my dog and horse with  
this letter when I get them. In the meanwhile please greet the  
chicks and the Pastor and take care of yourself. You are one of  
the women @ Tassara I respected and admired, a poise and  
calmness that impressed and influences - a presence that is seen  
and felt.

With warm affection and regards

Del Carlson

Sarasota

my private phone # not to be shared

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PS If appropriate you may share  
this letter @ Emma and David Chudak