

Dear Jim,

4/9/79

Every once in a while we did wonder if you are okay from the long silence, even though we know you were well and gratifyingly occupied with your Hospice work. So on both counts we were glad to get your 4/4. It is more than a merely worthwhile thing to be doing, especially because you take less than common skills to it and genuineness.

I'd never stopped to think that the loss might be harder on women, even greater. But given the kind of society we have it is logical. Also, I wonder if instead of "mere man" there might not be other considerations, from not being another woman who might take things wrong to the fact they've been using to discussing what meant much to them with another man.

With the unwillingness of men to be comforted, or talk or admit how they feel, do you suppose the general macho thing is a factor?

I'd never given thought to such things but they come to us all and it is new to me because I've not thought of it.

Anyway, you are doing a fine thing that should make you feel very good.

Our warmer weather, of which your comment on yours, has ended, I'm sure only temporarily. Cold rain and even a few snow-flakes a few minutes ago. Keeping me in and I feel it.

Burned the last of the fireplace wood last night and cleaned it for the season today rather than saving any for a current outage this time of the year. Should it happen, as winds a half-hour ago could have caused, it has moderated enough so we could make out with more clothing.

Our crocuses are past and the other earlier bloomers are opening. One Emperor tulip, some narcissus and jonquils. Wonderfully those that were lost in the areas I could not clear since 1975 are showing a good survival rate. I hope to move much of those closer to the house so as we get older we can enjoy them more and care for them with less trouble.

Year before last we stocked the pond with goldfish. Unthinkingly, without a predator to keep the population down. Last year we didn't see one of the 100 we put in. This year I've seen maybe 500 at a time. Marvel that there was enough oxygen for them over the winter and enough food.

Had a solid conservation man here for some advise on repairing the wier that should feed the pond. He believe my notion may work and that anything else will be a major cost. So I've engaged a man for next month. He'll go along the creek bed with his backhoe and gather all the large rocks for piling below what remains of the wier and then dump bottom silt and gravel atop, to filter down and leave no major holes between the larger rocks. That will help getting fresh water into the pond if it works. Meanwhile, I'd sure love to find someone anxious to seine some free goldfish!

Made me feel good to get the admiration of the solid conservation man when he saw what I did on the other side of the pond and that what was within possibility was all chewed up into visible mulch. He could gather from the stumps and what is visible of what I merely pushed over the side with what you may remember, a fodder fork. Kept me farthar away from thorns that regular pitch fork. He was so pleased he lined me up for some left-over but fresh fescue seed at 25¢ a pound. I still have the old Cyclone seeder, which you may also recall, from the farming. So I'll be seeding again when the wind is down and the soil dry enough.

The Wrones will be coming here in a couple of months and we look forward to it. Lesar was up Saturday for Id1 to do his taxes. I took him down the cellar and he flipped, that impressed with what I've accomplished with the part-time helper of the student Ras. He thinks we will be overjoyed. Imagine - I can go right to where any one of maybe 125,000 pages is right now if I have the file number. (Soon enough without the number for I've won the battle to get the 40 feet of index and already have an index of the various records,

more an inventory although the Dallas FBI called it an index.

I'm so please that someone like Dave will be looking after these things, gotten at such cost and (boast) when every~~ix~~ one thought it impossible.

It also was gratifying when Dave called me once to speak as he did of the political science I've been putting into court records, what I've been about in my various affidavits. (He doesn't have them all yet, either, I'm sure.) Then when Howard, undergraduate history major, and a local history PhD all said essentially the same thing, each with an element of surprise or discovery, of course I felt great about it.

Without knowing it was my birthday our friends the Harpers (he an editor of the local papers, shifted from the pm as they expand) had invited us for dinner yesterday so we had a pleasant respite from work. We'll be doing the same thing in 40 days for Ed's, with another friend, who was so apologetic over forgetting mine in the excitement of his newest grandchild.

Couple of interesting stories there.

His father was a fundamentalist preacher near Wilmington when I was in high school. He also taught commercial subjects there. Jim is a history prof but threw it all over VN and took his family to England for some years. They then returned and started anew, with Jim making his living from his former hobby. He is a model maker. And on his previous job he made the models for - sit tight - Three Mile Island!

He was a fan of mine from suburban Philadelphia. When that job was over he applied for a similar one between here and DC. When he came down for an interview he phoned and then came over. I persuaded him to consider living in Frederick rather than down below, especially because his wife doesn't drive and doesn't want to. I suggested an area and he actually found an old town house within a block. They love it and the neighborhood and living with neighbors who are that and friendly is all ways. A real nice small community varying from a black church across the street to college prof neighbors within a few houses. Bet walks to fine groceries and carries the food home in a cart we haven't used in years. They are delighted with the schools for their young r kids and the friends they've made. And Jim is at work in a half hour or a few minutes more. He lined his son-in-law up at the same place.

Wow! I've just looked outside. The snow is heavy, the temperature 34 and my snow blower is put away for the season! Guess we'll wait for it to melt this time if it keeps up!

Thought you might be interested in the enclosed WxPost story on a tragic figure.

Our best,

4 April 1979

Dear Harold and Lil:

And from this end, silence also does not mean lack of interest, nor ill health, or any other calamity, merely that, like you, I've been busy. And doing very well. Not much that can excite you, but it truly is satisfying to do the various volunteer chores I'm able to for Hospice. The latest being the assembly of a master mailing list of more than 5,000 IEM cards.

And recently the volunteer support group known as Friends of Hospice staged a mammoth garage sale which netted \$5,000. I helped collect and sort all the junk, set it up for sale, and did some of the selling. We filled and emptied a whole gymnasium.

Soon they will begin working volunteers into their home health care program, which the Hospice in San Diego already does. I'll try this too, partly because I know something about it and mostly because I know how much another interested helper can mean.

It is not easy to mention this without seeming immodest, but perhaps the most satisfying activity I've got into is helping new survivors. Both men and women, although the men are less willing to accept comfort and help. But even with a couple of the men I think I've been able to furnish new perspectives and help them figure out what they're going through. One is a retired master sergeant from the Presidio, quite shattered by the death of his wife; the other is a pianist for a very well known orchestra. It happens that among the men survivors I'm apparently the one the newly widowed women find least menacing and therefore easier to talk to. There are several who have thanked me for just talking to them, comparing notes and assuring them they aren't crazy to be depressed, or resentful, or even full of rage at what has happened. In most cases they have lost extraordinarily intelligent and ~~and~~ talented husbands, some of whom I have known by reputation at least. These gals really have a hard time, and seem genuinely astounded to encounter a mere man who will tell them he knows very well how they feel and is willing to sit down and discuss it with them. Just not being another woman seems to be an important part of it, just as I can talk to a woman more easily about Jenifer than I could to another man.

Dave/and Elaine called a couple of nights ago, and we must have talked for almost half an hour. They sound fine, and agree with my suspicion that the Three Mile Island accident (which now seems to be less likely to turn into a disaster) probably was a good thing to have happened, in that it finally made people think through a bit about the inherent daggers of the whole nuclear power technology and of letting private capitalism have any serious degree of control over it. I trust there aren't enough prevailing north winds to pose any danger to your area.

Finally, it has turned warm, and I'm about to go into the usual round of cleaning up the place outside, cutting back brush, trimming trees, pulling weeds and what not. I can use the fresh air and exercise, and certainly could use your shredder if it were within borrowing distance.

Best to you both,

jdw