



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

A letter from Dad: 2 April 2012

John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Sat, Mar 31, 2012 at 11:38 PM

Reply-To: john@larsen-family.us

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: Joyce Larsen <joyce@larsen-family.us>

Hello Dear Phillip,

When you get this letter I'll still be travelling to Cairo, Egypt. I'll probably just be getting into Cairo by the time you read this. I arrive at 5:45 PM Cairo time which is 11:45 AM Boston time and 12:45 PM Teresina time.

This past week has been eventful in some ways. As you can see from the attached pictures, we finally took the plunge and replaced the Caravan. I'll simply paste what I wrote on the website page below rather than writing it all over again:

Today (Mar 28th) we traded in our old 1999 Dodge Grand Caravan and bought a 2008 Honda Odyssey LX minivan. The pictures below were taken in front of AutoFair Honda in Manchester, NH. We bought the Caravan from AutoFair back in 2002. I looked for pictures of that event, but apparently I didn't take any.

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In 2002 the need for a replacement vehicle became urgent when our old Caprice Classic Station Wagon that we had purchased in 1988 finally failed in an expensive way. We had that car for 14 years and it had served us well. I remember calculating the miles per gallon the wagon was getting at the end and it was only 9 miles per gallon on premium!

So, one morning in February 2002 I got on the internet and went to AutoFair's website. They listed two vans in their inventory. One was a full sized van and the other was a minivan. I called them up and requested a test drive for both of them. While driving the full sized van I knew it was too big for Joyce to feel comfortable driving. Next I drove the minivan and knew that Joyce would like that. I bought it. I had already been pre-approved for a car loan with our credit union so it was just a matter of jumping through all the hoops to get it all done. So, in a two day period I junked one

car and bought a minivan. We paid the loan off in four years.

Fast forward to today, ten years later. We were told last year at inspection time that the minivan wouldn't pass this year without some serious rust repair. The exhaust system is also in need of attention. Joyce and I decided that it didn't make sense to put the kind of money into it that it would take. The Caravan has almost 190,000 miles on it. So we knew we would need to replace it this year.

I've been watching several different dealers' websites looking for minivans and getting a feel for prices. The Odyssey that I bought today had actually been sold two weeks ago, but the buyers' financing fell through and they had to return it. I had seen it on their website, but just wasn't ready to make the plunge. Then that minivan disappeared from their website and I felt like I had missed an opportunity. I kept watching for an Odyssey or Toyota Sienna in the price range I was willing to pay, but nothing really showed up.

Yesterday morning I checked and overnight this Odyssey had come back on AutoFair's website. I sent a test drive request, but had to go to work before they could respond. When they did I set up for a test drive this morning. I drove our Caravan up and even took the title with me on the off chance that the deal would be done today if I liked the car. Well, that's pretty much how it happened. I got there by 9:00 AM and took the Odyssey for a test drive around Manchester. I pulled into a large parking lot and gave it an inspection checking everything out. I looked underneath for rust. I did tight turns forward and reverse listening for clunks or any other odd noises. Nothing. It seemed like exactly the car I wanted.

It does have 78,331 miles on it, but that is one reason the price is lower. The car started out as a rental car in Michigan for its first 18 months and 50,000 miles. It was then sold at an auction to AutoFair in Dec 2009. They sold it to a private individual who had it until Dec 2011 when it was traded in on a different car.

So now we own it. We paid cash for it. We have been saving up every month for five years in order to have enough to replace the Caravan when it died. We have been greatly blessed to have things work out as they have. The pictures below are of when I was moving everything from the Caravan into the Odyssey. It is sad to see the Caravan go, but it is also nice to have a car that is 9 years newer. Hopefully Honda quality will pay off and we can get into the 200K mile range before it goes. e need for a replacement vehicle became urgent when our old Caprice Classic Station Wagon that we had purchased in 1988 finally failed in an expensive way. We had that car for 14 years and it had served us well. I remember calculating the miles per gallon the wagon was getting at the end and it was only 9 miles per gallon on premium!

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Okay... back to the present now. It's Saturday evening and I'm back from the priesthood session of General Conference. I enjoyed the talks, but struggled at the end to stay awake. It has been a busy day with errands in the morning and setting up for conference and Ruby Tuesdays in the afternoon. There were lots of extra people in the Relief Society room during conference sessions today. That wasn't a problem, but it was different from the norm. The stake play "Savior of the World" is this coming weekend and they were setting up lots of stuff for that play and doing tech rehearsal on Saturday. People involved with that dropped in on the sessions.

We did enjoy going to Ruby Tuesdays. We took all six missionaries, the four that live in Clocktower from the two Nashua Wards, and the two elders serving in the Merrimack Ward. So, there were 11 of us all together as you can see from the pictures. After Ruby Tuesdays we had cake and ice cream at the church just before the afternoon session started. Elder Stephens and Julia share an April 3rd birthday. We celebrated with them today.

I have packing still to do and I'm really tired. There is also a baptism on Sunday at 10:00 AM and Joyce and I have been asked to provide the music. That will cut into my preparation time for the trip. So, I think I'll sign off now and send this email so that it will be waiting for you.

I love you bunches and look forward to reading your email once I get to the hotel in Cairo. We're staying at the same Marriott Hotel as I did in December.


Love you,


Dad


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John R Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>
<http://larsen-family.us>

18 attachments


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