

July 22, 1922

Holly Kearl
772 Twilight Drive
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Dear Holly,

I couldn't put my hands on my two patents, but now I think I know where they are (in a folder on the shelf above my computer in Bountiful) and when I go there again I'll make a copy of the complete patents and send them to you. But here's a copy of the first page of each of them down to and including the extract.

Both patents were for the construction of refrigerators. The first one is for a pressure relief valve so that the doors can be more easily opened - and the second is about how to make an opening so that the evaporator can be assembled into the freezer compartment and the opening then closed. This is explained in the abstracts to the patents.

Both patents were assigned to General Electric. When I was young, everyone who worked for General Electric had to sign a patent agreement when they started working for them agreeing to sign over their patents to the company whenever they invented something. It was assumed that part of your job was to invent and that you were being paid for that in your weekly pay check. This was a common practice with most large companies. In most cases that patent was only of value to the company you worked for but occasionally someone would invent something that was very valuable and giving it to the company was unfair to them. A member of the church invented man-made diamonds and he sued the General Electric for the patent rights and won his law suit. Your Dad knew his daughter in Chicago, Sr. Bartholomew.

The company did give a token payment to those who received a patent. At first it was a \$25.00 War Bond and then they increased it to a \$100.00 War Bond and when you had several inventions they gave you a paper weight, "Inventors Award". I am giving you my "Inventors Award" to use to hold down

the papers on your desk. When you come out next we'll go to a place I know and have a plaque made that will tell about it. (Where it came from and why I received it). When you get old, you can give it to one of your children. OK?

Patents are granted by the government and allow you to have exclusive rights to that idea for a period of 17 years. In some cases they are valuable. The thermal break between the steel inside walls of a refrigerator and the steel outside walls is a must (a breaker strip) when you build a refrigerator. Jim Knight got that patent and all the other companies who made refrigerators paid GE for it's use, or probably traded the use of good patents they held for it's use.

Patents are thought to be an incentive to make creative inventions. Most companies find ways around the patents. The US have most of the patents on micro circuits which are essential to the production of computers but the Japanese will find ways around those patents and will soon be the world supplier of computers just as they are the only manufacturer of television sets. So patents don't really do all they should and most companies depend on getting a "head start" and keeping what they know a secret from others.

You Great Grand Father Chase Kearnl once invented a fertilizer spreader made of a hot water tank. He drilled small holes in outside of the tank, added a door to put in the fertilizer and wheels on its ends and then as the horses pulled it the fertilizer fell through the holes and onto the ground. I don't think he patented this idea but many farmers made them until more efficient ones were made and sold by farm equipment companies.

I'm waiting to hear what your next patent will be.

Love from your grandfather,

Papa Zero

Donald Cyril

Mary's mother visited us quite often and we usually went to Chicago to meet and drive her down to Louisville. This saved her the change of planes and sometimes airports. While we were there we'd visit museums, zoos, and other interesting places. One time in Chicago, I flew to Ithaca to pick up my father while Mary and the children stayed in Chicago. While they waited they decided try a ride on the subway and by accident Gary got off at the wrong train station. The doors closed and Gary was left behind. He was 11 years old. Mary got off at the next station caught the next train back. Luckily someone told her which train to get on. When she got to the station he was at, she signaled the train to stop. All the children went to the door and yelled, "Gary." He hopped on board and away they went back to the city. Luckily Gary had the good sense to stay put. He didn't know the hotel we were staying at or where he was at the moment and it would have been very bad if he had tried to find the family.

We had begun the storm decade of the sixties, which opened the age of experiment, an age of hope. They were the Kennedy years and his liberal views shook up the Nation but he was an inspiring person and he started some well needed reforms which carried into the Johnson administration. Unfortunately our involvement in Vietnam started during his term.

My work at G.E. had changed from Factory Contact to Project Administration. I was project engineer for a family of 2 door model refrigerators and finally was assigned to the side-by-side model of refrigerators. In those years I applied for several patents and had a

couple issued in my name.

GE gave the employee a \$25.00 Government Bond for each patent that was issued to him and I received a medallion as an inventor for the two patents that I was issued.

United States Patent

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3,376,711
REFRIGERATOR CABINET CONSTRUCTION
Willem J. Hagendoorn and Cyril M. Kearn, Louisville, Ky., assignors to General Electric Company, a corporation of New York
Filed Sept. 23, 1966, Ser. No. 581,614
5 Claims. (Cl. 62-410)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A refrigerator cabinet comprising storage compartments separated from one another by a partition and separate doors for closing the access openings to the compartments includes vent means for relieving a decrease in air pressure in either compartment comprising a first passage interconnecting the compartments through the partition and a second passage connecting the first passage to the exterior of the cabinet.

Patent #3,376,711

United States Patent

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3,474,440
HOUSEHOLD REFRIGERATOR CABINET CONSTRUCTION
Cyril M. Kearn, Wheaton, Ill., and Robert B. Gelbard, Louisville, Ky., assignors to General Electric Company, a corporation of New York
Filed May 23, 1968, Ser. No. 731,440
Int. Cl. F25d 11/00, 23/06
U.S. Cl. 62-449 6 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A refrigerator cabinet comprising insulated walls defined by a casing and a liner within and spaced from the casing and bonded thereto by rigid foam insulation includes an opening in one wall for insertion of an evaporator component into the cabinet. The opening is closed by a removable unitary access cover comprising a plate secured to the casing and a sheet of flexible plastic material in engagement with the walls defining the opening. The space between the cover plate and the sheet is filled with foamable insulation formed in situ so that the expansion of the foam insulation causes the sheet to conform to the wall structure of the opening.

Patent #3,474,440



1992

Gift to Holly
from Cyril