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Sherlene and Dan and kids  
May 21, 1980

She also said he was doing very well in the program for gifted and talented students and said she expected him to be a Rhodes Scholar someday.

Then Laura's teacher gave me the real kick. She said "Do you mind, Mrs. Bartholomew, if we skip talking about Laura today. You and I both know she is doing very well. I want to know what it is about your religion that gives your children something the other kids don't seem to have. I want to ask you some questions about the Mormon Church while I have the chance." Well, she had so many questions, our fifteen-minute conference turned into a half hour (not because I was spending any time answering those questions, mind you). Finally, the other parents were lining up, and she asked me if we could get together another time. I invited her here to lunch, but now she had to cancel that, but she wrote me a note asking if she could come visit me this summer. She's Jewish, too. Raised Orthodox, left it, married an ultra-liberal, and now she's fishing for something in-between before she starts her own family. Something in-between like Mormonism.

Dan is flying high, too, because he got a really good review at work. His boss called him in and described him as a "powerhouse of a designer," said his output for the year had been "mammoth," and told him he had solved some very intricate and complicated problems for the company. Gave him a 13% raise and an "A" rating--so, Dan finally feels he's going where he wants to with the company. They are also giving their management people a "carrot" by telling them that if they'll just hang in there one more year while the company maintains conservative "government-guideline" standards for raise-rates, that they'll in 1981 start giving lump-sum bonuses to their managers in sums up to 20% of salary. Boy, could we use one of those. We finally got a new car which we plan to pay-off in two years. It's a Ford Fairmont wagon, 4 cylinder engine, cream colored (the color of our house--kind of like cheese-cake), with camel-colored interior. Lovely. It is stick-shift, no power-nothing, no air-conditioning. We'll die if we drive West this summer--and it looks like that's the only way we'll make it. But Dan wanted that engine because of it's good reputation. So far, we have excellent mileage and performance with it. We sold our old faithful, rusted-through Ford Pinto for a grand and glorious \$100--and felt lucky to get that. It lasted us nine years, though--8including 5 years of driving on Chicago-s snowy-salty roads. We got that car so we could be sure we'd get to the hospital for Maniel's delivery--so it was with a little nostalgia that we saw that car out of the driveway for the last time. Oh, Dan did get a AM/FM radio and cassette tape stereo unit which he is installing himself in the car (a friend helped him get the speakers in--and he hopes to get the radio in tonight so we can use it on our trip).

We're leaving tomorrow for Wash. D.C. to visit Ginger and Barry, the temple, and also Joan and Roy Tanner (Dan's sister) and cousins and tour Monticello for the Memorial Day weekend. We are anticipating the whole trip with great delight.

Our garden is beautiful this year--the best ever. We planted our lettuce-type things on April 1, and we are getting beautiful salads with spinach, collards, kale, garden-ress, and seven varieties of lettuce. We planted 200 additional bulbs last fall, and all spring we had the most glorious show of spring flowers--which is continuing. We now have our flowers arranged so something is blooming continuously. Spring in Westchester County really is a treat. We have had magnificent weather. I am enjoying it so much after such a dull, long, cold winter. I was miserably depressed last winter--had a very unhappy and difficult time. And now so many things are happening and at times I feel such an exquisite joy, I can hardly bear it. It's a shame some of spring can't be sprinkled through the winter. We love and miss youze all. And enjoy your letters. ①

Love, Sherlene, Dan, and D & L ②