

November 2, 1955

Dear Grote:

We haven't heard from you since I shipped off that piece of equipment so I guess you must be busy using it---making those wheels go round. Actually, I hope that it reached you in good time and in good order because even your much maligned buddy at the San Francisco Steamshop office was doing his part.

We have been experiencing the impact of television. Some friends of ours left their set with us while they went on a trip to the West coast. We had the use of it for about two weeks or more, and it certainly is greedy of one's time. Naturally, the children thought it was terrific (I had been be-devilled about getting gone for months) but as it turns out, Jean is perhaps the most avid viewer in the household. We'll all be bug eyed in another six months.

However, a crisis has arisen!! These friends are going to move out to the West Coast and are about to take their TV along with them. Hence we are now on the trail of A TV ourselves because that one-eyed monster is part of the family. For my part, there have been several programs which could not have been staged except through the medium of television---and those few certainly make it worthwhile. We just have to learn to be discriminating. This is a gradual process, I understand, and is in direct proportion to the number of hours one stares at it during the first month.

This week Jean has had her first conference of the year with the children's teachers and we received the first report cards. Contrary to earlier times, conferences with teachers are regular procedures, not just in case of a problem child. Both Andy and Jeff are anything but that; they had excellent report cards, and the teacher's reports were glowing---believe me, there is considerable satisfaction in getting that kind of information about our babes. Todd is in kindergarten and also received an adequate report, but no report card until 1st grade. His main problem, according to the teacher, is that coming from a family where there are older children, it is difficult to settle down to the level of kindergarten. Hence he is bored, and tries to amuse himself. However, unlike Jeffrey who amused himself peaceably, Todd does it by wrestling with some of his buddies. We have been sitting on him about it, and I guess we are over the worst.

Jeff is in his second year of cub scouting which is the juvenile boy scout group. I'll have you know that I am Cubmaster, Pack 62, Longfellow School. It shouldn't take too much time, and up to know it has been principally paper work and telephoning. It's much simpler than having a Cub Den which is a once a week proposition, and since we have two more potential cubs coming along, I thought I ought to do my part.

The business situation has not improved appreciably, and the outlook is that it probably will remain somewhere at its present levels. When we didn't have so much competition, there was at least a higher volume level which could support (not well, but at least support) two families. Now, there are 14 outfits in the business, and ordinarily this would bode well because it indicated an expanding market. However, none of them are doing very well, and this competition has split up a static market so that our volume is off substantially. This trend has not been reversed for over a year, and at present I am witnessing the gradual disintegration of everything we had built up over the first three years. It is possible that there may be a living to be made out of this business, but on a very limited scale, and certainly not at the level that I anticipated. And this only with improvements in the product some of which are costly. What to do????

In order to salvage something of our efforts, I have decided to let Mike carry on the business, which is agreeable to him, and I will get a job. This will cut expenses, and perhaps provide Mike with a better living than he could make elsewhere. I will still retain ownership, and should volume get better in a year or so, then I can peddle the business at a time when it is showing improvement.

If you have any suggestions or thoughts on the matter, let me know, because I am job hunting as of right now.

The above was written earlier; not finished and not mailed. Since then your letter of the 2nd has arrived. It was good to get your letter, and I will get this one off to reach you at Millers Point which I assume is outside Sydney.

That itinerary is certainly an ambitious one . You're going to ~~be~~ be the globe girlding kid, and it sounds like the last leg between Rome and Sydney with a minimum of stops could be very exhausting. Why don't you take another few days with stop overs in the middle east, Persia, India, Singapore, and at least one spot in Indonesia. I assume there is some reason for going to Britain, and once there, going on around the other way is shorter than backtracking.

Predictions are that this will be one of the coldest winters on record, and the season's first snow fell a week ago. It didn't last long, but it sure was a cold breath of winter at the beginning of Autumn. Therefore, you may wish you had stayed for the summer down there---a whole year of winter is even too much for most Esquimeaux.

Naturally, we are looking forward to seeing you after all this time, and we are glad you will be spending the holidays with us. I hope by that time that I have a job so that my outlook on life will be a little brighter. We will meet you at the air port which brings up another question. Midway Airport ~~and~~ (old) and O'Hare Field ~~and~~ (new) are both ~~operating~~. If you can get a flight out of L.A. which ~~goes~~ goes into O'Hare it will be quicker and easier at this end---particularly if the roads are bad. In any case, when you reach L.A. be sure and send us a wire confirming your ETA and flight number. In this way we can check at this end to find out when to expect you.

I'm glad to know that everything is so satisfactory down in Hobart as compared with the situation in Hawaii. Just how do you plan to collapse the activity in Hawaii in less than two weeks??? Maybe you can hold an auction on your mountain top and auction everything off as is including your lease +!!!!!!!

Be prepared to have a room-mate at 212 and be sure we are glad you will be with us over the holidays----you'll never know the babes, they are getting so big.

Answered on 12-9-55
I gave new flight
schedule to Chicago.

All the best,

