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Dear Laura,

Sorry I'm so late in answering your letters. I enjoy them, so don't stop. But I don't read my E-mail very often, so if you need an immediate response, you'd better call.

Carol started her new job today. She is the Children's Program Coordinator at CADA, the Council Against Domestic Assault. She worked there a couple years ago as a volunteer or intern, so she is pretty familiar with the place. She will be making a little over \$19,000 - when they have the money to pay her. The job isn't exactly what she had in mind. She wanted to do therapy. But she thinks she is going to be able to make what she wants of the job, and there is a good chance she will get the supervision by a certified social worker that is required for her to become certified herself. She is very excited about it. In fact, she worked all day and then went back for some sort of meeting from 7:00 to 9:00 tonight.

I just hope that by the time I retire - in 4.5 years - she will be making enough to allow me to live comfortably. She owes me.

I was in a Microsoft Access class today - the second day this week. I have another 4 days of class next month. My employer wants me to become an expert so I can maintain an Access program that was developed for us by consultants. I'll also be able to develop new stuff. I'll have to do some studying and practicing at home to really learn it. Access is a database program that allows you to create "forms" to view and update files, design reports, etc.

I got Carol a couple of Audubon field guides for her birthday, one for wildflowers and one for insects and spiders. And I took her to dinner at the Outback Steakhouse. She is a carnivore. She has turned 50 and is feeling fine...when she isn't coughing her lungs out. Last week, we went to see a foot surgeon in Midland - about her foot, not her cough - and she is seriously considering surgery. The critical tendon in one of her feet has given out and that foot is completely flat. It looks more like a flipper than a foot. She can't do much walking - if she does, she later gets cramps in her foot. The surgeon told her there were two things she could do. One is to wear a brace. She got fitted for that earlier this week (they made a cast of her foot). The other is surgery to fuse certain bones in her foot. That will bring it up to about 80% of normal. After the surgery, she won't be able to put any weight at all on that foot for 6 weeks, and will be limited for another 6 weeks. She wants to get the surgery, but now that she has a job, I can't see how she'll be able to do it.

I don't know if I'll be running the Old Kent River Run in Grand Rapids on the 9th. I think I've strained a hamstring. If I don't make that one, there is a half marathon in Ludington June 20, part of which is through the dunes. I don't think I can resist that. We've already made motel reservations.

Before Carol got the job, I was hoping I could take a week off and we could drive out to Boulder to see Amy. Tom would meet us there. If Carol can't get away, I'll have to find someone else, like you or Walt or Cindy. Are you interested?

Love,
Steve