



David's personal letter to you

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Hi there!

I'm so sorry it's going to be so late by the time you get to read what I thought of all those wonderful cards and presents you sent for my Birthday! The whole house just burst at the seams with greetings cards. And I reckon that I'll never have to buy another T-shirt in my life!

Well, I know my Birthday's a fair way off now — and it'll be even farther by the time you see this, but I just had to try and tell you how happy you made me. And, if you can make a guy happy about being a year older — man, you've done something special there!

NEW NEWS

Now, let's see what news I've got for you this month . . . Well, last month I revived myself by going skiing. I just went off for a few days, completely by myself to get things together again after all the emotional upheaval of that wonderful time I had in Europe.

So, as it was such a short trip I stayed locally in California. Did you know that there are really good ski slopes with superb snow only two or three hours' drive from my home?

And I thought of you all, while I was there. You know what brought you to mind specially? That marvellous fur coat you gave me while I was over . . . I adore it, but it's something too warm to wear every day in L.A., so I'll be doubly looking forward to my skiing trips from now on. You see, those crisp, snowy slopes are just the right place for an extra hairy skin like that one!

Well, I came back home feeling ready for anything.

And it was then that I suddenly discovered this passion for gardening! Now, don't get me wrong . . . I've always loved gardens that are beautifully looked after with plenty of flowers and trees and things. But I never remember feeling prompted to do some of the "looking after" myself before now!

Maybe that's what they mean about the Spring calling you . . . I don't know. But I do know that I was out there digging before I could stop myself!

The general idea is to plant a vegetable

garden, so that we'll be able to have fresh, home-grown food through the summer and fall. That really appeals — to Sam as well. Though I noticed that he left me to get the digging underway before he became as all enthusiastic!

Seriously, though, I enjoyed it. I found digging curiously relaxing in a funny sort of a way. And it was really rewarding to look around at a clear, rich brown plot of ground that had been all tangled up with weeds only a few days before.

I don't fancy doing the big build-up to the triumph of pulling out the champion carrot of all time — only to discover that it's a spindly specimen about a half inch long!!!

And now I reckon that the time has come to actually get on with planting something . . . Only trouble is to decide *what!*

I want to have a try at some celery, but Sam keeps making cracks about artichokes being the "in-crop" in Encino this year.

O.K., smart guy . . . How do you grow an artichoke then?

Oh, we'll probably end up with ordinary things like peas, carrots and lettuce, after all . . .

But one thing I'd definitely like to find room for is a small patch for herbs.

I'm certain that if everyone in the States who had enough space did this sort of thing, we'd all be a whole lot healthier . . . Eating fresh, natural-grown produce instead of all this pre-packed stuff at the supermarkets. (Though I guess even that's okay, if you can get down to the supermarket without being trailed in the first place!)

Hey! Why don't you try sharing my experiment? Ask your Mom and Dad if they can spare some of their dirt? And use it to grow things in!

I'll bet you Mom'll be knocked out when you present her with your first bumper crop for Sunday lunch!

And I know that quite a lot of you *do* follow suit when I tell you about my latest venture . . . Like all those of you who wrote me about taking up piano lessons after I did. I sure do hope that you're progressing well and really enjoying your music. I've found it a marvellous help