**1974**

The time goes fast, the years go by, the money keeps going out faster than it comes in. Daily ozone reports appear for the first time. Gas stations run out of gas. Mom waits in line for an hour to get $5 worth of gas. Dad listens to Nixon resign, and tries to stop spoiling Alec. Lesle drives everyone crazy, and is completely surprised. Lisa makes jello. Alan is elated. Andy wins a bat, and first prize for his bat pumpkin. Alec learns he doesn’t get money every time the ice-cream truck drives by. Everyone has a great (not just OK!) time at the YMCA camp in Colorado. Dad says, “I’m lucky to have such a nice family.”

**1-14-74 – Mon –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Well we’re back on our regular schedule here in the new year. Hope everything is fine with you and everyone in Hutchinson. Thanks to everyone for the “Thank You” letters.

It got above freezing today for the first time in a couple of weeks, I believe. I guess we’ve all had a pretty hard winter so far. Our average snowfall in the Chicago area is about 39 inches and we’ve already had 34 inches, and the snow season is only about ½ over. Alan and Andy have been trying to make a little ice skating rink in the backyard (putting ice in the middle of a circle of banked snow), but I don’t think they have been very successful. The kids haven’t asked to go ice skating as much this winter as other years. Lisa went skating one day with a friend at a nearby enclosed rink. Alan and Andy went skating once over at the nearby grade school where they flood a flat area. Alan went for his first toboggan ride yesterday afternoon with the Jr. High Fellowship at church.

This Wed night is the Father and Son Banquet at church; I’m planning to take both Alan and Andy; the banquet is sponsored by the deacons. Sometimes we also have a Mother-Daughter Banquet.

Thurs night Andy has a concert; its all the 4-6 grade strings in the school district. Right now Ruth is accompanying Andy on his viola solo for contest. Ruth always volunteers to accompany students and she is already beginning to get calls. Alan also has a solo on the bassoon. I just drove out to pick up Lesle’s oboe; it had been over-hauled for the first time since it was new and we had to take it back as it was still not right. Lesle is still taking an oral antibiotic, but her infected gland is better and she went back to school today.

Lisa is still delivering the local paper twice a week with a girl friend; they get up early (dark now) on Thurs and Sun mornings to go out. She doesn’t complain much and, of course, likes the extra money. Alan is at scouts this evening. He hasn’t worked on merit badges much recently. He can get his Star rank before long if he gets another merit badge or so. Friday is Ruth’s birthday. I’ll take her out to eat and we’ll have her presents. Ruth is hostess at her circle meeting in the morning.

Andy just brought all his magic tricks in to list them like I used to do. As I told Mother he used his $5 with some extra money I gave him and “we” bought several tricks from that Abbott Magic Co, in Michigan where I used to buy tricks when I was a boy. As I’ve said before, Andy is the only child (unless Alec takes it up) who is interested in magic.

Our Session meeting was called off last Wed night because of snow and because so many were absent. We’ll all come to Hutchinson during the Easter Spring vacation when the kids are out of school. Hope all are OK.

**1-22-74 – Tues –** Ruth says “Thank You” for the birthday card and gift. My how the years go by, it doesn’t seem possible that we’ve been married almost 17 years. Ruth and I ate out alone at a good restaurant last Friday on her birthday; it was nice to not have the children along for a change. We did take Lisa and 2 friends to a movie on the way, and picked them up on the way. It was foggy that day and night, and on the way to work and back (it was my day to drive). We’ve had a lot of fog and rain the last few days as we’ve had above average temperatures and a warm spell. After we got home Ruth opened her presents. She got some more new clothes. With all her Christmas clothes she is in pretty good shape. Ruth likes to have a number of changes because of her teaching.

Two weeks from tonight I’ll be in Boston. I stay at a Hotel Sonesta which is in Cambridge on the Charles just a short ways from where I have to go. I’ll fly there on Mon afternoon and meet all day with the men two weeks from today. I’ll stay Tues night, meet on Wed AM if needed and come back Wed afternoon. This is that project involving treatment for newborn babies with respiratory problems. It’s going to be very expensive to do the studies in the babies to see if it works, so I don’t know how long the company will fund it.

Last Thurs night was Andy’s orchestra program. It was his first time to appear in a program since we missed the closing program in summer school, and their earlier program in December was cancelled because of bad weather. I missed choir rehersal and a church meeting to go.

On Sat besides the regular errands and usual activities I did some more reading on the energy crises which was my subject for one of the adult s.s. classes last Sunday AM. I had to fill in for the one Sunday while the teacher leading the regular series they were having was away with our young adult group on their retreat. We started a second adult s.s. class a week ago Sunday and they have had good crowds. We’re having 10-15 more adults out in both classes than we were having in the one class previously.

Last Wed night was the Father and Son Banquet at church. I took Alan and Andy and another man who doesn’t have a son at home used Alan as his “son”. A coach at a nearby high school who is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Atheletes spoke and gave his testimony.

Sunday afternoon Ruth, Andy and I attended a Youth Orchestra Concert of the Chicago Heights Symphony; it was at a nearby high school and it was foggy that afternoon. Sunday evening I took Lisa, Alan and Andy to the church to attend a movie while I drove on to a session on Biblical Archeology. It is a series of 8 sessions and I like archeology so I’m going to try to attend all the sessions I can. Last night I took the girls to their newly starting oboe lessons because Ruth was teaching. Today Lisa went to the oral surgeon and had 2 teeth removed so her teeth will have more room; she feels fine. Hope you’re all doing OK.

**1-29-74 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Hope you’re having some of the warmer weather we’ve been having, although I know you don’t get outside that often to know exactly what the temperature is. We had a lot of rain, and although it snowed some yesterday afternoon it was above freezing today and will get into the 40’s tomorrow. Most of our snow has melted. This is our coldest week of the year on the average.

We have enough gas to get us through Fri, I think. Most of the gas stations have run out of gas because they have sold all of their January quotas. Presumably they will have new February shipments by Friday the first. If they go to gas rationing we may have to give up some of our regular activities, but I don’t know what it will be.

Lesle started her driver education course this week (start of the 2nd semester); they start the semester they turn 16 (her birthday, of course, is March 6th). They say if we have gas rationing that teen-age drivers won’t get allotment until they are 18, so if Lesle learns to drive this spring and gets her license we won’t get any extra gasoline because of her.

Ruth has gone to her Sauk Village Church choir practice. Ruth is accompanying about 20 grade school and junior high students for their contest solos; they emphasize solos in our district so almost everybody plays. They always have trouble getting enough accompanists so she volunteers to help out. The kids all come here to the house to practice so it will get pretty busy around here for the next 2-3 weeks.

A week from tonight I’ll be in Boston; as I’ve said I’m staying 2 nights coming back a week from tomorrow afternoon. I’ll be riding to the airport with some men who are going to a meeting in Washington.

Lisa got over her teeth extraction she had a week ago today; she stayed home that afternoon but felt like going to school she said. I think I said that her teeth were removed so there would be plenty of room for her other teeth as they are being straightened. Lisa has had her full braces on about 10 months.

Alan is out tonight to a band practice. Last Sat he went on the boy scout Klondike Derby. It was rainy and muddy. They all went to a nearby forest preserve. Each patrol competed against each other. They had 10 stations they went to hauling their equipment around on big sled. At each station they got so many points for doing certain skills, etc. Alan’s patrol (he is patrol leader and they had only 3) beat the other larger patrol in their troop, so he was quite elated.

Last Fri night was the cubs pinewood derby where the cubs race little wooden cars (by gravity on a sloping track) made by the cubs and their dads. There were 39 cubs and Andy’s car finished in the top 12 which was better than we finished last year. The Laidigs are coming on the train Feb 13th to stay a few days. We’ll all try to go to Hutchinson on the train the week of April 15-19 (Spring Vacation and Ruth won’t be teaching). Hope you’re all OK.

**2-3-74 – Sun –** Its clearing off this afternoon, so the ground hog would see his shadow today. It was cloudy yesterday “when he came out.” Our weather has been cooler again, but no major snows; the long-range report says it will be warmer and wetter than average for Feb, I believe.

Hope Bill has been able to get enough gasoline for all his work driving. I was able to get some more yesterday and didn’t have to wait in line too long (at Sears). As I’ve said we’ve cut down some on extra trips. I guess even if the Arabs lift the oil embargo in the next couple of months, we will still have shortages for several months. Lesle is taking drivers training at school (may have mentioned this); she had her written test last week and will start driving this week or next.

Andy is sitting by me here on the living room couch working on magic. I’m gradually showing him some of my old tricks and turning them over to him. He’s been working on the egg bag. He said he asked to do a trick at school and did the coin in the boxes that I did when he was about my age.

Lesle is sewing this afternoon and Lisa is cooking (made cake icing and jello). Lisa is more interested in domestic things than Lesle. We always tell them if they don’t like what Mom serves they can take over the cooking. Alec is taking a nap. He fights naps and doesn’t want to go to sleep at night either. I guess its mainly my fault; the whole family tells me I have spoiled Alec. Of course I didn’t realize I was doing it, so I’ve agreed to get “tougher” with him. Alec needs his rest as he’s had a cough and cold for about a week. Andy has a bit of a cough and missed his choir practice yesterday morning. Lesle got over her infection OK.

Since I’ll be gone tomorrow night a friend will take the girls to their oboe lessons and Ruth will pick them up. We stayed home on Fri night rather than eat out. Yesterday morning we went to our first Bar Mitzvah at a temple near our church. The boy is a good friend of Alan’s (probably Alan Shnay) and the whole family received an invitation (enclosed). Alan, Andy, Ruth and I went. It was a very impressive service and only the 2nd or 3rd time I had been in Jewish temple. Afterwards we went to the boys house for a buffet luncheon. Alan is at youth fellowship this afternoon and should be home anytime. He got good grades at school (2 Bs – rest A’s) and has been working on the architecture merit badge.

Tonight is the 3rd session of that Biblical archeology course I am attending. We’ll try to get train tickets to Hutchinson to leave Joliet in the evening on Easter Day. Ruth, of course, has her choir on Easter. The train goes all night and you get to Hutchinson early in the morning. That’s the week of Spring Vacation for the kids and Ruth won’t be teaching. The birthday dinner for M.J. sounded nice and nice that Aunt Clara got out OK. Hope you have a good week.

**2-12-74 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We were glad to have your card and to know that everyone is OK. Your morale is an inspiration to all of us – keep it up. I heard that Mrs. Kirkland, the lady who owned Neisler Drug Co. in Decatur, Ill where I first went to work there, lives at a hospital in Decatur. She built the hospital wing with some of the money she got when she sold the drug company.

Today it got up to about 50 after a cold spell. The kids were off from school because of Lincoln’s birthday (just in Illinois, I expect, because Lincoln grew up in this state). Everybody is cleaning up some today because the Laidigs are coming in tomorrow on the train to stay 5-6 days. To take the train here they have to drive about 25-30 miles to McCook, Nebraska to take the train. They will get off in Aurora (a western suburb) so we won’t have to drive all the way into downtown Chicago. I’ve called for our family train reservations from Joliet to Hutchinson but we haven’t heard (they are supposed to call) yet if they are confirmed.

I’ll miss the girls big band concert tomorrow night because of session meeting at church, but the Laidigs should be here to go if they are not too tired. We may all go to the museum on Sat. Ruth had a lot of kids in today to practice their solos for the contest a week from Sat. I finished our income tax last night; this is the earliest I’ve ever done it. We’ll get a nice refund because of heavy deductions, including the biggest medical deduction we’ve ever had. All the orthodontist (braces) expenses made it big.

My trip to Boston went OK. Had good weather going. They had had a big snowstorm in Boston a couple of days before, but the runways were clear on Monday. Had meetings on Tues and Wed mornings. I called home on Tues night and called our friends, the Klines, who live there in Cambridge. I was at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) the day after the students dropped a big yo-yo from the top of a building there. I saw the building but not the yo-yo. There were pictures of it on TV news I understand.

We were late leaving Wed afternoon coming back. It was clear in Boston when we left but they were having a blowing snowstorm here at that time and it was going East. We flew over it and were delayed 1½ hrs in the air before landing because only one runway was open at O’Hare Airport. Got to O’Hare at 5:00 so it was still daylight. An Armour driver brought another man and me home.

Wed night I went out to the Jr. High to hear Ruth accompany some of the kids playing solos at a practice session. Missed choir Thurs night because I was tired from the trip. Sunday afternoon was Ruth’s piano recital. I went to my archeology class Sun night. Its over 25 miles round trip.

**2-14-74 –** I found this note from Dad inside a Valentine’s Day card in my keepsake box. Looks like it was xeroxed, so each of us probably got a copy. Dear Lesle, Lisa, Alan and Andy, Just a Valentine’s Day note to tell all of you how much we love you, yesterday, today and always. Mom and I are so very proud of you, and love each of you just as you are. We wish you the very best in the coming years and you know we will help you in any way we can. Love, Dad and Mom

**2-19-74 – Tues –** We’re all at home relaxing. Ruth cancelled her lessons today because of having to drive the Laidigs to the train station. Their train left Aurora (a far Western suburb) about 5:00 PM. Ruth left about 3:00 (about 60 miles from here) and got them there in time. They insisted she start on back before dark. When she got back in Park Forest she got in a gas line and waited one hour for $5 worth of gasoline. We’re supposed to get more gasoline in the Chicago area, but its still pretty short as of today.

Ruth has a solo practice in a little bit (the girl is here now). Alan is out at a band practice for a Thursday night concert. Lisa has a cold but hasn’t missed any school. There is a lot of flu and sickness in our area. We’ve all been fairly free recently. Friday night is Andy’s cub scout blue and gold banquet for fathers and sons. Sat is the solo contest at a town near Kankakee where Ruth plays for all the grade school and jr high soloists. Sun is a symphony concert.

I stayed home from work last Wed because of the Laidigs coming. Their train was 5 hrs late into Aurora because the last 4-5 cars derailed west of McCook, Neb before they got on. You may have heard about it on the news. There was a little article about it in the Chicago paper. About 20 people were hurt, none seriously, and the train went on without the cars that wrecked (they were on the rear of the train). The Laidigs got seats OK and were very tired, of course. Mrs. L called about 11:00 PM a week ago tonight to say they were still waiting in the McCook train station. They had heard by then that the train had been derailed and for us to not expect them on time. They got in about 3:00 on Wed. Wed night I had session meeting while Ruth took her folks out to the Sr. High band concert. I was disappointed to miss it but we hadn’t had session meeting for 2 months and some of the newly elected elders were there.

Thurs night Lisa and I went to choir practice. We stayed home Fri night. Sat we all drove up to the Museum of Science and Industry. The Laidigs had never seen it and Mr. Laidig likes museums. We always try to show them something they haven’t seen every time they are here. It was a beautiful clear day which is unusual for February in Chicago. The Museum is near the University of Chicago, so I suppose we were near the Lesters; they now live near the University somewhere. On the way back we drove south on Lake Shore Drive so everyone could see some of the frozen lakefront. When one is at the Museum you’re, of course, not far from Blackstone Street where the Lesters lived years ago, and didn’t my Dad stay with them for awhile.

Sun morning Ruth’s folks followed her around and went to the Sauk Village Church with her to hear her choir. We had a class of new members and installation and ordination of officers at our church. There was a reception for them after church and Ruth and her parents got back before it was over. Alan went ice skating Sun afternoon with the Jr. High Fellowship. Sun night I took Mr. Laidig to that Biblical Archeology class I’m attending. He enjoyed it. Our reservations to Hutchinson were confirmed so we’ll see you the week after Easter. Hope you’re all OK.

**2-25-74 – Mon – 7:00 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, That was good that you got out a week ago yesterday, or whatever day it was, keep it up. Hope you all escape the flu etc. We’ve had an awful lot of flu, colds, etc. here, but I think maybe its now on the decline. Lisa had a bad cold but its better now. Normally at this time on Monday nights I’m taking the girls to their oboe lessons. Their teacher called earlier to say that he couldn’t give them lessons today for some reason. He is a music teacher and director of the Chicago Heights Symphony and is a very busy man.

Tomorrow night the Senior High Fellowship at church is sponsoring a chili dinner to raise money for the church. I’m attending an education meeting afterwards at another church while Ruth has her choir rehersal. Wednesday night is the first Lenten service; Andy’s choir has to sing. Thurs night Lesle is playing in the high school orchestra.

As I wrote last week the Laidigs had a nice visit with us and got off OK last Tues. We had a letter from them saying that they got home OK. The train was crowded but they had seats OK. Mr. Laidig’s brother Floyd (he is the farmer who lives near Oberlin) met them at McCook, Nebraska and took them back home. As I’ve said McCook is about 30 miles north of Oberlin and the Laidigs didn’t want to leave their car in McCook while they were gone. Mrs. Laidig is very active in Eastern Star and had a meeting she had to get back to.

Alec has his “drums” and music all set up ready to practice; drums are what he says he wants to play. Andy is doing fine on the viola and seems still interested. He still says he wants to play the French horn. Last Thurs night I missed choir practice and went to hear Alan’s Jr. High orchestra and band concert. It was for one of the music association meetings. That’s the parents group that backs and helps the students with things musical.

Lesle was in the room a little bit ago and said she drove a car today for the first time in drivers education. She wants to go driving with us but we just haven’t gotten around to it. Some people say you shouldn’t take them out driving before they have drivers education.

Friday night was Andy’s Cub Scout Blue and Gold banquet at a local restaurant. It is for the cubs and their dads. The entertainment was a couple of movies about racing cars. Sat AM Ruth and Alan left early on the school bus to go to a nearby town for the grade school (through 8th grade) solo contest. Ruth played for 16 students, including Alan. She had 2 more who didn’t make it because of sickness. Alan got a I on his bassoon solo (they grade them I-II or III). They got home about 5:30.



Andy in his blue and gold.

Sun AM stayed at our church as it was her Sun off from her choir. After church Ruth practiced with another lady; they are singing a duet this Fri at a World Day of Prayer service. Sun afternoon was the Chicago Height Symphony; a small crowd of about 200 there. Last evening I went to my archeology class. We’ll see you the week after Easter. Hope all OK.

**3-4-74 – Mon –** Sorry to hear you haven’t been feeling so well recently. Hope this letter finds you feeling lots better and not so tired. Maybe you should take a good multiple vitamin-mineral supplement if you haven’t been taking one. Andy stayed home from school today because he’s been running a slight fever since last Friday. He feels pretty good a lot of the time but, of course, we can’t let him go to school yet. I guess a lot of flu here is like that, a mild fever which won’t go away. Lisa got over her cold and other than an occasional runny nose, Alec has been fine.

As you may have heard on the TV news it got up to 80 in Chicago yesterday. That was the hottest its ever been that early in the year, and the previous high for March 3rd was 64. It also got into the 70’s on Sat. Naturally the kids were outside a lot those two days. Lisa even raked the front yard. Today is cool and rainy.

As a week ago this evening I normally would be on the way taking the girls to their oboe lessons, but again their teacher has another meeting or concert and had to cancel their lesson tonight. Ruth will be home from teaching later this evening. Tomorrow night I’ll go to church to the Womens Association dinner to hear a lady archeologist; she has been on digs in the Holy Land. Ruth will be there late since she has to teach till 6:30.

Wed night is the 2nd Lenten Service. Had 140 at the first one last Wed night. Thurs night I have an education meeting at the church. Ruth and Lisa will probably ride there with me to attend choir practice. Fri night there will be a surprise party for Lesle. Last Tues night I went to the money-raising chili dinner at church. Afterwards two other men and I attended a Sunday School meeting at another church. Part of the evening was spent discussing discipline, which was helpful since we have several classes with discipline problems in our Sunday School.

Last Wed night was the first Lenten Service. Ruth taught till 7:30 and didn’t get there in time to hear Andy sing in the youth choir. Last Thurs night Ruth and I went to hear the high school orchestra (I sent the program) that Lesle is in and the choruses. Lesle plays the oboe and English horn in the orchestra.

Alan was first in spelling in his English class so he is supposed to go a contest at another high school. Sat morning I drove South (5 miles north of Kankakee) to that Jr. High Science Fair that I usually help judge. Alan had a scout meeting Sat afternoon. Sun was regular schedule. In the evening I went to the archeology class. There is one class left. I hope to make Biblical archeology one of my main interests in the next few years. I think I mentioned that we will leave on the train from Joliet for Hutchinson Easter night and get to Hutch on Mon morning.

**3-11-74 – Mon –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I guess its your turn to receive the weekly “diary”. Hope this finds Mother doing much better, and that you’re holding your own. Mother said Sat evening that she was feeling better, and might even go to church on Sunday (yesterday) if she felt like it.

Today is cooler and rainy after our above average temperature and recent spring-like weather. Today’s temperature was about average for this time of year. Tonight is an orchestra festival out at the high school. Lesle plays in the high school orchestra, Alan in the jr. high one and Andy in the grade school. I’ll take them out early and then come back early to get Ruth from her teaching at the Conservatory.

Tomorrow night I’ll go with Ruth to practice Easter music with her choir. Wednesday night is our third Lenten service. I have session meeting afterwards. Last Tues night went to our church to hear that lady archeologist. She is a student at McCormick Seminary, the Presbyterian Seminary in Chicago and has been on a couple of “digs” in the Holy Land. Her slides were very nice. Her presentation was preceeded by a dinner.

Last Wed night was Lenten service. I went alone with our neighbors. Ruth stayed home after teaching to get Lesle’s birthday cake and presents ready, which we had after I got home from church. (I’ll finish this now that we’re home from the orchestra concert – it was short). Lesle got clothes and 2 gerbils (little animals about the size of small rats). The gerbils have their own special cage. Mom adds: (also a chromatic harmonica which she had asked for)

Back to Dad: Thurs night I went to an adult education meeting at our church. It was a meeting for Presbyterian churchs in our area; they discussed different types of adult Christian education classes, etc. that have been successful at various churchs. Ruth and Lisa went to choir practice while I attended the meeting.

Friday night we had a surprize birthday party for Lesle. During the week Lisa secretly invited 2 of Lesle’s friends. They came while I went out with Lesle to pick up piza and to let her practice driving for a few minutes. Lesle was completely surprised. Her friends stayed all night. Saturday Ruth and I attended a Jr. High Band Festival at a nearby school. Alan played in the band (Hubbard Trail) and in the honors orchestra. While we were there Alec went to a birthday party.

Sun morning I had to sit in for the 4th grade s.s. class as their teacher called at the last minute to say that she couldn’t make it. That was Andy’s class; there were 5 boys and 1 girl. After church (Ruth’s choir didn’t sing) we went to a friends house for lunch; we stayed all afternoon. I attended the 8th and last archeology class Sun night. Again, hope you’re all doing OK.

**No Date – Sun PM –** We were pleased to have your letter and to know that you were feeling still better – keep it up. Everybody will feel better when the weather gets warmer and we can be outside more. People here are still having colds and flu. My 5th grade teacher called this morning while we were eating breakfast to say that her cough wasn’t any better and that she better not try to teach; her class went in with the 6th graders. A man in our car pool missed work Friday because of a cold that has hung on.

Today is cool and cloudy, just like its been for the last several days. The temperature is now averaging several degrees below normal. We’re relaxing this afternoon and evening as, unlike usually, we don’t have any engagements. I just took Lisa to buy some interfacing for something she is making. We’ve had plenty of gasoline here the last couple of weeks so have been able to run a few extra errands like that. Alan doesn’t have Jr. High Fellowship this afternoon because they all went on a swiming-piza party last night. Lesle was out to a party last night, also.

I don’t have that class tonight for the 1st time in 8 weeks. Next weeks schedule is much the same as last week except we’re invited out to a friends house on Friday. A week from tonight we’re having a big Christian Education Committee meeting. Sunday night is about the only night available anymore that Ruth has completely free.

I expect Bill has been watching some of the big college basketball games on TV like I watched yesterday. The KU games were not on our station, but I expect they were on there. Thats nice that KU has gotten as far as they have in the tournament, although they will be the underdogs in the game with Marquette next Sat afternoon. Alan’s Jr. High Band Contest is next Sat, and it may conflict with the KU game.

Your sickish feeling may be due in part to the digitalis. If so, you should feel better on a lower dose, although it may take several days to get rid of the extra digitalis.

Last Tues night I went with Ruth to her choir practice. Wed night was regular Lenten Service, followed by an abbreviated 2 hr Session meeting. Thurs night was choir practice. We ate out Fri night and Ruth took the girls shopping. Sat AM Andy finally decided to register for the regular Park Forest Boys Baseball, the one Alan has been in. They had an extra registration day because not enough young boys registered the first two Saturdays. Andy played in the Recreation (Park Board) Program, but its not as good as the other one; they don’t have uniforms and don’t get to play much in that program. He got his uniform yesterday. Lisa still goes horseback riding on Sat. Lesle drove the car a couple of times yesterday and is getting better. Alec is fine and maybe is a little less spoiled. Four weeks from tonight we’ll be leaving for Hutchinson. Don’t overdo, but stay busy. Hello to everyone.

**No Date – Tues 5:30 PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I started this Sunday but obviously didn’t get very far; I’ve forgotten now what came up to interrupt me. We’re looking forward to seeing you all the week after Easter; its Spring vacation for the kids so is a good time to take a trip. Like many places we’ve recently had way below average temperatures the last week or so after having a record setting warm spell, we had some record setting low temperatures the last few days. Its supposed to warm up to 60 by the weekend. We plan to go to the big flower show at McCormick Place (a big exhibition hall and convention center in Chicago) next Saturday.

Alan just came in and said he had run some today during track workout; I guess he’s going out for track. Lisa and Lesle just got home from high school and are in the kitchen fixing supper. Lisa and Alan are good about fixing supper when Ruth assigns it to them. You see Ruth teaches during the supper hour on Mon-Tues-Wed.

Lisa and I may go with Ruth to her choir practice tonight since we’re going to help her for the Maundy Thursday service. Watched some of the basketball games the last few days and got to see Kansas University play once. They lost both games in the national tournament, as predicted, but that was an honor for them to go. I can remember when I was a junior at KU the basketball team won the national championship, and I can remember the big pep rallies and the team riding down the street on a big fire engine. One of the local area high schools, Bloom (a lot of the kids at church go there), took 2nd in the state high school basketball championship, so we watched their game Sat night.

Last Wed night and tomorrow nights are more Lenten services at church. Lisa went with me last week. Tomorrow night I have to help up front as the Sunday School is in charge except for the sermon. Andy’s choir sings a week from tomorrow night at the last Lenten service. Last Thurs night Ruth, Alec and I went to grade school strings solo recital. Andy did fine. Fri night we were invited to a church friends house along with several other church couples. It was a lot of fun as they had several games set up.

Sat afternoon Ruth and I drove to a junior high school in a nearby suburb to hear Alan’s band and orchestra play in the district contest. Both groups got a I (they were the only orchestra entered) and the band was rated best of the 8 or 9 bands there. Sunday morning the car wouldn’t start (had a new starter motor put in yesterday) so we had to get rides with friends. Ruth rode out to her job with the minister there who also lives in Park Forest. We missed a youth symphony concert in the afternoon because of the car. In the evening we got a ride to Christian Education Committee I had set up. My project involving the aerosol drug for babies is progressing and it may be tested in a few months.

**4-4-74 – Thurs 5:30 PM –** Its cool and rainy today, and we may get a little snow tomorrow after the storms yesterday. I guess Kansas missed the tornadoes but Mr. Laidig said over the phone last evening (he called to ask us to send him something he wanted for church) that Oberlin, Kansas had a blizzard yesterday.

I just came in the kitchen so Alec could show me the house he and Andy just made using Alec’s big cardboard blocks, with the furniture made out of clay. Alec has been playing outside recently when it was warmer. Ruth just took Alan to his bassoon lesson; I don’t think he practiced very much this week. Lesle has a band practice tonight getting ready for Saturdays contest at a nearby suburb. I’ll take Lisa to choir practice later.

By the way, Mr. Laidig said they were through Hutchinson the other day and tried to call you, but no one answered; I’m not sure what day, or time of day that was. He said they won’t try to drive to Hutchinson while we’re there. He shipping us some drawers for me to use in a base for the old couch that we moved into the family room.

Last night Ruth, Lesle, Andy, Alec and I went to the 6th and last Lenten service. Andy sang in the youth choir, they also sang at the first service. Tues night I went with Ruth to her choir practice. I forgot to say that we had real heavy rains through our area, but the only Ill tornado was in Decatur just a few miles from where we used to live.

One of the men in Boston on that baby project was in town this weekend. He and I visited a small company near O’Hare Airport on Mon (I had a rental car). On Tues he gave a seminar at our company and I then drove him back to his hotel in downtown Chicago. We had warm weather both Mon and Tues. He is attending a meeting in Chicago through tomorrow.

I’ve forgotten when I wrote last. A week ago Tues Lisa went to Ruth’s choir practice with me. Wed was Lenten service (I had to help up front) and Thurs regular choir practice. Ruth went Thurs as she didn’t have her choir last Sun. Alan has a campout this weekend with the boy scouts. He hasn’t been working very hard on merit badges so I don’t think he’ll get his Star badge at the next award ceremony. Andy hasn’t worked much on Cubs recently either. Andy’s first baseball practice is Sat. Alan’s doesn’t start until later. Alan is still out for track.

We ate out last Fri night since it was payday. Lisa and Lesle then went to a Marx brothers movie at the high school. Sat morning was regular and then in the afternoon we all (except Lisa who had something with 4H) went into Chicago to the big Flower and Garden show. Sun afternoon was examination of the Confirmation Class. Hope you’re all OK. See you a week from Mon.

**4-8-74 – Mon PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, This will be last letter before we leave for Hutchinson. We had a nice letter from M.J. today. It was cold here today, in the 30’s, but is supposed to get up nearer normal temperatures tomorrow. In a few minutes we will leave to take the girls to their oboe lessons. They didn’t have lessons a week ago today because their teacher had a meeting. He is a band director at a nearby high school, and also leads the Chicago Heights Symphony. Yesterday afternoon was their last concert of the year. On the program were the 4 winners of the Youth Opportunity Contest. They were all boys; 3 17 yr olds and one 13 yr old. They were all very good. Also on the program was the Firebird ballet. On the way home we picked up Alan from his Jr. High Fellowship at Church.

I just got back from taking the girls to their lesson. Ruth is home from work, but Alan isn’t back from scouts yet. Alan went on a scout outing Fri night (I drove 4 boys and their equipment to a nearby camp), through Sun (he was back when we got back from church) morning. (Alan just came in). Andy is now lying down and running some temperature. We’ll hope that he is feeling OK for the Hutchinson trip. He’ll have to miss school tomorrow.

That was lucky that you didn’t break any bones when you fell. I always worry that you and Mother will have a bad fall. Andy just said that Henry Aaron hit his 715th home run tonight while we were gone, to break Babe Ruth’s record. I believe Babe Ruth broke the record in 1927 which I imagine you remember hearing about.

Tomorrow night Lisa and I will go to Ruth’s choir practice. Wed night is session meeting and Thurs night is Maundy Thurs service at Ruth’s church. I’m off work on Good Friday; we might do something special then. Ruth and I are supposed to sing a duet on Easter Sunday for the 9:30 service at out church. After that Ruth will go to her church for the 11:00 AM service.

Last Thurs Lisa went with me to our choir practice. Sat morning Ruth took Lesle and me out to the high school. I went on the bus with her to the contest as a chaperone. Three buses went. The band and orchestra got I ratings. The Jr. High (Alan) band and orchestra got I’s at their contest earlier. The music program is strong in our school system. Ruth drove up to the contest with Alec. I rode back on the bus and Ruth picked us up. Sunday AM was Palm Sunday. We had 2 anthems at our church and Ruth, of course, had Palm Sunday music with her choir. We don’t have any plans yet for summer. Lisa says she wants to go to some camp. Hope everyone is fine this week. See you next Mon.

**5-24-74 – Wed PM –** The date on this letter does not seem accurate, so I am putting it here because Dad is talking about the Easter trip to Hutchinson. – Thanks to all for everything during our Hutchinson visit. It was particularly nice to have had a car while there so we could easily get around. Received your letter today with the clippings about the tornadoes and flooding. It was raining when we left, of course, and there was lightning and rain most of the way East through Kansas although I slept some I guess. The man at the station said it was OK to park the car right there so I backed the car to the South side of the Santa Fe lot. When I opened the door I saw that the car was in 3 or 4 inches of water, so I hope Bill didn’t get wet Sat AM when he picked the car up; although that water was probably still around the car in the AM as it must have rained hard all night.

There were just 7 seats left on the (I think 7 people got off at Hutch) coach we had our reservations on. Five seats were together in the middle of the coach. Alan and I went to separate seats at opposite ends of the coach. We didn’t sleep too well as we all didn’t have pillows. By coincidence one of Alec’s Sunday School teachers and her little girl were on the same coach we were on. We knew she had been to California but, of course, didn’t know she would be on the same train coming back. Thurs – We ate breakfast in the diner, and waited till we got to a local drive-in for lunch. The train was only 30 mins late so we had time to get Thumper before 3:00 PM. The rest of Sat and Sunday were are usual busy schedule.

Since we got back Ruth has also cleaned out a lot of toys, some to throw away and some to take over to the White Elephant sale at the grade school which will be held at the carnival on Sat (you know, like I used to give magic shows for). Andy has his space derby (races of propeller driven rockets that hang on wires) tomorrow night at the Cub Scout Pack Meeting. I don’t know whether he’ll have his done in time or not.

The girls had oboe lessons Mon night and they spent the whole time making reeds. Oboe and bassoon players usually make their own reeds because they are so expensive, but its real hard to do and is a real art. The girls and Alan are doing better but still have a lot of trouble. If only I could have played the flute ☺ Lesle is at practice tonight for the Spring Musical at High School (its the orchestra that accompanies the show). Alan ran in a Jr. High Track Meet after school. He didn’t do too well so I don’t know whether he’ll continue to run or not. The boys have baseball practice Sat.

Our Session retreat which was scheduled for Sat has been cancelled because of the funeral for a 14 year old boy who just joined the church (in the last confirmation class). He died about 10 days after being hit by a car while riding his bike (I warned our kids again). Again, thanks to everyone for a real successful trip to Hutchinson.

**5-5-74 – Sun –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, This will be my “Mothers Day Letter” to the three Hutchinson mothers. Hope you have a nice day. The weekend has been very nice here, not too hot and not too cold. Actually its been a little a cool side the last couple of days. Andy, Lesle, Ruth and I just finished playing a new card game that we learned to play a week ago last night at a friends house. It requires some skill and is just about right for our family – not too hard for the kids, and I don’t like card games that require a lot of thinking anyway.

A week from tonight I should be at a hotel in St. Louis. I’m planning to drive down next Sun afternoon after we eat out for Mother’s day. If available, I’ll drive a company car down. I’m attending a meeting Mon Tues and Wed morning on heparin the anticoagulant drug (blood thinner) that keeps blood from clotting. I’ll come back on that (May 15th) Wed night. Ruth is going to Oberlin (by train) that Thurs or Fri to be there for her high school classes 20th anniversary dinner on May 18th. Alan and Andy have their piano recital that Sun which Ruth will probably miss. This will probably be Alan’s last year taking piano lessons, although we hope Andy will take some more. We’re real pleased that all 4 of the older children have obtained a good music foundation on the piano. Hopefully, Alec will take piano lessons someday, also. Andy is not sure whether he can start the French horn in summer school and still play the viola, since band and orchestra for him are scheduled at the same time. Alan is still thinking about learning to play an instrument he can march with, but he hasn’t started practicing yet. He, of course, doesn’t play his bassoon in the marching band. Alan’s Jr. High band marched yesterday morning in Park Forest South in a parade; Alan Dad writes: helped carry the banner. Mom crosses that out and writes: carried the Illinois flag.

Early this morning Alan left for Detroit, Mich with a 7th grade group. The 8th graders go to Washington every year (Lisa went last year) and now the 7th graders think they should go on a trip also. It’s a quick trip by bus and they return late tomorrow evening. They are staying at a Holiday Inn Motel tonight. I think they get to go through a Ford Motor Company plant, and I imagine they will drive into Canada for a bit and visit Greenfield Village and museum.

The boys are well into baseball practice. Alan has practice every day this week although he’ll miss tomorrow. Had a letter from the Laidigs. They are busy, going to meetings in various towns, and visiting places in Kansas that they hadn’t gotten around to visiting. We’ve picked up a new little cat (he’s made friends with the dog), but we may be able to give it to a neighbor child. We don’t know where it came from. Hope you and everyone have had a good week.

**6-9-74 – Sun Afternoon –** Another incorrect date. Looks like this letter belongs here and not in June. – Its finally clearing off some after several days of cool rainy weather. As I told you over the phone, we had heavy rains Thurs night, with heavy flash flooding in the south suburbs early Fri morning; it was the worst flooding in several years, I believe. I had to drive through some water Fri AM on the way to work. I drove the car pool on Thurs (I was gone Mon-Wed) instead of Friday since I had to leave work early Fri to take Ruth to the train station. We left here about 3:00 PM (Alec rode along) to get Ruth to Aurora (58 miles – one way) so Ruth could take the train at 5:08. The train started in Chicago like the one we took but is really a Burlington train rather than the Santa Fe that we took. It goes through Omaha, Neb, McCook, Neb (where Ruth got off, about 25 mi north of Oberlin) and on to Denver. Her Mother was going to meet her in McCook to drive her on over to Oberlin. Alec and I got back home about 6:00.

Fri night the boys went to a baseball clinic. Andy won one of the bats they gave away as a door prize. It was put on by a savings and loan company as a means of advertising. Thurs Fri and Sat nights Lesle played in the orchestra that accompanied the Crete-Monee High School production of “On the Town” a musical that was written during the time of World War II. Ruth and I went Thurs night after going to the first part of Alan’s concert (I don’t know why they scheduled them both the same night).

Yesterday was the opening day of boys baseball for Andy but it rained most of the day and all the games were cancelled. They did have their little parade (in the light rain) and opening ceremony. With a firetruck and a band the ball players all marched over to the park. Alan’s regular season opens in 2 weeks and his practice game yesterday was, of course, also rained out. Alan is still pitching and playing in the outfield, and I think Andy is playing the outfield.

A local high school choir sang at the church service this morning. The kids and I ate out afterwards. Tonight is Alan and Andy’s piano recital which Ruth was sorry to miss. As you may remember, the girls don’t take piano anymore, and this was probably Alan’s last year. The schedule eases up some now as Ruth is through with her church choir. She has a recital for her piano pupils in 2 or 3 weeks. A week ago today after we all ate out I drove a company car to St. Louis to that meeting on heparin. It was worth attending, although I didn’t understand some of the papers since I hadn’t been working in that area. I drove back here on Wed afternoon.

Mon: Ruth got home about 3:00 this afternoon, just in time for her lessons. Got your letter today. Glad Aunt Clara is feeling better. I guess they had a lot of flooding in Kansas City.

**5-25-74 – Sat –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We had a very pleasant Spring day here today. Hope it was a nice day there in Hutchinson and maybe you felt like getting out sometime when M.J. and/or Bill have time to take you. Keep as active as you can and don’t give up. I guess I haven’t written every week since we got back from Hutchinson. Like M.J. and Bill, it seems like we’re quite busy all the time which makes the time go fast. Our 17th wedding anniversary is next Fri. Maybe you will remember when you went to Oberlin, Kans with Mother and Uncle Clyde for the wedding.

Baseball season is now underway for both Alan and Andy. I bought them both new baseball shoes today. They had 180 fewer boys sign up in Park Forest this year so they had to eliminate one whole league that they have always had. As a result Andy, who played just a little bit last Summer, has to play against boys who have had more experience. Andy’s team has lost their first two games.

Sunday – 5-26-74 – Andy had baseball practice after church and said he hit the ball better. Alan has a practice game tomorrow night and their regular season starts next Sat, I believe. Ruth was at church as her choir is over for the year. They may have a picnic sometime in June.

This afternoon the girls played in the high school marching band for the Memorial Day Service out at the nearby town of Crete where the high school is located. I’m off work tomorrow, but the children have to go to school. Illinois is the only state with this mix-up. The state employees, including schools, are going along with the old date, while many businesses are closed tomorrow to go along with the new system of 3 day weekends.

Next Tues night is the high school band award dinner. They have about two more weeks of school in our district. Next Sunday the whole family (except for Alec and maybe Andy) is scheduled to supply the special music at the Sauk Village Church where Ruth directs the choir. The older three children will accompany Ruth and I as we sing.

I guess I wrote that Ruth had a nice time on her trip and got back OK, although she just barely made it in time for her first lesson last Mon. She rented a car in Aurora (where the train went to) drove to the Hertz Rental Car place here and took a cab home. That way I didn’t have to take off from work to go get her.

Last Tues night was the Jr. High Band and Orchestra (Alan) awards night and pot luck supper. Wed night was the final high school band concert. Fri night was Cubs and Andy became a Webelo. That’s what they call the Cubs in their 3rd year. They didn’t do it that way when I was in Cubs. Andy has one more year in Cubs. Again, hope everyone is doing OK.

**6-3-74 – Mon –** Its a beautiful summer evening here. We’ve had drier weather here the last few days, although we had a shower yesterday evening while Ruth’s piano recital was on. Her recital was a 7:00 PM (she couldn’t have it in the afternoon like she usually does because someone else had a recital then), and all 19 of her scheduled students were there. She has students who won’t appear in a recital. Thats OK as far as just taking lessons at the Conservatory goes, but you can’t earn any of the awards if you don’t play in a recital. They have a whole series of awards to earn based on recitals, memorization, technique proficiency, time you have played, etc. It takes several years to earn them all.

Ruth stopped in awhile ago for a bit of supper and then went to church for the last practice of the play she is directing tomorrow at the final Women’s Association’s meeting of the year. They have had several long rehersals in the last couple of weeks.

Thanks a lot for the Father’s Day and Anniversary gifts. The kids say “Thank You” for their gifts also. Ruth and I used some of your gift to eat out at a nice restaurant last Friday on the 31st. It’s one of the nicest restaurants in the area, but we had eaten there only about once each in the past few years. I bought Ruth a new everyday tablecloth for our anniversary.

Alan is at scouts this evening getting ready for their bike hike to Kankakee next weekend. Alan’s bike needs some repair work before then. Alan is still enthusiastic about scouts, but he hasn’t done much on merit badges. Maybe he will when school is out. The kids all go to school through Thurs and then get their grades on Fri. When school is out they should be able to get the painting finished around here.

Alec has a cold and runny nose (he’s been exposed to chickenpox, but we don’t think he has it), but is playing all the time with the neighborhood children. There are lots of children about Alec’s age in the neighborhood. The girls and Alan don’t have any more private music lessons until possibly later in July.

Lesle has driven us crazy with her trying to get all her art done in the last 2 or 3 wks so she will get a decent grade. She done most of it in the last week and tomorrow is the deadline. The kids are all going to the funny movie “Whats Up Doc” tomorrow night. Ruth and I went last Friday after we ate out. Lisa won an award last Tues night at the band awards banquet as “Best Instrumentalist” in the Concert Band. Thats the 2nd band, Freshman and Sophomores, but they are almost as good as the Symphonic Band. Lesle lettered in Band. Andy’s team won their 1st game last Tues night but lost by one run on Sat. Alan’s team won their 1st game Sat. Alan pitched the 1st 4 innings. Hope everyone is fine in Hutchinson.

**6-9-74 – Sun –** Dear Mother, Just a special note to a wonderful Mother on her 81st birthday. I’m so thankful now that I was raised in a good home, with such wonderful parents. I don’t have a regular birthday card this evening, but maybe this written note will convey love to you from all of us. We’ve had storms and lots of rain here, and I heard about the tornado at Emporia, Kans. It’s windy and stormy looking in the West this evening. Happy Birthday, With all our love, Carroll and family.

**6-11-74 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I just called Mother to wish her Happy Birthday and she said you made it over to the Church today for her party as part of the Philathea Party – keep it up. That was nice that Jana played.

Its cool and clearer here this evening (its been about 15-20 degrees cooler than the normal temperature for this time of year) after some showers in the area again today. We’ve had rains every day for almost a week and last Thurs night it rained 4 inches in 2-3 hrs, setting records and causing flash flooding. I had to drive out in the middle of it to get gasoline (since I had to drive the car pool on Friday) and I almost didn’t make it back home just the few blocks from the downtown plaza because of high water. The street about a block south of here became a river, the first time its been like that in years.

Alan’s baseball games have all been rained out since the first one a week ago last Sat, but they hope to play Thurs. Andy got games in on Sat (lost) and Sun (won) because their field dries off better than where Alan plays. The swimming pool opens this Sat but it may be too cool to have much of a crowd. Alan in the Jr High Band and the girls in the Senior High Band have to march Sat in a parade at Monee (a small town just south of us that is in our school district) celebrating the town’s 100th anniversary.

Wed – 6-12: Today has been beautiful and nice. About 70 degrees and no rain with lots of sunshine. This makes up for a lot of our rainy weather. I guess there is a chance for showers over the weekend, but they won’t be as bad as last weekend. Tonight I have Session meeting. I’ll take the car as soon as Ruth gets home from teaching. Ruth teaches pretty much through June and July, if the students are in town. As with any instrument its best if you keep playing right on through summer. Tomorrow night is the choir picnic for our church. Alan also has a game. Sat night is the choir picnic for Ruth’s choir.

Thurs – 6-13: The choir picnic was nice this evening. The weather. We didn’t make it to Alan’s game which they won 7-6. Lisa went to the choir picnic also as you’ll remember that she sang in the choir most of the year. The kids start summer school next week. The girls don’t have to take summer band like they did last year so they are enrolling in typing. One of the most useful and valuable classes I ever took ☺ Andy is taking orchestra and starting on the French Horn. Alan is taking band and basketball. Hope everyone is doing fine this week.

**6-18-74 – Tues –** Thanks for the extra gift, it will come in handy. In these days of inflation the money seems to go out faster than it comes in. I had a nice Father’s Day, receiving several nice shirts, socks, etc, from each member of my family. I’m lucky to have such a nice family.

We got back from Alan’s baseball game awhile ago; his team lost. They were tired from 5 games in 6 days because of the makeup games from all the rainouts. Andy’s team won their game last night. They play tomorrow night, Alan on Friday and both of them on Sat. All the games will be made up by then.

Andy’s s.s. class goes on a picnic with their teacher. She has taught several years in a row and is taking a leave of absence, so we will have to find a new 4th grade teacher. We’re having Vacation Bible School on Mon, Wed and Friday of this week and next. Alec was quite excited about it yesterday. Ruth is helping some with music.

I got all 4 of the older children up at 6:45 this AM so that they could make the bus out to Summer school. Only Alan had to get up that early last school year. The girls slept late then since they were on a split shift and went to school in the afternoon. We’ve had cooler (warm today) and drier weather the last few days. But as I hear the TV news in the other room thunderstorms, with tornado possibilities, are heading this way and will reach here later tonight.

Ruth is preaching this Sunday at the 9:00 AM service. There are 5 Sundays this summer when are minister is gone, so instead of hiring pulpit supply, they are using lay persons to preach for the 10 services (we always have 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM services in the summer). Ruth and I sing, accompanied by our children, at both our church sometime and at the Sauk Village Church on July 28th.

Last Thurs night was our churchs choir picnic at the choir directors house. Sat night was the Sauk Village Choir’s picnic. Ruth and I went to that instead of to the annual steak fry at our church. We stayed till after 11:00 singing around the piano – Ruth was playing. Sun AM I had the 5-6 graders (7 were there, I believe) while Ruth had the 3 or 4 third and fourth graders who were there. As you may recall we keep our s.s. going in the summer using substitute teachers while the regular teachers take the summer off. Sun afternoon Andy had a make-up game after which we drove to a nearby town where Alan had gone with the Jr. High band to a big band festival with a big marching show in the evening. Hope you’re all OK.

**6-28-74 – Thurs PM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I can’t remember who I sent the last regular letter to, but I think it was to Mother first. Hope you both had nice birthdays. We thought about you on both days. Your card probably didn’t reach you until the day after your birthday.

It’s gradually warmed up here after being rainy and cold last weekend, and today finally got into the 80’s. The boys games were rained out last Sat, but they played them on Sunday when it was very windy and cool, in the 50’s. Alan played a game last Friday night in the mud. The boys both had their regular games at the same time yesterday evening; they both won. Alan pitched in his game and did fairly well. I went to Alan’s game and Ruth to Andy’s.

Tonight Lesle is practicing with the color guard for the high school band. At the same time they have an adult summer band something like the Hutchinson Municipal Band (which, I assume, is playing this summer). Ruth went to play drums in it, at least for this one time, as they needed drum players. They should be getting home any minute.

Last Sunday at the early service (9:00 AM) Ruth and I were in charge. Ruth gave the sermon and everything went OK. Someone else had the 11:00 sermon. Our minister is supposed to be back this Sunday, and will then be gone four more Sundays later in the summer, on which Sundays other laymen will be in charge of the service. This Sunday is when Ruth and I sing a duet accompanied by our 3 older children on the oboes and bassoon. I expect we’ll practice later this evening as we really need it. We play the same thing at the Sauk Village Church later in July.

I just took a break to go get Alec. He was playing with some other children down at the end of the block and I thought it was time he was getting home as it is dark (9:00 PM). There are a lot of 3 and 4 year olds in this block which means Alec has a lot of friends to play with. It also means a lot of birthday parties for Alec to attend and a lot of presents to buy.

Didn’t do much last week except for baseball games. I’m off work next week on the 4th and 5th, but I don’t know if we’ll do anything special. We need to do a lot of work around the house. Ruth or I, or both of us, have been asked to sing at Larry Laidig’s wedding in La Cross, Kans (south of Hays) on August 17th, with rehersal on Friday night the 16th. We’ll be through Hutchinson and Oberlin sometime around then but won’t be able to stay as long as last Spring. Hope everyone is OK.

**7-10-74 –** Hope everything is going OK in Hutchinson and it hasn’t been too hot. We’ve had 3-4 consecutive days with the temperature getting into the 90’s, including a high of 98 yesterday, I believe. A sudden storm came up Mon evening and rained out both boys baseball games. It rained just a little bit this morning and is supposed to be cooler today and tomorrow. Monday night I wasn’t at the games (Ruth had gone to Andy’s and got all wet) as I was getting ready to go to a meeting of the Chicago Heights Symphony Board of Directors. We know several people on the board and I was asked to serve a 3 yr term. Its a local (our church is in Chicago Heights) volunteer symphony. They haven’t had very good attendance in recent years and are trying to build things back up.

7-11-74 – Tues night our car was fixed so we all went to the movie “The Three Muskateers”; it was one that Ruth especially wanted to see, and naturally the children were “willing” to go along. Yesterday Ruth took the car through the diagnostic lane and found out everything that needs to be done to get it back into good working shape. I’ll go in next Wed for the first round of work. Cars are very expensive to operate nowadays because of the higher cost of gasoline.

Last night Alan had a ball game which they lost, Lisa had a good horseback riding lesson, and I had Session meeting at one of the elder’s houses. I had to miss all but about 15 minutes of Alan’s game. Both boys have games tomorrow night and Sat. Alan is excited about leaving for boy scout camp Sunday AM; he’ll be back the following Sat unless he comes back early for a game that Sat. I don’t have to drive him to the camp which is near Rockford Ill NW of Chicago.

I’ll let you folks know our August vacation schedule after I hear for sure if we got that cabin in Colorado. We still haven’t heard what we’re going to sing at Larry Laidigs (nephew) wedding in La Crosse on Aug 17th, if we’re going to sing.

I think I last wrote 2 wks ago and I’ve forgotten everything that has happened. We’ve had lots of ball games, as you know. Alec is having a great time this summer because there are so many children his age living in our block. Our music at church a week ago Sunday went OK and we had lots of complements (the kids always say they “won’t do it again”). Ruth is still teaching a lot on Tuesdays. Alec wasn’t sure about the fireworks the evening of the 4th (he held his ears the whole time). We did get some cleaning done around the house over the 4th vacation. That’s good Jim has a job. Hope M.J. and Bill made it back in time for their wedding.

**7-18-74 – Thurs –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Well, another week has slipped by and I better get this off or I’ll go 2 wks again like I did last time. It seems like we’re as busy in the summer anymore as in the winter. Of course there are different things to do in the summer. Its good you have enough different things to do to keep busy. And of course in the summer its easier to get outside because of the better weather.

Although we had a lot of rain several weeks ago, its been pretty dry since and I believe I saw where its getting to be a drought in the southwest and into the Midwest. We had our hottest weekend in a long time last Sat and Sunday. Andy was so hot at the start of their game in the afternoon that he got to feeling sick and dizzy and had to lie down in the shade. He got to feeling better and played the last ½ inning. Andy’s team has a chance at the championship of the last ½ of the season (10 games – they have 3 left to play). Alan’s team hasn’t done as well this ½, winning 2 and losing 4 so far. Alan missed their game on Tues night because of scout camp. After the games on Sat we went to a church family picnic for awhile. They had started earlier but we couldn’t be there for the first part because of Andy’s game.

Alan left for scout camp on Sunday. Andy, Alec, Ruth and I went to movie Sunday afternoon while the girls went swimming. We had a brief rain that afternoon which helped to cool things off. Alec is doing fine this summer except that he thinks he should get something to eat everytime the ice cream truck goes by. He’s learning the hard way that he doesn’t get money everytime.

I may not have mentioned that Mr. Laidig had cataract surgery in Denver the other day. Ruth called him afterwards and I guess he got along OK. We got our reservations at the YMCA ranch near Estes Park, Colorado for the nights of August 20-23. School starts here on August 27th. I’ll let you know our detailed trip plans later. M.J. wrote that some of the cousins may be in Hutchinson on the 18th. Harolds were sure lucky to escape the tornado with out being injured. M.J., Bill and Janas trips sounded nice.

Our company is having an open-house this Sunday afternoon. They haven’t had an open house for many years and are trying to improve community relations. Andy goes on a cub outing this Sat afternoon and all night. Hope it hasn’t been too hot in Hutch.

**7-24-74 – Wed –** We just got back from Andy’s summer band concert. They have classes the rest of this week and the first two days of next week. Andy’s orchestra concert is tomorrow night. He will miss a baseball game for that, but will make their last regularly scheduled game on Sat. Andy’s team won their first 8 games out of 10 for this half of the season, and have already clinched (the next team has lost 3 or more games) the 2nd half championship. They play the 1st half winner next Sun afternoon for the division championship. If they win that game they will play the winner of the other division in a little best 2 of 3 games “world series” next week. Alan’s Monday night game was rained out so their final 3 games are Thurs Fri and Sat. They have won 3 and lost 4 during the second half of 10 games. Win or lose both boys have had a lot of fun this summer and have improved individually which is the most important thing. Tues night was Alan’s Jr. High Band and Orchestra Concert.

Fri – As you see I didn’t get this letter finished. Last night was Andy’s summer orchestra concert. We went there after going to the first part of Alans game. Andy missed a game but didn’t mind at all. Andy loves his music and, as you may remember, is more enthusiastic about a lot of things than his older brother and sisters. We call Andy our “ham”. Andy’s team is having a family picnic Sunday evening.

Next Sunday morning is our time to have the special music at the Sauk Village Church where Ruth has the choir. We’re doing that same music we did at our church; Ruth and I sing a duet accompanied by Lesle, Lisa and Alan. We went over it last night and it sounded pretty good. Ruth is already looking at music for next year that would include Andy. We, of course, won’t tell the kids about that? Three weeks from tonight is the wedding rehersal in La Crosse, Kansas. As of now our vacation schedule looks like this:

I have 15 days of vacation and have used 6 of them, 5 during the spring trip to Hutchinson and 1 when the Laidigs came here. Leave here early Aug 13th stay all night in Neb and on to Oberlin on Wed. Leave Oberlin in time (on Fri) to go to the wedding rehersal (either drive back to Oberlin late that night or stay around La Crosse some where. The wedding is at 4:00 Sat afternoon. Drive to Hutch Sat evening after the wedding. In Hutch on Sun to see the cousins. Leave Hutch Mon afternoon and stay that night in Oberlin. Drive to the Colorado cabin on Tues. Leave Colorado Sat AM and get back home Sun night the 25th. School starts here Tues August 27th. Have heard about your very hot weather.

**8-3-74 – Sat AM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, It seems strange, but this is the first Sat (except for a rainy Sat or two) in 2 months that we haven’t had baseball games. The last game of the year was last night when the all-star team Alan was on lost 4-3 to the team (6 teams in the league) that won the league. I think Alan’s team finished about 3rd (12 wins 8 losses) overall for the year. Andy’s team lost their play-off game last Sun afternoon so they didn’t make it into the “little world series” against the team that won the other division (they have 6 teams in each division). Both boys had a lot of fun and I’m sure they will both play next year. If Alan has a chance to make some kind of a sports team in high school it will probably be baseball. Andy’s team had a picnic last Sunday evening which was very nice and a lot of fun. The kids played ball against the adults.

This morning is sunny and cool, very nice. I’ve been reading about the drought all over the mid-west. I’m sure it’s a big thing with the farmers Bill works with. Wasn’t it just last year that the crops were about the best ever? We had above average rainfall earlier in the year and Illinois farmers had trouble getting the corn in (some planted a 2nd and 3rd time) because of heavy rains that washed the fields out. But since that time we’ve hardly had any rain.

Ruth and I just went over the music for the wedding 2 weeks from today in Dad writes La Crosse and Mom crosses it out and writes: Rush Center, above it. Dad continues: Kansas (south of Hays) La Crosse is about half way between Oberlin and Hutchinson and we’ll drive on to Hutchinson Sat evening after the wedding. Larry Laidig (he’s about 21 or 22) is the one being married. He is the only child of Eldon Laidig, Ruth’s brother who is just a few months younger than I am. He is a principal in the Denver area. Larry and his fiancé have been attending Fort Hays State College and I think they have at least one more year. They will live in a trailer at the college, I think. The wedding rehersal is the night before and we’ll stay in a motel somewhere near there. Ruth is working right this minute on the transposing of the wedding music. I may have told you that they are asking for 5 separate songs at the wedding, which has meant many hours of work transposing, etc for Ruth. We’ll each sing a song alone and will sing the other 3 as duets. We’ll probably have to have a separate practice with the organist on Sat before the wedding.

Hope some of the cousins can make it to Hutchinson on Sunday Aug 18th. Ruth has met Lucille in Tulsa, but I don’t believe she ever met Harold and Marianne. Our music at Sauk Village Church went OK last Sunday. Hope the hospitals air conditioning has been working OK.

**8-9-74 – Friday –** I had planned to write this last night but I listened to Nixon’s resignation, so I didn’t get anything else done. Most people seem to agree that Nixon did the right thing, as the impeachment proceedings would have taken several more months and Nixon wouldn’t have had time to do much else. And also maybe because he broke the law and tried to cover it up.

This will be my last letter before we leave next Tues morning. I guess we’ll be ready, but there are so many things one has to do at the last minute. For example, the dog has to be taken in on the last day, etc. Our car has been in the shop 3 days already and has to go in Mon AM to get it ready for the trip. (We’re spending over $400 on it, but it should last 2-3 more years; it was 3 yrs old in June.) Heard that there had been some rain in the mid-west although not enough. I’m sure we’ll drive through some of the worst drought areas in Nebraska and Kansas.

The wedding rehersal is one week from tonight so I need to practice some more since I don’t know the songs real well. As I probably told you Ruth and I sing 3 songs together and 1 each alone. Five songs for one wedding is quite a bit of music. We’ll sing them for you when we’re in Hutchinson. The girls want new dresses for the wedding but I don’t know whether they will get them or not.

It was beautiful and clear when I went into Chicago last Monday to attend a convention. I rode in on the train and rode back in a car with a couple of men from here. On Tues Ruth went in and back with me on the train. The older kids all helped watch Alec and we got home about 6:15. Ruth shopped at a music store in the morning, we ate lunch together, and she shopped at a book store in the afternoon while I attended another session.

Wed night I went to have my picture taken with the other 3 new Chicago Heights (suburb our church is in) Symphony board members for the newspaper.

Last night Alan passed his safety merit badge for scouts. The man (counseler) who passed it for him rides in our car pool. That gives him enough for star rank. There is one more rank (life) before eagle. Tonight Alan leaves on a weekend bike hike with his troop. They are cycling all the way down to somewhere near Kankakee, about 25 miles. They will stay somewhere tonight along the way and cycle on in tomorrow, coming back Sunday evening, I guess. They are trying to carry everything they need on their bikes. Last Sat Alan worked all day at the recycling (newspapers, cans, bottles) place. Their troop made $65.00.

Hope everyone is doing fine and you’ve finally had some rain. See you a week from Sat after supper (the wedding is at 4:00).



Dad, Alec and Lisa walking on the railroad tracks in Oberlin. Maybe in 1974.

**8-27-74 – Tues –** Thanks to everyone in Hutchinson for everything and a special thank you to M.J. and Bill for arranging the visits with our cousins. I’m sure that Harold and Lucille are the cousins that M.J. and I will most likely try to keep in contact with over the years.

Today we’re all into the fall schedules. School started today for all the kids. A year from now we’ll have a child in kindergarten (Alec) and a senior in high school. Since Lesle is a junior she goes to school just in the morning with the seniors (many of them have jobs in the afternoon). Lisa goes just in the afternoon (with the freshmen) and doesn’t get home until almost 6:00 PM (usually after I get home). Alan has to get up early along with Lesle in order to catch his bus to the Jr. High.

Lesle is taking: 2nd year of Spanish, American History, Band and Orchestra and Gym, Environmental Science, Science Fiction and media later

Lisa taking: Band and Orchestra (?) and Gym, French I, Biology, Writers workshop, Algebra II

Alan is taking: Band and Orchestra and Gym, Algebra, English, Art, Social Studies, Science

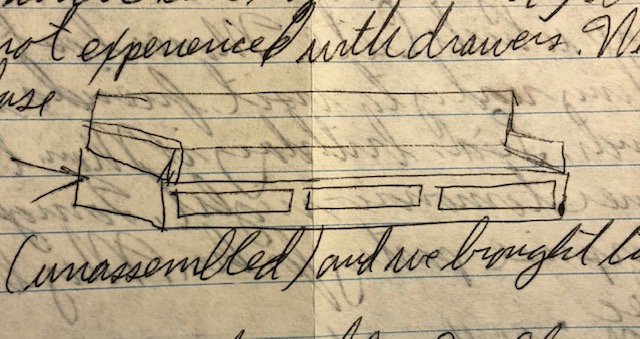
Andy is in the 5th grade.

Ruth is at her 1st choir rehersal tonight. She wrote cards to each prospective member and mailed them from Colorado; the cards probably didn’t get here until yesterday so I hope some of them turned out tonight. Ruth will start her piano students next week. Ruth lined up a couple of Sunday School teachers today and still has 2 or 3 more to get. Our fall Sunday School program starts a week from Sunday.

Had a quick visit with Aunt Clara as we left Hutchinson a week ago yesterday. Made it to Oberlin about 6:30 in time for supper there. It was hot driving to Colorado on Tues. Stopped to visit Mary Jane Laidig (mother of the nephew who got married) in a Denver suburb. Got to the camp (had to cross Berthoud Pass) about 7:30-8:00. Roasted hot dogs in the fireplace that night. Everyone had a great time at the ranch (YMCA camp). Plenty of time for activities as well as relaxation. Everyone rode horses, including Alec. The boys hiked up to where there is still snow on a mountain. Had a hard days drive on Sat to Lincoln going out on the high drive in Rocky Mountain National Park and ate lunch at Estes Park. Got in Lincoln after midnight. Over 600 miles. 500 miles and more on home Sunday. We all felt it was one of our best vacations. Hope M.J. and Bills Colorado trip went fine also.

**9-3-74 – Tues –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We’ve had cool weather here also. On Friday night we all went to the circus. It was the Cole Brothers Clyde Beatty Circus which is still touring with a tent after all these years. They set up for afternoon and evening performances in our Central Park. It was a good show and I was surprised that they carried 8 elephants, as well as lions, tigers and some horses. The whole family went and, of course, Alec was quite excited although he was tired before the show was over at about 10:15 PM. They even had a “side-show” set up which the older kids went to. By the time the circus was over it was beginning to get cooler. Sat was warm, but by Sunday afternoon it was really getting cold.

Sat 9-7-74 – Last Sat the boys and I started to build the couch base for the old couch (with the legs removed). Its a big job for us as we’re not experienced with drawers. We’re putting 3 drawers in the base.



The familiar couch. Still in use today. I always thought Grandpa built it, but I guess he only made the drawers.

Mr. Laidig made the drawers (unassembled) and we brought them back from Oberlin.

Sun afternoon was cooler. We stopped by a Jr. Chamber of Commerce picnic after church. Mon on Labor Day we all slept late and just relaxed with the whole family at home most of the day. A lot of the stores were open so Ruth took Alan out to buy some new school clothes. Ruth started teaching again this week. She has more students than last year; this is partly because a couple of their regular teachers have quit.

Wed night I had a budget committee meeting at church. Our church budget (about 850 active members) is now about $125,000. We’re hoping to get an assistant minister sometime in 1975. Our mortgage should be paid off next year also and the church building will be 10 yrs old next year. It was less than a year old when we came. Thurs night I went to our first regular choir practice. Ruth’s choir sings this Sunday so she didn’t practice there but worked on Sunday School things. Our regular fall Sunday School program starts tomorrow. We have several new teachers in addition to several of the regulars who are returning. Ruth still has to get a 2nd grade teacher.

Last night the girls went to the first high school football game which Crete-Monee lost. This AM (Sat) we’re getting ready to visit friends in another suburb for lunch. Lisa’s birthday is Mon but we’re having her dinner tomorrow night. Tonight her friends are having a surprise party for her. My birthday is next and then Alec. We all thought our vacation this summer was one of the best ever. We all like the mountains and want to go back. Glad we got to see you folks and good to see you’re staying active.

**9-10-74 – Tues –** We’ve had warm weather again which has been nice after that cold spell, but the air has been stagnent and lots of pollution. They now report ozone levels in the air which I can almost tell – you can’t breathe as well. This is the time of year for allergies and hay fever and, of course, Ruth is bothered more. She went in for a shot today that helps to keep her desensitized. My nose was running some today but I think I have a touch of a cold. It is still very dry here and the yards are all dry except where people have watered. If we don’t get rain I won’t have to mow the grass any more. The field behind us is so dry that it would really make a blaze if it caught fire. It has burned in other years (it burns up to the edge of our grass, although the grass is so dry we might have to wet the yard), but not recently.

Ruth is at her choir rehersal tonight. She only had 6 last Sunday for the first time. She still expects a few more, but can’t do much if they only have 6 or so on a regular basis. They have usually been able to have more than that. This is her 4th year with this choir. I had Chicago Heights (next suburb where our church is located) Symphony Board meeting last night. Tomorrow night is Session meeting for me, and Thurs night is regular choir practice. This coming Sat night the church Mariners Group (the Mariners are a national Presbyterian group for couples) is having a pot luck supper followed by a talk on drug and alcohol abuse; we are planning to go. I gave a similar talk once to our senior highs.

The girls are having extra band marching practice at night now getting ready to march at the remaining football games. They lost their first game last Friday night. The girls went; it was the first time the girls had gone to a game when they didn’t have to go because of playing in the band. I was pleased they were showing some school spirit.

Ruth now has 20 piano students each week which is about all she can handle. She thinks she can have them all at one recital if each student plays only one number. Our fall Sunday School (new teachers starting for the first time) schedule got off to a pretty good start last Sunday AM considering that several teachers couldn’t be there; I had to fill in for the 2nd grade (the youngest group I ever taught) since Ruth had not hired their teacher as yet; she has someone now. Our 2nd grade class is all girls (6 or 7 were there Sunday). They are very sweet and no trouble at all for a teacher. Alec was promoted to the kindergarten group (4 & 5 yr olds). It doesn’t seem possible that Alec will start to kindergarten next year.

Our visit with the Duvalls last Sat was nice. We ate outside as it was still warm. We got back in time for Lisa to be at a party for her birthday. We had her birthday dinner Sunday night following an ice cream social at the church. Hope you’re all keeping busy – its good for all of us.

**9-19-74 – Thurs –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Its been warmer here the last few days and still feels like summer, but we know that fall is just around the corner. Some of the trees are already beginning to turn color. I expect that our trees turn a little bit sooner than yours do. Thanks to Mother for the birthday present. I told Ruth I don’t need many clothes right now, but I’ll be pleased with whatever I receive.

Alan and his good friend who is also in boy scouts have gone to their assistant scoutmasters house for the 3rd Thurs evening in a row. The man likes to do leather work and promised the boys he would help them on something that would apply on the leather craft merit badge. Alan and Lisa made some leather things at the camp in Colorado.

Lesle has been practicing driving some more and is talking now about taking the driving test. She only has to take the driving part of the test as she took the written exam when she had the course at school. Lesle and Lisa have band practice 3 nights (Mon, Wed and Thurs) a week now during the football season, which makes a real transportation burden.

Alec started to his “school” yesterday morning over at the Conservatory where Ruth teaches. Its a class (they have 3 different groups) called Tune Town for pre schoolers. They do lots of different things, with music as the theme. Alec got along fine the first time. Ruth got all the Sunday School staff lined up, but now we have to get a new Sunday School treasurer as our former one is moving to Pittsburgh; he’s been faithful at the job for many years.

Last Tues night I went to Ruth’s choir practice as she wants me to sing with her choir a week from Sunday. She doesn’t have choir this Sunday (they only have a choir 3 Sundays a month to save money), so she will be at our worship service when the Christian Education Staff is dedicated. Ruth still says she is resigning as superintendent sometime after the first of the year. Andy has a youth choir picnic this Saturday. He chose going to that over going on a cub scout overnight for Sat night; they are coming back on Sun. I didn’t think I could go because of the recognition of the staff at church. Andy likes to sing and likes cubs also so sometimes he has to choose one or the other.

Sat: Ruth called her folks the other night and Mr. is getting along fine from his cataract operation. It was bothering him quite a bit when we were there in August; he was keeping an eye patch on it, etc. He has to have a cataract operation on his other eye. They believe he’ll be able to drive again. As I’ve told before, the burns on his arm left so much scar tissue (he probably should have had skin grafting but they didn’t want to move him) that he doesn’t have full use of his right arm which depresses him. Keep up your good spirit and hello to all.

**9-26-74 – Thurs –** We’ve had beautiful early fall weather here the last few days. It got up to 80 or so today and was just like summer. I have the front door open right now. We had some frost several days ago and I guess the farmers suffered even more crop damage, following the early heavy rains and the drought during the summer. We haven’t had any more rain here.

Alec was pleased to get the birthday card and gift today. Ruth decided at the last minute to have a little party for him in the morning (he’s got a runny nose) and she is out now buying some things for it. Ruth got another student so she now has 29 – I don’t see how she stands it; its not like a class with the same lesson since each piano student has separate lessons, etc. I don’t think she can have them all at one recital since the hall over at the Conservatory won’t hold that many students, their parents and relatives.

I may have told you that Andy is the only one still taking private piano lessons. We were pleased that Lesle, Lisa and Alan took piano lessons as long as they did. The girls are supposed to start their oboe lessons next Mon night. Alec went to his “Tune-Town” yesterday morning at the conservatory; he likes it real well. Alec is doing better and doesn’t cry as much or have as many tantrums as he was having. I’m trying to be a little “tougher” with him and not spoil him so much.

The girls are at band marching practice again this evening. I probably said that they go Mon, Wed and Thurs nights for marching practice during the football season. The game they have been practicing for is tomorrow night so I expect we’ll all go out and see how well they do. It should still be warm tomorrow night.

Some of the scouts in Alan’s patrol were supposed to come over this evening to plan for there outing a week from this weekend, but his good friend was the only one who showed up. This Sat our Session (church ruling group) is having a retreat from 9-4 at a nearby Catholic school which has a retreat center. The retreat is for long-range planning and thinking, since all current activities are running fine.

I didn’t go to our choir practice tonight since I’m going to help Ruth’s choir this Sunday. She only has 2 men and if my voice is OK I can give them a good boost. She has so few but they are enthusiastic and want to keep a choir going and Ruth enjoys the experience, so I don’t feel guilty about going out there occasionally to help them out. I went with her on Tues to her practice. Its nice to go out alone with my wife once a week or so anyway. My dinner (birthday) on Sun evening was nice. I got 3 new shirts, new trousers and a new winter dressy sport shirt. We can say your gift was applied on these thanks. Hope you’re all doing OK and keeping active.

**10-3-74 – Thurs evening –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, As usual, I had hoped to get this written earlier in the week, but just didn’t get to it. It seems like each year we get a little busier than the year before. That will continue as long as the children are all at home. I assume, of course, that someday the children will leave home, either to go away to college, or to work somewhere. We have a good junior college nearby, so its possible that one or more of the children will go there before going somewhere. We have a new Governors State University about a mile from here which might offer something they would be interested in. When I ask Lesle what subjects she likes best she says “Art and foreign language (she’s only had Spanish so far)”. Lisa says she likes horses and creative writing. Alan really doesn’t know what he likes best and, of course, Andy likes music and writing.

I just brought Andy back from an orchestra special rehersal; I don’t know when his next concert is. Alec is sitting beside me marking up a new Christmas catalog. He, of course, marks lots of things and thinks he’ll get it all. I really don’t think he needs much more after seeing everything he got for his birthday. Alec still likes his Tune-Town Class on Wed AM’s.

Alan is getting ready for his boy scout weekend outing. It should be a little warmer after several nights when it got below freezing. (2 or 3 mornings it set cold records for this time of the year.) Lesle helped put in some of the storm windows. We don’t put them all in as yet since we will still have some warm days. The girls have been a little more helpful around the house recently and have helped to paint some in the carport (where they didn’t have to scrape any). As patrol leader Alan had to plan and buy the food for their 5-6 meals (they leave tomorrow night and come back sometime Sunday). Last night I helped Alan buy felt so he could make a new patrol flag (rattlesnake patrol).

Andy has a cub pack meeting tomorrow night and the girls are marching at another home football game. I don’t know which place I’ll go. I went with Alan and Alec to their football game last Fri night. Sat afternoon Ruth and I have a wedding to attend. The young woman used to be our best babysitter before the girls were old enough to stay alone. We’re invited to the dinner after the wedding.

Glad to hear that Kansas State (for the 1st time in many years) had won their 1st 3 football games, and KU had won some of theirs also. Glad to hear that you had gotten out for Jana’s birthday, etc. Keep it up. Ruth still hasn’t had a letter from her folks, although she assumes everything is OK since she talked to them over the phone a couple of weeks ago. Hope everyone is busy and doing fine.

**10-8-74 – Tues PM –** Didn’t get a letter from you today, but expect we might tomorrow. Ruth hadn’t heard from her folks in a long time so she called last night. They are fine. Mr. L’s one eye (he had a cataract removed) healed fine and they have scheduled the surgery for the other eye later this month. They went to Texas to a highway meeting. I don’t know when they will get up here again.

Ruth just got home from teaching. This is her normal choir practice night at Sauk Village but she called the rehersal off since they won’t be singing this Sunday. I went and helped them again last Sunday as it was communion Sunday and they were singing a fairly heavy number; I believe there were 9 singers and Ruth (she usually sings also).

Tomorrow night is Session meeting. Lisa is still taking riding lessons on Wed evenings although it conflicts sometimes with her band marching rehersals. This Sat the girls go to Champaign Ill (where the main campus of the University of Illinois is located – near Decatur where we used to live) with the band for a marching contest. They haven’t practiced enough to get a top rating. Ruth and I won’t be able to see their marching at homecoming a week from Friday night since that is the night of the first Chicago Heights Symphony concert preceeded by a benefit dinner.

This Sat Alan goes to a Jr. High marching contest at another town. Sat night is our churchs Mariners (couples) group progressive dinner. Mariners, the national Presbyterian organization for couples, is strong in Kansas and Illinois. Some of the national officers are often from Kansas, and once I saw some officers listed who were from Hutchinson. Ruth and I met with another couple last Sunday afternoon to serve as the nominating committee for Mariners officers for 1975. The nominating committee excluded themselves from consideration as officers; Alan went to his Jr. High Church Fellowship while we met.

I see where KU had a big football win last Sat while K-State lost their 1st game after winning their 1st 3; so both schools have 3 and 1 records which is pretty good. The Chicago Bears professional football team is also doing better this year than last.

Two weeks from yesterday, today and tomorrow I’ll be attending a meeting in Madison, Wisconsin. Two men and I will drive up Mon AM and come back on Wed afternoon. If I have a chance I’ll call up Charles and Cooley. This Thurs and Fri I’m going to a meeting in Chicago with another man.

Las Sat afternoon Ruth and I attended the wedding of our former baby sitter. The reception was a dinner at 6:30 at the nearby small town where the man is from. Last Fri night Ruth, Andy, Alec and I went to Andy Cub Pack Meeting. Ruth left early to go see the girls band march at the football game. Hope everyone in Hutchinson is doing fine.

**10-19-74 – Sat AM –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’m sitting on the couch with Alec and he is showing me some of his books. He was quite excited about his fire engine book. We stopped at the Plaza (Park Forest’s shopping center) the other day during Fire Prevention Week and saw some of the city’s fire engines on display. They had the big extended ladder way up in the sky so Alec was quite excited.

Hope everything is going fine for you and everyone else in Hutchinson. I know you’re busy with everything you have to do. Sounds like M.J. is busy with all her substitute teaching; those extra dollars come in handy in these days of inflation.

Today is a little lighter schedule than some Saturdays. I guess it was last Sat that KU just barely beat K-State in football at Manhatten; I expect M.J. and Bill were both there. The other night there was a TV program about all the injuries young boys can get playing high school football. I was glad that our boys watched it as we have essentially told them we won’t let them play football; they really aren’t big enough to play football anyway. Alan has played some sandlot football but I don’t know how hard they tackle each other. Alan just went out with a friend to practice basketball. He says he is going out for basketball (he didn’t make the team last year). We’d just as soon he wouldn’t make it because of the time involved after school. Andy plays basketball at school also.

Ruth is having her first piano recitals a week from tomorrow afternoon. She has so many students that she is having two sections at 2:30 and 4:00. Our church every-member canvas is that afternoon so I may not get in for all her recitals. This is the week I’m going up to Madison, Wis to a meeting. I’m driving up with a couple of men Mon AM. The meeting starts at 1:30 Mon and is over about noon on Wed so I’ll only be gone 2 nights. I’ll try to call Charles and Cooly and say “hello” for everyone in Hutchinson.

Hope you’ve all stayed free of colds, flu, etc. We’ve had touchs of sore throats, etc. and Alan missed school Tues and Wed because of a fever; he didn’t have any fever Wed but we kept him home. The kids were all out of school last Mon because of Columbus Day (they have that day off here, but I don’t know whether they do in Kansas).

Last night was the opening dinner (benefit) and “Pops” Concert of the Chicago Heights Symphony. Ruth and I were late to the dinner because we had to deliver a load of kids to the football game. It was homecoming and Alan’s Jr. High Band marched before the game and Lesle and Lisa’s High School band at halftime. Alec stayed home with Andy. The high school band got a 2 rating (1 is the best) at the marching contest a week ago today; that was better than they did last year. Their practices are over now for marching. Alan had a bowling party last Sunday afternoon. Hope you’re all OK.

**No Date – Mon PM –** Glad to have your recent letter. A man in our car pool said he heard over the news last week that a big hole, about the size of a football field, had appeared in the ground at Hutchinson. I don’t know whether he was confused, just kidding me or what, but if it did happen I would like to see a picture of it. A sinkhole did indeed appear in Hutchinson on October 21, 1974. You can see pictures online. “The Cargill sink formed as a result of solution mining of salt near Hutchinson, Kansas. The sudden collapse of bedrock and near-surface, water-saturated sands into the underground brine-filled cavity created the sinkhole and left the Missouri-Pacific railroad tracks suspended 6 meters in the air. The volume of the crater was estimated at 70,000 cubic meters.”

Both KU and K State got beaten pretty badly last Sat in football, as you’ve probably heard, so it doesn’t look like either school will get to go to a bowl game this year. Crete-Monee High School has won only one football game this year (they have lost 7), with one game to go this Friday night. They were supposed to do a lot better so I don’t know what happened unless they had a lot of injuries.

Ruth is out with Lisa to buy new shoes. Lisa’s French Class (if they can get enough students who can afford it) will go on a one week tour of Paris, France during Easter vacation at a cost of $587 per person. Friday night is the last football game for the high school but I don’t think the band is playing so I don’t know whether Ruth and I will be going since that is Andy’s Cub Pack meeting. Andy’s den meeting is each Sat AM (except for the Sat after the pack meeting) at 8:00. Afterwards he goes to his choir practice at church. Their youth choir is larger this year (about 15-17) and sings at the early (9:00) worship service we are now having once a month. Mr. Laidigs 2nd cataract operation is today in Denver. Ruth’s two recitals were yesterday afternoon as was our churchs every member calling.

A week ago tonight at this time (9:00 PM) the evening session of the meeting I was attending was just finishing. I then went to my room to watch the last of the Green Bay Packers – Chicago Bears football game which Chicago just barely won. I drove up Mon morning with two men from work; one took his wife along. They were older (58-59 and one about 61). It was nice weather all the time and on Tues afternoon we took a ride to the campus. Stopped at an ice cream place in one of the dairy buildings. It was warm and the students were all outside. We drove through the arboretum (U of Wis) south of Lake Wingra and took a short walk. We also got out on the campus near Lake Mendota and walked down to the edge of the water on that pathway. It was right across from that point (I’ve forgotten the name); there were sailboats out.

I called Charles and Cooley about supper time on Tues. He had been in the motel where we were that Tues and I didn’t know it so I was apologetic that I hadn’t called on Mon. I talked to Cooly then (Charles had already gone out to play cards till 12:30) so I called him at 7:30 Wed AM before he went to work (he had a meeting that AM). He is clear out of the oil business and deals in real estate which is what he was doing at the motel, I guess.

Alan is at scouts tonight. It’s a Halloween party. He and his patrol made popcorn balls here last night. Andy is finishing his Aztec temple project tonight. It is due tomorrow. Alec says hello.

**11-7-74 – Thurs –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, I’m here in the living room listening to Ruth and Alan playing an exciting popular type piano piece and having a lot of fun together. Our children generally all get along together very well. We were all together at supper tonight as Ruth wasn’t working. Ruth is gone at supper time Mon-Tues-Wed teaching so we appreciate being together more when she is here. Hope you’ve had a busy enough week. I thought I’d get the letter off earlier this week, but we’ve been busy as usual and the time flies.

The kids were out of school today and Ruth had conferences with their teachers. They are all doing fine. Andy had perfect grades and Lesle had straight A’s. Alan had 2 B’s a C and the rest A’s and Lisa 1 C 1 B and rest A’s. We’re very proud of them and we do a lot of kidding about “brains” grades etc. The kids are out of school tomorrow, also.

Alan was to have his first bassoon lesson today but Mr. Folsom had the flu. I took the girls up Mon night to their first lessons of the fall (they didn’t take during football season). Just now Ruth took the girls out shopping so I’ll miss choir practice. Lisa is riding in a horse show Sunday. I’ve gone to Ruth’s choir practices the last few Tuesday nights; I’m helping her choir the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Alec’s having fun at his “Tune Town School” on Wed’s. They had a Halloween party last week. A week ago last night (the night before Halloween) the kids went through a “Haunted House” that the local JC’s or some club had fixed up in the brick house (in a park) where the firemen practice (like the house there in Hutchinson in Sylvan Park). Alec was thrilled and I’m sure scared. The big kids took him. They all had a big time on Halloween. Alec went out “trick or treating” before it got dark with Ruth. I went to choir practice that evening.

Mr. Laidig is home in Oberlin following his 2nd cataract operation. I guess he is recovering well. I don’t know when they will be able to visit us again here.

I’ve had some discipline problems with some 6th grade boys at s.s., but we talked to their parents and they were better last Sunday. We have a new teacher (19 yrs old) to help out there.

Last Friday night was Cubs and their pumpkin contest. Andy designed and made by himself a bat pumpkin (see enclosed picture) and won 1st prize in one of the 3 divisions. He (and we) were excited as it was the first time he had ever won a prize at Cubs. Sat Alan went to a music festival. It was for the better orchestra, band and chorus members from a number of Jr. Highs. He played bassoon in the orchestra. He left early on the school bus (they practiced till the concert at 3:00). We drove over for that. Hope everyone in Hutchinson is still fine. Andy is opening his letter from Mother right now.

**11-15-74 – Tues PM 6:45 –** I’ll start this tonight, but won’t finish it. Ruth will be home in a little bit from teaching, she’ll eat in a hurry and we’ll go out to her choir practice. Andy was pleased to have the letter addressed to him with the return of that picture. Glad to hear that everybody in Hutchinson is doing fine. It is a lot colder here today and the temperatures are expected to average 5-10 degrees below normal for the next few days. As you remember, we had above average temperatures for awhile, but we knew that wouldn’t last. It is predicted that our winter will be below normal for temperatures.

Alan has just about finished making a bird feeder for use this winter. I bought him some plexiglass for it last Sunday afternoon. I was out ordering a new washer from Wards to be delivered this Thursday. It will only be our 3rd washer since we have been married. Our current washer is a Sears one and it has served well, but is on its last “legs.” It still washes but sounds like its going to fall apart. The last time it was repaired the man said we should get a new one next time. It was purchased in Decatur over 8 years ago.

Tomorrow night is session meeting. I only have about 2 more after that (Dec and Jan) before I go off the board (3 yr term). I’ve called one last meeting of the Christian Education Committee for next Sunday night. That’s a bad time, but its about the only time Ruth can make it and she is still superintendent until next Feb 15th when she is definitely resigning. Now Sat 1:30 PM (as I said I didn’t get this letter finished earlier in the week but we’ve been extremely busy).

Yesterday AM another man and I from work went to O’Hare Airport and had breakfast with a couple of men (PhD and MD) from the University of Virginia Medical School at Charlottesville, Va Dept of Plastic Surgery. They came for a seminar and for us to determine if we should work with them.

Today (Sat) was the Annual Park Forest Christmas Parade. The girls band marched and Alan as a boy scout helped carry a banner. It started out warmer this AM, but by the end of the parade it was much colder and starting to rain, so the kids were quite cold. We had our first snow of several inches last week and Alec thought it should be Christmas, but I told him we had to have Thanksgiving 1st. Alan is working on merit badges a little bit. We have to keep reminding him to keep working so he’ll continue to make progress.

Glad to have your letter today and the Thanksgiving gift. We’re looking forward to Thanksgiving vacation and some rest. Its too bad that Lena Van Zandt can’t do much anymore. Give her our regards. We’re supposed to have way above average snow in the next few weeks.

**11-23-74 – Sat –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, We had sunshine at the start of today, but its cloudy and dreary, with a little rain. As I’ve said many times, we have a lot of cloudy weather here in the winter – I like lots of sunshine. I’m in the family room watching the big Ohio State – Michigan college football game, and playing with Alec. It was a disappointing season for both the KU and K-State football teams after their good starts. I expect Bill may be watching the game this afternoon, also.

This can be our Thanksgiving letter and greetings to Hutchinson. We remember that nice visit we had at Thanksgiving in Hutchinson a few years ago when you had us all out to dinner. Its so expensive (at least $350) I don’t know whether we can all come out on the train this winter or spring, but I told Mother I might get out once by myself sometime.

There is a good chance that our research and development group will be transferred to an Armour building NW of here. We won’t move but it will be a much longer commute for our car pool. Alan has a good friend who lives nearby whose dad works near where I may be going. I may not have mentioned that I’ll be going to a meeting in Washington, D.C. the week after Thanksgiving. Its a meeting about the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and their activities. Thats the government agency that people hear so much about. It regulates food and drug purity standards, etc.

Haven’t heard from the Laidigs for awhile but the last we knew Mr. L had gotten along fine after his 2nd cataract operation. He’s 78 you know.

Ruth doesn’t have choir tomorrow. They sang last Sunday (I helped) since all the singers could be there. The anthem was a modern rhythm with drums as well as organ accompaniment. We’re all looking forward to Thanksgiving vacation as we’ve all been so busy. We’ll be thinking about everyone in Hutchinson and hope maybe you’ll be able to get out at least once.

They have enough students at the high school who are interested in playing jazz, swing, rhythms that they have 2 jazz bands this year. Lisa was invited to play the piano in the newly formed one. Their 1st performance was Thurs night.

We finally got our new washer last Thurs and Alan and I got it installed last night. Last Sat was the Christmas parade here. It was cold and rainy by the end of the parade. Andy’s choir sang at the early service last Sun so Ruth and I went to that service, had s.s. and went to her church for choir. Again, Thanksgiving wishes to everyone in Hutchinson.

**Thanksgiving Day 1974 –** Happy Thanksgiving to everyone in Hutchinson. Hope you all were able to get together today. Ruth called her parents awhile ago and found them at the Doloris Musgrave Berland (she is the one girl of the 6 Musgrave children that the Laidigs raised) in Manhatten. Doloris teaches school at K-State and Steve Berland is an architect or something like that for a company in Manhatten. They were going to drive on to visit some friends elsewhere in Kansas before going back to Oberlin. I don’t know when they will ever get up to see us.

Alan has been sick since last Sat with a fever and some kind of virus or something. He’s up and around most of the time and doesn’t feel too badly. His fever went higher on Tues and he was getting some ear infection so Ruth took him to the Dr. yesterday and he gave him some antibiotics; I think his ears feel better today.

Ruth and I may go to Chicago tomorrow to get some oboe and English Horn trio music. There is another oboeist at the high school that the girls say they would be willing to play with in a trio. They are still taking private lessons but don’t practice enough to make any progress. Alan won’t have his private lesson today because of Thanksgiving. I’m not sure what kind of progress Andy is making on the viola and French horn. He gets some private lessons from his teacher at school, but still takes piano lessons from the lady who has taught all the children. Alec is doing fine at his Tune Town School on Wed mornings at the Conservatory.

Its clear and sunshiny here today, although on the cool side. As I said, I’m going to Washington next Mon with another man from work. He’s about 61 and has always reminded me a little of my father. He has been sick some in the last couple of years but is pretty good right now and has the job of seeing that things are submitted to the Food and Drug Administration. I’ve been asked to help him some as he has quite a backlog of things to do. This new work gives me a chance to work more with the pharmacists and also learn more about manufacturing. That drug for babies with breathing problems is being tested in Boston, but they haven’t had as many sick babies recently (they have only tested 4) so its too early to know if it works.

The meeting in Washington is sponsored by the Food and Drug Law Institute. That will be the start of a busy Dec schedule with concerts, rehersals, meetings, etc. I’m scheduled to give a magic show at church on Dec 14th. The Mariners couples group is having the senior citizens in for dessert and entertainment. In Jan I’m to give a magic show for the Father and Son Banquet at church. I ordered a new trick from that Abbott Magic Co I bought from when I was young. Last night I went with Ruth to help her choir at their Thanksgiving Eve Service. Again, hope you all had a nice Thanksgiving.

**12-18-74 – Wed –** Dear Aunt Clara, Mother, M.J. and Bill, Mary Janet just called to say that Mother is in the hospital. Hope she is feeling better and more alert by the time this gets there, and you can share this with her. M.J. said you have been able to go see her. Hope M.J. doesn’t get worn out checking on both of you.

Are you sending Christmas cards this year? I know its harder for you to write now. M.J. said she thought Mother had started to write her cards when she took sick. Hope she will be able to finish them. Ruth has our cards about half done. One always thinks he’ll get Christmas things done sooner than he usually does. Our Christmas tree is pretty and Lesle made an angel doll to go at the top in place of the star we’ve had for many years. Its real pretty; we’ll take a picture of it and sent it to Hutchinson.

Lisa had her horseback riding lesson this evening and she said she did much better. She won’t have lessons for the next two weeks. The girls and Alan don’t have any more music lessons this month either. Ruth has a couple more lessons tomorrow, and then her students will be off for two weeks also. We don’t have anything at night till next Sunday night when Ruth’s choir gives their Christmas Cantata as part of the childrens program. I’ll go help her choir for that one. The Cantata at our church was last Sunday morning. Andy’s youth choir sings this Sunday and we have some new members joining the church. Our minister is very friendly and continually brings in new members, so our church, unlike many churchs, has not had any real financial problems. The church mortgage will be paid off next year after only 10 years which is very remarkable. After the mortgage is paid for we hope to be able to call an assistant minister.

I’ve had a cough and hoarseness since I got back from Washington, D.C. I guess I got run down from the trip that week (after Thanksgiving). There has been a lot of cough and hoarseness around. Hope you and Mother don’t come down with the flu. I stayed home from work on Mon and Thurs of last week. I’m gradually getting over it but its slow.

I missed Alan and Andy’s concert last Thurs night because of my throat and cold. I felt better Fri and started setting up my magic show Fri night at the church. I finished it on Sat and the show was about 20 mins long Sat evening. It went a little better than I thought it would. Lesle, Lisa and Andy assisted. Alan was on a scout camp out. Not too many there for the show as a lot of conflicts for people. Have to get ready for a Jan 22 magic show for the Father-Son banquet. Hope Mother is feeling better.

**12-18-74 – Wed –** Dear Mother, Aunt Clara, M.J. and Bill, Well, we’re over the peak of outside activities so we can begin to relax a little, although there is still is a lot of shopping to do. Mary Janet just called and said you are in the hospital. Hope you are doing better now and will be able to read this. I’ll try to come visit you sometime before too long. Love, Carroll and family

Christmas Eve and Christmas morning 1974. Probably.