

January 10, 1993

Dear Aunt Madge,

The family reunion is only six months away and things are really getting busy. Won't it be great to get everyone together again? I think 10 years between reunions is just too long, don't you? It takes a lot of planning, but the effort is sure worth it in the long run. This world is just too big, and with people spread out over the U.S. and four other countries, it's pretty hard to keep up with everyone. What ever happened to the old days when people were born and raised in one place and always had an extended family around?

I've already heard from some of the relatives. Ramona is flying in from London, and Al's making the trip from Boston. I hope we get as many people as the last reunion--maybe more! I heard Mary Pat has blossomed into a lovely young lady, and little Jeffrey is a sweet little guy. Melinda has been accepted at Duke University and Pamela is engaged to be married next year.

Have you decided what you're going to wear yet? I've been shopping like crazy trying to find something just right. I found the cutest peach chiffon in the store the other day. But it didn't fit quite right. Well, I'm sure something will turn up.

Here are some other details relating to the reunion. The date is set for July 19th. I've arranged everything with the caterers--barbecue it is! We'll be having pork-n-beans, chicken, pork, potato salad, homemade ice-cream, and watermelon. I've also asked Lillian to bring some of those wonderful berry pies of hers. They were always such a favorite of Ray's. Too bad he won't be here to see this reunion. How proud he would be of the way the grandkids turned out.

Anyway, I was wondering if you would take care of the flower arrangements. You could work with a florist there in Mapleton and they could send the order to the florist here in Mayberry. Don't worry about the cost; it's all been added into the price of the reunion. Just let me know how much it will be. Of course if you want to bring some of those beautiful arrangements you do with the flowers from your garden, that'd be fine too.

I think that takes care of many of the loose ends. I can't believe how well things are falling into place. Soon we'll all be looking back and laughing at how well things went. Or so I hope, anyway.

We're working hard on the farm these days. Didn't seem to have as much work around here when we were younger. I guess having the kids all grown and gone makes a big difference; things were busy then, but there were many helpful hands around too. Hope the weather holds up. If it does, Harold will be able to get the crop in before the reunion. Otherwise I don't know if he'll be able to spend much time having fun.

I just brought in some beautiful squash from the garden. That stuff will grow anywhere, and I do love it. I'll have to save some for you to take home with you when you're out here.

Oh, I can hear those cats playing outside again. Susie had another litter of kittens this spring, and they're just now getting to that cute stage. I suppose Mary Pat will be pestering her Mama to let her take one home. There are 10 of them and they do cause a ruckus around here. They all look healthy enough. I'm sure we'll have some cats to give away in a few weeks. I do miss them when they're all gone though. Maybe I'll keep a few this time.

Harold and I are planning our vacation in California for Christmas this year. We hope to see the Rose Bowl Parade and spend some time at the beach. Bev and Bill's children are all grown up now and spread out around the state, but we hope to see them too. And, of course, we'll visit Amy and Emil. I guess they are really enjoying their new home. They've renovated the entire house and added some rooms too. It's quite a hobby. I wonder if they'll hold on to this house or sell it like the last one. I imagine they'll make a pretty penny.

Now that I've gone on and on about us...how are you all? I imagine Mapleton is beautiful this time of year. Did you go to the Bobby Burns festival this year? I sure do have a lot of pleasant memories of that festival. In fact, Harold and I had our first date there. We must have gone on that ferris wheel a hundred times. I suppose little Jimmy is doing things like that now. And Jake... when will he get around to marrying that lovely girlfriend of his? I hope he'll bring her to the reunion.

Will you all be able to get away this Christmas? Sounded like you all had such a great time in Toledo last year. I'd like to visit the Ruthries there sometime myself. They are so much fun. I hear Lynn has gained quite a bit of acclaim for her photographs. What a creative person she is. I just love the one she took of the old-fashioned bathtub.

I guess it's time for me to get back to the garden. I've been pulling weeds all summer. It's finally getting cooler -- it's been a hot one today though. I couldn't bring myself to go out there in the sun before this. Of course Harold spends the day out in this heat. The air-conditioned cab they have on that tractor sure does help. How our parents would've loved the luxuries of today.

Let me know what you're thinking about the flowers. If you don't have time to do it, I could probably get Rozella or Shirley to help.

Take care, and give my love to everyone -- R.