

July 4, 2000

Dear Family,

It is a beautiful 4th here in Lansing. Carol and I just got back from a visit to some public flower gardens. We also checked out a public swimming pool. We will have 2 grandchildren in our care this weekend, and now we know how we'll spend part of the time. We didn't go to any of the parades today, but we did go to a suburban fireworks display last night.

Next week Thursday I will fly out to Boulder to see Amy and Tom. Tom will drive from Kansas City. I'll be back Monday evening.

The last weekend of July, Carol and I and some friends are driving to Stratford, Canada to the Stratford Festival, a theater festival. We will see 3 plays in 3 days. They do a lot of Shakespeare, but the 3 we picked aren't. We will see *The Three Musketeers*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, and *the Diary of Ann Frank*. We are not big theater fans although we occasionally go to a play here in Lansing, but the wife in the couple we are going with is a theater fanatic. It was time for us to do something she wanted to do.

Three weeks ago we were in Ludington for the half marathon. That went well, although I had to run in Bermuda shorts because I forgot my regular running shorts. The race started at the waterfront near downtown and went out to Ludington State Park the back way, along the west shore of Hamlin Lake until the road ended, then through the woods for 1.8 miles, down a dune, across the dam, then through the park to the lakeshore and then back to Ludington along the lakeshore drive. My pace was a little under 8 minutes a mile, but that put me only about in the middle of my 55-59 age group. That was disappointing - I wanted to win something. I probably won't do any more long races. The long training runs (once a week) leave me with too little energy to enjoy the rest of the day. I'd been training since last fall.

But we had so much fun that we took Monday and Tuesday off the next week and stayed in Wellston Saturday and back to Ludington Sunday and Monday. Carol likes to see the fish, and we always see a lot of them in the Manistee River below Tippy Dam. We take the same 3-hour canoe trip every time we go there. We also saw a couple snapping turtles fighting, an eagle, and an osprey. In Ludington, we walk along the banks of the Big Sable River in the state park. The water is shallow and clear enough so we can see big carp, northern pike, bass, and sunfish. We spent a lot of time watching the little sunfish protecting their nests - little bowls they'd dug out in the bottom. We also paddle around in Lost Lake, a shallow area of Hamlin Lake that is cut off from the main lake by a string of islands. There we saw a couple of bullheads with a cloud of babies, no bigger than tadpoles. Carol had never seen baby bullheads before. The adults were chasing away the sunfish, but we seemed to scare off the adult bullheads, causing Carol to fret that we'd left the babies vulnerable to the sunfish, upsetting the Balance of Nature. A couple years ago along the shore of Hamlin Lake we saw a bowfish, also called dogfish, with a big swarm

of babies. There were other people there too playing in the water, and the babies got separated from the adult, but the finally rejoined their mother, seeming to follow the same route she did as if they could smell the trail.

Steve