

Saturday,
July 26, 1980

Dear Family,

Everyone in the house is taking a nap including Charlotte so this seems like a good time to drop in a line. Last night I took Charlotte to the Hollywood Bowl. My parents and sister with fiancé also came along. I got the tickets through work on a special offer. The concert was performed by the L. A. Philharmonic in a tribute to Tchaikovsky. The last number was an Overture (1812) complete with fireworks. We got home at 1:00 A.M. Sarah spent the night at one of her friends. We picked her up in the morning 7:45 before she woke up. Sarah is on a late sleeping schedule. Goes to bed late and gets up late. We enjoyed the event very much.

A year ago (Sept. 79) our blue car named Bessy (no reflections please) died. I bought Bessy about a year before we were married. The radiator was in need of replacement and finally went out on us on the freeway. Well anyway to make a long story short, the block got cracked and we barely made it home. Since that time our driveway has turned into the fastest buy and sell car lot in town. First we bought a 73 Toyota for \$1300. The transmission was leaking quite badly and still under warranty by Aamco so we took it in. They "fixed" the leak sort of. That means that it still leaks but at a much slower rate. Later on during the same month our engine started to vibrate when we were stopped but not when the car was moving. We decided to sell. I should also mention we had replaced the carburetor and the muffler. We tried to sell it for \$1500 but were only able to get \$1300. So much for our second car. We unloaded it the last week in May.

Car number # 3: This one was bought on more of an impulse rather than necessity. Last December I heard about this friend of my dad who was going to sell a 73 Plymouth wagon for \$200. I had visions of fixing up this bomb in an auto-shop class and then coming to Utah in it this summer. We bought the car in January. I suppose if I had thought about it realistically I would have known that I wouldn't enroll in the auto-shop class. Car number 3 held us over just long enough between selling #2 and buying our present #4. We sold "the Bomb" last month for \$450.

Car number 4 I dubbed "the beast". It is a 76 Pacer by AMC. We bought it after three weeks of looking. We wanted air conditioning for vacation and something that would be low maintenance. We got air conditioning but that was all. We bought it for \$1700 with anticipating some repairs. The low blue book was \$2300. I could see that it was leaking trans. fluid so even with \$600 in repairs we would be OK. So far we spent \$600 but it still needs another \$550 of work. \$50 will be spent this week on replacing the electronic ignition. Every once in awhile the car just dies. It starts up again but it sure is an inconvenience and we don't want to find out it will not start up again while on our way to Utah. I have learned this is a problem inherent to all Pacers. The other major repair still needing attention is the power steering. We go through a quart of fluid every two weeks. The aprt part needing replacement is patented and costs \$300. The other bad part is because of the part location they just about have to take the whole car apart to reach it. So much for \$200 estimate of labor. For now we decided to spend a dollar every two weeks on transmission fluid for the power steering. Does anyone need to buy a slightly used car?

If you write letters like I do, you may as well know it is Monday and Sarah and Charlotte have both gone to bed.

Our garden is just marvelous this year. It took three months to kill all the Burmuda (devil grass). We have two plots both of which are approximately 150 square feet. One of the plots is bearen but ready for planting. We will plant our fall garden when we get back from vacation. The other plot has the ground completely covered with produce. This year we stayed with the basics. Our garden includes: Carrots, lettuce, beets, pole climbing green beans, three rows of corn (each row planted in successive weeks), zucchini, cucumbers, six bell peppers, two tomato plants, and eight vines of cantaloupe. I am sure some of you may be wondering how that much could possibly fit in that small of a garden plot. Oh by the way, I forgot to mention we have one row of boysenberries four feet wide and three feet high. The answer is found in a book entitled "The Postage Stamp Garden Book" by Duane Newcomb. He is not a very good writer ~~by~~ but the ideas and information is easy to glean. Most of the valuable information is tabulated. Another very valuable book I read this year is entitled, "The No Work Garden Book" by Ruth Strout. This book has taught me how to eliminate garden weeds with very little work. I turned over the soil once and laid a black heavy tarp over the ground for two months. Then before anything new (weeds) could appear, I laid a very heavy mulch of grass clippings on top. When I want to plant, all that is needed is to rake back the mulch. After the crops push through the soil, the mulch is brought up close to the base of the plant. This way the only things that can grow are those which are ~~also~~ allowed to grow. This second book is fairly repetitive but there are many very good suggestions. Highly recommended. Just in case anyone wants to know, I am pro ~~of~~ organic gardening. At least it has worked very well for me. We do have our pests but not to an extent I would call a problem. In fact we have not seen one tomato worm this year.

Some of you may have heard that we are trying to sell ~~of~~ our home and buy a better one. We will sell (hopefully soon) after my next raise. I was due in July but am still waiting. We have already put our house up on the market. We will try to buy a home in the \$90,000 to \$100,000 range. We will have the down payment with the equity built up in our present home but making payments for the first year is going to be tough. The most disappointing thing about it is for that much money we will not get that much house in California. We will probably have to get my parents to co-sign the loan since we only make \$1800/mo. plus the next raise. Somehow we'll make it if we are suppose to. Now is a good time to buy while loans are cheap. Ha, ha, ha.

Love you all,

Bryan, Charlotte
& Sarah
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