

May 21, 1997

Dear Tom,

Carol has graduated from graduate school with a Masters in Social Work. She came out with a 3.7 average. Now she's looking for a job, and finding that most places want people with some sort of certification that you can only get after 2 years of experience.

My job is going OK. I am learning stuff a little at a time, all on the job, but eventually I'll also be taking some classes. We're getting new hardware and software that I will be responsible for, giving me a good opportunity to learn. My mentor is a consultant working in our office. He's about your age.

I haven't heard from Amy for several weeks. I'd better call to see if she's still alive. Maybe she has a boyfriend and is too busy to call.

Two weekends ago I ran in the Old Kent River Bank Run in Grand Rapids. It was a 25K, slightly over 15 miles. My start was really slow because of the crowd of runners, and I had to make a potty stop about half way, and still my pace was well under 8 minutes a mile. I had shin pain at first, but that subsided at about the 4 mile mark, and I felt good until I got past 10 miles. In the last 5 miles, it got pretty hard to pick up my feet.

It has been unseasonably cool here. We've been planting flowers in the back yard and afraid they will get frosted during the night. So far they look OK, but we are also afraid the woodchucks will eat them. There is a momma with 3 youngsters in the neighboring lot.

That neighboring lot where the modular house went in is still a mess. The garage is still not finished, and although they have smoothed the dirt in the yard, there is no grass. They hired someone to remove a lot of the trees in back along the river - the ones that were crooked, or dead. I like having it cleared out a bit. Carol doesn't.

Grandad Harry is doing OK, helping Laura and Rich on the farm. He still has frequent insulin reactions. Seems to have one every time we visit.

A little over a month ago, Walter, Laura, Cindy and I drove to Tennessee to visit Deb and Jerry. We toured a Fleetwood plant and watched them build modular houses. They build 9 of them a day. Deb and Jerry bought a farm a few miles from their home, where they have a herd of cattle. The farm has a small barn, but no house. They may build a house on it someday. The property is pretty flat, unlike their homestead. They have cattle at the homestead, too. All together, they have about 50 head of cattle.

I've been reading about cars in Consumers Reports and other magazines, hoping I can buy a new one when Carol starts raking in the big bucks. There are a lot of good ones to choose from, like the Ford Contour, Mazda Protege, Chevy Malibu, Plymouth Breeze. We've also considered something sporty, like a Ford Probe. My Mazda 323 still runs fine, but it rides rough and is rusting.

I have less than a week of vacation time left this year, so we are planning nothing but weekend jaunts.

What's new with you?