January 30, 1994

Dear DA!S,

I continue to search for Alternatives! in my life. Recently, for example, I discovered that if I go straight at this one corner on the way to work rather than turning left, it shortens my commute by several minutes. I have also found that you can use a paper towel as a replacement for a number two filter in our coffee maker and achieve really quite satisfactory results. On New Year's Day, I found many alternatives to keeping the resolutions I had made just hours earlier. Finally, I realized today that a post-New Year letter could be presented as an alternative to the traditional Christmas card (which we traditionally fail to send), in a manner that seems deliberate, rather than apologetic. As you can see, I've been busy sticking to the creed. I hope that you find yourselves, as well, continuing to try to break the mold, march to the beat of a different drummer, and take the road less traveled by.

Speaking of roads, we travelled a really icy one up to Casa Healey-Bopp for whatever long weekend that was back in early January and had a grand time. Blue is wintering there, for those of you who haven't kept current with the comings and goings of the DA!S pets. There was skating, there was skiing, and there be some good food going down in that house too. Sunday morning, the kitchen thermostat was registering -23, which made me think yet again about how much Rod would enjoy a few years in northern New England. Rod? Rod? are you there, big fella? Do you read me? Is there a signal, a sign, a pulse? Something to keep the guttering, flickering flame of hope for your survival, nay, redemption, alive? While on this sticky subject, have heard little from the Italianate wing of the Party for some time. I heard a rumor from one of my ex-students who spent time in So. Hadley that Professor Ferraro has had a "procedure," and now calls herself Dr. Unique de Fleur, Professor of Romance Languages. This has not been confirmed. Any info? R.D. Brough is still at 536-5939, I know, and pressing the star button on your phone will still short-cut the recorded message. The Gilliatts were alive and well this summer, though Peaches seems to have given up his old habit of calling people three or four times a week just to chat. Where have you all gone, old chums? What about Auld Lang Syne? What is Auld Lang Syne, anyway?

These distances between us make me wonder whether it's time, perhaps, for another Men's Retreat. And when I do wonder about this, one word always pops right in to my Old Chum Lobe. And that word is NO. However, it is time--past time--to begin thinking about this summer, and whether we can arrange any kind of meeting. Our deal is this: our house in the Poconos isn't being rented out this summer to strangas, which means we can rent it for a week if we can find a good time (about $900 for the group). Problem is, our clan hasn't yet got our dates straight, so I can't give you all the alternatives. Cam was talking about how the second or third week of August might be the best for him. What do the rest of you think? What constraints/opportunities should be considered. Dr. de Fleur, are there special balms or perfumes you would require? R.G., would security be an issue?

I'm making the bold assumption, of course, that people want to see each other, and will try to be civil. Why don't you let me know your feelings on this, or any other, subject--by phone, fax, or letter. (If a week proves impossible, could we contemplate a three or four day weekend?) There are, as always, many alternatives. Pray for Tanya and Lorena.