Below is Aliza's letter to her friend Kelly. She is writing about her stay in Atlantic City with Ruth and her family.

July 30, 1977

Dear Kelly,

We arrived in Atlantic City (AC) three days ago. It was quite a short drive as AC is in New Jersey, only 100 miles south west of New York. I'm staying with my friend Ruth and her family in a motel just on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Just like most motels here, it's run by a family so it feels like home. It's really hot and humid here so I find it difficult to sleep without the air-conditioner on. They say the climate of AC is extremely variable. It's like this throughout the summer but in the winter it gets very cold and they get a lot of snowfall, though it's hard to believe right now! Despite the heat we're having a great time.

On our first day, we drove around the city. You should see the residential areas. They're really well-kept. The houses are beautiful and most of them have a view of the ocean. In fact, the whole city is very charming with it's beautiful sand beaches, old town center and the famous Boardwalk. The beaches are full of people; some just swimming or suntanning, some building sand castles and others surfing the waves.

Last night, Ruth and I went to the town center to Antonio's Pizza; it's the gathering place for the young people. Then, we had ice-cream at the famous Nelly's ice-cream parlor. In the town center, there are a couple of historic buildings, a few clothes' shops. There are also small restaurants besides the pizzeria. Boardwalk is where all the activity takes place. There are stalls which sell anything you can think of — candies, hot-dog, T-shirts, souvenirs. It's not very crowded during the day because everyone's at the beach then, but you should see it at night! Everybody's there so it is the place to hang out in the evenings. At the end of the Boardwalk, there's a small amusement park with a big roller coaster. I can't wait to ride it!

I'm sure you'd love it here as it's very peaceful despite all the fun. Next time, we must come here together. I'll be back home next Monday

With Love, Aliza
Atlantic City Skyline, 2002

September 2002, Aliza and Ruth are talking in Aliza's apartment in New York.

Aliza: Look at this picture of Atlantic City. I can't believe this is the beautiful resort we visited 25 years ago in 1977! What's happened to all those lovely houses along the coast!

Ruth: I guess they pulled them down to build these high-rise, 5-star Casino-Hotels. AC is no longer the little city you know. It's a resort and convention center. They need the casinos because gambling is the biggest industry together with shell fishing and candy manufacturing. Oh, that reminds me. Do you remember Mrs. Green, the lady who used to sell T-shirts and souvenirs?

Aliza: Sure, what about her?

Ruth: I ran into her the other day.

Aliza: But doesn't she live in Atlantic City?

Ruth: Not any more. She's living with her grandson here in New York. She had to give up her stall because her customers slowly disappeared and the tourists today prefer to shop at the new malls where they can find the latest fashions. Oh! and they pulled down the famous ice-cream parlor and Antonio's pizza while they were transforming the town center.

Aliza: Atlantic City without the ice-cream parlor and Antonio's pizza? Why did they do that?

Ruth: To build another mall with 120 new boutiques. That's why!

Aliza: Look at this picture of the beach and the Boardwalk. Do you remember how crowded it used to be. It looks so deserted now. I guess people just stay in their hotels and gamble.

Ruth: I read on the paper the other day that they've been developing housing complexes, too. It said a lot of people were moving back. Do you remember? About 10,000 people had moved out after gambling was legalized. The population is about 44,000 now, so it has almost reached the numbers of the early 1980s.

Aliza: Ruth, come here and read this article about the amusement park and its famous roller coaster:

Atlantic City's Famous Roller Coaster and Amusement Park to Reopen in the Summer of 2003 The amusement park was closed down in 1990 when it's owners had finally decided that they had no hope of doing business any longer. For a decade, the city was left to gamblers but now families are coming back with their children; the Boardwalk and the beaches are once again becoming lively.