

Aug. 14, 1969.

Cacapon State Park, W. Va.

Dear Parents and Brothers & Sisters,

There are 15 of us here this year, the Alan W Gordons and the Gary Gordons being sizeable groups each. Instead of being at the Old Inn each family has a cabin about 200 ft. apart in the woods not too far from the Lodge where we are eating our noon meals as we did last year. The cabins are very adequate and attractive. There's a large living room in the center with fire place, a kitchen off the back of the living room, the bathroom also, and a bedroom off of each corner of the l.r. Each bedroom has a double bed and a bureau and a closet. The kitchen is well equiped with dishes and pans and stove and refrigerator and lots of cabinets. Really someone has thought of just about everything! Its a nice change from having to invent makeshift things as we did last year at the Inn.

For breakfast everyong comes to the Gary cabin which is #22 where all the breakfast food and dishes are kept. The table isn't really big enough for everyone to sit at but that's all right, of course because some of us prefer to sleep later than others. Guess which!

Supper is eaten either down at the picnic area or at the Alan cabin - #23. Last night we had decided to eat out side #23 on the grass. We set up a table for the food and Alan got his stereo all set in the windows on that side of the cabin with his tape of The Sound Of Music pouring forth gloriously across the mountainside. It would have been a wonderful atmosphere for eating except that the gats had claimed the spot first, so the sound of music and the table were taken inside wherewe could enjoy them in private.

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to keep an appointment at the Goddard Space Center with some other Gonnstt fellows. Since our home is now only a 2 hour drive from here, is not much of a strain.

For lunch we go to the Lodge, and use the same system we had last year, that is, somebody takes all the orders 20 minutes ahead of time. When we all arrive at 12:00, the food is on the table - theoretically. It seems to take a few days to get the system running smoothly, and today was the first day it really worked. But it sure is nice to have a gang of 15 to a restaurant and be out in 20 minutes.

After lunch we usually go to the beach for the afternoon.

We have our green beach umbrella set up everytime, both for the shade and to serve as a landmark for the children. Donald, Sylvia, Alan, and Sandra can swim quite well, spend quite a bit of time at the deep area, jumping and diving off the diving boards. With all the children a year older, there is considerably less watching than last year. In fact Carol is the only one that really requires it -- she likes deep water, and seems to be too young even to understand she's not supposed to go beyond a certain depth. Besides swimming, we play some games at the beach. The high point of the afternoon is the snack, when each child gets a coin. We started out at 10¢ of last year, but there are considerable things that can be bought for 5¢, and the change was too much bother -- so now every child gets only a nickel. The allowance is still 10¢ after lunch for the game room downstairs.

Doris started this letter, and Gary is finishing it on Friday, the 15th. This morning the two of us got up at 8:00 (before any of the children!) and went on a 2-mile hike over the "green" trail. When we got back the children had gotten and eaten their own breakfast, and there were 10 children in a circle, playing Old Maid. They were doing so well, that we went over to the Lodge and had breakfast for two -- with blue-berry pancakes.

Love from all the Gordon clan.

A² D³GNPS⁶

Rec. 26.8.69

August 16, 1969
Cacapon St.Pk., W.Va.

Hi you all,

Continuing our activities at Cacapon, we have taken advantage of some of the "suggested recreational activities". Monday evening I took the boys down to see the slide show about Cacapon and other state parks, at the Old Inn. (Incidentally the Old Inn has a new covering over the old logs, a stairway up to the back porch, and air conditioned rooms). Tuesday morning some of the children took advantage of the guided hike along the "yellow" trail.

Tuesday evening we joined the campfire down by the lake. We had a picnic supper there timed so that as we finished supper the campfire started. There was no musical director, but the ranger did a good job of finding talent among the audience, and getting the direction that way. Alan made his contribution with his new accordion, although I think some of the audience may have been more appreciative of the songs he picked than of all the capabilities of his accordion. The children enjoyed toasting marshmallows at the campfire; the fire was so hot that many of them were more burned than toasted, but the kids had fun. Sonia's arm was burned by the hot marshmallow from another boy's stick (not a Gordon), but he was most apologetic. We stayed rather late, Alan and Alma finally taking their younger girls off to bed, and the rest of us staying until the end.

Wednesday some of the older children went to the recreational hall in the evening. While they didn't get into any of the square dances, they did enjoy the Bunny Hop and the Hokie-Pokie. Thursday evening and Saturday evening there were movies at the Old Inn, and the older children went by themselves. The Saturday night movie was listed as "about 1 hour", but it turned out to be the full length feature: Sargeant York. This was a good movie for our boys, because while they enjoyed the war and the fighting, there is also some good philosophy mixed in about killing and saving lives. Normal bedtimes have been relaxed and the older children have enjoyed staying up and having these evening activities. We even had some cake and milk after the movie, which you could call a party.

Saturday was our morning in town. Alan and Gary did the chores,-- shopping and laundry. It takes a lot of groceries for this crowd, even when we have lunch at the lodge. Alan and Alma liked the A&P at Hancock, which is just a few minutes ~~far~~ beyond Berkeley Springs, so we went there. We found the laundromat right next to the A&P, which made it quite convenient. As the washing got done, Alan shopped in the A&P while Gary got a few other things around town: stamps, newspaper, tennis balls, shuttlecock, and a bug spray.

Meanwhile, Daris and Alma took the older children to visit the Castle near Berkeley Springs. This is quite an interesting building, with a tower and a view. The girls enjoyed the history while the children enjoyed the tower. We agreed to have lunch independently, so we wouldn't be tied to a deadline, but we all ended up at the Fairfax Restaurant, a place where we had eatmen last year. The vegetable soup was delicious!

Sunday morning we went to church at the small church in Omps, the community right outside the park. We didn't find out the starting time (9:45) soon enough, so we were a few minutes late in arriving. We were such a large group the minister stopped the responsive reading until we were seated and had found our places. They had no nursery, so we had all 11 children sitting quietly through church; Susan and Carol found it a little difficult, but the others did quite well. We didn't stay for Sunday School, as they had no classes for children, and we just didn't think ours would sit quietly another hour. So we had our own Sunday School in the evening, which Alma led, and was so popular there were several requests for a repeat performance. Each child found a small object that he could hide in his hand, and each had a turn in revealing what it was, and then everyone would try to relate this object to God.

Well, that summarizes our first week at Cacapon; more later

A³CD-6NPS⁶

Rec Sept. 9 -

August 30, 1969

Greetings from Washington Grove,

Somehow the rest of our activities didn't get chronicled, so I'll try to put down a few thoughts - maybe they will be of interest.

The one big thing we did was a trip to Washington Grove on Wednesday of the second week. This was partly to give Alma to see our new house a chance. The other reason was that we all wanted an evening out, and that's the one thing that Cacapon seems to lack. I asked the girl at the desk whether there were any summer theaters in the area, and her answer was given with all the stary eye wonderment of a country girl -- "You mezan plays!?" So we left Cacapon Wednesday morning, and attended the Shady Grove Music Fair Wednesday evening.

We all came in Alan's car, and you have to see the car to appreciate how well it holds 4 adults and 11 children. I don't know as we'd want to ride all day, but it was quite adequate for a couple of hours. Wednesday afternoon Alan and I went down to my office; I did some work while he watched, mainly while I used the computer over the telephone. Meanwhile Doris and Alma took some of the children over to the Shady Grove Music Fair where they saw "The Princess and the Pea". Doris and Alma also did such mundane things as letting the babies nap, and getting some clothes washed.

For the evening we desided that two babysitters were better than one, so we got both Rachel McCutcheon and Priscilla Wilkerson, two neighboring high school girls. They gave the kids their supper, and put all ll of them in bed. Even without the new upstairs (yet to be finished) we were able to find room for all. The four grown-ups had dinner at Normandy Farms, which features french cooking, and which Doris and I had tried once before. Alan was brave enough to order "Le Diner Mysterieux", which I suppose translates into a pot-luck-supper; the rest of us had Shish-Ke-Bob, which I think was the best I've had in this country. I still don't think it came up to the Filet no Espeto at the Restaurante do Papai, but it's been so long, that maybe my memory has improved the latter too much. Anyway, after dinner we went to the theater, and saw "The Student Prince". This was a very nice musical, well done, and with some good songs; I thought the male chorus was excellent. (We didn't see Vice-President Agnew, as Doris and I had a few weeks previously at this theater).

The next morning we drove back to Cacapon for the rest of our vacation. Our little outing was enjoyable, but strenuous, and I think most of us were happy to get back and settle down to the routine.

Lunch at the Lodge worked out so well we rarely missed. We didn't have the private dining room we had last year, but with 2 large tables in the main room, things worked out quite well. Eight or nine children sat at one round table, while the adults and babies sat at the other. As soon as the children finished, they got their dime and rushed downstairs. Donald surpassed everyone on the target shooting machine, with scores of 3130 and 3150 that I recorded (compared to my scores of 2600 and 2900, and Alan's scores of 2340 and 2740). As we did last year, we usually had one bowling game with the grown-ups, with occasionally a child joining (this took real will power to still have a dime by the time we got around to the game). Alan was consistently better, with an average of 187 and a top score of 233. My average was only 160, but one day I managed 8 strikes in a row, and got a score of 242. I'm sure Alma Dole would have liked to join us. Even Susan and Carol turned in fair scores, by having any gutter balls caught and returned for a re-run.

Vacation ended Friday night, when Alan and Alma packed; when we got up Saturday they were gone. We stayed until Sunday afternoon, but it just wasn't the same without them, and our boys didn't know what to do with themselves.

Wish you all could have joined us. Much love,

A³ C V G M P S⁶