

Thursday, Feb. 4, 1982.

Dear Phyllis,

A letter to tell you about my wedding day. Yes, Tom and I are married! As I announced to you in my last letter, we had decided to tie the knot sometime in early February. Well, preparation for the event includes blood tests and a medical certificate; we obtained this and then discovered that its period of validity is only 15 days, so we got serious about getting the various other forms in (Mexican officialdom loves documents and stampings and duplicates and fees, etc.) Finally everything was approved and we set the date for 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 2nd.

Tuesday morning we put the usual pot of beans on to soak, then we hiked down to the public bath house. You see, we are having a severe water crisis here in the working-class districts (the wealthy areas are still washing their cars and sidewalks and are unaware of a shortage). For over a month we've been getting about 15 minutes' worth of water every night around 2:30 or 3 a.m., at which time we flush the toilets and wash all the dishes and fill our buckets so that all ten of us can make it through another 24 hours. But recently there have been a number of nights where we've waited in vain for even one drop of water, and Monday night had been one of those. Usually we just stay dirty, conserving the water for drinking/cooking/brushing teeth. But on this day we splurged and went to the "baños" where one gets a private shower-room and all the hot water one wants. Got really clean and washed my hair (having given Tom and myself a haircut last weekend). Emerged squeaky clean and tidy-looking, put on clean clothes (albeit jeans and a sweater) and joined our witnesses (wedding party?).

My "best man" was Jorge, an Argentinian comrade, and Christine from Germany was Tom's "groomsmaid". The neighbours Señor and Señora Rodriguez were our second set of witnesses. The six of us walked up to the Azcapotzalco City Hall, where we spent an hour waiting in lines and filling out some more forms. Christine took a number of pictures, so you'll get to see what the scene was like. Then the big moment came: we were called in to the judge's chambers where we lined up in front of his enormous mahogany desk and listened to his legal ramble. He is an old gray-haired man with lots of doublechins, and with spectacles that sit on the end of his nose so that he reads through them as he bends over his desk and then peers up over their rims to scrutinize his clients. He gives an impression of weighty solemnity, but he also has a sense of humour; he stopped in the middle of his monologue to quiz Tom: "Well are you understanding any of this?" Tom sputtered out a surprised yes and then the judge launched into a leisurely discourse on the Latin and Greek he'd studied in school but that he'd never gotten around to learning English. Etc. Then he droned on. After a while he suddenly stopped again, this time to scold Jorge. It turned out that Jorge had carelessly placed his burning cigarette on the edge of the pompous desk, and the judge said that not only would the desk get burned but besides, it is forbidden to smoke during the ceremony. So Jorge wanted to stub it out, but of course there were no ashtrays around, and he was afraid to throw it on the floor. Poor Jorge, he had to leave the room and get rid of the offensive thing and then return with apologies. By this time even the serious judge was smiling, and the rest of us were

laughing out loud. Eventually all the witnesses had given their official approval and Tom and I had said our "si" together, and the judge pronounced us husband and wife.

Once outside the building, we shouted and jumped with joy. The Rodriguez' took us all to a nice restaurant for lunch. When we returned to our apartment building, Tom picked me up and carried me up the three flights of stairs and into our home! Crazy -- rest assured that I am still of hefty physique, Phyllis. A few more pictures were taken, and then it was all over.

Indeed, "normal" life began immediately thereafter, as we hurried to the market and trudged home laden with fruits and vegetables for the evening meal. But the merits of living communally were so apparent on this day: by the time we got back, Davis had washed the floor, Mary was tidying up, Janet was cutting tomatoes and Ursula was chopping onions. Tom joined them and I went off to teach. I'm giving English classes to a lawyer and his secretary, every Tues., Wed., Thurs. from 4:30 to 6:00 (plus travel time because I go to their office). Didn't want to miss a session, and it worked out fine, in spite of their good-natured teasing appropo the occasion. When class was finished I helped with the food preparation, and around 7:30 our guests started to arrive.

We had invited only a few people, because our apartment isn't all that big. By the time all of our own gang had come home from work, we were the usual 10 plus about 18 or 20 guests: neighbours from this building, various friends, some solid comrades whom we've gotten to know and trust here. A nice crowd. The food was a big hit and everybody kept going back to the table where there stood a mountain of tortillas surrounded by large containers of fillings -- beans, spicy red tomato sauce with veggies, a green chili & green tomato sauce, and guacamole (mashed avocados with onions and lime juice; sort of a national favourite). Also tea and coffee, cokes, an applecider & red wine mixture, one bottle of champagne for toasting. Much of the evening was spent eating and drinking and talking; it was lively and people were relaxed. A bit of dancing, and Jorge played the guitar, doing some general singalong pieces but also some excellent solo music (revolutionary songs from the struggle in Latin America). The party went on until about midnight. Then Tom and I cleaned up and fell into bed, exhausted and happy.

The next day was just normal -- Tom worked on writing projects while I ran errands and went teaching. Today he is at his magazine office and I'm typing for my translator fellow (hence this typed letter snuk in). Even my name remains unchanged. And so life goes on ... What I do hope will change as a result of all this is that my parents might accept us. That remains to be seen. Well, I think I've told you everything about the event -- except to say that I sure wished you could have been the one to stand at my side!

Must close now and do some real work. Tom said I should relay his greetings to you. Did you receive my last letter? According to the system begun in it, this is letter #3. How I look forward to hearing from you! Please give my greetings also to the comrades and Robin.

LOVE,

R.