

6/4/82

Dear Jim,

The news about your eye is great! And it looks like there is every reason to believe that it will only get better.

I got good eye news this week. No major changes in the slow-growing cataracts, no reason to expect them to grow any faster, no change in the corrections, and all that is visible with the light examinations, blood vessels, optic nerve, etc., if what it should be.

We had a rather good day after that examination. We picked up Lil's 92-year old mother, took her to shop for dresses, which she'd not planned, then took her out to lunch, the kind of change she enjoys, and again out to supper, and that night she saw some relatives she'd not seen for a while when they planned the family reunion. She'd been a teetotaler all her life, until about a year ago, when a grandson got her to take a taste of wine. She enjoys an occasional one but won't get it where she's staying, so I had a bottle for her.

I don't recall the downhill of your property, only the great view through the large window, but I imagine it is steep enough for you to get some good exercise bringing the firewood up. I've got year after next's supply stacked and drying just past the swimming pool, and the beginning of this winter's supply, most of which I plan to buy dried. The future supply is six cords of green oak, which will dry.

Hope you have other bay trees left.

Lil hasn't been doing much cooking. She is well but remains tired, so we go out pretty often. So she hasn't used many of the bay leaves.

As I write this there is mad dashing by grown and young chipmunks, grown rabbits and their very young, who can't move fast, and all kinds of birds right outside my window. The animal have learned that we feed birds on the ground and that the birds waste much from the feeders. The damned squirrels have just wrecked the new hanging feeder I thought would defeat them and did for six months. For no need or reason, either. They get plenty without those seeds. I ~~xxx~~ enjoy seeing all of them carry on, but they make so much extra work and trouble! But the deer do not tarry around here and we don't see them often. Quail, alas, have grown scarce, between the building and the shooting.

I liked Hal, too, but I've often wondered about his silence.

If you saw last night's ABC special on Hoover, none of it was new, despite the puffery, and all of it on JFK was badly done. It was actually unfair to the FBI and ranged from dishonestly angled to false.

Can't begin to top your Mallard story, but I've a different one for you.

A young friend found an egg. He made an incubator to hatch it for his two kids, girl about 6 and boy about 2. It hatched. They've raised it too successfully. It now thinks it is not a duck, won't go in the stream near where they live, doesn't join the mallards in the city lake near which they live, and developed two dropped wings, distorted outer joints on both. I suggested to the wife that she either tape them in place for a while or take to the State vets, who are not far from them. She did the latter. They could not begin to believe that they were looking at a 5-week old female, it is that large. Their diagnosis, either overly-rapid growth or protein deficiency. I know it can't be the latter because I told them where to get what feed, and it had ample protein. But with all that TLC, it could have grown too rapidly. The duck is spoiled in other ways. It also gets to go to school, where the kids love it.

We have a friend who found a lone, unfledged robin out of the abandoned nest. She raised it and now it won't go away. It comes to be fed the cut-up worms her husband and son have been providing. It now won't even eat uncut worms. It flies but doesn't go away. Her husband and son took a tree down. There was a nest in it with three unfledged young, species not yet known. They are feeding them cut-up worms and by golly, the robin also feeds them!

For the time being the affidavits are past. But there are other chores connected with the litigation. Just mailed Lesar a long memo on a DJ Brief that is distinguished for its mendacity. That is in the oldest of all FOIA cases, for the JFK scientific testing. I'm hoping that Lesar can find a safe way of calling all the dishonesty to the attention of the appeals court. They know the government lies, but they don't want to have to admit or face it.

Y
ur best,
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31 May 1982

Dear Harold and Lil:

Not much to tell you in the way of news, but I want to thank you for your good letter of the 17th. I hope your affidavit chores have eased off a bit by now, for both your sakes.

I last saw the eye surgeon two weeks ago. He said come back in three months, and in the meantime see the optometrist in mid-June for possible correction of the glasses lens for the left eye (which was the one operated on.) Pressure continues normal in that eye, and, with the help of a mild medication, in the right eye too. Vision in the left eye is very nearly normal, so I seem to be doing okay.

Late in March the winter wet season wound up with a windstorm in the midst of an extended downpour of rain, and I had four bay trees blown down and a black acacia uprooted, all falling downhill and away from the house. I hired some kids to chainsaw them into firewood and drag the brush down the hill and into a gully. This exposed an area as big as a couple of tennis courts where I had not been able to keep smaller ~~xxx~~ brush under control since ~~before~~ Jenifer became ill in 1976, so the past few weeks I've been cleaning it out -- digging out tangles of blackberries, poison oak, chaparral, wild plum sprouts, anise and giant weeds and dragging or rolling it all down into the same gully. The place looks much more open and spacious from the deck, and I'm glad to have it cleared away because of the fire hazard during the dry season. A young fawn uses it to do the equivalent of his jogging while his mother looks on, and there are three pair ~~xx~~ of quail who parade across it regularly every day on their foraging rounds. And the usual array of noisy bluejays scolding the occasional cat that wanders through.

No, I have heard nothing from Hal Verb since about the time I retired nearly 10 years ago. I'm not sure quite why, but assume it was a combination of my retiring from active news work and his being involved at the time with job troubles and an assortment of other people of whom I knew little. I remember Kaffke, although I never met him. I think Hal had him figured as a plant, as I certainly did. We were ~~justxxx~~ content that Hal dropped away, as he was a puzzling combination of dogged worker with considerable insight and yet a childlike willingness to trust almost anyone, such as Christian. We liked Hal, and he worked well with us, but we never felt certain of his discretion.

You mentioned the mallards who have taken over your swimming pool. Reminds me of the pair of mallards who were running Marin General Hospital during Jenifer's stays there. They would fly up from the nearby estuary and sit sedately on the lawn for hours at a time. One night when I went down to the basement cafeteria for some dinner the kitchen door was open, and there on the floor just inside the back door were the drake and hen, sitting comfortably on the linoleum, waiting for a handout. People working all around them, no problems.

Interesting about the Reader's Digest decision to do the book on the ~~un~~ answered questions. Hope your interview with their write turned out well.

Glad to hear you're both well and okay, and let's hope the summer will be gentler than usual.

All the best,


jdw