**1973**

There are gas shortages, and air pollution, and skyrocketing food prices. There are magic shows, and stamp collecting binges, and smelly Indian food. Dad gets a raise and brags about his children. Mom gives up on Chansonettes, but not on her choir. Lesle flies to Florida. Lisa flies to Washington, D.C. Andy learns to be less bossy. Alec learns about fog. Alan boils an egg. Dad hopes for Spring, and to sleep late on Good Friday, and that whoever is setting the trash cans on fire will stop. And one cold day in February Dad says, “It’s nice to have Ruth home this evening.”

**1-3-73 – Wed PM –** Dear Mother, Aunt Clara, M.J. and Bill, I’m in the living room with Alec. He’s working some of his jig-saw puzzles, including the new one that M.J. and Bill sent. We also got him a 3 little pigs one for his present on one of the boy’s birthdays. (You may remember that each child receives one gift at the time the child having the birthday receives his presents). I’ll enclose the birthday pictures. They didn’t turn out too well; I ruined one or two of them completely. Hope you folks are all relaxing OK after the holiday season. I expect we’ll hear from you tomorrow or Friday. Hope you got the box OK – it was mailed to M.J.’s, but they should have been back from Columbus about the time it got to Hutchinson. As you may recall, we have our family picture taken every 2 years. The photographer we go to is expensive, but very good.

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The expensive family portrait.

The things we have ordered for the family room, using some of yours and Aunt Clara’s money, have arrived, but we haven’t picked them up yet. Had a letter from the Laidigs telling about their activities. We received new 5 x 7 pictures of Grammy and Grandpa for Christmas. I suppose they will get up here sometime in the Spring.

Let me know if Charles and Cooley plan to come to Hutchinson sometime in the Spring. Ruth had a Triple Trio appearance (Chansonettes) today. They have two more appearances in January. The next thing I have to work on is the Millikin Choir appearance which is one month from tonight. Our Music Committee Chairman has done a good job on everything up to now, but they left for Florida today, and will be gone 2-3 months. His wife (they are both retired) has had chronic leukemia but is normal right now and has made a miraculous recovery.

Ruth had her first choir practice of the new year last night. They have a new electric organ which should help – the old organ wasn’t very good. The kids have been off from school all last week and this (I had Mon off this week; that was my last vacation day until Good Friday in April). They have accomplished some things – scout work, sewing, etc. but have spent a lot of time watching TV. Lesle is still trying to decide what to buy with her money.

The motor burned out on the dryer since I hadn’t kept the lint out, and our exhaust hose is not big enough; the new motor cost $40.00. Because of Lesle’s braces and contacts we had $1400.00 medical and dental expenses in 1972 so we should have a nice medical deduction on our income tax; I’ve started working on the tax earlier this year. Lisa will be starting with her braces before too long.

Ruth got new pants and a top for Christmas and several owls. Also a new wall secretary for the kitchen and new night gowns. I got a new sport coat and grey pants. Again, thanks for everything. Hope you’re all feeling pretty good. Today was warmer and rainy. We had a couple of sunny days after a warmer wet spell which got rid of most of the snow and ice. The ice was very slippery when it got wet. I watched a lot of the football games as I expect Bill did. Lesle baby sat from 9-12 on New Years eve. Lisa was supposed to go somewhere but their plans changed. Ruth was at our Church Sun as her choir was off – it was Communion. Last Fri night was the Annual Chansonettes Christmas Dinner Party.

**1-9-73 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Its a cold clear night here, and the temperature will probably get below zero by morning. We heard that there was quite a snowstorm in Kansas City and Nebraska, but didn’t hear if got as far as Hutchinson? We’ve had several cold days recently, but I haven’t minded it as much as the streets are clear and most of the snow and ice melted those days that we had warmer, rainy weather. The last part of Jan and first part of Feb are the coldest times of the year in our area. Thats nice that you have a new FM radio so you can listen to the Church Services. That was nice that you also got out on New Years Day. M.J. wrote about it in her recent thank you letter.

I’m playing on the bed with Alec this evening; he’s “feeling better” now after being fussy just before supper. He had just gotten up from a late nap, since Ruth had been to the monthly Women’s Association Meeting at Church. Ruth is at her choir practice this evening. As I think I wrote in my last Hutchinson letter, they have a newer, better electric organ at her Church. Ruth said it blew a fuse in the middle of the worship service last Sunday; they had to plug in the old organ and the organist (a high school senior) had to play it with her back to Ruth.

Alec now has several pillows on the bed arranged as his “kitchen,” “bedroom,” “house,” etc; there is nothing wrong with his imagination. The kids, of course, started back to school yesterday (some school districts started last Wed) and had their first piano lessons in 3 weeks yesterday. I have Session tomorrow night (this starts the 2nd year of my 3 year term). Last night Ruth had Chansonettes rehersal, Alan went to Scouts, and I went to South Holland (about 15 miles away) to attend the Christian Education Committee Meeting of the Presbyterian Church there. They have a full time assistant minister who handles their education programs. He has a lot of good ideas that he likes to share with other churchs. His church is where I attended that Bible study course on the 6 Wed nights (except for the night we were riding the train to Hutchinson) before Christmas.

This Sat afternoon Ruth and several teachers will attend an Art Media Workshop at another church. Sat night is the Small Study Group and Sunday evening is a dinner for the Conservatory teachers and their spouses. Last Fri night I took Alan, Andy and 3 of Alan’s friends bowling for Alan’s birthday party. The 3 boys then stayed all night; they were more giggly than girls before they finally got to sleep. Andy had had his party in the afternoon when Ruth took Andy and 3 of his friends to a Walt Disney movie. Sat was our usual busy day with errands, grocery shopping, etc. I picked up a new cardboard chest for Alec’s clothes. Hope you’re feeling pretty good and everyone else is doing OK, also.

**1-15-73 – Mon –** Hope you folks have had a good week, and it hasn’t been too icy for everyone. We were glad to have your letter last Sat. My last letter with all of the enclosures went to Aunt Clara first, and should have arrived by Sat. Alec and I are playing “house” on our big bed while I write this. As I’ve said, Alec imagines everything. The house to our South finally sold; the people moved in last week. They have two children, one almost two, and one 3 yr old, so Alec should have two new friends when the weather gets warmer and the children are all playing outside. Now the days are getting longer it always seems like it won’t be too long before Spring arrives.

Thumper is doing better, but still jumps up on people when he shouldn’t. We’re going to have to fix him some kind of a house outside this Spring. We need to do a lot of cleaning out and throwing away of things this Spring. We’re so busy with things it seems like we don’t get the sorting done that we should. Alec doesn’t like it when Thumper barks.

We have to get the house cleaned up for when the Hofflands stay overnight with us 2 weeks from this coming Sat night. That is the night the Millikin University Choir (Decatur, Illinois) will appear in our church. Everything is coming OK in preparation for the choir. Ruth is handling a lot of the publicity and has spent a lot of time on it. She is experienced with newspaper publicity, etc., since she is still Publicity Chairman for the Womens Assoc.

Lesle is sewing her new coat on the new sewing machine; its been used like we thought it would. Alan is at scouts tonight and Ruth is at Chansonettes rehersal. Ruth’s birthday is Thursday, but we may have her dinner on Friday since she works Thurs and is only off for one-half hour for supper. Andy is making good progress on his tongue exercises. Lisa is now about ready to start braces. Lesle’s mouth is, of course, a lot better; I expect she’ll have to go about one more year at least. Alan may have to have a little work done; his teeth are the best. Andy is working hard on his rocket model for the race at Cub Scouts a week from Friday. Andy thinks he will play baseball this Spring along with Alan. Ruth is busy accompanying a number of students, including our own, for their solos which come up tomorrow night and later; they usually have trouble getting enough accompanists, and she enjoys helping them out.

I believe the girls are making good progress on their oboes; Lesle’s tone has improved considerably, and she is now in the best band which may go on a trip. I think Lisa is still going to Washington in the Spring. I had Men’s breakfast yesterday AM at church. In the evening we had a dinner at the Conservatory for the spouses of the teachers. Ruth got to meet a lot of the other teachers that she had heard about. Last Sat night was the small discussion group at the ministers house. Hope you’re all OK.

**1-22-73 – Mon –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Hope you folks are all escaping the flu so far. We have quite a bit of it around here, but we haven’t had any in the family so far. Heard over the news about the snowstorm in Colorado, Kansas, etc. It sounded like it might have covered Hutchinson also. We’ve had some rain and wet snow today after several abnormally warm days. Hope you’ve been able to get out again if your weather has allowed it.

I’m playing on the bed again with Alec. He is always saying, “do you want to play on the bed with me, Daddy.” Earlier this evening Ruth and I went over to the Court of Honor for Alan’s scout troop. Alan got his first merit badge in music and received his tenderfoot. After many years they have changed the award system, and Alan was the first new scout to start under the new system. They now have to earn one merit badge before they get the first tenderfoot award. (Jim might like to know that.)

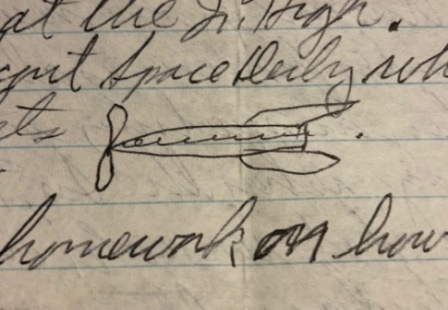
Ruth went on to her Chansonettes rehersal and I came back home. Tomorrow night we have a Community Concert (a jazz group) in Kankakee. Ruth is not having her choir rehersal since her choir is not singing this Sunday. Everything is coming along OK in preparation for the Millikin Choir Concert on Sat night Feb. 3rd. Andy has his Cub Scout meeting this Fri night. They are having a race with some rockets they have made. I went shopping last Wed night with Lisa and Alan for Ruth’s birthday. She got a new blouse, a number of new kitchen gagets, a new sewing accessory easel, a clock for the family room, and a new inexpensive wrist watch. We didn’t have Ruth’s birthday dinner on Thurs, her birthday, since she was working. I went to choir practice on Thurs night. Fri night we all ate at a nice smorgasboard; that was where Ruth wanted to go for her birthday dinner. An insurance man was supposed to come after that but he never showed up. Lesle is working hard to finish her new winter coat on the new sewing machine. It is set up most of the time. Sat and Sunday were our regular schedule. Lisa had her x-rays in preparation for getting braces. I guess that’s about all for the weekly diary. Again, hope you’re all OK.

**1-?-73 – Mon PM –** Dear Mother, Aunt Clara, M.J. and Bill, Glad to have Mother’s letter with Ruths birthday card, etc. Hope your weather hasn’t been too bad. After our warm spell last week it turned colder over the weekend with some snow. Lesle went on the Sr. High Fellowship Winter Retreat over the weekend at the Presbyterian Camp at Saugatuk, Michigan. That is the camp where we went as a family a year ago last August. Saugatuk is on Lake Michigan, a ways North of Sawyer where the Lesters have their Summer home. I think I commented after you sent that letter from Aunt Margaret, that the Lesters may be living in a South suburb near us. Aunt Margaret said they were living in a Chicago suburb, and that Bill Lester is on the staff at the University of Chicago. Many people who work at the University of Chicago live in our area since the Illinois Central train goes from here to Chicago by way of the University. The new Governors State University about 2 miles from us is almost completed and will open in the Fall. They are meeting in a temporary building now.

Anyway, when the Sr. Highers left Fri night it was warm, and it was cold and snowy when they came back yesterday afternoon. Lisa went on a bowling party yesterday afternoon with her Jr. High Fellowship. Her Confirmation Class and Youth Choir still meet on Sat AM. They will join the church sometime around Easter.

Ruth is at Chansonettes rehersal tonight; she is directing. Wed night is the Annual Congregational Dinner and business meeting to elect new officers and go over the budget. Next Sat night is the Millikin Choir; I hope the weather is good. Last Tues night Ruth and I went to Kankakee to the Community Concert; it was a jazz group – 6 players and a vocalist. The leader and pianist is a well-known musician from Park Forest. We were both home Wed night. Thurs night Ruth couldn’t get the car started to come home for supper from the Conservatory, so Lisa, Alec and I walked over with her supper and got the car started. I then went to choir practice. In the Summer we often walk back and forth to the Conservatory, which is about 6 blocks away.

Hope Aunt Clara’s over her cold and you, M.J. and Bill have avoided the flu. We haven’t had any flu yet (they say it is getting better in the area) but Alec, Alan and I have touches of colds. Last week almost ¼ (200) students were absent one day at the Jr. High. Friday night was the Cub Scout Space Derby where the Cubs all raced their model rockets.



Artwork by Dad.

Alan does not have scouts this evening so he is doing some homework on how to find and catelogue things in the library. Alec is playing in the living room and I need to get him to bed. Ruth didn’t work yesterday which was fine since we didn’t let Alec go in his classroom because of his cold. Again, hope you all avoid the flue.

**2-6-73 – Mon PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Well another week has gone by. Hope its been a good one for you and you accomplished everything you had planned. I’m sure you feel better on some days more than on others, but I guess that goes for all of us (I guess I’m groggy tonight – I’m not writing very well). We’re in the living room and Alec is sitting at the piano “playing.” I’ll be surprised if he is not musical with all the music and piano playing going on around him. He’s sorting his music ready to “play”; I’ve never seen him sit this long at the piano. Andy just came in and sat down beside him. Ruth, Alan and Lisa just left for a recital (required of all 6-7-8 grade music students) out at the Jr. High School. Alan left his bassoon at the school (we kidded him that he had done it on purpose) and we had to go over and have the custodian let us in to get it. Ruth is missing a Chansonettes appearance this evening to play for 12-13 of the children playing tonight. They always have trouble getting enough accompianists so she volunteers as a pianist to help the children.

That was nice Mrs. Laidig called Mother. She told about it in a long letter we finally had from her. They are so busy with all their responsibilities that they are not sure when they might get up here. They usually come up sometime in the Spring. That was nice you got to go home awhile and do a lot of sorting and rearranging. Hope you have all avoided the flu. We’ve had some sniffles (I have a head cold now) but nobody has come clear down with the flu; I believe there are a lot fewer cases here now. After our very rough Dec weather, we’ve had a very mild Jan and early Feb. It got up in the 50’s yesterday which is 30 degrees or more above normal. Right now and the last 2 weeks of January is normally our coldest time of the year. I guess the mild weather has relieved the fuel shortage somewhat.

Last week was pretty much the regular schedule on the weekdays. Sat was busy as we had to clean the house getting ready for the Hofflands (Millikin Choir Director) to stay overnight. Had many errands to run, shopping etc. but we made it. The concert went fine Sat night although I thought we would have a slightly larger crowd. We all got to bed about midnight. The Hofflands had to be back at the Church as the bus left at 8:45 AM so they could make it in plenty of time to another suburb for a worship service concert at another church. They also had a concert yesterday evening at a church in the North part of Chicago. Next year they have a big tour planned for Scandinavia.

Yesterday afternoon Ruth had her 3rd recital at the Conservatory. I go along to help take pictures, set-up refreshments, etc. All 11 of her pupils and their families were there. Mom writes above this: (not all of my students – but all who were supposed to be there) Back to Dad: Yesterday night was Family Night at Church with a speaker from India. Hope you’re all OK.

**2-?-73 – Mon –** Hope you all had a nice Valentines Day. We were all thinking of you folks, even if we didn’t get Valentine’s Day things off in time for you to receive them on the Day. Alec just asked for a haircut so Ruth just trimmed off some of his locks. Except for a couple of days break Alec’s nose has been running for the past 3-4 weeks. He feels good, but coughs occasionally at night. I’m not as hoarse as I was a week ago today, but still have some head cold. Hope most of the flu is over in Hutchinson by now, and you have all avoided it.

Its nice to have Ruth home this evening. There is no Chansonettes because its Lincoln’s birthday. The kids were all out of school also. Alan is at scouts; he had to miss a week ago tonight because of the solo recital. I have Session Wed night and Thurs night a longer choir rehersal as our Senior Choir is singing next Sunday night at a Choir Festival at another church in the area. We will all go to Family Night first and then leave early for the festival. Next week on Tues and Wed nights we have S.S. Staff and Christian Education Committee meetings so I have a lot of reading and sorting to do before that time. This Fri night I have to give a magic show for the Blue and Gold Cub Scout Dinner at our church (that is not the pack that Andy is in). We’ll all eat there and the kids will help me on some tricks. I have the “Pup Tent” set up here in the living room and we’ll try to “produce” Andy out of it on Friday. I’ve only used the tent once over all the years I’ve had it. I’ve used the head chopper and the floating lady a few times.

The kids have all been to see the Walt Disney movie, “The Worlds Greatest Athlete.” Last Wed night Ruth, Andy and I went over to the PTA or PTO meeting at the grade school. A lady talked on “modern math” and afterwards we saw Alan and Andy’s art work. Thurs night was the regular teaching and choir practice schedule. Fri and Sat I read some on the Dead Sea Scrolls as I had the adult class last Sun AM as a fill in and used that subject. I’m trying to do some more reading on Biblical Archaeology. Our small study group was called off Sat night because some of the people were gone. Sun AM was the men’s breakfast, s.s. and then I had a solo part in the anthem.

I got the stamps out over the weekend for the first time after all these years. It was to help Andy have a collection for his Wolf badge so I bought him a small album and got him started. Then Lisa and Alan insisted they wanted collections also, so tonight I bought a good up to date American Album for all of them to help on and eventually transfer my good American collection into. You can send all the stamps you have saved. Sorry to hear about Mr. Kilmer. We had your letter today. Glad Aunt Clara got out and hope you’re all OK.

**2-19-73 – Mon 8:30 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, well I’m still doing pretty well holding to my Monday night schedule for writing to Hutchinson. Hope you’re all doing fine, and looking forward to warmer Spring weather. We had another spell of colder weather and some snow, but today has been warmer and I believe we are definitely over the “hump” of winter.

Ruth is at Chansonettes rehersal this evening; I suppose they have 6 or so performances left for the rest of the Winter and Spring. Ruth had the general Sunday School Staff Meeting schedule for tomorrow night but so many couldn’t come that we’ve rescheduled it for a week from Wed night. As a result Ruth will be home tomorrow night since she had cancelled her choir rehersal. Alec is doing fine and his nose finally stopped running. Alan went to the Dr. this afternoon to see about a boil on his arm; I can remember when I had the same thing. I’m still a little hoarse for singing and have been again for several weeks.

We’ve really been on a stamp collecting binge since we started about 10 days ago. Alan and Andy have both done a lot. Andy has a beginners album and he is transferring all my reserve collection. A week ago I bought a new complete U.S. loose leaf album and its to be the good family U.S. Album. Alan is doing most of the work in it so he can get credit on his stamp collecting merit badge. Lisa has done some foreign collecting, so we may get a new foreign album at a later time. My old albums were about 30 years out of date.

Session meeting was supposed to be last Wed, but the minister didn’t feel well so it was postponed till this Wed. As a result, I took Andy to the Church last Wed and we worked on some tricks for the show on Fri. Thurs night was choir. Friday we all, except for Lesle who was baby sitting, went to the Cub Scout Blue and Gold Banquet at our church. (That is not the pack that Andy is in) I put on a magic show and Andy, Lisa and Alan assisted. It went pretty well. About 80 people there counting the parents. Our dinner was our pay.

Sat Ruth left early for a nearby town to accompany 6-7-8 graders for solos. She had 11 but 1 didn’t show up. Her kids got 5 I’s and 5 II’s. Alan got a II on his bassoon solo. (Next Sat I go to a nearby town to help judge a science fair, also 6-7-8 grades). Sat PM I drove Alan (he didn’t play till 3:30) and Alec over to get Ruth and we got home about 6:00. Yesterday morning was regular schedule. We worked on stamps in the afternoon and then all went to Family Mission Nights at 5:00. Ruth and I left early to go sing with our adult choir and 5 other choirs at a Festival at another Church. The kids got a ride home with friends. Andy’s Blue and Gold Banquet is this Fri night. Hope you’re all OK and you’ve been able to get out another time. Its snowing some now 10:15 PM.

**3-3-73 – Sat AM 9:15 –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I didn’t get my letter written last Mon evening as we had someplace to go, and just didn’t get it written later. I’m in the living room with Alec. Lisa just left for Junior Choir practice followed by Confirmation Class. The minister hopes to finish their class up before Easter. Glad to have Mother’s letters and the stamps. With all of those stamps and the ones we have saved, we should just about have one of each of all the pretty commerative stamps that have issued in the last 20-25 years since I stopped collecting. The stamps came through the mail OK. I just now put them in water to soak the stamps off. You then put them face down on paper towels to dry. I, of course, remember doing that a lot when I was a boy. You folks can all continue to save the big commerative stamps if you don’t mind, and if no one else wants them.

Ruth is working on the biweekly grocery list. As we all know the price of groceries has skyrocketed. Glad to hear that you folks are all OK now and that M.J. is up from her bout with the flu. Some people here still have hoarseness, etc. but I think we’re over the flu season. We’ve had above average temperatures the last few days with “April like” showers yesterday. I believe we had a warmer than average Feb and March is supposed to be warmer and drier than average. Anyway, we’ve had a mild winter although we can still have snow in March.

Hope your Pink Lady reorganization works out OK and that you will still have something to do, if you still want to. Lesle bought a new top and some material with her birthday money last evening. She says “thanks.” It doesn’t seem possible that we have a 15 yr old. Lesle is a half inch shorter than Ruth and Lisa about half an inch taller. The girls have probably just about reached their full height although they, of course, will get heavier as they get older. Indeed.

Suppose Bill is still busy with income tax returns for the farmers. I started ours in Jan but haven’t gotten back to it because our weekends have been so busy. They are due April 15th, you know. Tonight we are invited to a dinner party for some church people. The kids will all stay home. Tomorrow afternoon is the Winter High School Orchestra Concert. We’ll be going since Lesle will be playing in it. The High School finally got budget approval for an English Horn and it has been ordered; they have promised Lesle that she can learn to play it. Tomorrow evening is the 3rd and final Family Mission Night at Church on India. Ruth is preparing some special Indian food. Mom adds: (curried chicken – smells up the refrigerator even though wrapped in foil, lid on, etc.) Back to Dad: Tues AM I’ve promised to give a magic show for Andy’s class at school. I’ll do it first thing and then go on to work. Hope you’re now having some nice warm weather and you have been able to get outside.

**3-6-73 – Tues PM –** Glad to have your packet of stamps and note today. We soaked the other stamps off, and Andy has put some in his album that he didn’t have. The dinner party last Sat night (7 couples from church) was a lot of fun. For the dinner everyone had a menu, but each item had a disguised name. Everyone had to guess what was what trying to get the courses in the proper order. Naturally, it was funny as no one had everything in perfect order, e.g., I got food before I got silverware. We played a simple card game afterwards. The host couples were the minister and his wife and another couple. Sun afternoon was the high school orchestra and Freshman Sophomore Chorus Concert. Lesle played in the orchestra. Afterwards we went to the last Family Night at church. The Indian food (Ruth made one of the casseroles) was very good and spicy. The crowd was the biggest of the 3 nights.

The last few days have been April-like and it got up to about 60 on Sat and today. It is to get warmer tonight with the possibility of thunderstorms tomorrow. After some errands last night I got ready for the magic show today for Andy’s room. I went to work awhile first this morning and then drove up to put on the show (gave one for his room last year, also). The other two 3rd grade rooms and some 2nd and 4th graders also came in.

After the show Ruth, Alec and I went shopping before I went back to work. Ruth had to buy some more presents for Lesle’s birthday (15) today. Lesle got a lot of new clothes, especially shirts and blouses. She opened her presents right after supper. Ruth is at her regular choir practice tonight. Tomorrow night is the first of the Lenten services. Last Wed night was a chili supper (Mardi Gra theme) at church put on by the high school group (they gave the profits back to the church). Afterwards Ruth had a s.s. staff meeting. Last Thurs was regular schedule and we were home on Fri night after eating out and doing some shopping. I think we had a letter from the Laidigs but I don’t know if they plan on coming up this Spring or not. This Friday night Ruth and I are attending a stage show at a theater. It’s a benefit for the Chicago Heights Symphony. This Sat is a very heavy schedule with the small study group in the evening. Sun AM is the mens breakfast.

The boys are starting to play some baseball as the weather has gotten warmer. Andy’s Blue and Gold Cub banquet went OK on Feb 23rd. Andy hadn’t felt well that day but went with me. A boy scout (son of the Packmaster) gave a magic show like I used to. My science fair judging went OK on Sat the 24th. Hope you’re all OK. The girls and Alan are all practicing (10:00 PM) their oboes and bassoon which pleases me.

**3-12-73 – Mon 8:00 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Its been a little cooler today, but has still been warmer than average for March. Yesterday morning when I got up a bit earlier than usual to attend the Men’s Breakfast, it was just like an April morning, clearing and warmer. By church time, however, it was cooler, windy and raining by the time we were on the way. We had a pretty good crowd in church.

Ruth has gone to Chansonettes rehersal this evening. I don’t know how many appearances they have left this Spring. We went to the library right after supper tonight. We had to pay for a book that we had checked out one time, but have been unable to locate; I expect it will turn up sometime when we clean some more, especially in the boys room. I checked out a stamp catalogue for Alan (he had already gone to scouts) to help him on his stamp collecting merit badge. He hopes to pass his cooking skill award tonight. He did some of it on their campout that weekend. Sat he boiled an egg for me, and last night he went to the grocery store with me to get prices on food to feed 8 people for 3 meals. He is quite interested in scouts right now so we’re trying to keep him encouraged. He is well on his way toward his 2nd class award.

Hope your weather has been nice and you have had the energy to get outside at least once. Last Wed night was our first Lenten service. Ruth stayed home with Alec as he had another cold (this time with a cough) all last week. (He is lots better today.) I went with the rest of the kids. Lisa and Alan were to help in the nursery but they weren’t needed. This Wed night I have Session meeting after the service.

Last Fri night Ruth and I went up towards Chicago, had dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence – 6th grade s.s. teacher, and Mr. Hureau – orchestra teacher, and then went with them to the Drury Lane Theater to see Van Johnson (a popular movie star of 15-25 years ago) in “Catch Me If You Can,” a humorous mystery with a surprise ending. Sat Ruth had to play for a couple of senior high students up at their solo contest. One of them was a trumpet player who was very good (I heard him practice here at the house). Sat night was the small discussion group at someones house. Yesterday afternoon Ruth, Lisa and I went to the Winter Art Fair. It was held in the big car repair building of the local Ford dealer. We didn’t buy anything this time.

Lesle is a busy freshman with all her music, art, studies, etc. She will soon get an English Horn (the high school finally got approval in this years budget) to learn to play. She will need it in the orchestra as they accompany the Spring Musical at the high school “Fiddler on the Roof.” Thanks to Mother for the stamps. Hope everything is OK with everyone. Alec is drawing some cows, horses and birds for you; I’ll enclose the paper. Alec likes to draw with a pen – holding it in a regular writing position.

**3-19-73 – Mon PM –** I just took Alan to scouts and Ruth just left for Chansonettes. Alec and Andy are playing (building with blocks) here in the living room. The big kids all are real good with Alec. Andy is learning to play better with Alec and not to be too bossy. We’re having March weather (30-45) right now after the earlier warm spells. The kids are playing outside a lot though. I think I told you how Alan put a basketball ball goal (an old one that a friend gave him) up all by himself on the roof over the carport. Its slightly higher than 10 ft (regulation height), he says. He practices all the time, either here or at friend’s houses.



The basketball goal with the Rolling Stones tongue.

His first baseball practice is 2 wks from next Sat; its often cold and rainy for their first practices. Although Andy is old enough for the regular junior division of Park Forest Boys Baseball, I think he is going to play in a daytime league sponsored by the Recreation Commission (they sponsor Ruth’s Chansonettes).

Sorry that Kansas State lost out in the big basketball tournament, but I believe they did win the Big Eight championship for two years in a row. Indiana, the team that plays UCLA next, has a star freshman player, Quinn Buckner, who played for a high school near here the last two years as his team won the Illinois State Championship each year.

Lisa took sick at her stomach as soon as she got home from her piano lesson, so I don’t know whether she will be going to school tomorrow or not. She has been up and around all evening. Wed night is another Lenten service at church. Ruth and another lady are singing a duet. Fri night is Andy’s Cub Pack Meeting. The dads and cubs are supposed to each decorate a cake. Moms can bake them, but the “men” have to do the decorating. I worked with Alan last Sat night (we stayed home from the church Couples Club bowling party) on stamp collecting and I believe he is about ready to pass his merit badge. He was working with Andy (he was his patient) last night on his first aid merit badge. I worked some on income tax yesterday. I’ve also been working some on magic even though I don’t have a show to give. Yesterday afternoon Alan and I went to the Park Forest Stamp Club Exhibit.

Last Wed was Lenten Service and I had Session meeting afterwards. Thurs night Lisa (Jr. High Orchestra) and Alan (6th grade band) played at the Jr. High for the parents music organization. Fri night we drove up to another suburb to attend the Jr. High Band and Orchestra District Contest. Lisa went earlier on the bus. We were too late to hear the band (they played at 6:30) but heard the orchestra. The orchestra got a I and the band a II. Sat we picked up Lesle’s new bike (she got her other bike on her 7th birthday) that we got for her birthday. Hope you’re all OK and your weather is getting warmer.

**3-30-73 – Fri –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I talked to Mother over the telephone so I’ll write the news letter to you first; since I didn’t write Monday its been almost 2 weeks since my last letter. Hope your weather is now more Spring like so you’ll feel like getting out more. It was sunshiny as I started to drive home from work this afternoon, but cloudy and cooler by the time we got up here to Park Forest. We went out to the drive in for food and by that time it was getting foggy. I was out with Alec later when it was darker and he learned about fog; he learned that fog looks like smoke. Alec was 2½ years old day before yesterday and he is growing up all the time.

That is good that you still like to play Scrabble. Our family has so many hobbies, projects, activities, etc. that we only rarely play a family game together. However, we do lots of things together. The girls are both at the movie Cabaret (it and the actors and actresses in it just won several of the Academy Awards) with some of their friends. Two of Lesle’s friends are sleeping here tonight.

Lisa has her last Confirmation Class in the morning. Her class of 22 will meet with the Session (to be accepted as new church members) Sunday afternoon April 8th; her first communion will be on Maundy Thursday, the night before Good Friday. We’re having our special Easter music a week from Sunday AM. Lisa’s Confirmation Class, along with new adult members; will be welcomed into the church on Palm Sunday.

That’s nice that Charles and Cooley plan to drop in sometime this Spring; that will be a pleasant surprise for all you folks. We don’t know our full Summer schedule as yet. With Alan’s baseball and Summer school we may not get the whole family to Kansas until August, but maybe I can come out some weekend myself.

I was “excited” this week when my new magic catalog which I just ordered came. I hadn’t gotten one since I was in high school, so I enjoyed looking at how prices had gone up (after 25 years) on some of the old tricks. So far Andy is most interested in magic; he’s reading his Cub Scout magic book right now. Alans first baseball practice is a week from tomorrow. Andy’s baseball will not start till Summer. Alan is studying hard for his first aid merit badge; I’ll help him review it in a few days.

Glad Jana got over her “flu”. Lisa missed school on Mon and Tues with a virus which was associated with a skin breaking out. She went to school Wed but they sent her home. She stayed home yesterday. The kids were all out of school today because of Teachers Institute. Somebody burned the “house” (in the field back of us) down Wed at supper time. Last night about 1:00 AM (we were all asleep) somebody burned our 2 plastic trash cans (filled with trash) to the ground out on our curb. Wow, I remember fort(s) being burned more than once over the years, but no memory of the trash cans. A neighbor man getting home from work called the fire department. Hope everyone is doing fine in Hutchinson.

**4-?-73 – Tues PM –** We’re all home this evening except for Ruth who has her regular choir rehersal. Her choir is still small (14 there is about the most they ever have) but they work hard and enjoy singing. It’s a small church and the’re short of money since they just built a new building. I’m sure she’ll stay with them at least one more year; she hopes they can get some more members for next Fall.

Tomorrow night is the fifth Lenten Service. We will probably go but leave early so we can go to the grade school science fair. I helped Andy build (using a plan from the World Books) a light projector that shows how to make different colors. Andy is doing fine in school and brought home a good report card this week, as did Alan. Lisa had some of her best grades ever making all A’s but for a C in Algebra (she’s done better there and can again if she studies). Lesle, of course, makes good grades. I don’t worry about any of them in their school work, knowing they have the ability to do whatever they set their minds to. As I guess you did with M.J. and me, our philosophy is to expose them to many things, and let their lives develop in the directions of their interests. We have, of course, emphasized the Church and music.

We heard of another fire in a garbage can in a house nearby. We hope that whoever has been setting the fires will stop. Tues or Sat night we’re going to a show at a nearby high school. One of the boys in Ruth’s choir has the lead. As I mentioned, Lisa’s Confirmation Class meets with the Session this Sunday afternoon to be examined by Rev Reif and taken into the church. Lisa said there was a magician at their Jr. High today so I enjoyed hearing her tell us all about it.



Lisa’s confirmation class, and all those familiar church faces. Lisa is front row, third from left.

I finally got the income tax finished last weekend, but I haven’t copied it yet onto the final form. Our Easter music will be this Sunday and Ruth will sing an alto solo as part of one of the numbers. Ruth is still going to Chansonettes most Monday evenings but is getting discouraged, as many others, because their director is not very good. She has helped them for 3 years now, but may not join in the Fall unless some changes are made. Lesle is doing OK on the English Horn now that she has some better reeds. As I said before she has to use the English Horn a lot in the orchestra that accompanies their Spring Musical, “Fiddler on the Roof.” We’ve continued to have cool, rainy weather; it gets down into the 30’s at night and then warms up to 50 or so during the day. Alan’s first baseball practice is this Sat but it may be too muddy. Pete Luna, that man I work and ride with, had a car accident Sun (no one hurt badly), so he’s driving another car to work tomorrow. Thats all the general news from here. Hope you’re all the same and OK.

**4-11-73 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I didn’t get the letter off earlier since Mon evening was busy with the children having appointments, etc. and I had an insurance man out. I’m not buying any new insurance, he is just new in the area and wanted to go over my policies (one of mine and the girls are with his company – Northwestern Mutual) and get acquainted. You may remember in 1949 (when I was a senior in high school) when Mother started a life insurance policy for me from Northwestern National Life of Minneapolis, Carlton Armour’s company, I still have the policy and it is one of our major assets.

That was nice that you were able to get out for a ride. Hope your weather is better now. Mother sent some clippings of the high water. Years ago that much water would, I suppose, have gotten into downtown Hutchinson. I can well remember the flooding when I was a boy; 1941 was a big one, I recall. With all the dikes and levees I would guess you have much less flooding in near Hutchinson.

Ruth called her folks the other night and they, of course, had been hit hard by the late winter storms, etc. It had been up to 75 and then turned cold with snow. I guess a lot of cattle died out in those areas. Ruth invited her folks to come up here sometime, but they are so busy they don’t know when they might be able to come. This Dec they are going in again as Grand Matron and Patron of their Eastern Star group. I can’t remember if you or Mother were ever members of Eastern Star. Mr. Laidig is still active in the highway association work out there in Western Kansas, they have to fight pretty hard to get money, etc. for highway improvements.

I got the income tax forms (State and federal) copied last night and mailed out today. We should get a nice refund from the federal one since we had more deductions this year than ever before. The medical deduction was big since Lesle started in braces this year. Lisa gets her full braces on this Friday; she was scheduled to go a couple of weeks ago, but was sick.

Tonight is the 6th and last Lenten Service at church. I have monthly session meeting afterwards. Ruth is having the best luck she has ever had with a plant indoors; it is a lipstick plant in a hanging basket by the window. Mom adds: (the one I bought with birthday money – the lipstick comes up out of what looks like a red blossom) Back to Dad: I forgot to say that we had snow here yesterday and it has been below freezing at night; real unusual. It warmed up last Fri and Sat (Alan had his first baseball practice Sat afternoon) and has been cold, rainy and snowy ever since.

The Easter music went fine last Sun AM; Ruth sang a solo. In the afternoon Lisa’s confirmation class met with the session for examination and voting into church membership. They will be welcomed this Sun and have their first communion a week from tomorrow night on Maundy Thursday. I’m off work on Good Friday. Hope everyone there is OK.

**4-17-73 – Tues –** It was warmer again today after cooling off yesterday; Sat and especially Sunday were also more Spring-like. Hope your weather has also finally become more Spring-like. I’m on the living room couch with Alec. He has his pajamas on and I’ll put him to bed in a little while. With the warmer weather Alec, of course, wants to be outside all the time. He thinks he can play baseball as well as the big kids. Ruth is at her regular choir practice this evening.

Thurs night is our Maundy Thursday Communion Service. Lisa will take her first communion at that time. We all hope to sleep late on Good Friday. There will be 3 services Sun starting with an outside (if its warm enough) service at 6:00 AM; followed by a pancake breakfast, a second worship service, s.s., and a 3rd service at 11:00 AM.

Lesle played with the high school band last Sat AM at their district contest in a neighboring suburb (they got a I). She came home and went to bed sick with a fever (she probably was sick while she was playing) and sore throat. She apparently has a strep throat based on the culture the Dr. did yesterday when Ruth took her in. Its so unusual for Lesle to be sick as she is usually the most resistant of all the children to colds, etc. I expect she’ll miss school tomorrow and I’m not sure about Thurs. Next week is the high school band trip to Florida (Miami) so Lesle won’t want to miss that. Mrs. L, as you may remember, has a sister in Miami (I visited them that one time I attended a meeting in Miami). I don’t know whether Lesle will have time to visit them or not. The band and chorus at high school alternate each year taking a big trip.

Lisa is still planning to go to Washington next month on the 8th grade trip. I’m probably going to Boston 2 days the middle of May on business (16th and 17th). I may have mentioned that a 14 member (teenage) bell choir will present a concert during the morning worship on April 29th. Ruth has always been interested in bell choirs; she says they are good for Jr. High boys interested in participating in a music group since that is the age when boys voices are changing and they are oftentimes embarrassed about singing.

It finally was dry enough for them to deliver and plant our new crabapple today in the front yard. Its about (Dad draws a line about 1½ inches long.) this diameter and about 8 ft tall so we hope it will thrive; we’ve had trouble with trees in that spot. The last one was a corkscrew which died last year.

Wed: Lesle is better today (she had another penicillin shot today). She can go back to school tomorrow if she has no symptoms. Alan had baseball practice last Sat. In the evening Ruth and I went to the next to last small discussion group in someones home. Sun AM Lisa’s confirmation class was welcomed into the church along with 13 other new members; there was a fellowship time after church for them. In the afternoon Ruth and I went to the last concert (4 youth soloists) of the Chicago Heights Symphony. Hope you’re all fine.

**4-25-73 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We hope you made it back home OK and are settled now. That’s great that this lady showed up at the time when you were anxious to get back. I expect your weather is more Spring-like by now and the rains have slowed down. We haven’t had any rain this week after a wet weekend. Alan didn’t have baseball practice last Saturday because it rained most of the day. There is still a lot of flooding in Illinois, water standing around, and I guess the Mississippi River has been about as high as its ever been.

Ruth is practicing on the piano; it sure is nice that we have had the good piano you gave us all these years we have been married. Ruth is trying to spend more time practicing as Alec gradually takes less and less time. Ruth still has her regular complement of 13 students at the Conservatory. Since schools are out this week she let her students off also. Our kids also did not have their regular piano, oboe and bassoon lessons.

Lesle is in Florida right now with the Crete-Monee High School Band. They left yesterday flying to Miami. They had two concerts today in high schools and one concert tomorrow. Friday they get to go to the seashore and they spend all day Saturday at Disneyworld (the entertainment place in Florida that is similar to Disneyland in California). They fly back late Sat night getting in here early Sun morning. Next month Lisa goes to Washington D.C. on the annual 8th grade tour there. Trips like these are common these days with the availability of jet airplanes. When I was in high school we thought it was a big trip when we went to Wichita on the bus for a game or to a music contest. Ruth has an Aunt (Mrs. L sister) in Miami, but I don’t know whether they will get to see each other or not (Ruth wrote her about Lesle’s coming).

We have choir practice tomorrow night and Andy has Cubs Friday. This Sunday we are having that teen-age bell choir from a Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, New York (the contact was made through one of our members who used to live there). Our minister is taking a vacation this week (after working hard through the Lenten Season) and may not be back by Sun AM so I’m presiding, which won’t be a very big job.

Last night (Ruth let her choir off since the’re not singing this Sunday) Ruth and I went down to the Kankakee Community Concert to hear a good Metropolitan Opera baritone, William Walker. We were home Mon night. Easter Sunday morning we went to the early breakfast and then to the 8:30 service where Lisa sang in the Youth Choir. We had s.s. next and then Ruth went over for her choir and I sang in our choir for the 11:00 service. The kids dyed their Easter eggs on Sun afternoon. I was off work Friday and did some cleaning around the house. Again, hope you’re all settled OK and everything works out fine.

**5-6-73 – Sun PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Glad to have the note from Mother hearing that you are settled OK and everything is working out; it is certainly wonderful that you could go home again. Mother wrote about M.J. (and Bill helping) taking the Girl Scouts out camping. I remember M.J. mentioning one trip that she was going to take them camping. Lisa was a girl scout for awhile, but Lesle was never interested.

It has rained some again this evening. It was just getting reasonably well dried out so one could really work in the yard. We got a new bush for the front yard yesterday. Ruth has worked out a landscaping “Master Plan” for the yard which we are trying to gradually carry out. Lisa is the child most interested in the yard; sometimes she goes ahead on her own and does something in the yard. It pleases us very much when our children do work without being told. It makes one feel that your child rearing is succeeding.

Lesle was good with Alec yesterday. Ruth and I were out around noon and when we got back she had taken him out for a picnic lunch on a blanket in the back yard. Even Alan (12 yrs) now baby sits some and we can even depend on Andy to help watch and entertain Alec, also. Alec is so far doing quite well about staying close to the house, and on the sidewalk, when he is outside. All the older neighborhood children are good about keeping an eye on the younger children.

Alan has just come in the living room to practice the bassoon. He’s doing pretty well but, of course, sports and scouts are the big things right now. We’ve done like you did, we’ve cleaned out our “attic”. Our “attic” is a storage space up over our carport. I got up and sorted and cleaned it out better than I had ever done before. I threw away a lot of old pharmacy and medical magazines that were out of date. Things in those areas get out of date, and I have full access at work to the latest journals and books. I’ve saved all of the old magic magazines that I got in Hutchinson since they contain original things that can’t be found elsewhere.

Alan knocked in the winning run in his practice game yesterday (baseball); their regular season starts a week from next Saturday. He had a practice this afternoon. After Alan’s practice Ruth and I went out to an Art Fair out at the High School. I have to make a church call tomorrow night before Ruth goes to a Chansonettes appearance at the Golden Towers (a low income senior citizens home in Chicago Heights). Lesle has a busy week of rehersals and then the appearances of “Fiddler on the Roof” on Thurs, Fri and Sat nights. She plays both the English Horn (belongs to the High School) and her oboe in the orchestra that accompanies the show. Our family will probably go on Fri night. Hope you’ve been out for more rides, as I’m sure your weather is really Springlike by now.

**5-14-73 – Mon PM –** Its clear and cool this evening, and it may get down to freezing by morning. We’ve really had a cool damp Spring. A frost may have killed our nice new tree in the front yard. The nursery man said it might come out again (the leaves are withering and dying), but if it doesn’t they will plant another one in the Fall. I just took Thumper out for a walk in the field. I also took him for long walks on Sat and Sun. Lisa normally takes him for most of his walks, but she won’t get back from Washington D.C. till 9:30 or 10:00 this evening. The’re probably just about landing at O’Hare Airport now (8:30). Its clear here this evening and it should be pretty coming into Chicago with all the lights, etc. They could probably also see Lake Michigan some. Lisa left early Sat AM about 3:30 AM. She went to bed early Fri evening. Ruth and I went to see Fiddler on the Roof at the High School (Lesle played in the orchestra) and then Ruth stayed up to see Lisa off. I’ll leave in a little bit to go out and pick her up.

That was nice hearing your voices over the phone yesterday, and we were glad that the flowers were nice. Ruth also got some flowers when we were at the store awhile on Sat. Alan’s team lost their practice game on Sat. The regular season (21 games) starts next Sat after they have their Opening Day Parade early in the morning. Next Sat is the grade school Pow Pow (Carnival) and Sun afternoon Ruth’s students have a recital. Sat night is a Scout Panorama like Jim was in once, I believe.

Andy got a ¾ size viola last Sat. He scored well on the music aptitude test and they recommended a violin (the teacher said viola would be fine since that is what Andy said he wanted). Andy has always said he wanted to play the French Horn, but he would have to wait another year (Summer before 5th grade) before he could start that. With a string instrument he can start now and during Summer school before he’s in the 4th grade. He can play for a year and then decide whether he wants to stay with it or not. With the ¾ size instrument you rent until the child is old enough for a regular size instrument.

Ruth is at Chansonettes this evening. She has to play the piano for their last 2 or 3 appearances since the regular pianist is leaving town. Ruth plans to drop out of Chansonettes next year. Tomorrow night is a music awards banquet. Wed AM I go to Boston with Dr. Clements, our toxicologist; we come back Thurs afternoon. The trip is to visit the groups in Boston that are working on that aerosol treatment for newborn babies that have problems breathing. If it works it could save many lives. Friday night is Showboat and we’re going with the Church Couples Club. Tues night: I’m going to bed early so I can get up for the trip at 5:30. Lisa got home OK. Ruth says “Thanks” for the Mother’s Day gift. Hope you’re all OK.

**5-23-73 – Wed –** I’m finally relaxing some after, I think, one of the busiest 2 weeks we’ve ever had. Today has been cooler and a little rainy; it rained some yesterday also. It doesn’t seem possible that the swimming pool will open in about 3 weeks. Sometimes its too cool here to do much swimming before July. We’ve got to sit down soon and plan our Summer schedule. We’ve been so busy and tired that we just haven’t planned much ahead.

Andy had a viola lesson today at school. He, of course, will play it in Summer School. I’m not sure what the other kids are taking, but they all go in the morning, I believe. Andy will be in a Summer baseball program rather than the Boys Baseball Program that Alan is in. I think the big kids will take their oboe and bassoon lessons for most of the Summer. Ruth is out this evening singing with the Chansonettes. I believe they have another appearance tomorrow during the day and maybe one more before they are through for the year. As I’ve told you Ruth is resigning from Chansonettes after this year. She has sung regularly for 3 years and has gained a lot of experience regarding groups of that type, in case she ever has an opportunity to direct such a group. The current director has several weaknesses and it is no longer fun for Ruth.

The boys haven’t done much on scouts recently, although I took the boys out to a big scout show last Sat night. Andy has Cub Pack Meeting this Friday night. Yesterday evening Ruth had her last choir rehersal of the year out at the Sauk Village Church; her choir sings for the last time next Sunday. She plans to return there at least one more year, I guess.

Congratulations to M.J. on being elected President of Hutchinson Area-City Panhellenic. We all get tired and weary with our many activities, but know it is better to be busy than idle. Thats nice that Aunt Clara can take her desk back to the Hospital. Hope everything works out better now. That was good that she got to sort through some more things while she was at home. Ruth and I could spend months sorting and reading through things and still not be done. We had a man (we met him at an Art Show) make a 2 foot wide tall bookcase to go in the hallway just outside the door to the front bathroom; the wall is just 2 feet wide and we couldn’t find one that narrow in the stores. Anyway, it gives us some more badly needed storage space for books. This is the bookcase where the book “Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex – But Were Afraid to Ask” mysteriously appeared one year ☺

My trip to Boston went OK last Wed and Thurs, although the work being done there isn’t quite as far along as I thought it was. I’m going to have to go back there more often from now on. Ruth and I went to see Showboat last Fri night with the Church Couples Club – we enjoyed it. Because of rain Alan’s first baseball game was postponed from Sat to Sun. Alan pitched well but lost 3-1; they lost their 2nd game 11-2 on Mon night. Their team is weaker than last year. Ruth’s last recital of the year was Sunday afternoon. The girls went to see Godspell in Chicago. Hope you’re all OK.

**5-30-72 – Wed evening –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’m sitting on the living room couch with Alec and he is playing with that little red 3 drawer cabinet that you gave the children one time; it says B & B Adhesive Tape on the sides. I expect it is one that Ola played with. Alec seems so grown-up tonight, but after all, he is 2 years and 8 months old now. He goes everywhere with us and naturally thinks he is as big as any of the older kids.

Hope you’re settled OK again at the hospital and everything works out OK for you. That was good that you had a chance to get some more sorting done at home. I believe Mother wrote that you were able to take your desk to the hospital; I’m sure that will help you sort your things. We’ve done a lot of sorting in the last few days. Ruth has sorted out a lot of things the last few days getting ready to take a lot of old clothes and other things to a neighborhood garage sale this weekend. We had a chance to do sorting over the holiday weekend since it rained most all of Sunday, Monday and yesterday.

Andy is practicing the piano now. The 4 older children all have their yearly piano recital this coming Sunday afternoon. Alan has a make-up baseball game at 12:30 Sunday with their recital later in the afternoon. His game was scheduled for yesterday but had to be postponed because it was raining. Lesle is out at the High School Commencement playing in the band. The seniors are through after tonight but the underclassmen have to go through next Tues, I believe. Last evening Ruth and I went with Lesle to the High School Band and Orchestra Awards dinner. They have a good music program in our school system which, of course, pleases us. I guess the kids will all take music in Summer School including Andy starting to play the viola (¾ size).

After our long rainy, cold spell it cleared off today and will finally be warm and in the 70’s tomorrow. We had tornado warnings around here, just like I’m sure you had in Kansas. I think I heard that a tornado struck some people on a lake? somewhere in Kansas. A week from tonight I’m having a Christian Education Committee meeting at the church. We’ll review everything, including plans for the Fall program. Ruth’s choir finished last Sunday; she also had to play the organ. Our choir is through this Sun until the Sun after Labor Day. We will have 2 services every Sunday this Summer, with special music at each service. The girls and Alan are good enough to play something together on their oboes and bassoon, but I don’t know whether they will or not.

It doesn’t seem possible but 16 years ago tonight I was in Oberlin prior to our wedding on May 31, 1957. We had a picnic dinner that evening outside in the Laidig’s yard. I believe you folks came the next day; you may remember that it rained on our wedding day. We’ve certainly had 16 years of happily married life. Hope everyone is OK.

**6-5-73 – Tues –** I just got back in from taking Alec for a walk; it was sprinkling a little, so we used an umbrella part of the time.



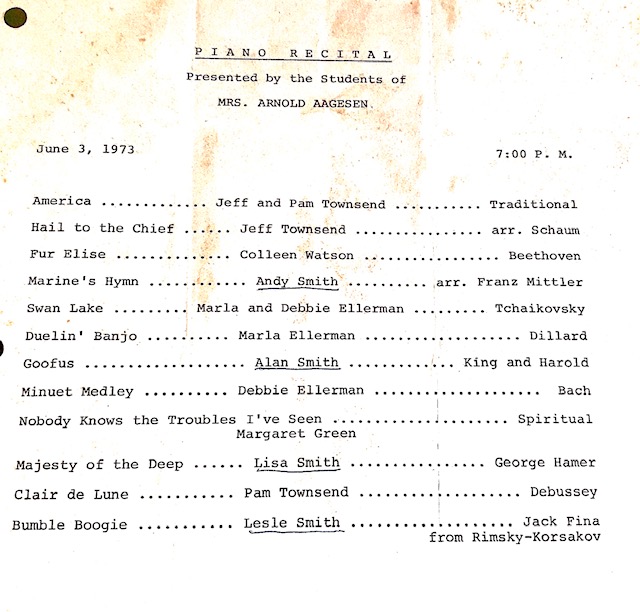
Andy and Alec with umbrella. No date.

We’ve had more rain the last couple of days after a few dry days. It was nice last Sat for Alan’s game that day. It rained Sat night, however, but was dry enough by 12:30 Sun afternoon for Alan’s make-up game; they are now all caught up. They have lost all 5 of their games, but may be able to win a few of their remaining 16 games if they improve some. The boys are mostly 11 and 12 yr olds.

Ruth is at a final monthly Womens Association meeting tonight. They are normally held at noon, but this last one is at night for those women that have to work. Their next monthly meeting will be the first week in October. Our church has a strong and active womens group. Ruth still does the publicity, including writing those newspaper articles, for the group. Alan has new aviator style glasses which look real nice. So far he is going to be less nearsighted than the girls. Lisa has the weakest eyes, Lesle next and then Alan. Andy was still OK the last time he was checked, so it looks like Andy may have the best eyes of the 4 older children. Lisa will be getting her contact lenses just before she starts to high school this Fall.

Mrs. Laidig is going to the Holy Land this Sept with some other local people. Mr. Laidig does not want to go because he just couldn’t keep up with a tour group because of his arthritis – I guess you know about that. Tomorrow night Ruth and I have a Christian Education Committee meeting at the church. We’ll start planning for the Fall program. Thurs night Alan has a game if it isn’t raining. Ruth will be teaching most Thurs’s this Summer. Last night we had our new pictures taken for passes at the Aqua Center (swimming pool). It opens this Sat if the weather is good.

I’m looking at my old music stand which the kids still use after all these years. Andy has started practicing his viola some the last few days. They had their (the 4 older ones) piano recital last Sun evening. They did fine. Their teacher only has a few students so she holds it in her home. They all started piano after we moved up here and this was the girls 7th recital; Alan’s 5th or so and Andy’s 3rd.

After the recital. Alan the stud in his new aviator glasses.

The kids go for 1½ hours of school in the AM and are then out for the Summer. Tell Jim that the older 3 kids are playing chess this evening. I can’t remember when I last saw them play chess. I’m sure Jim could beat them in a few moves. Our high school and Jr. High both have chess clubs. Mom adds: (High school team is state chess champ.) Back to Dad: Hope everything is fine in Hutchinson and you’re having nice Summer weather. Glad to have your letter.

**6-?-73 – Thurs evening –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, It’s a beautiful evening here. Its been clear today and got up into the low 80’s. It is supposed to be warmer tomorrow so the kids may go swimming in the afternoon. They couldn’t go today as I was driving the car for the car pool to go to work. Glad to have Mother’s Father Day card today and to hear that you got out the other day – keep it up. Being the father to a large family is not always an easy job, trying to give all your children equal attention, but our family is a happy one and I have no regrets that we had 5 children. Families are getting smaller now and most are only planning on having 1 or 2 children.

I got my notice today regarding the renewal of my Kansas pharmacy license registration. I’ve kept it up all these years, so I guess you can say I’ve helped support the Kansas Association all these years. I read where there may be too many pharmacists in a couple of years when a very large class (all the pharmacy schools in the country) graduates. Apparently a lot of students went into pharmacy the last 2 or 3 years because jobs were hard to find in teaching and certain other fields. We bought a new set of tires this week and we hope they will last for as long as we keep our car. We’ve had the Plymouth 2 yrs and will probably keep it 3-3½ yrs more. Its amazing how the miles go on a car with the large family; we’ve averaged 18,000 miles a year these last two years.

Sun night – Its been 3 days since I started this letter so I’ll try to finish it tonight. Thanks to Mother for the Father’s Day gifts. I was surprised when we got home from church to find I had about 6 presents all wrapped (socks, summer shirts, pajamas, etc). We went to the early service today. The first Sunday of the summer Sunday School went OK and we had pretty good attendance. We let all the regular teachers off for the summer (knowing that some will want to teach again in the fall, and some won’t), and then get new people in to help for the summer session. So many churches just stop Sunday School in the summer, but we believe our church is large enough that we should keep it going, having something available at all ages for those who are around. We try to have different things in the summer such as films, film strips, outings, etc.

Vacation Bible School is this next week, but Alan and Andy won’t be going because summer school conflicts. So many children don’t go any more because of conflicts with all of the other activities children have in the summertime. We’ve cut it from 2 wks to 1 wk and no longer have anything for children in the 7th grade and above. We haven’t given up on Vacation Bible School yet, but will review the situation after we see how it goes next week. Ruth used to always lead the music but they let her off this year. I think I mentioned that Ruth is teaching all the time we are here this summer. Hope everything is fine for everyone in Hutchinson.

**6-25-73 – Mon PM -** Its warm and humid this evening and there is a chance for showers tonight. We’ve had very nice weather the last few days. Yesterday was absolutely beautiful. About 80 (not too hot), not humid and clear; we don’t get to many days like that here. Alan didn’t have scouts tonight so he’s gone over to a ball game. Andy is enjoying his baseball in summer school. (its a different program than the one Alan is in). Andy’s meets during the day (Alan’s is all in the evenings and on Sat) and high school or college boys lead it, I guess.

Ruth is practicing on some new music for her students. She had a new student today (she teaches on Mon and Tues mornings during the summer) and now has 13-14; she may pick up some more in Sept. She is stopping Chansonettes in the fall, but as far as we know she will be back as choir director at that church in Sauk Village. Andy is just now opening his viola case so he can practice. Alan’s in the band this summer; Lesle and Lisa’s high school band practices on Tues and Thurs evenings. Alan’s team finished the 1st ½ season winning only 2 of 11 games, so they finished last of 6th, but we knew this years team would be weaker. He has a lot of fun though, and I believe he is gradually getting to be a better pitcher, although they “hit” him pretty hard sometimes. I think some of those 12 yr old boys he plays against weigh as much as I do, and they can really hit the ball.

A week ago today I made our motel reservations for our trip to Boston. The American Pharmaceutical Association meets in Boston July 23-27, and since the project I’m on involves those workers in Boston, I thought I might go so I could visit them also. Furthermore, it will give the family a chance to see New England for the first time. It will cost us quite a bit of money, but should be worth it. We will leave here right after Alan’s game on Sat July 21st. Alan will miss his last 2 games and also will not go to scout camp the week of July 16-20. There are just so many things to do for kids.

We’ll drive across New Hampshire and Vermont and back across New York or up to Montreal and back. No one knows whether there will be gasoline shortages by that time or not, so I think most people are just planning their vacations as usual. After getting back we’ll go right on to Kansas for our regular vacation there the first 1½ weeks in August. I don’t know whether we’ll go to Oberlin or Hutchinson first.

Our ability to get away on weekends is so hard anymore because of our Sunday School and church responsibilities. We’re starting to look for a replacement for Ruth and an assistant superintendent (we haven’t had one for several years) so we won’t be so tied down on weekends. This summer Ruth has had to line up replacements for the regular teachers. I have to help keep the Junior Dept. going. Glad to have your letter and to hear all the news. Hope you’ve had nice weather also. Thanks again for the gifts (Father’s Day and anniversary). Hope Aunt Clara’s birthday party went OK. Andy just played “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” the first time I’ve heard him play a song on the viola.

**7-2-73 – Mon –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, If everything goes OK we’ll be in Boston 3 weeks from tonight. As I wrote we’ll leave 3 weeks from yesterday and drive to about Cleveland. I don’t know whether we’ll make it all the way to Boston on Sunday or not, since when they have gasoline shortages they often close stations on Sun. A lot of the time they limit you to 10 gallons so you have to stop for gas more often. Anyway, there is not much you can do but go ahead and make your plans and start out. We’ll go to Kansas after the Boston trip.

I’m back on the bed with Alec. He had a bath right after supper because he was dirty and itchy from being out in the hot, humid weather this afternoon. I’ll enclose the letter that Alec has written to you folks. Hope you’re having nice summer weather in Hutchinson. We’re hot again after about 10 days of cooler weather. Nobody had gone to the swimming pool for several days until yesterday afternoon when everybody went but Lisa. Lesle went swimming this afternoon out at a friends house. Andy is enjoying his baseball which meets during the weekday afternoons. Andy is getting ready to practice his ¾ size viola; he is sounding a lot better already. Lesle is learning to play it for fun also.

Alan went to scouts tonight and has a ball game tomorrow night. He’s not doing much on scouts right now except he is working with me some on his home repair merit badge. There are plenty of things around our house that need repairing. Alan has helped repair our patio fence, and we’re now working on making a new gate for the fence. We’re scraping on the house getting ready to paint it.

Alan just came in and says he wants to go to scout camp which means, if he comes back early on July 20 (Fri), so he can play his ball game on Sat before we leave for Boston, that he will miss his Monday game and the last two. I guess you just can’t do everything. I’m off work Wed on July 4th; we may mainly stay home and work on the house.

The older 3 children are playing at the early church service next Sun AM. Their teacher agrees with Ruth that it is good for them to appear; they have never played together before. We went to the 2nd service yesterday morning as Ruth and Alan and Lesle helped in the nursery. They have trouble getting enough people to help in the nursery. I sat with Andy and Lisa; it was communion Sunday.

Thats interesting that they now have 2 young women in the Hutchinson Municipal Band after all the years of having only men. In fact, it’s interesting that they still have the Municipal Band; not many towns have them anymore, especially where the members get paid. I just stopped and made a motel reservation at a Holiday Inn in Youngstown, Ohio (just before you get to Pennsylvania) for Sat night July 21st. We’ll drive on to Boston the next day. Hope everyone in Hutchinson is OK.

**7-9-73 – Mon Evening –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I don’t have much news that is new, but I’ll write something anyway since I always assume that people like to receive mail. As I sit down to write this the wind is starting to come up a little bit. We’ve had 3 straight hot, and most of time humid, days and its supposed to stay hot tomorrow, even though it may get up into the 90’s again tomorrow. It was hot last night for sleeping with essentially no breeze. I expect you’ve had some hot weather in Hutchinson also.

I just got back from taking Andy out to get a new pair of sandals. He finally found a pair; two of the stores, including Sears, were all out of boys sandals in his size. Ruth is at some kind of a Chansonettes get together this evening. I don’t know what it is about. Wed night would be the regular Session meeting but the minister is on vacation so its postponed for 2 weeks and I’ll be on vacation that night. Alan’s next game is Wed night. As I’ve said he is going to scout camp next week; he’ll miss the last 2 weeks of summer school and 3 ball games (we’ll be on vacation the 2nd week). I’m not sure yet but I may have to drive some of the boys up to camp next Sunday afternoon (its about 100 miles). Alan will come back a week from Fri, play his game on Sat and we’ll leave right after that for Boston.

That sounds like a nice trip for M.J., Bill, Jim and Jana, hope they have good luck. Next year I will have 3 weeks vacation, so it will allow a little more flexability in vacations. I started my 8th year at Armour last Thurs. I can remember well how hot it was 7 years ago when we moved up here. We rented a house for the first 2½ months before moving into this house in Sept.

Alan and I (Alan is working on his home repair merit badge) finished rebuilding and setting back in the ground, the gate and part of the patio fence; it was good experience for both of us. The next job is to get the patio fence painted. The big kids are all supposed to help paint it. We’ve started scrapping the house so we can get it painted sometime. We just aren’t very fast with our work on the house.

Last Tues night Alan pitched and won one of the best games he ever played. On the 4th we worked around the house and went to the local carnival and fireworks display. Alec rode the train, ponys and merry go round. We were closer than usual to the fireworks and Alec didn’t like the big booms very well.

Sunday morning the 3 older children played their trio (2 oboes and bassoon) fine at church. We ate out after s.s. and then rested before Alan’s All-Star Game at 3:00; he struck out the one time he was up at bat. Hope everyone is doing OK in Hutchinson and you’re enjoying the summer.

**7-18-73 – Wed –** Glad to have M.J.’s note today and to hear more about their nice trip. Hope we both have plenty of gasoline all along the way. As M.J. said, if we don’t get our trips in while our families all together, we never will. I have fond memories of the trips we took together. I guess most of those trips were after I was in college. Glad to have your note today and thanks for the gift. I expect we’ll spend over $500 on the trip counting gasoline. With credit cards I can charge some of the gasoline and motel expenses and then pay for them later in the Fall.

When we’re in Boston we’ll try and see the Ernst Kleins if they are in town. He was the Baptist Student Pastor at Lawrence the 2 or 3 years I was in graduate school there. He was the one who drove by Hutchinson one time to pick up the magic so I could give a show or two for the youth group, including one time, I believe, when we went to a town in Kansas – Clay Center - to put on the worship service, entertainment etc. Rev. Klein, I believe, is still an American Baptist Student Pastor at Harvard. I called them up when I was in Boston that last time. Our address in Boston for next Sun-Fri nights is: Howard Johnson’s Motor Lodge, 200 Stuart Street, Boston, Mass 02116 phone 482-1800. We have no reservations after that.

That was nice that Aunt Clara has been getting out. Our weather was cooler, clear, and very nice over the weekend also. We got a good start on the painting. Ruth has done most of the painting and I’ve done a lot of scraping. The kids have taken some turns painting the patio fence, but it isn’t even halfway done. Alan did get some painting in before he left for camp so he could count it on his home repair merit badge. I will expect him to help some after we get back. We still have several odd jobs to finish, including replacing the screens in the carport doors.

Its a lot warmer and we may get some needed rain by tomorrow. I think I told you that Mrs. L is going on a Holy Land tour in Sept. Alec is feeling better today. He was sick with a fever and sore throat last Fri and Sat (he went to church Sun AM) and then had a relapse yesterday. Andy must have it today as he came home from baseball with a fever and headache; he went to bed early this evening.

Alan’s team hasn’t won any more games. Alan will pitch his last game in the Junior Division this Sat just before we leave. Alan went to church and s.s. and I brought him home so he could be picked up by 11:00 to go to camp. He’s coming home early Fri night (the camp lasts thru Sat) so he and another boy can play their Sat games.

It doesn’t seem possible but school will start before the end of Aug, less than 3 wks after we get back. We’ll just have time to get ready and make sure the s.s. is all set at church. Hope you’re all OK.

**8-15-73 – Wed –** I’m back in my usual spot on the bed playing with Alec; he’s building a “house” right now with the pillows. Alec is always asking me to go play on the bed with him. He associates bed with play, fun times and sleeping with us sometimes when he was a baby. It was to the cool side when we got back about supper time (we ate at the McDonalds here before driving on to the house) Sunday, but is more summer like today.

Thanks again to everyone for everything. Ruth wrote a lot of notes and Thank Yous yesterday to the people we visited on the trip. I believe it was the best vacation trip we ever had; it certainly was the biggest; we had driven almost 4800 miles by the time we got home. We were thankful that we had no car trouble accident, and no one got any sicker than Lisa that time in Boston. (I recall quite clearly having one of my throwing up episodes in the hotel room in Boston one night. I slept on the floor outside the bathroom door.) I called the Carey Park Swimming Pool Sun evening but they had not found Lesle’s contact lens during their filtering of the water so we have ordered her a replacement lens.

Alan’s team won one of the last two games that Alan missed so they finished with a 5 won and 16 lost record; Alan was the winning pitcher in 4 of the 5 wins. Yesterday Alan went with a good friend and his family to the State Fair down at Springfield. Alan is building a weather instrument box in the carport this PM. The cat didn’t come back for a day (the neighbor fed him) but is OK now. Thumper hasn’t barked much since he has laryngitis or something.

Except for a couple spots the s.s. staff is pretty well set for the fall (which starts 2 weeks from Sun) so we don’t have too many worries there for right now. Lisa is cutting out a dress on the floor (I’m in the living room now) in front of me; it’s a school dress from material we got at Oberlin. We had a good trip to Oberlin a week ago today although it was hot. We ate lunch in a small café in Larned and had a cold treat at Hays. We got to Oberlin in plenty of time for supper and went to that “mellerdrama” at the fair. Alec rode the little cars and the ponies and the big kids rode the ferris wheel.

Lisa got to ride a horse at Oberlin that Grandpa had lined up for her, and we borrowed some bicycles for them to ride awhile. We relaxed some, but like Hutchinson, the time went fast and there was plenty to do. We left Oberlin late Sat AM and stopped at Danbury, Neb (about 25 miles from Oberlin) to visit Mr. L’s sister, Aunt Myrtle, who lives alone. She is very active at 84 and has a nice garden and house. We drove on to a small town for lunch and on to Omaha to a motel. We got away at 9:30 Sun and, as I said, were home by 6:30, I believe the earliest we every got back from a trip. We had plenty of time to unpack (Lesle cleaned the car today), etc. and to bed in good time as I had to get up for work on Mon.

Summertime in Oberlin.

I know you’re looking forward to M.J. and family getting home about a week from today. We missed them but it worked out fine. I expect Aunt Clara is looking forward to another ride before long.

**8-22-73 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I expect you’re excited today as you expect M.J. and Bill home either today or tomorrow, if they were able to stay on schedule. They have had some bad forest fires in the west (I heard where they think some of the fires were set by arsonists). That was sure wonderful that they were able to take such a nice trip. Our weather has turned a little cooler and the hot, stagnant, polluted air that we had for several days has cleared out. We’ll have a fair amount of warm weather yet before it really turns to fall. Last Friday we all went to (for the first time) the new Lincoln Mall shopping center. It’s a big (although there are several bigger ones in the Chicago area) new shopping center nearby. We bought some new school clothes for the children and looked around some.

I had a nice surprise (looks like he spelled it with a “z” and later changed it to an “s”) yesterday when I heard that I had finally received a nice raise in salary. It had been over 2 years since the last one so it will help to cover some of the inflation costs on everything that have occurred in the last few years. Ruth has her first choir practice of the year next Tues night; she hopes to have 2 or 3 more people singing than last year. Its such a small church that they don’t get many people out to sing. Our church choir doesn’t start until a week from Sunday.

This Fri night I’m driving a couple of other people to a Christian Education curriculum meeting at a Presbyterian church in a nearby suburb. I forget to mention that we received the cards from Jim and Jana. The girls are having high school marching band tryouts and practice all day for 3 days this week. The’re complaining about it, naturally, but I told them that’s the only way they can do a good job. The high school is on a split shift this year; Lisa and Lesle a freshman and sophomore go in the afternoon (band is at noon so it overlaps) and the seniors and juniors go in the morning (they often have jobs in the afternoon). The high school is so crowded that is the only way they could work it out. We’re building a new junior high so next year the freshman will go there.

Ruth and the kids have made real progress in painting the house. The eaves are white and the walls a dark blue; it looks real nice. Its been 5-6 yrs since we painted and the old green had faded quite a bit. Alan and I have fixed up a better workshop area in the carport. I bought him a hack saw (for metal) and a soldering gun last night. He’s quite interested in all kinds of projects and things to to with his hands. Last Sunday after church we drove 55 miles to a NW suburb where we visited a school friend (high school in Oberlin) of Ruth’s, her husband and family and a couple from Denver who were in Ruth’s high school class. Keep up your spirit. You and Mother are an inspiration to us with your spirit and faith.

**8-28-73 – Tues PM –** Glad to have your letters and to know that M.J., Bill and family got home OK. I may not have mentioned that we just missed some flash floods in New Jersey. It was the morning we left New Jersey after staying all night at Ruth’s brothers house (John). It rained on us as we drove down to their house the night before and was raining that AM when we got up. John called later in the AM that he was 1½ hrs late getting to work because of flash flooding. We checked before we left and didn’t have any trouble but we saw some of the flooding (4 people drowned) and it was raining hard as we left.

As I guess you’ve had there, we’ve had our hottest spell of the year; its been above 90 and humid, with little wind, for 4 days and it is supposed to last at least through tomorrow. Its been too hot to do much work during the day, so we haven’t gotten any more painting done.

I’m listening to the Chicago White Sox ball game that Alan is attending. He went with his ball team; his manager is taking them. I had a chance to drive one of the cars, but when the man called Ruth thought she was still going to have her first choir practice tonight and would have to have the car. She found out today that they hadn’t announced the practice so she called it off until a week from tonight. It was best anyway since Ruth and I have been hoarse with sore throats since last Fri and Sat. Everyone in the family has now had it. Alec had it before we went on vacation and Alan had it in Boston. Ruth could only whisper yesterday but is better today. My throat is still sore today and I’m still hoarse.

I’m home alone with Alec (he’s drawing his usual ghosts and monsters) while Ruth has taken the girls and Andy out to buy school supplies. Today was the first day of school. Lesle is taking Spanish. I think I told you that Lisa and Lesle go in the afternoon because of crowding. They won’t get up when I do like they used to do, but Ruth won’t let them sleep too late, or they won’t get any studying or anything else done in the mornings.

I took off from work awhile today and Ruth and I went up to a lawyers and started working on our will. We started one several years ago but just never got around to finishing it. Ruth starts teaching next Tues, the day after labor day. It looks like she’ll have 15-16 pupils, a couple more than she finished with earlier this summer. Ruth is composing some religious service music to use with her choir and maybe to try and publish someday. Are there any finished pieces in existence somewhere?

We’ve lined up a couple more s.s. teachers so we’re in pretty good shape except we could use a few more substitutes. Alan and I are still doing odd jobs around the house for his merit badge. Andy’s den meetings should start in a week or so. We bought a solder gun, a new electric hand jig saw and an electric drill.

Thats nice that Aunt Clara was able to get out to Mrs. Hietts 92nd birthday celebration. Even though it gets hot and humid in Hutchinson you don’t get this stagnant polluted air that we get here.

**9-5-73 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J., and Bill, Hope you all had a nice Labor Day week-end and you had a chance to get outside. I thought about you all on Monday. Our heat wave finally broke yesterday when the temperature failing to reach the 90’s for the first time in about 10 straight days. I believe the record for the Chicago area is 90 degrees or higher for 11 days in a row so we almost matched the record. Anyway it was the hottest stretch during the 7 years we have lived here (it was 7 years ago this month that we moved into this house). The kids could not go swimming during the heat wave since the pool closed early as many of the life guards had gone back to school.

Ruth is teaching right now (5:30 PM) but will be home for supper. At this time she has a good group of 15 pupils with the possibility of 2-3 more. She teaches Mon, Tues and Wed late afternoons and early evening. I have a church budget meeting this evening and tomorrow night is our first choir practice. Ruth had her first choir practice last night; she only had 4 or 5 but they hope to have more. She needs 11-13 or so to make it sound good (its a small church).

I still have some soreness in the front part of my throat that I can’t seem to get rid of. I guess its some kind of a virus that is very persistent. Ruth has had it to, but I think her throat is better than mine. Ruth’s allergies and hay fever are bad now, but she gets along pretty well when she takes her antihistamines and shots. The children are all pretty healthy right now.

I guess Mrs. Laidig goes on her Holy Land trip sometime this month. We haven’t heard much since we got back from vacation. We’ve had to have 2 different men work on our kitchen sink pipes and drain. The drainage from the kitchen sinks of houses like ours is not good and the sinks often stop up. This was the worse its been since we’ve lived here. I just couldn’t get it open by myself with hand operated long “snake” metal drain cleaners.

Alan and I have done some more odd jobs and we still have plenty to do. As you know, when you own a home there are always plenty of things that need repairing. I’ve got to start studying for my drivers license examination which I have to take sometime before my birthday on the 23rd when my license expires. Lisa will be 14 this Sunday, I’m next, and Alec will be 3 on the 28th.

I suppose M.J. and Bill will soon be going to K-State football games. I’ll probably be going to a nearby small college game on Sept 22nd with Andy and the cub scouts. Hope your heat wave wasn’t as bad as ours and everyone is doing fine.

**9-11-73 – Tues –** Well another week has rolled by and our weather is beginning to feel like autumn already, especially at night when it cools off. I just lined up a ride to Session meeting tomorrow night since we again have a tight schedule for the car. The girls are having band rehersals and marching practice 3 nights a week through Oct, so the schedule gets pretty complicated when I have a meeting since Ruth is teaching 3 nights a week. She has 18 pupils now, I believe, and still might get 1 or 2 more.

Ruth and I have both gotten over our colds. Mine lasted 2 wks and I was sure relieved not to have that soreness when I swallowed. Hope your knees are better. Aunt Clara’s blood pressure is not too high and M.J. and Bill are OK (Jim and Jana too). Thats great that M.J. and Bill have a new car; that should really make it handy for them. Does Bill still have use of a company car, also. We feel we don’t want to think about any 2nd car until one of the girls might need it to go to a local college or something like that. Lesle takes drivers education later this year.

I’m back playing on the bed with Alec like we often do. Although Alec, of course, doesn’t need as much attention as he used to (he plays nicely with the neighbor children), he still usually asks me to play on the bed with him just before he goes to bed. It doesn’t seem possible that he will soon be 3 yrs old (and that I will be 42).

Alan is excited about his shop class at school. They learn about some tools that he is not so well acquainted with and make several things, of course. You will remember my 7th grade shop class when I made a checkerboard and coathanger which I think are still around somewhere. I believe I also made a ping-pong paddle and something else, but I don’t remember what. Ruth is at her choir rehersal tonight; she only had 5 last Sun so is hoping for some more.

I missed choir practice last Thurs because of our schedule. Fri night Lisa had some girls in for a pizza birthday supper and then all but one of them stayed overnight. Saturday afternoon Andy and I left on his cub scout overnight at a nearby campground. It was Andy’s first campout away from home and my first one in a long time. We took sleeping bags and slept in another mans big tent. We had a lota fun. There were 19 boys, including 2 or 3 younger and older than the regular (8-9-10) and 7 dads that stayed all night. We cooked supper there, had cocoa before bed and Sun breakfast with a snack before coming home, about 1:00 Sun PM. We obviously missed s.s. and church.

We now have an assistant s.s. superintendent so Ruth hopes to be able to resign about Jan which would give her a 3 yr stint as superintendent. I’ll still be education chairman thru 1974. Andy has his first den meeting this week. Lisa had her birthday dinner Sun night after I was back home. Again, hope everyone is doing fine. Thanks for the letter.

**9-18-73 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I guess its your turn to receive the weekly letter, if I remember correctly. Hope you’ve had a good week. I guess it was Sunday night when I called Mother, and she said she had eaten with you in the new cafeteria, or whatever they call it. Hope you have some new friends there at the hospital since a lot of them left to go to that nursing home, or whatever it is. Mother said you had had cooler, wet weather also. It was raining and cool yesterday. I believe it got down into the 40’s for the first time yesterday AM.

Wed: I’m waiting for Ruth to get back from taking Alan and Andy to get some new clothes. I’ll take her back to teach another lesson or two, and then go up to take my drivers license renewal examination. You have to take the exam at least every 9 years in Ill before you reach 65. Ruth had to take it the last time her license was up for renewal. I have to drive both tomorrow and Friday since our car wouldn’t start last Fri when I was supposed to drive. We had to get a new battery.

Glad to have, and “Thanks” to Mother today for the birthday check and card. I’ll probably apply it on clothes. Lisa slso says “Thank You” for her check. She and Lesle rode bicycles to the Plaza yesterday evening, and Lisa bought some kind of pants with her money. I don’t believe Lesle bought anything.

That sounded like quite a trip for Jim; more than I ever had in high school. That must be a pretty good band they have and I’m sure they practice a lot. Our girls have to go 2-3 nights a week through Oct (I just got home (9:30) from bringing 8 high schoolers home from one of their marching practices) to practices. I think the bands practice a lot more than when I was in high school.

I passed my drivers license renewal examination OK this evening. They don’t make you take the driving part for a renewal except, probably in certain cases if you’ve had an accident, etc. Tomorrow night is choir practice; last week Ruth and I both went awhile even though she had her own choir on Sunday. Ruth just tried to call her mother, but nobody answered. I think Mrs. L is to leave on her Holy Land trip in a few days.

Alan and the girls all went to their respective (Jr. High, and Sr. High) afternoon and evening youth fellowships at church Sun. We had to coax them a little, but they had fun once they got there. Ummm. Alan may go on a scout overnight canoe trip this weekend. Fri night the girls (they both play the cymbals in the marching band) play in the band at a football game. Hope you’ve had a good week. You and Mother are certainly an inspiration to us all.

**9-26-73 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I just read the weekly letter from Hutchinson, so I’ll start the one from here. After a cooler stretch, we had hot (record breaking today at 87 degrees F), humid weather yesterday and today. The trees are starting to turn color, so we know that fall has started. I got all the storm windows out of storage on Sat, but didn’t put any up. I’ll put them up gradually as the weather gets cooler. We’re a little over half through painting the house, including the front and sides that show from the street, so it looks nicer from the street as you drive by. The eaves are white and the sides a dark colonial blue that I really like. The girls painted quite a bit on Sat and Sun. I do the repairs and odd jobs while Ruth and the older children do the painting.

That was nice that both K-State and KU won their football games last Sat. Andy, Ruth and I went out to the Crete-Monee football game since the girls band was performing before the game and at half-time. (I just had to stop and go get Alan and Lesle off the roof of the house. They climbed up the paint ladder and saw no reason why they shouldn’t be allowed to play up there.) The girls are home at night (except for some baby sitting) this week; they don’t have band rehersals at night since the football team plays out of town this week.

Our TV needs repairing, but we’ve told the kids we won’t call the repairman until they do some more cleaning up in the family room. Mr. Laidig burned his hands, arms and face when some cleaning solvent blew up on him; I guess he started to clean something in one of the houses they rent and forgot that a pilot light was lit on a water heater. He may come visit us (he would come by train) while Mrs. Laidig goes on her holy land trip shortly.

Many of Ruth’s choir members have left or can’t sing, so she may resign her choir job unless they can come up with some more singers. She got another piano pupil today. Alan got along fine on his boy scout canoe trip last weekend. He left Friday night (it was on a river about 100 miles from here. The river is not real deep at this time of the year, and they had life preservers. Alan, of course, is a good swimmer too) and didn’t get home until Sun at about 1:00.

Lisa hasn’t been taking riding lessons because of her schedule. The girls won’t take oboe lessons until after their extra band rehersals are over. I was proud of Lesle today when she came home and said she got an A+ on the demonstration speech she gave in speech class. It was a magic trick I had recommended to her. She had to demonstrate something and then explain how it worked, etc. She did a sucker torn and restored napkin trick like I used to do where you apparently explain how to do the trick but end up fooling the audience. Glad to hear that everyone is fine and that you got out to Jana’s birthday celebration.

**10-2-73 – Tues 8:30 PM -** I’ve been cleaning in the family room as a TV repairman is coming later this evening. He is a member of Ruth’s choir and will follow her back tonight after their choir practice. Our color TV will be 4 years old this Christmas and we haven’t had very much trouble with it although we have never had perfect pictures on all channels because we don’t have a good aerial (something we need to get, I guess). I guess the picture tubes often give out after 5-6 yrs, and if that’s the case it could cost $150 or so, enough to buy a new black and white set. I just spent $20 to have our clock radio (I use it in the bedroom as an alarm clock) repaired. If I’d known that it was going to cost that much I might have just let it go and bought a new digital (number 712, etc to show the time) alarm clock, which you can buy for $25-30.

We can really tell how the cost of food has gone up. I’m sure that our food costs us 20% more than it did a year ago. As I may have mentioned Ruth has had so few at her choir that she may tell them that they can’t afford her. She enjoys doing it but its not fair to her or the church when they have so few. Our choir is strong again this year with 25-28 on Sundays. This Sunday is world-wide communion and a group of new members.

Ruth called Oberlin after supper tonight to see how Mr Laidig. He’s miserable a lot of the time and delerious when his fever goes up. I’m quite worried about him since its been a week and now is when you can get bad infections from burns, which are then hard to throw off when you’re his age (77). I worry about you and the open fire on the stove. Please be careful and watch your sleeves.

I’ve been doing some calling for our sessions retreat this coming Sat up at McCormick (Presbyterian) seminary. Its our first retreat and its to discuss long range plans, etc that we don’t have time to discuss at the regular monthly meeting. Ruth’s teaching is going fine. She has 20 pupils now, which is all she can take on the 3 days (Mon-Wed) after school. She has a good reputation and people often recommend her. That added income is a big help. Alan is working on scout things again and should have his 1st class by Nov and if he gets the one hard (Citizenship in the Community) merit badge he needs.

We’ve had warm weather the last few days, a little warmer than average, and we have finally had some much needed rain. Andy has been working on cub things and finished his wolf arrow. I told him you probably had my cub scout shirt with the badges. Alec had his party last Fri AM and his cake and presents in the evening after I got home. He was really excited. We ate out. Andy is singing in the youth choir. Sat night Ruth and I went to the movies for a change. Sun night was a church pot-luck dinner and meeting about our proposed 1974 pledge.

Hope you’re all doing OK. I guess all of the Big Eight football teams are strong this year. I forgot to notice if K-State won last week. KU won, I know. Please return the pictures. Alec says “Thanks” for the gift. The TV man just got here and the picture tube is OK.

**10-9-73 – Tues 7:15 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I better write tonight as the rest of the week is pretty well filled up already. Glad to have Mother’s note today and to hear that everyone is doing better. Mr. Laidig is doing better now from his bad burns, I’ll enclose some of the letters that tell about it. As I’ve said before, Mrs. Laidig had planned to go on a Holy Land trip, but has had to postpone it. We’re kinda glad she’s not over there right now because of the war that just broke out. We assume that the tour she was scheduled to go on was over in Israel when the war broke out; we don’t know whether they finished the tour or have come back to America.

Ruth is just ready to leave for her choir practice; they have 1 or 2 more singers and they don’t want to give up. I have session meeting tomorrow night. Our sessions first retreat last Sat went fine and we got some advance planning done. For example, we started talking about an assistant pastor for about a year from now.

The girls are at band practice tonight since Fri night is the homecoming football game. Alan’s Jr. High band participates also so we’ll all be going. I may not have mentioned that Alan carries one of the flags in his band. Bassoons don’t march, of course. Alan says he might like to play the saxophone so he can play an instrument while he marches. I was just called to the front door for a member of the Kiwanis Club who was selling advance tickets for the Kiwanis Pancake Day this Sat. We usually go as it is a worthy money raising even for them. Last Sat I rode up to our retreat with an elder who is a Kiwanis executive in Chicago at their international office. He is in charge of new club development. I told him I was a member of Rotary Club once because of my uncle who was in the drug business.

We’re still having warm nice weather with no frost as yet. We have to go pick out the tree for our front yard to replace the one that was killed by the frost last spring. Ruth and I went over to the grade school PTA meeting last Wed night. We met Andy’s teachers (he has 3). We figured out that if we continue to live here, and Alec goes all the way through the grade school, we will have had at least one child in the grade school for 15 consecutive years. We’re in the 8th year now. Alec will start to kindergarten in 2 years when Andy starts 6th grade.

I expect you had World-Wide Communion last Sun as we did. We took in 18 new members and had a reception for them after the service. I guess I didn’t read the score on the last K-State football game that M.J and Bill went to. KU lost by 1 point to Tennessee. Sunday night Ruth’s brother John and his wife Esther visited us. Uncle John had to be in Chicago Mon (yesterday) to give a paper at a technical meeting so Esther came with him and they rented a car and drove out to visit us. They were flying home Mon night. Again, glad to hear that everything is fine in Hutch.

**10-16-73 – Tues –** I’m in the family room with all 5 children; Ruth is at her choir rehersal. She has had a few more come out for her choir, and hasn’t given up yet. The girls are each sewing right behind me. Lisa is using our old (but still good) Singer portable sewing machine (she is making a dress). Lesle is using the newer Viking machine which we bought last year in Hutchinson. We’ve had some trouble with the Viking, but I guess Ruth has it working OK now. She called the man in Hutchinson one day to find out about it. I’m watching the world series as I imagine Bill is also. I noticed where KU beat K-State last Sat. I expect M.J. and Bill were at the game. Lesle has just made a purse and a billfold (both out of soft materials). She didn’t have a pattern or anything. Andy is playing and working with one of my blue egg bags (trick) that I made when I was about Lisa or Lesle’s age. I sewed them on your sewing machine. As I’ve said, Andy likes magic better than the other children, so I guess I’ll have to spend more time with him. He loves his Cubs and almost has his 2nd wolf arrow. His den meetings are on Wednesdays after school.

Our last report (Ruth called her mother) was that Mr. Laidig is doing lots better and probably won’t have to have any skin grafting. Ruth has written him every other day or so. Thats nice you dropped them a line. Mrs. L wrote that the Holy Land tour she was scheduled to go on only got as far as Greece because of the war in Israel, Syria and Egypt.

This Sat the girls go down to Champaign with their high school band to perform in the state high school band marching contest. I don’t know whether Ruth and I will drive down or not. Last Friday night was homecoming at the high school. The parade was in late afternoon so I didn’t get to see it. We went out for most of the game and to see Alan’s jr. high band march before the game, and the high school band with their half time show.

It is supposed to get down to freezing tonight for the first time this fall. I put up some more of the storm windows last night. I didn’t put all of them in since we’ll still have a few warm days. That’s nice that you have a new education director. I believe you’ve had quite a few over the years. We’ve started talking at church about an assistant minister. We’ll have trouble affording one until our mortgage is paid off in about 3 years.

Someone at work commented about rains and flooding in Nebraska. I believe you said you have had a lot of rain. Last Sun AM I went to the mens breakfast before s.s. Sat was Kiwanis pancake day. It’s a money raising event. You pay $1.50 and get all the pancakes and sausages you can eat. Hope Aunt Clara has been able to get out while the weather is still warm. Glad to have your letter and to know that everyone is OK.

**10-23-73 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I believe its your turn for the weekly letter. Hope this finds you and everyone doing OK. We’ve been having warm weather so I still haven’t put the rest of the storm windows up. We’ve had a lot of nice clear days and nights. I think our air pollution is getting better in the last 2-3 years.

We had good news from Oberlin. We talked to Mr. Laidig over the phone just after he had come home from the hospital. His accident was 4 weeks ago yesterday morning. He has to go back to the hospital every day for treatments until the skin has all healed over. He was very lucky that it wasn’t deep enough to require any skin grafting. We’ve invited them to come up here for Thanksgiving on the train if they feel up to it.

Lesle has gone to the movies with some other girls and won’t be home this evening until after Ruth gets home from her choir practice. As I’ve said she has picked up 2-3 new choir members so feels encouraged. Her choir doesn’t sing this Sunday (they sing 3 Sundays a month) as this Sunday afternoon is her first recital of the year. I imagine 18-19 of her pupils will play. At the Park Forest Conservatory where she teaches they have a series of awards that the students can earn by meeting certain requirements; she will have several students receive awards this Sunday.

I believe K-State won their football game against Iowa State last Sat while KU was losing to Nebraska by one point. Big college football games are always exciting and colorful and I’m sure M.J. and Bill enjoy them when they go.

Alan tried out for basketball today but will have to go some more times before he knows if he makes it. With his boy scouts I think he has enough to do, but some of his friends were trying out. Alan says he wants to play the saxaphone so he can play and march (he carries one of the banners now), but I don’t think he’s gotten an instrument at school as yet. Alan finished up his first class at scout meeting last night. He’s been in one year and seems anxious to go on and should be able to get his Eagle in 1½ to 2 years if he keeps steadily working.

Friday night is the last home football game and also Andy’s pack meeting. Since we missed the pack meeting last month because Andy wanted to stay home for Alec’s birthday, we’ll probably go to Cubs. Next Monday morning I’m taking a couple hours off from work to give a magic show for a teacher’s (1st grade) class. The teacher attends our church.

Last Sunday night we went (Ruth, I and the boys) to see the movie “10 Commandments” at our church. It was almost 4 hrs long. Last Sat the girls went with the high school band to the state marching contest at Champaign near Decatur where we used to live. Last Thurs night the high school orchestra (Lesle) and Jr. High band had a program out at the Jr. High. Hope everyone has had a good week in Hutchinson.

**10-30-73 – Tues –** Another week has gone by – they sure go fast; I guess thats a sign I’m getting older. Glad to hear Aunt Clara’s arm is better, and hope maybe she has been able to get out for a ride. Thats nice that Jim is now able to do some of the driving. Lesle takes driver education next semester and she, of course, thinks she should have her own car shortly after that. She might get one in the next few years if she needs it to get to a local junior college, or something like that.

The 3 boys are all carving their pumpkins in the kitchen. Alec is very excited since its the first time he’s been able to help carve it (the big kids are doing most of it). I’m surprised how excited Alan is, and he has made a fancy banana costume. Lesle even just said she should have her own pumpkin (I didn’t buy her one the other night when I got Alec’s and Andy’s). I guess you don’t outgrow Halloween very fast. Ruth will probably take Alec out trick or treating tomorrow afternoon before she goes to work. I’ll answer the door after I get home from work (the boys stay with Alec after they get home from school and after Ruth goes to work) since Ruth won’t be through teaching until 7:30.

I have to get some Bible study in this week and next since I have the adult class this Sunday and the men’s breakfast discussion the following Sunday. Ruth has now gone to her choir rehersal. I’m to go with her a week from tonight to start rehersals with them on their Christmas cantata. I have helped them out the last 2 years at Christmas time. Ruth schedules it so it doesn’t conflict with the Christmas music at our church.

Lisa started her horseback riding lessons again last Sat AM. She is to ride in a show a week from Sunday. We’ve promised her some riding boots (were promised on her birthday). I’ve borrowed a friends old saxaphone to see if we want to get it for Alan to play. Alan did not make the 7th grade basketball team which is OK with us since he is busy enough with scouts, church, music, etc. He says he couldn’t make left handed lay-ups. He can try again next year. The 7th grade team practices a lot and plays about 20 games.

We assume Mr. Laidig is continuing to get better since we haven’t heard recently. Yesterday AM I took a couple of hours off from work and gave a magic show for a church friends 1st grade class. She invited 2 other classes in so there were about 80 children. Everything went fine. Ruth and Alec went and then Ruth took me right to work. Sun afternoon was Ruth’s fall Halloween recital. One student forgot the recital so there were 17 who played. Last Fri night Ruth and I went with Andy to his Cub pack meeting. The cubs took decorated pumpkins and everybody judged them. Alan went bowling with his jr. high fellowship on Sun afternoon. Hope everyone is fine. You’re all an inspiration to us. Alec is going to be dressed as snoopy tomorrow.

**11-5-73 – Mon 8:30 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’ll start this tonight since I’m going to Ruth’s choir practice tomorrow night to start practicing on their Christmas music. It was good talking to Mother last night and to hear that everyone is fine. That was nice that the WCTU (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) lady could come across and eat with you and Mother at the cafeteria. I guess I’ve never seen your new cafeteria.

Ruth is home from work now. Alan has gone to scouts. Alan’s troup is awarding 5 boys with their Eagle’s a week from Sat night at a big court of honor. Alan should get his 1st class that evening, also. Ruth has to help with the refreshments that evening. As I told Mother we haven’t heard from the Laidigs for quite some time so we assume that he is pretty well healed by now.

This morning it got down into the 20’s which made it the coldest morning since last April 25th, I believe the newscast said. I got the rest of the storm windows up yesterday afternoon before it got dark. Alan went to his fellowship yesterday afternoon, and the girls went to the Senior High Fellowship in the evening (they got home while I was talking to Mother on the phone). Lisa is riding in a horse show this Sunday over at the riding stable.

Everything went OK on Halloween, although it was kinda cold and rainy. Alec put on the Snoopy costume that Andy used once and Ruth (before she went to work) took him “trick or treating” to some of the close neighbors. Alan, Andy and Lisa also went out but Lesle stayed in. Since Wed was Andy’s regular cub scout meeting day, they had a Halloween party. I got my magic from that school show all packed up and put away that evening. Thurs evening we were glad when Lisa went for the first time to our adult choir practice. High Schooler’s are elgible for our choir since we do not have a separate Sr. High choir.

Tues: 6:15 – Ruth will be home in a little while. Last Sat morning Alan left real early on the school bus to go to a town just northwest of Joliet to attend an all day music clinic. He played in the orchestra. They also had a band and a chorus. Each group was made up of the better Jr. High musicians from a number of area schools. Ruth, Alec and I drove over in the afternoon to hear their 3:00 PM concert. It was good (they held it in the auditorium gym of the Jr. High school) and Alec was good. He’s been to enough concerts, etc. now that he is pretty used to them and will stay still. Mom adds: Alan was 1st chair.

Back to Dad: Sunday AM I had the discussion (talked about events in Old Testament history) in the adult s.s. class after Ruth and I had the Jr. Dept opening as usual. Did odd jobs in the afternoon and watched football awhile. Everyone says “hi” to everyone in Hutchinson.

**11-12-73 – Mon 7:00 PM –** Thanks for your last letter, letting us hear how everyone is doing. You all are certainly an inspiration to us, and I hope all your grandchildren are an inspiration to you (I know they are). Today has been warmer here, and tomorrow even warmer after a cold spell when it got quite a bit below normal. (I can hardly write as my 3 sons are roughhousing on the bed back here in the bedroom – Alan and Andy are now gone so its quieter). Alan will go to scouts in a few minutes. I said Alan will get his 1st class next Sat night. He actually already has it but his name will be mentioned on Sat.

Alan has started learning to play the tenor saxaphone. We’ve borrowed one from our neighbor. The man played it when he was in high school and doesn’t want to sell it. As I’ve told you Alan wants to play the saxaphone so he can play an instrument in the marching band. He’s carried a flag or banner so far.

Ruth called her folks. Mr. L had a few spots on his arm that hadn’t completely healed and he had developed an allergy to the sulfa-like drug they now use on burns, so the Dr. changed his medicine and I guess he’s just about healed now.

Alec is making a “cake” with the pennies from his bank here on the bed. Alec has a little cold as have most of the family, but nobody has missed any school. Tonight is the last night I’ll be home until next Sun night. Tomorrow night I’ll again go with Ruth to help at her choir practice. Her Christmas cantata will be on Sun AM Dec 23rd. (I help with solos and the choruses.) The cantata at our church is the Sunday before. (I have a couple of solos there also.)

Wed night is the High School Fellowship fundraising spaghetti dinner at church. Session meeting is after that. Thurs night is a school concert. Fri is Cub Pack meeting (its a week early because of Thanksgiving) and Sat night is the scout meeting where 5 scouts will receive their eagles.

I believe KU won and K State lost Sat in football. The Chicago Bears, Kansas City Chiefs professional football game is just now starting; I’m sure Bill is listening also. Ruth just got home and said she has taken on a 21st pupil. We ate out last Fri night since it was payday and then did some shopping.

Sat was the regular schedule including a memorial service at church for a church elder who died the Sun before. Ruth worked in the grocery shopping despite the tight schedule. Sun AM I had to get up earlier to go to the monthly mens breakfast. About 30 men and boys were there. I led a 30 min discussion on the Old Testament. I always promised myself that I would learn more about the Bible when I was about this age so I’m trying to do it.

Lisa entered the horse show at her stables and won 1st in both events (there were 6 entered in one event and 9 entered in the other.) Hope everyone is doing OK in Hutchinson. A week from tomorrow I’m driving to Detroit with a man at work on a business trip.

Excuse me but I must brag a little bit about my childrens grades for the 1st 6 weeks. Andy had excellent for everything and his orchestra teacher told Ruth that he gave Andy the highest grades of any of his grade school orchestra players. Lesle had straight A’s except for a B in gym. Lesle just found out today that she gets her braces off in 2 weeks. She’s worn them a little over 1½ years. He originally said her case should take 1½ to 2 years. I pay $75 a month for all 4 children being treated. Lisa also had straight A’s except for gym. She said she probably could have had an A in gym if she had picked something up to study for a gym test. Alan had straight A’s except for a B+ in English. He doesn’t care much about English which I’m sure sounds familiar to you. His teacher thinks he should have special projects but I’m not sure he’s interested.

**11-19-73 – Mon 7:45 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Well, another week has gone by. Ours went pretty fast as we had our usual busy schedule. Mother wrote that you got out and went home about a week ago to check on things. Thats good, keep it up, except you probably won’t want to get out as much when the weather gets colder. We’ve had milder weather the last few days, but I guess the temperatures have just about been normal for this time of year. Its supposed to rain some tomorrow afternoon. I fly to Detroit tomorrow afternoon with another man from work, but maybe it won’t be raining yet when we leave. Tomorrow night at this time we’ll be listening to some Drs. discuss a new product idea we’re investigating. The other man is in Marketing and I’ve worked with him for over 3 years; I’ve learned a lot I didn’t know about selling drugs, etc. I still have that project that may help babies who are born early with lung problems. We may know in a few months whether it works or not. Thats the project that I occasionally have to go to Boston on. I should go next sometime in Dec or Jan. Since I don’t care that much about traveling, I’ve been lucky in my job that I haven’t had to travel a lot while the children have been little.

I just told Alec that I wouldn’t be home tomorrow night since I had to go to Detroit and he said I couldn’t do that because he might cry (the cat is sitting by Alec and tickling his face with his tail). I told Alec he is getting big enough to know that Mom and Dad have to leave him sometimes.

I guess you’re all excited over Mothers 50 years in PEO celebration – congratulations. Yours was about 2-3 yrs ago, as I recall? There is a Thanksgiving eve service at a local church on the 21st but I’m not sure yet whether we’re going. Its at a catholic church and our minister is preaching. There will be a unified choir from different churchs. There is a service at our church on Thanksgiving morning.

Last Tues I helped Ruth at her choir. Wed night was the high school church fellowship spaghetti dinner and I had session meeting afterwards. Thurs night Alan had a short concert. Fri night was Andy’s pack meeting. It was the annual night for the dads and cubs to decorate a cake (mothers were allowed to bake the cakes). We made a flying saucer. We didn’t win a prize, but Ruth agreed that we should have in comparison with the others.

Sat morning was our annual Park Forest Christmas Parade. Alan as a boy scout, carried a banner, and the girls marched in the Crete-Monee High School Band. It was chilly but not too cold. Alec was excited. He’s still not sure he is going to talk to Santa Claus this year (he didn’t talk to him last year over at a store).

Sat night was that boy scout Court of Honor where 5 boys in Alan’s troop got their eagle awards. Alan got several merit badges and his 1st class. Took in 18 new members at church on Sun. Hope everyone is doing OK. I expect your business things help you keep busy.

**11-26-73 – Mon –** Well, it was kinda hard for everyone to get back to the regular routine today after the long 4 day holiday. Today was a big day for Lesle as she got her braces off; her teeth look real nice. Lisa has had her full braces on for about 6 months so she has a ways to go. I may have said that Andy’s lower jaw has come out quite a bit since he started his exercises. I’m not sure what Alan is having done right now.

I’ll go help Ruth again tomorrow night at her choir practice and then we have to practice our wedding duet for next Sat. Its out at the church where Ruth directs and their regular organist is playing. The wedding is at 6:00 PM next Sat.

My trip to Detroit went OK and I learned a lot. The other man and I left Kankakee at 11:00 AM Tues and got back to the building by 10:30 AM Wed. We had a rental car for going to O’Hare and then also had a car in Detroit. The place we went to is in a NW suburb of Detroit so we did not have to go through the heart of Detroit. Our motel was several miles North of where we went Tues evening from 6:30-10:30 to observe (by closed circuit TV in another room) 2 groups of physicians (about 10 per group) being interviewed regarding one of our new product ideas (a new quinine product for use in treating night leg cramps). Wed AM it rained most of the way back to the airport in Detroit and the traffic was real heavy as we went through Dearborn near all the Ford office buildings. We ate breakfast at the airport and the plane pulled out 1 min after we sat down.

Wed night Ruth and I went to the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at one of the Catholic churches in Chicago Heights. We sang in the choir and stayed for the social hour afterwards. Our minister, Rev Reif, gave the sermon. We bought our turkey on the way home.

The children are already quite busy with Christmas presents and things. Lisa had started some time before Thanksgiving on her presents. Thurs AM I went to the Thanksgiving service at our church, everyone else stayed home. Fri we all went bowling together for the first time in a long time. I finished getting the new TV aerial up on the roof yesterday afternoon. Thanksgiving was warm and clear here, but it was rainy by Sat.

Tues 10:30 PM – Alec was sick at his stomach Sat night but he seemed OK Sun AM so we all went to church as usual. He got sick during s.s. so he stayed outside with Alan. Lisa and I sang in the choir (they needed basses as 2 were gone) while Ruth took the other children home, coming back to get me.

Alan took sick the same way Sun afternoon, missed Jr. High Fellowship and missed school yesterday but felt fine by evening and went to school today. Lesle began to fell funny (she has not been sick at her stomach) yesterday evening and began running a fever. She missed school today and had a fever this afternoon. Hope none of you get the flu this winter. Congratulations again on your 50th anniversary in PEO.

**12-3-73 – Mon –**Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Another busy week has gone by for us. We hope your week has been just busy enough for you. I would expect that the Hospital has some Christmas decorations by now or soon will have. I got our Christmas boxes down yesterday afternoon. We’ll probably get our tree next Sat afternoon.

Ruth should be getting home from teaching in a few minutes. I believe she has a pretty good group of pupils at the present time. She is getting a lot of good experience and I think she is considered to be a good teacher by the Conservatory.

We’ve had warm weather here, as much as 20 degrees above normal. We haven’t had any snow as yet; usually we’ve had our first snow by this time. Maybe it will be a mild winter, which will help conserve fuel. I’m home tonight but have to go out the next 5 nights. Tomorrow night I go help Ruth’s choir again on their Christmas music. I hope I have a better voice than last Tues night when I was hoarse.

Wed night I have a Christian Education Committee meeting. Thurs is choir practice and Fri is Amahl and the Night Visitors put on by the Chicago Heights Symphony. Its a modern ballet and musical play about the birthday of Jesus. Sat night is our department Christmas dinner in Kankakee, followed by an open house at a church friends house here in Park Forest.

The children are still busy with some things for Christmas but I think they are just about done. I know Ruth has done quite a bit of shopping, so I guess I’m the only one who hasn’t done any shopping as yet. (I’m always the last one to get it done.) I remember Dad would always ask Mom to circle things she wanted in the Sears or Penneys catalogs and he would order practically everything she circled and pick up all the packages a day or so before Christmas.

Last Friday Ruth and I went to Sauk Village to the rehersal for the wedding where we were to sing. We were invited over to the brides (18 yrs old) parents house after the rehersal. The wedding was at 6:00 PM on Sat. We sang one song (accompanied by guitar) just after the candles were lit, and the second song while everyone was up front just after the prayer. The second song (they were both duets, of course) was accompanied by the organist. They had a supper following the service, and then the cake. The groom’s family was saddened by the fact that a neighbor couple they had invited to the wedding, and who were following them over to the wedding, were involved in a bad accident as they turned the corner (trying to stay right behind the groom’s parents car) at a dangerous intersection. The groom’s father was late, and the ceremony was held up until he got there. The last we heard the lady had multiple fractures; we don’t know about the man.

We’re talking about going to Hutchinson the 1st week in Jan. We’ve invited the Laidigs up here for Christmas. We’ll let you know details later. Hope everyone is fine.

**12-19-73 – Wed 4:00 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’m home early from work because of the biggest snow storm(s) we’ve had in several years. A light snow has been falling all day after snow all night. The biggest snow since we’ve been here was 7 years ago next month when we really had a big blizzard and I just barely made it home from work. The Director of Research had a luncheon at noon so I went to that before coming on home. Because of the report that there could be a lot more additional snow we were all let off at noon so we didn’t go back after the luncheon.

Thanks to you and Mother for your money Christmas gifts; we’ll designate them for something “special.” We’re glad that you and Mother are enjoying the gifts that the kids made. We’ve been real pleased with the enthusiasm the children have shown in making presents for other people. While we still have some Christmas shopping and mailing to do we’re over the “Christmas Hump.” Ruth is still working on the cards; but has been so busy they probably won’t reach everyone before Christmas.

We were home last Mon night but last night I went with Ruth to her choir practice. The Christmas cantata I’m helping her with is this coming Sunday morning. Andy’s choir is singing during the s.s. period at our church so he’ll stay while some of the rest of us go to Ruth’s church.

Andy had a Christmas program tonight but we assume its cancelled since there was no school today. I’ve promised to take Lesle out tomorrow night for some last minute shopping.

Sat night is the Sauk Village (where Ruth has the choir) choir Christmas dinner. After the cantata Sunday we’re pretty free for awhile. I guess I haven’t written for 2 weeks since I called Mother last week. Our department Christmas dinner a week ago Sat night was nice. It was at a restaurant in Kankakee. Afterwards we stopped at an open house in Park Forest given by our church’s treasurer.

A week ago yesterday I went to my first meeting of Chicago Presbytery. That is the organization of all the Presbyterian churchs in the Chicago area. It was an exciting meeting for the representatives from our church as a man from our congregation was elected moderator of the Presbytery which is quite an honor.

Last Fri night was Andy’s Dec pack meeting; they had a grab bag gift exchange. Sat night we went to the first part of the church progressive Christmas dinner and then to a buffet dinner at the house (in another suburb just North of us) of a former neighbors. It was snowing that evening.

We got our Christmas tree a week ago Sat. We went to the tree farm to cut our own fresh tree. The cantata at our church went fine last Sun. I sang solos in the same cantata about 20 yrs ago at your church. We haven’t made any travel plans as yet. Merry Christmas.

**12-30-73 – Sun evening –** Its colder here and the weather report calls for another snowstorm tonight and tomorrow. I just took the girls to Sr. High Fellowship and it was snowing a little. We’ve already had about as much snow as I can ever remember for Dec; usually we have most of our snow after the first of the year.

I suppose gasoline is short in Kansas here at the end of the year before the stations get their new quotas. I had half a tank full yesterday so didn’t get into line to try to get any more as we’re not planning to drive much tomorrow and Tues (1st). Ruth’s choir, of course, was off today, as was our choir, so she didn’t have to drive to Sauk Village. I guess a lot of gasoline stations are closed until Wed.

That was too bad about Dillard. We sent them a sympathy card. I can’t remember when I last saw them; I’m sure it has been several years. M.J. said they were in Hutchinson 2 or 3 yrs ago at one of your New Year’s eve celebrations. As M.J. said we should try to maintain contact with Harold. Sometime maybe we can stop to see them when we’re driving to Kansas. Was John Gibbens Archie’s oldest son and the farmer who had emphysema?

Sun evening – 1 week later: 1-6-74 – I started this a week ago but held off finishing it as you had all the enclosures and Christmas pictures. We didn’t get a lot done over the New Years holiday. I was off work on Monday and Tues which made it nice. I watched lots of football, of course, as I’m sure Bill did.

News Years Eve Lesle and Lisa both had babysitting jobs. They got home at 3:00 and 4:00 AM New Years morning. Ruth stayed up till they were in as she always does. Ruth and I went to just South neighbors (a young couple that go to our church) get together from about 11:30-1:30 (after Alec was asleep. Alan and Andy were “babysitting” for him.) They had 3 other young couples from the church plus one other couple; the others came some time before we did and left around 3:00, I guess. We were the “old folks.”

We took the tree down on New Years day and got some of the Christmas decorations put away. Thurs night we took the kids shopping and then Ruth, Lisa and I went to choir practice. Ruth went because her choir was off today. Fri night we ate out and did some more shopping.

Yesterday Lesle went to the Dr. to see about an inflamed, infected gland. He gave her a shot of penicillin and some oral antibiotic, and told her to stay down and in bed as much as possible until the inflammation subsides. She’s finding it hard to stay down as she feels pretty good. She, of course, missed church this morning.

This afternoon I put up several ceiling hooks for Lesle and Ruth for some of their new plants and planters (hanging basket type). Ruth got a couple of planters for Christmas and Lesle made some. We’re proud of that wreath (we sent you a picture to see) that Lesle made. Its very colorful with the two yarn dolls and yarn balls (covered styrefoam). Hope you’re all OK.

**12-31-73 – Mon –** This must have been sent before he finished the last letter on January 6th – Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’ll send these Christmas pictures and things to you first. Please have Mother return the pictures. Thanks again for the Christmas gifts. I’m on vacation today and tomorrow. It was nice talking to you on Christmas. That was great that you felt like getting out. You’re an inspiration to all of us. Love, Carroll and family