

Sunday, September 10

Dear Amy,

I just got back from a trip to Ludington with my friend Alan. Dayna and the baby, along with Dawn, were coming to stay this weekend, so I thought it would be a good time to get away. It was raining when we got up today, so we came home early, but yesterday was nice. We rented a pontoon boat and went out on Hamlin Lake. We did some snorkeling, but the water was too riled up and weedy to see anything. We did get a new perspective on the lake and its surroundings. It is a very big lake, and there is a lot more dune area along its northern shore than I thought.

A couple weekends ago, Carol and I tipped over our canoe for the first time in about 13 years (Friday was 11th anniversary of our marriage). We were on our favorite section of the Manistee River, watching a couple of fisherman along the edge, and the current and the wind conspired with our inattention and tipped us over in about 7 feet of water. Carol got a little water in her mouth and had a little trouble catching her breath, but she had a life jacket on and was never in serious trouble. All our snacks got wet, but the only things that sunk were our 2 sets of binoculars. I dove in and retrieved them, but they are ruined. I sent mine off to be repaired, but they said they wouldn't be able to clean them completely - there would likely be spots on the lenses caused when bacteria in the water dried on the lens coating. So I told them to toss them. They said they might have been OK if I had immediately put them in a zip-lock bag so they would stay moist until they were repaired. It was diving for the binoculars that made me think it might be fun to do some snorkeling this weekend, but we should have done it in the river rather than Hamlin Lake. The river is clean and clear and there is lots of stuff to see.

Wednesday-Friday, September 20-22, I will be at the Amway Grand Hotel in Grand Rapids for our company's Annual Meeting. Delegates from the local governments in Michigan whose retirement programs we administer will be there to be wined and dined and lectured. We have guest speakers and sessions put on by our own staff on various subjects. I will be providing "one on one" sessions for people who have questions about the monthly payroll reports they send us. The hotel is pretty fancy and it is right downtown, so it might be fun.

In October, all our non-management staff will be attending a 3-day session in Lansing presented by the Franklin-Covey organization. Covey is the "7 Habits of Successful People" guy and Franklin is the Franklin Planner. They are going to teach us how to be more effective and efficient and better people all around. We will learn to use the "win/win" approach to solving problems. I think it will be a pain in the ass, literally and figuratively. I hate being forced to sit and listen, and I am already about as effective as I care to be. My main work goal is to hang in there for 2 more years and then retire. The reason the managers are not included is that they have already gone through it. They all flew out to Salt Lake City for it. That was in July, and I have not yet noticed any changes. Early this year, our former director retired and our investments manager was hired as his replacement. She has no qualms about spending money, which is nice, but I think she puts too much faith in the ideas of the experts and attends too little to the nitty-gritty everyday details. We don't need inspiration, we need decisions!

Dad

