

ar. Hml 10-17-54

Dear Grote --

Schuy will contribute to this letter before it gets mailed, and we all hope it will reach you at your ship before you set sail for Australia.

We have had a week or more of colds running through the family, but as of this weekend all six are on their feet and back to normal. You may hear that this weekend has been a wet one for Chicago. I gather this is the worst rain in some sixty-odd years. It started Saturday afternoon and within twenty-four hours there had been between six and ten inches (reports vary) leading to all sorts of chaotic conditions. In Wheaton there were flooded basements, great low areas which were turned into lakes mostly on the south side (near the high school and on south of Roosevelt Road). Practically everyone we know has had water in their basements - some six inches, some eight, and rumors of water pouring through windows to a depth of several feet. Many of the newer homes without basements had water floating right in their living rooms. But you will be as glad as we to learn that we apparently have the only dry basement in town. Not a drop of water, thank goodness!

Chicago is apparently on the verge of being declared a disaster area. The south and southwest sides were hardest hit -- flooded basements and streets -- people being evacuated in rowboats - schools closed -- failure of electricity and phone lines -- even some chance of water pollution. Last I heard the city water was declared ok. in Chicago but elsewhere in Cook County residents were being told to boil all drinking water. The Union Station was flooded last night when a retaining wall gave in and all trains were halted or else picked up and delivered passengers outside the city limits. The Daily News Building was flooded in the sub-basement (it's right next to the river which overflowed its banks), and their supplies of paper and equipment were useless. The Colonel came through and allowed them to use the Tribune's facilities so I hear.

It has really been an expensive tragedy for many people in the city. Last estimates I heard were of ten million dollars damage. Areas like Midlothian and Blue Island apparently have thousands of people being cared for by the Red Cross until the water recedes. It rained some more today, tho' only slightly; and the prediction is for at least two inches more tonight and tomorrow. But we Rebers are not personally affected so you need have no worries about us. Much of the water did recede in Wheaton today, tho certain areas still have what look like small lakes here and there.

I wanted to let you know about a very pleasant gent who stopped in here one day and chatted about you. His name was Mr. Lindstrom, from Barber-Green Co. in Aurora (they make road grading equipment, etc.). He had heard that you were doing some experimentation here in Wheaton, and allowed as how he was an amateur or arm-chair scientist himself -- likes to read about what people are doing. I briefed him on your activities - Washington and then Hawaii and now Australia. Apparently he believes that his company should spend some of its money to further scientific research, so when I heard that I invited him to stay a few more hours and did my best to sell your project. I made it clear that you were not trying to perfect some handy little gadget which every home-owner would eventually carry around in his pocket, and he understood that. He allowed that what you were doing was a far cry from road-grading equipment, but with the changing world one never knows when some embryonic idea might blossom into a whole new industry. I heartily agreed - spent some time telling him of the lack of research grants available in this country - threw in a few remarks about what other nations are doing in that field - and constantly mentioned people I'd heard you talk about in Britain, Holland, Australia, etc. to prove that you were tops in your field. I mention all this so that if the day comes when you hear from this man and he offers you a fortune, you will know where to send the commission! I seriously don't know whether anything will come of it, Grote, but I did my best to sell

him, and suggested he contact you for copies of your printed articles, etc. which I was "sure he would find interesting and stimulating". He was a nice gent - sounded sincere - but it may be that he has a hard time selling cosmic radiation to a road-grading outfit. Let us know if you ever hear from him.

I'm glad your box of "things" arrived intact; and also hope that you received the envelope of papers Schuy sent along with the photograph of the children. We thought you'd like to have it and this is the first time we've had all four children taken together. It wasn't easy, believe me. The day the photographer came to take the picture, it was boiling hot and Larry just refused to be a party to the nonsense. The photographer tried his best but came back about two weeks later to try again. This time Larry was all for it and behaved like a gentleman.  
HMMMMMMMM.

We received your power of attorney and I'll leave it to Schuy to bring you up to date on where we stand re house-moving. Suffice it to say that we have given up hope of doing anything this fall. We are getting all the facts together, tho', and have been attempting to do so all summer. It takes ages to get estimates from movers, plumbers, sewer people etc. and then we get conflicting reports on what can and cannot be done. Fortunately, I've been active in the Community Association and have had occasion to become well acquainted with the Mayor, City Clerk, and a few of the good and trusty council members -- believe me, I'm going to continue the friendship until they grant us a moving permit. What we hope to do is to get the permit this fall sometime - perhaps within a period of two or three weeks we can approach the council and then they can have a lot of time to decide whether or not to grant it. Once it is granted we'll have the winter to get our plans in shape, get firm estimates about building the addition, and we'll be able to go about the whole thing in a leisurely fashion and can afford the time to seek out the best for the least. We already have an architect on the job - not Mr. Salisbury but a younger man whom we know personally. He advised us to wait until spring to move the house and add on because then he can let contracts during the winter when contractors are hungry instead of busy. Then maybe we can get going first thing in the spring. If the city does not grant the permit we'll have to start all over on a new tack; but I'm prepared to fight them on it and I don't see how they can refuse.

Reports from my family back home indicate that they are all well and survived the hurricanes which hit the east so severely. They wish you well on your Australian venture.

Uncle Watt wrote us recently (last week) that he is attempting to put together a geneology of the Reber family, and wanted pertinent info about your parents' wedding date, your birthday, Schuy's, mine, all our children, etc. He said he'd get us a copy when he has it finished and we'll ask him to get one for you, too.

Fred Babcock has broken into print with a novel entitled "Hang Up the Fiddle". The Tribune Book Review section is plugging it as another Mark Twain type of thing but Schuy is inclined to believe the Tribune could do little but plug it since Fred is their book editor. Sour grapes! We have our names on the list at the library to read it, since we did not receive an autographed copy from the author himself! Haven't seen the Babcocks in years. Met Ginny King recently, and she reports that both Harley and Jim are now engaged.

Little more gossip that I can think of. Be sure to write us as soon as you arrive in Australia for we'll be anxious to know that you had a safe and interesting trip. We'll write you there and I'll send some snapshots of the family one of these days. We'll miss you this Christmas but we'll reserve a stocking for you on our chimney for next year for sure. Have a good trip down, Grote, and be sure that we all hope your work and your life in Australia will be satisfying and happy! Ben Voyage, old shoe, and much love.

*Jean*

And now I'll take over so this will get in the mail tonight---it should have gone long ago, but I had one devil of a cold last week, and probably we can get this to you on the ship.

Many thanks for the Power of Attorney; I had no idea that they were so involved, and it was a good suggestion to have Woodward make it out just to be sure that everything was in order. We are progressing on the move, and the hooker in the deal at the moment is the lack of sewer and water facilities in the street in front of the lot which is on the north side of Union St. between Ellis and Gary. That means we have to bring them in from one street or the other, and this is expensive. In addition, we want to be sure that drainage can be taken care of readily since we want a dry basement---the surface run-off appears to be good since this past week-end gave a fine chance for observation under peak conditions.

Our plans now call for straightening out the plumbing matter, getting an option on the lot subject to receipt of a permit, getting a building permit from the city for use next spring, and then bargaining with the tradesmen to get the job done economically. We have become firmly convinced that this is the best thing to do.

Also, I believe I can handle the deal so that we won't have to sell the land immediately thereby putting us in a position to make a better deal on it. Once the house is off, we feel sure we will be approached on the land, and to have a little time will be advantageous. I will keep you abreast of developments, and as I indicated earlier I will make disposition of funds due you to your account at the Harris providing you with an accounting of them and the transaction.

Business has been a little slow, and it hasn't picked up this fall as fast as I had hoped. However, we are still working at it, even though progress is mortal slow, and I get discouraged at times. It is a definite fact that vertical blinds are becoming a more accepted window covering since there are more manufacturers in the field, and one of these days the dealers will give them more attention---at that point we hope to have our product re-designed so it can be assembled in the field with us supplying the component parts from Geneva. This should reduce costs, broaden the market, and enable us really to be competitive with conventional forms of window coverings.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter to an outfit in Sydney who saw Verti\*Blind up in Muggdelein in the plant of one of their suppliers. I doubt if any business results from it for us, but you might like to use the letter as an additional point of contact in a strange land.

Enclosed also are some miscellaneous items which you will want. There are a few catalogues etc still reposing here, and I will mail them along one of these days---only a few.

On Tedd's birthday I measured all the children against the edge of the bathroom door and so marked them. Just recently, they stood up for an unofficial comparison and it appears that Andy, Jeff and Tedd have grown each about an inch in the last month. That represents a powerful lot of calories---- I'll measure them again on Larry's birthday to see what has taken place.

Have yourself a fine relaxing trip down under, and be sure to drop us a line as soon as you get ashore in Australia---so we'll know you got there OK. We'll miss having you here at Xmas, but we'll drink a toast

to you in absentia---and there's always next year. Here's hoping that you find the situation in Australia up to your expectations and that you really enjoy your associations there. This in addition to a fertile opportunity for experimentation under what we hope will be more stimulating and cooperative conditions. Make the most of it, and let us know how you are doing from time to time.

Love from all of us,

*Schuyler*

P.S. - I mislaid the ltr to Sydney - will send it along when I find it.



**WATER DID NOT STAY AWAY FROM THIS DOOR** — Charlotte Carley, of 828 S. Main, Wheaton, arrives at the Paul Dickinson home, 1011 S. Main, to assist in operation mop-up. Fairway section, where picture was taken, was one of the worst hit by flood waters in the Wheaton area. The Dickinsons had six inches of water in their home.

*25th to 40th Homes - NO BASEMENT* (Daily Journal photo)



**MAIN STREET SCHOOL, GLEN ELLYN** — Scene of school on south Main, looking northwest from Turner avenue, east of Main street, shows portion of flooded area on Glen Ellyn's south side. An unofficial source said over two inches of rain fell after this photograph was taken at 2 p.m. Sunday. School basement had two or three inches of water, but several houses in the area had basements flooded. (Daily Journal photo)