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a college education if you pass the entrance exam and qualify financially.

The people here seem to dress more formally than we do in the States. Male office workers wear suits and ties, women are attired in skirts and dresses.

London is very international with over 300 languages. English seems to be a second language because I hear very little of it here. Traveling internationally is quite easy. It is not very different from air travel to New York or California, except for having to go through Customs. There's so much to see and do and life is so short.

Take good care. My prayers are with you. More later...

XOXOXO,

Paula

Monday, May 24, 2010

My Dear Brian....

We toured Oxford University today. It's both vast and sprawling. Classes were in session. We could tell which students were taking their final exams because they were dressed in regalia, which is a required custom at Oxford.

Most students here use bicycles with large baskets to get around campus and town. You should see the bikes parked outside of buildings on campus! Too many to count. It's like going back in time a bit.

The accommodations and food are good. The bakeries are unbelievable and there are so many! Getting in a lot of walking.

Traveling internationally, at least to the U.K. and Ireland, is very easy and much like traveling to any point in the states, except you need to show your passport and you hear very little English with so many tourists here from around the world.

I love you and miss you. Can't wait to see you on Wednesday

Love, hugs and kisses...

"Pauli"

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A resident of Southeast South Dakota, Paula Damon is a national award-winning columnist. Her columns have won first-place in National Federation of Press Women, South Dakota Press Women and Iowa Press Women Communications Contests. In the 2009 and 2010 South Dakota Press Women Communications Contest, Paula's columns took three first-place awards.

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put it up today. The puppies are doing well, though Poe misses you. He waits at the livingroom window each evening for you, doesn't want to come to bed or join us downstairs.

Take care, eat a banger for me. All my love and enjoy your final two days. I'll be waiting at the window with Poe on Wednesday.

Brian

And now for the rest of the story...

That letter I relieved from my mother, that one birthday long, long ago was dated June 22, 1969. You might wonder, since it was February, how a letter could take so many months to receive, but this was not the case.

For you see, it did not arrive through conventional means. I found it in the bottom of an old bag after a vigorous night of bowling. With no idea how it got there and having not seen it before, I was not distracted from her message: "I believe, I love, I remember, I wish."

For it was not months, no not months that it took to arrive, but years. The date of that special birthday gift was 2/11/79 and by then my mother had been long gone, for she had died 6/9/70. Yes almost 10 years before I found it

And now you know the rest of the story. Well, almost.

A patient once asked me if I had written a letter to each of my adult children, telling them how proud I am of them, recalling memories, celebrating our relationship, speaking of the love only a parent feels for their children, reaffirming my belief in them and sharing my wishes for them. I replied I had not and asked have you? With a smile and a warmth to match the sparkle in her eye, she said she had. And that it had been one of the best gifts she had ever given, one that would last well beyond her years.

The power of the old fashion written word, does it ever get old? Thanks for listening.

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Brian Damon has been married for 37 years, is a psychotherapist, specializing in the small group experience, and the innovator of "Black Board Therapy."

Damon works at Mercy Medical Center, Sioux City, Iowa, in the Pathways Program, an intensive outpatient treatment program for individuals with personal, relationship and psychiatric issues.

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