

Monday, July 26, 1954

Dear Grote ---

I can't recall how many weeks it's been since we talked of writing you, but I know the weeks have passed into months. We really should try to write short notes at more frequent intervals -- and I might add that you should do the same. We were very concerned over not hearing from you for so many months there before your last letter. I suppose you sometimes wonder about the silences at this end, too. Why don't we vow to send short letters more frequently? Is it a deal? Particularly in view of the fact that you will be taking off for far distant shores -- even more distant than Hawaii -- we do want to know that you are in good health and spirits.

I can't even remember when we sent the last letter in your direction. Schuy sometimes announces that he's going to write you from the plant, and then time goes by and he doesn't have a chance to do so. Did we ever tell you that Andy had a sudden attack of appendicitis in April? It all blew up very hurriedly with a tummy ache when we woke up on a Monday morning. The doctor came to see her around 10:30 a.m. and she was on the operating table by 12:30. Fortunately it all worked out very well and she was home again in five days and in two weeks was as good as new. That has been our major bit of medical history; fortunately we've had few ills other than that. We've all been spending time at our dentists -- finally got Andy fixed up. She has had a great fear of dentists, as I think we told you, and it has been a problem. But at the moment she's all taken care of and went for her four or five visits all by herself with nary a shake or a quiver. We are also starting on a session with the orthodontist -- the man who straightens teeth for a princely sum. Jeff will have to have a good bit of work done since he has a severe malocclusion (sp?); Andy has a one-sided bite which will also have to be corrected. Todd isn't old enough yet but he'll be next in line in a few years. Larry seems at this point to have the best jaw formation of the lot.

We had thought of taking a week's vacation with the children -- perhaps a cottage on a lake in Michigan. But several places to whom we wrote were filled up, and others looked like a little pond in the middle of a field and we lost some of our enthusiasm. In view of the money we're paying out for operations and dentistry etc. we figured we'd better pass it up anyway. So Schuy will take a week off and we'll take a few side trips to the zoo and perhaps the Dunes in Indiana one day etc. etc. The kids will enjoy it and they aren't old enough yet to realize what they will miss in a real vacation.

Schuy and I are taking off for the weekend coming up. On Saturday we will celebrate our 11th wedding anniversary. Egad, we're really getting on! We have found a college girl who is old enough to be very sensible and capable as a baby sitter, and she will come in and man the fort for Saturday and Sunday. We're going into Chicago and see a show, have dinner, dance and spend the night. All of which means we can sleep late on Sunday morning which will be a refreshing change. It's been several years since we've had even that brief a vacation from the children and I think it will be good for both of us.

There hasn't been too much news of the local people whom you know. Pop Tweedie (Doug Sr.) died a few months ago under rather tragic circumstances. He and Doug Jr. had been on a business trip to Indiannapolis and Doug Jr. left him to come home and travel west. Pop apparently had a heart attack the next day, but wasn't discovered for two or three days. With such a large family living around him here, it seemed too bad that he was alone when the

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end came. He and Mrs. Tweedie had just bought a smaller house and were preparing to move into it within a week or two. Young Ed Tweedie (Doug's younger brother) remarried and is living in the big Tweedie house on Ellis Avenue. Apparently Mrs. Tweedie Sr. went ahead with the move after Pop's death and is living by herself. Ed Tweedie's first wife died about two years ago of polio, leaving him with two young daughters. His second wife was a widow with two young daughters, too, so now Ed has himself quite a harem. The four girls are very close in age; if he and his present wife have any children they can really end up with quite a family!

Through the years we've always had our eye on the Tweedie house for its potential space. But furnishing such a large home and keeping it clean and in good repair could be a back breaking job, and we aren't prepared for anything quite that large as yet.

A few months ago we heard that Aunt Agnes was considering selling her house and moving into an apartment. She was at that time going to offer her home to Henry Grote (who now lives in Downer's Grove), because his business plant was being moved somewhere north of here. Haven't heard any more about that, tho; perhaps it will not come to pass. Aunt Agnes is not in too good health but continues to live alone. No - I believe recently some friend came to live in the house with her. Hal Gilbert, whom we saw recently, said she is failing and he apparently does a good job of seeing her frequently and taking her for drives etc.

Aunt Myrtle came through in early May, just after Andy's operation. She came over one afternoon and looked fine and was very interesting to visit with. We gave her all the dope about your activities and she sent her love and affection to you. She seemed rather impressed with our children, and Todd almost knocked her off her feet in his exuberance as he tried to jump all over her. Fortunately, we averted a crisis by getting hold of him and steadying Aunt Myrtle! Ginny and Jack King had a nifty trip to Europe apparently. (You'll remember they were planning the trip when we saw them when you were here). Harley got himself engaged recently to the girl they mentioned that night, someone from the university in Ohio.

I had a call one day from someone at the Math and Physics department of Wheaton College. He apparently had a student who was interested in your type of work, and they thought you were still in Washington. He wanted to contact you there to see if this young man might come and work with you. I explained that you were in Hawaii and might even be enroute to Australia (this was before we learned that your trip had been postponed), but I did give him your address out there. You may have heard from him. Also, one day sometime after that another young man called here and tried to pick my brains about what you were doing and where. He was not representing any outfit, just a young man who had read about your work and was interested. I explained where you were and what I thought you were doing. He got very technical - i.e., what wavelengths you were using etc. He also was very curious as to who was financing your operation. On this I played very dumb. I didn't know from nothing! I did give him your address, too, so you may have heard from him.

Andy and Jeff are taking swimming lessons two days a week at the pool and Jeff is making real progress. Andy takes a dimmer view and finds it difficult to get her face under water etc. Jeff can swim a little, and floats and swims under water (his distance is controlled by the length of time he can hold his breath, for he hasn't mastered the breathing yet). Andy is also taking piano lessons. She became very interested in the piano here a while ago and surprised us by playing songs with two hands, chords and all, all by herself. So we figured she was really interested and ready for lessons; she is doing a very nice job and is progressing rapidly. The band concerts in the park are proving a pleasure and a nuisance. The kids love them, of course, and the boys can hardly wait till they can play

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in the band. Each week they choose a different instrument which they would like to play - and each week the instruments get bigger and noisier! However, since the band rehearses in the park on Wednesday nights and plays the concert on Thursday nights, we find that the children can't get to sleep until after ten o'clock two nights in a row -- and they have unusual dispositions by Friday!

As you might expect, we have been keeping an ear to the ground on the housing situation. Prices are still high and the offerings are of a low quality. We thought we had something a few months ago when we found a large old house up on Harrison street just off Wheaton Avenue. It was a stucco structure (very unattractive, with stucco falling off in large chunks). But it had ten rooms, and a beautiful back yard. We looked it all over and then took an architect through it with us. He and Schuy went over it with a fine-toothed comb, noting all the things which needed to be done to put it in good repair. It is presently a two-apartment house, so that would mean certain walls had to come out and others had to be put in. All in all, the estimated cost of putting it in good shape came to \$18,000. We nearly died at that figure. Oy. The house was being offered for sale at \$16,000, so you can see where you would have ended up. We had thought it might be possible to buy it for \$12,000 and maybe put six or eight thousand into it and come up with something possible. But we had no wish to buy anything which would require that much overhauling.

In view of the fact that Mr. Allmart, Karl Rahnje, Al Woodward, etc. etc. have all indicated that the value of our property lies in the location and not in the structure; and in view of the fact that our house here is too good a structure to tear down, we again looked all over town for a possible spot to move it. We had noted the lot directly across the park from us, as I think we pointed out to you. This we find is available at the ridiculous price of \$5500. Further sly investigation indicates that we couldn't move this house to that location because that area is a fire zone and all new structures built or moved onto it must be of brick construction. So, even if the price were reasonable, no one could move this house over there.

We investigated another lot, down on Front Street near where the Ashe's moved the old homestead. There is a small lot there, only 40 feet wide, which is available at \$3600, which also seems to us to be a ridiculous price for the size and location. We even tried one lot way up on Gary Avenue, thinking it might be possible to move this house up that way. This lot was available to us for \$6500! (Don't ask me where people get the idea that their land has gold underneath it!)

We were very discouraged, need I say. Then, quite by chance, I was driving around one day and noted the rear half of a lot which had a bush hedge around it but which appeared to be all overgrown and uncared for behind the hedge. I got out and investigated, we tracked it down, and found that it is a separate lot even tho' it looks like somebody's unkempt back yard. It is for sale at a reasonable price. It is on Union Ave., between Gary and Ellis. (I'll enclose a map so you can orient yourself). The street is a quiet one, with lots of large trees. The lot itself has small and a few large trees on it, a number of evergreens, and is 80 feet wide and 155 feet deep. It looks now as if it would be ideal, for it is only a block and a half from the school, not too far from town, an established area which is not wide open to the hot sun (even tho' some of the trees and bushes would have to come down to make room for the house). We are at present trying to find out whether or not the house can be moved there. The city engineer went out with us and noted the trees along the way which would have to be trimmed, and allowed as how we would have to take the matter before the city council to get a moving permit. We then talked to both Belding and Muehlfeldt, both of whom think the move could be made quite simply without affecting too many trees along the way.

4 They are preparing estimates for us as to the cost of the job. Belding has already given us a partial estimate of the work he would do in moving it and we have to get prices for the work which he will not do, but which will have to be done by someone else - i.e. plumbing, sewer, water etc. Muelfeldt is supposed to give us a complete estimate on the whole job, but three weeks have passed and we haven't heard from him as yet. It seems to take forever to get any dope!

At the moment, until we have all the prices, we can't say for sure that this is what should be done; but it appears very likely that this will be a good thing to do. Then, we will have to convince the city fathers that their precious trees will not be adversely affected along the way. The house could be moved from Seminary, down Wheaton to Wesley, over Wesley to Gary, up Gary to Union, and half a block on Union to the lot.

Although we have a plan in mind for adding to this house, we think we would delay any addition in the beginning. It seems wiser to move it as is, then redecorate and re-do the floors etc. and get this much of the house in shape, meanwhile finding out whether or not we would want to remain in that location indefinitely. If so, we could then add on to get the room we require, for we do require more living space, for sure. We could wait another year for that, tho', if we were fixing up what space we do have now and if we were in a more pleasant location as far as traffic is concerned.

Naturally, we are interested in your opinion of this whole idea. In your last letter you indicated that we were in a better position to find out what the possibilities are than you, and I think that is true. You also indicated that you felt that what was good for us would be good for you. From the advice we've been able to get, it appears that having the house on this lot is a detriment rather than an advantage, and that the house does not add to the value of the property. It therefore seems silly to sell both house and land for the value of the land, if the house can be of value to us or to someone else. The going rate of houses offered to be moved is very low. We can ask Mr. Muelfeldt how much he would pay for this house if he were going to move it off, and can try to ask Belding the same so that we can affix some sort of valuation on the structure itself. Then we would, of course, be glad to pay you whatever amount would be a fair evaluation of your half of the house, if that meets with your approval. Then we could sell the vacant land, either immediately or hold out for a certain price if you think that would be wise. Both the telephone company and the Wheaton Federal Savings and Loan (directly behind us here) seem like good prospects for this land, even tho' we have not approached either of them as yet.

There are so many angles to this whole thing that it makes my head swim sometimes, but I think it is worth the effort to move the house if we can get just as much out of the vacant land as we could with the house made a part of the sale. If you agree, and if it still looks like the thing to do when we have all the prices in, then Schuy and I would buy the lot on Union, pay to move the house, get a mortgage on it in the new location, pay you for your half of the house, and then both you and we would wait till the land is sold before getting any money out of it.

Will you try to let us know soon what your ideas on the subject are? If this is to take place, we'd like to get the house moved by this fall. With all the delays in time for just getting estimates, I have no idea how long it would take to get over the other hurdles and get the job done. Before we can proceed at all, of course, we would have to have your opinion. We would probably also have to have your power of attorney to make the transaction legally clear. After all, you and Schuy now own this house and lot. If we move the house off and settle it down on a new location and transfer the ownership to Schuy and me in that new location, we should have some legal power to show that we haven't just lifted your half of the house off your half of the lot! Egad!

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Since you may be leaving for Australia in a few months, it would seem wise to have your power of attorney with Schuy so that he can handle the details, no matter what decision we all reach together. I hope you know that we would not take any steps without getting your approval first, but having the power of attorney would make it much simpler to transact business and would avoid having to send documents half way round the world.

Will you try to give this some thought and let us hear from you as soon as possible? For until we know you agree that this is a good idea, we can't take any action at all. We won't buy the lot and we won't try to get the permit to move the house until after we hear from you, for after all, you are a party to the deal now.

Where do you stand in your plans for going to Australia now?

The Verti-Blind business was a bit slow this spring, as was business in general, but seems to be picking up again. The salesman whom Schuy hired is earning his draw, which is pretty good for such a short time with us.

This has turned into a book! Even more reason why we should write more frequently! I'll sign off and leave this for Schuy, who will want to add something perhaps. Let us hear about your plans, and let us know what you think of the plan I outlined. We all hope you are in good health and in good spirits.

Lots of love from all of us,

Jean 

Dear Grote:

There is little I can add to the above except that I have been carrying around in my brief case several items about which I wanted to write to you for at least two months. Thus, Jean took the bull by the horns in starting this letter to you, and I will now attempt to be brief so that we can get it off to you in the morning.

The package of pamphlets and magazines was sent off to you about the first of this month---postage to Zone 8, \$2.95. Not much has accumulated since then, and we'll hold it here for the time being.

Enclosed is a letter from the Detroit Edison Co., and from United States Lines. The latter will probably have an effect on the shipment of this piece of equipment from Wheaton at such time as you decide you want it.

Also enclosed is a letter from the Commonwealth Edison Co. which is self-explanatory, and which I have underlined in part. In this case, the company has provided an alternative in case you take no action, and therefore, action by you prior to a deadline date is not imperative. However, this is not always true.....

I have reference to a stock issue of the Conn. Lit. and Pwr Co. for which you received some subscription warrants. This poop was contained in a letter dated June 16th which was received here

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probably about the 18th. The warrants expired on June 30th. By the time I got into Chicago it was the 24th, and I checked with a broker to find out that all these warrants at the current market were worth about \$45.00. However, to be any good the warrant certificate had to be signed and sent to New York to arrive there before the 30th. There wasn't time enough to send this out to you and back again so I thought about forging your signature----and then decided against it.

could
With you in Australia, this ~~could~~ happen again and cost you some more money---the Commonwealth Edison Situation approaches it. The answer may be to make out a Power of Attorney enabling me to take care of routine matters in connection with your securities account directing me to deposit any monies received at the Harris, and specifically excluding any power to sell securities owned or disburse any funds on deposit. My hands are tied as the matter now stands, and you are the only loser, as well as leaving these matters at loose ends.

This should be separate from the Power concerning the premises here at 212. Jean has explained that situation much better than I could, and with you so far away, and probably about to be even more remote, it becomes, I think, desirable and wise for us to act for you since your best interests coincide with ours. You can get the forms at any stationery store---write the dope in yourself, and have them notarized---that's it.

We also received a statement as of April 28 of your account at the Wailuku Br. of the Bank of Hawaii---balance 50 cents. You ought to clear off that balance if it still exists.

The business is still progressing and we are doing better, but business it harder to come by these days, and we have to work harder to get it. However, there are various straws in the wind which look good from the long haul. One is that the big name in the window covering industry---Kirseh---has come out with a metal vertical blind which draws from side to side. They are able to spend money promoting it, and it should do the industry good. Also, our advertising is beginning to be effective, and we can spend money on it without wondering if we are throwing it down the sewer. Naturally, it took time to come by this since it meant testing and more testing, but we are getting the answers. I'M working like the devil, and we are far from getting rich, but I still have hopes of making a real buck out of this one of these days.

Here's hoping that all goes well with you; have a look at page 45 of Time Mag's issue of July 19th ---an article of a radio sextant. If I recall rightly, this is what I approached one P. K. Leberman about during the war while I was in the Radio Division of BuShips. Are not your patents filed on this particular application of radio astronomy????

Take it easy, let us hear from you, and keep us up to date on when you are leaving for "down under"....

All the best,



