

September 9, 2000

Dear Deb,

Did you modem suddenly go bad? I don't think I've ever seen that happen. I used to buy and install U.S. Robotics modems at work, but haven't done it in a while since I moved out of the DP dept.

Amy is OK. Her doctor told her she definitely did not need a hysterectomy. They will check her again in a few months and take another "cone" out of her cervix if necessary, but they don't think it will be necessary. She's relieved and is trying to take better care of herself.

We were lucky when we went in the river. It was a warm day and even the water was fairly warm for a fast-moving river. We would have been in trouble had it been cold, because we were an hour from the end of the trip. I dove in to retrieve my binoculars, and that went OK, but holding on to them and trying to swim against the current back to shore was tough. But it did occur to me at the time that with the proper equipment, it might be fun to do some diving in the river. It's deep in places and clear and there is fish and other stuff to look at. So a few weeks ago, I went up with old friend Alan Jansen with the intention of doing some snorkeling. We ended up in Ludington, where we rented a pontoon boat and went out on Hamlin Lake. It was no good, because the water wasn't clear and where it was shallow enough to get to the bottom, there were too many weeds.

By the way, Carol fell in twice that day on the Manistee. We were going to take the canoe out to try to snag the binoculars with a stick, and before we pushed off, she went over the side backwards into the water again. Luckily, she didn't hit anything but water. She is in no hurry to get back into a canoe.

I certainly have thought of retiring in the Manistee area. Manistee has fewer tourists than Ludington and better rivers - the Pine and the Little and Big Manistee. And not too much farther north is the Sleeping Bear Dunes. They just put a casino in, however, which makes it a bit less attractive. Carol would not want to live there. Too small and too far away from family.

Along about a mile stretch of the river valley, the banks are level for a hundred yards back away from the river and not heavily forested. It's a great place to camp, picnic or just play along the river. Earlier this summer, I saw a yellow-billed cuckoo there. That and the yellow-headed black bird I saw at Ludington State Park were firsts for me.

We'd like to get down to see you, but I don't know when. Carol is desperately trying to find a new job and is frustrated and depressed. She has an interview tomorrow. Her current job is "limited term." It ends at the end of October and although they will most likely extend it, they've told her nothing.

Steve