

Sept. 4, 1998

Dear Tom and Amy,

I am still thinking about doing some traveling during the Christmas holidays. I could take 3 days off work and have a total string of 11 days - Thursday, December 24 through Sunday, January 3. That is so long, in fact, that Carol and I could stay here in Michigan on Christmas Eve and Christmas day and still have 9 days to travel. If we go to New Orleans, that will give us 4 days to get there and back - I plan on driving - and 5 days in New Orleans. That seems like plenty of time, and probably all we could afford.

If you would be interested in visiting New Orleans with us at that time, let me know so I can start looking for accommodations.

As you know, Carol quit her job at Council Against Domestic Assault. They kept her on through last week, but now she is really done. They wanted her to take another job that had opened up, but she decided against it. She just didn't like working there. Didn't like the way the place was run. She has had a couple interviews for other jobs, but no offers yet.

Amy, have you heard from Megan? I hear she likes it out there and wants to stay.

Dayna came here to stay last weekend because Glenn went on a trip up north with some of his buddies, so I took the opportunity to go north by myself. I like to do a little more serious hiking than Carol is able to do. I took the canoe and took a trip on our favorite section of the Manistee River, intending to stop and do some hiking along the way. There is a stretch of about 2 miles where the river bank rises about 8 feet above the river, high and dry but fairly clear of brush, making it a nice place to wander around. When I got there, I found that someone - probably the state Department of Natural Resources - had dumped tons of rocks over the bank so that they are piled at the water's edge, presumably to stop erosion. Keeping the river free of silt makes it more amenable to certain species of sport fish. The few feet of sandy shoreline have been replaced by piles of rocks, making it very difficult to park the canoe, and dumping the rocks over the bank not only destroyed much of the vegetation we had so much enjoyed, but also seemed to have driven away the cliff swallows that had tunneled nests into the bank. In addition, the heavy equipment used to haul in the rocks had run over brush and worn a muddy 2-track along the river bank where before there was only a 6 inch wide foot path. I was pissed, but I thought of a joke:

Question: Why did the DNR dump tons of rocks along the banks of the Manistee?

Answer: Because pouring concrete would have been unnatural.

If I had the time, I'd raise some hell about it. I'd like to know if the problem of erosion was that serious and if it was, if there wasn't a less drastic and costly solution.

Love,
Dad