

June 26, 1999

Dear Lil;

Thank you for your nice card and note which came in the mail today. Coincidentally, a letter came at the same time from Harold, his "Dear Friends" which cleverly updates everyone with one letter! He is trying hard to get you "home" and will surely do that!! There is still a lot to be done. Fortunately, I am doing fine just hanging around for my 71st birthday! I would knock on wood, but, all I see is plastic!!! We were lucky to grow up on a small farm and got to eat fresh veggies and fruit right on the spot. We had 17 kinds of apples on 175 trees (strange, my brother and I, when he was in the nursing home, tried to remember all 17, but, could only get 16! I solved that since and wrote it down in a journal since it is quite an effort to remember all 17 anymore). We had cherries, dewberries, elderberries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, blackcaps, currants. My dad always told us kids to eat our fill before picking for the market!! In the sandy soil, we grew peanuts and sweet potatoes. We had musk- and watermelons, cukes, squash, tomatoes (4000 plants), carrots, cabbage, horseradish, radishes, ~~not~~ kolorabi, asparagus, rhubarb, sweetcorn. No kid today ever ate fresh-snapped asparagus or freshly-pulled rhubarb!! We had our own cows and had fresh milk, cottage cheese, sour cream, etc. We had chickens, geese and ducks as well as turkeys. Lots of eggs. We butchered swine and hives in the Fall and smoked our own meat. We made wine and cider and canned and made jellies. A lot of that type of living I still follow - like grinding my own hamburger!! Dad used to work in the packing houses as a premium ham skinner and often had to go to the kill floor to help clean up. He told us what went into the grinders for hamburger and hot dogs. When he was told that a 'dog was all beef, he could take a pencil and pad and show you how a hamburger or 'dog could be 100% beef with no meat in it!!! I always give a lot of credit to growing up on the farm. After 5 years, we finally sold it to a developer. The neighbors are upset and jealous - they fought the same to the end. They thought they could get it from us for a song. One offered \$90,000, but, we got \$437,000. Sounds great but a lot of bills had to be honored!! The neighbors still held a grudge and fired a \$500,000 home that was being built. Arson? That's what the insurance company says.

Well, enough of that- you have problems that make all this sound like fairytale stuff. I guessed right and sent Harold's last letters to your Old Receiver address. I do hope I can write you there soon. Right now I am preparing to visit my son's family near Tampa. I'll be there a week since that covers both his and his wife's birthdays. My one and only grandson is 1½ years old and can say "Hello" on the phone. I saw him last in March and am very anxious!!!

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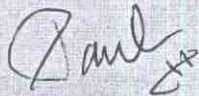
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Also, I am working on t~~he~~e first communion for my little Mexican girlfriend who 'ad~~opted~~'me when she was 4 in 1995. Her communion is in Mexico City, July 31 and she wants me there so badly. I'm not going - everyone recommends against it saying it is a bad p^lice to visit as a single tourist!! Lots of poverty there and a single traveler looks like a walking strip ma~~al~~ to them. They say the cab drivers often take the tourists right to the muggers!!! Her grandpa is a doctor and they have 200 people invited, so, I think I might be okay. They do not know I am retired so I can use my imaginary job as an excuse. I will send her a preent via the mail - she is crazy about my Polaroid camera so I am sending her one with 30 instant films. If I buy 4 packs of film, I get the camera free as a rebate. I need the film anyway for my own camera. This way at no cost to me, I can make the little girl very happy!!!! And she is a very good little photographer!! She adopted me in Dallas where she was visiiing her uncle who ran the bar and grill at the hotel where I was staying. She lives in San Antonio and I stop over to visit with her every year when I go to Dallas for the JFK convention!!

I do hope all is going better for you and pray that you get to go back to your home at Old Receiver Road. my late brother was in a nursing home for 3½ years so I know what it is like. He longed so much to spend his days at the farm!!!

The very best of everything and hang in there!!!!

Paul Haller



P.S. I can appreciate your comments on how a house goes to pot when no one is living there. With my brother in a nursing home, the farm and its buildings got beyond reasonable repair. Inside the h~~ome~~, the water froze in the toilet bowl and caused a lot of fun about that!!!