August 4, 1970

Dear Folks,

Got your letter with Karen's card and dollar. Glad to hear from you. You sound like you are keeping busy. Karen was tickled as pink as this paper with her dollar. She had gotten one earlier in the day from my Dad and when she got another one!!! Wow!!!! She had quite an exciting birthday all the way around. She had chosen to get most of her presents at supper instead of breakfast because I was supposed to work that day. The evening before my hoarse throat turned into a sore throat so I decided I'd better not spread it around to all the patients, so I got up at 6 and went over to the pay phone and called in to tell them I wouldn't be in. Karen was really surprised. Neal and Yvonne woke up first and hurried to get the presents wrapped. Then, I woke Karen. She got a "Downzy" from Neal, a "breakable" poodle on a pillow and a necklace from Yvonne and a turtle and bowl from Bill and me. She chose rare steak and buttered noodles for her birthday supper and a filled angel food for her cake. That was a rather interesting project right there, due to the fact that I didn't bring an angel food pan along. I used a Pillsbury one-step mix, mixed it in the big mixer bowl, took out part of the batter in two metal cups. Then, I pushed an aluminum foil covered skinny pineapple can down into the batter, tied a strong thread around the bowl and over the can so it wouldn't rise up and baked it. It worked beautifully. I used Whip 'n Chill for the filling and even I thought it was good.

I have worked 3 complete 8 hour shifts, now, and it doesn't seem to bother me. My only problem has been sleeping the night before I'm to go to work. On Karen's birthday, after I got the breakfast mess cleaned up, I told the kids and Bill to pretend I was at work and went to bed. I really slept then, and got over my throat problem.

When I read your letter, I realized that I hadn't written anything about our trip. Imagine you know about the Avon segment. We left there about 4:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 8 and had a miserable day to drive. Really hot. We stopped in Miles City in the afternoon for a treat break and the kids went into some nice air-conditioned store to spend some of their money. Karen found a pink piggy bank right off. We got to Glendive where we planned to camp about 6, got some groceries and headed for the state park only to find a sign on the road "Steep Grade Ahead. Leave Trailers Here." So we went back and got a motel room in a homey-type motel. We cooked our supper on the camp stove on a picnic table in front of our cabin. We hated to leave early the next morning it was so cool and comfortable, but we decided we'd hate ourselves in the afternoon if we didn't, so we left at 5:30 a.m. Had cereal before we left, so drove clear to Bismarck before stopping to eat. Had brunch there at 11 and got to Lansford about 2. Beth & Earl and Layne had been there since July 3 and Edith, Chuck and their 4 youngest had arrived the day before. It was hot there, too. We slept in the tent a couple nights because it was too hot in the house. The reunion was a big success. Never heard any final figures on how many were there, but they served 521 at the banquet on Saturday night. My songs went fine. On Sunday afternoon there was a community barbeque at the country club and they figured they served over 1000. It was really hot that day. The Picken bunch left on Tuesday and we took the Adams' to the plane on Friday. We left early Tuesday morning and got to Edith's about 8 that night. Stayed there 2 days and came on to Dubuque on Friday a.m. The kids got to go swimming several times while in Lansford and in Annandale. Yvonne would have lived in the lake there in anyone would have stayed with her. She got brave enough to jump off the dock and go clear under the water.

We are moving to our apartment on Thursday. It's a 2 bedroom apartment which means Neal will have to have a corner to call his own in one of the rooms and will probably sleep in the living room. It's furnished pretty well. Good stove and refrig. Costs $130 a month but that includes all utilities except telephone and it is about 2 blocks from the hospital which eliminates the necessity for a second car. Also has an automatic washer which was an attractive feature.

Bill doesn't have a church to serve, yet, but has told them we will be living in Dubuque and he will be able to commute farther on weekends than if we had lived at a parish and both os us commuted. He's assigned to preach in Sherrard, this Sunday, and the kids will go with him since I'll be working.

It has finally cooled off. Almost too much. We had some really hot, humid weather last week, and several days with severe weather warnings. One day Yvonne and Karen had all their most precious belongings packed up in grocery bags ready to head for the basement.

Guess I'd better wind this volume up, and dash off a note to Dad.

Our address from now on will be 1256 University Ave.
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Love,
Marilyn