

Dear Jim,

11/1/79

Lil and I both felt very good after reading your letter of the 28th this a.m. It is a wonderful thing you do and you should feel fine about it. Details of the kind you give are new to us and add meaning to what we'd assumed. The time it takes is more than worth it in the ~~great~~ good it does for those in great distress.

Thanks for the good advice for Mike when his son gets here. I saw him today but did not mention it. Neither of us will forget it. There has been an unexplained delay. We drafted and redrafted a letter for him and took it to him. There is no problem in China. His son has the passport and is in Shanghai awaiting a U.S. paper of some kind.

If making logs from paper doesn't require another machine I am interested in knowing how because getting the paper to the junk yard is sometimes a problem, as is storing it until I have a load.

We had much severe tree damage several weeks ago when we had a heavy, wet snow while the trees were in full leaf. I doubt any of the poplars escaped harm. And the larger of the two mimosas near the house has to come down - piece by piece, from the top! For this we have a tree man who was booked up for two months. Gives an idea of the great damage hereabouts. Skyline Park in the Shenandoah lost 25% of its trees.

My neighbor Paul, the one who lives at the end of the lane, took some that were no problem down for me and I've been working - for me now - hard getting caught up on them. All that does not weigh over 100 lbs is up at the house. I'll have to split the larger hunks where they are first.

We have used no other source of heat thus far. While the days have not been bad and some have been balmy, nights are below 40 and have been down to 25. I'm using the poorer wood first, saving the better stuff for the rougher weather. It is a source of satisfaction, too, even though I have other than muscular reactions sometimes.

Glad you made no mention of what I told you about Lil. She has a strange attitude toward such things, one I can't explain. The neurologist discharged her last week. The EEG showed it was not a stroke. She says of what lingers that her head is not clear. But she seems to have all her faculties and is otherwise OK.

Spoke to Dave and Guth about a week ago. Guth was much impressed by you. I'll let Dave, who had not heard from you, know that you are well and busy. He had told me that Elizabeth and David had gotten a present for me. It came today, an album of the Smithsonian jazz collection! Wonderful!

Dave and Deloyd have about wrapped the bibliography up. This is what we spoke about when they called. Much work but a worthwhile project.

Lesar is in Singapore visiting his in-laws. Last time the medics there took his appendix out when he passed a kidney stone so I'm looking forward to his safe return.

The clippings did include stories I'd not seen. I didn't even know that Garry finally made that charge against Lane. I agree. It is typical of Lane. A dangerous and very sick man. He's finished his Jonestown book and the case he is on in D.C. is Orest Penase. He and two of his brothers are in a mass arrest having to do with bribery over prostitution. More than 100 male and female prostitutes were arrested in a mass swoop in the Quarter. Whatever the facts, I predict Lane will take the line that this is ~~xxxx~~ merely the latest part of the Government's JFK conspiracy.

Orest flipped out years ago. He had enough money to live straight and more than comfortably. He admitted being worth 1/3 million at his bond hearing.

Our best,

28 October 1979

Dear Harold:

Herewith some clippings which have accumulated. I haven't made copies for Dave because I've been rushed. Leave it to you whether you think he needs any of them. I doubt that he does.

I've been so busy that I quite lost track of the time and was quite shocked to find I last wrote you in August. I'm supposed to work at Hospice two days a week, but usually it turns out to be four because so much needs to be done. In addition I continue volunteer work, both in patient care and in a new area which is being opened up, designing a program to broaden the help HOM gives the newly bereft family survivors. It sounds grim, of course, and at times it is, but there are unique rewards and satisfactions. More and more I realize how lucky I am to have something so worthwhile to do in retirement.

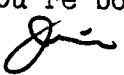
As a patient care volunteer, I lost my first "patient" about a month ago, a retired locomotive engineer with lung cancer. He had no children, his wife had died 30 years ago, and he really was the loneliest person I think I've ever met. No relatives about except a very distant cousin who couldn't see him very often because of her own family obligations. He was grumpy, distant, a complainer, and heckled his nurses unmercifully in the rest home where he wound up. Fortunately I knew another retired engineer from Southern Pacific, and it turned out that my friend had started out as a fireman under Old Tom. He rounded up some other retired SP people, and pretty soon Old Tom was having visitors. By the time he died (peacefully, in his sleep) he was smiling now and then and seemed to feel he meant something to others after all. Wasn't much we could do for him, but clearly it was better than nothing.

I'm now working with a retired carpenter whose wife is dying of some kind of cancer. He's a great guy but has his problems as he's somewhat diabetic, which carries with it its own emotional syndrome as well as physical effects. He's lucky in that his daughter-in-law, who is taking care of the old lady in her own home, was once an x-ray technician and is doing a magnificent job with both the old people.

I have nothing here at the house which lists any phonograph record course for a Chinese who wants to learn English, so I can't make any recommendation about Mike Miao's son. I'd suggest that Jim Lesar or his wife could find out what's available more easily than most. I'm sure there must be something of the sort. Berlitz may have something, but I would think almost any university department of Chinese could point out such a course, or one that could be used to some extent anyway. Actually, he'll probably learn more quickly if the family persists in speaking to him in English after teaching him some fundamental words and phrases and explaining them at first in Chinese, then going over to English and staying away from Chinese except in emergencies or when all else fails.

This method worked best the other way round when I was learning Chinese, and I see no reason why it wouldn't work with the Miaos.

Your accumulation of wood for the winter sounds very impressive. If you're interested in learning how to make logs out of discarded newspapers, I'll be glad to write out the instructions. They burn evenly, do not pop like wood does in the fireplace, and are very satisfactory. I use them most of the time instead of wood because of the non-popping feature. It's a good way to make use of something that otherwise is quite useless. Let me know if you're interested.

Delighted to hear you're both hanging in there. Keep it up, and keep me posted. All the best,  jdw