

Jane Rule
The Fork, Rte. 1
Galiano, British Columbia
V0N 1P0

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Dear Carolyn:

Thanks for your card. Somehow the date got into the Vancouver Sun; so I had quite a fine display of well wishing for my 60th, which I greeted with relief. It's an age when my complaints seem more appropriate than they did when they started the day before my 45th. I bought myself a wheelchair rather than a new typewriter to celebrate the occasion. I don't have to use it much yet; but it represents an extension of choices, makes it possible for me to go to an opening or a party when most people can't sit down, etc. At 60 retirement is also more acceptable though it seems to be the general reaction that writers have no business retiring ever. Why I can't fathom since the books of most aging friends seem to me cautionary tales for retirement. Best to save senile repetitions for patient friends.

We do totter on with relative good cheer, gathering more young help around us for chores we are no longer able to do. Our social life isn't so constantly ambitious though we had Betty Jane Wylie for the weekend who was overlapped by Judy Baca, our muralist friend from L.A., who was overlapped by Shelagh Day and her beloved Gwen, ten days of very good talk and guest familiar enough about the house to make the feeding of them simple. We'll have another flurry the end of the month with my parents for a week and right after that the reunion here of the family young and their significant others, but they, too, are grown up and useful. I wish I didn't feel as apologetically, well, old with my parents, but there it is. Sixty is old to be a child.

We've been in pool saga for a month. We needed a new liner for it, a replacement I delayed as long as possible because I couldn't see quite how we'd get 12,000 of water out of it and a new 12,000 gallons into it in a short space of time. The volunteer firemen, most of whose kids swim at the pool, came to our rescue. On their Monday night practice, they turned up at the house just as we were feeding a shy Englishwoman we didn't really know. Here were 8 men in full regalia, yellow suits and hats, staggering across the lower field with huge hoses. After much inept struggle, they finally got the water flowing out of the pool into the creek across the road. Tuesday night the town men arrived to stay with us in order to be at work removing the old liner and putting in the new at first light. More firemen turned up, put a big pump from the firehall into the creek, and in less than four hours we had our 12,000 gallons. We'd also had to have the pool repiped after a bitter freezing winter, and now three weeks into the process the water still isn't clear, and we're not sure why, trying one thing and then another, but it seems a minor problem compared to those already solved. I'd have been more impatient if the weather had been decent enough for a swim, but we got our first one only several days ago, nearly a month late. Not even the children have started begging to come.

I talked to Susan (of Beth Appledorn and Susan.. I don't know her last name) this morning. They've moved to Saltspring, and she is having

a good grumble about the weather, having been misled into believing we have the best climate in Canada. She's also missing the city, and at the moment Beth is in Europe. She's loving the island, content with gardening and bird watching, but Susan thinks she'll take longer to adjust. She does like Victoria and goes there for her city fix often. She's afraid of the dark on country roads. Liz Armour has been making them feel welcome. We haven't yet got them over to visit us, but we will some time in the summer when Beth gets back.

We've been busy, as all islanders have, with the madness of raising money to buy Mt. Galiano, now achieved, but we're pressing on to see if we can get a little more of the MacBlo land, mostly being sold to gypo loggers who are clear cutting everywhere. Fortunately around us, it still looks like Galiano.

And Elisabeth Hopkins died two days after her 97th birthday in late April after a very long hard year in hospital. There was a funeral on Saltspring and a memorial here, I grumbling that it was getting as bad as her 90th birthday, which went on for weeks and nearly killed us all. But her ashes are now in the little graveyard up the road past her cottage, and gradually this last year will seem a short span in that long independent, venturing life.

Will you have a book tour? Might we see you in the fall? That would be lovely, particularly since I seem to be venturing less and less. I need to import my friends.

I hope you had a good time at the AGM.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jane'.