

16 November 1972

Dear Harold:

If we have few things to send you this time, it's because very little has turned up in the material we've been able to cover. We're still much behind and probably will stay that way until until we have the necessary to time to do the job.

Fortunately, it won't be long. We can scarcely believe it, but my last day of work will be Dec. 2. The AP frequently behaves like a mindless outfit, the existence of which can be explained only by the fact that if it didn't exist it would have to be invented. Consequently it doesn't have to act like it had any sense, and doesn't. After decreeing, contrary to the contract, that although I would retire on Dec. 31 instead of on my 65th birthday, Dec. 9, it changed its mind and said yes, retire him on his birthday. The local gauleiter looked up the calendar and found Dec. 9 to be a Saturday and decreed that "we can't have you working on your birthday," and said I'd retire as of Dec. 8. That would be my last day. Then I checked with the sub-gauleiter, the guy who actually makes out the work schedules, and found I have four days of compensating time off coming because of holiday work. So those, with the two days off coming anyway that week, pushed the last day of work back to Dec. 2.

I suspect the decision to revert to my birthday as a retirement date was dictated by their insurance contract, just in case I should have a heart attack. If I were still working and that happened it would cost them a bundle. I have no intention of having a heart attack, by the way.

If there is one thing I can do with absolute assurance, it is to relieve you of any apprehension that I have some secret hangup about retirement. We both have longed for it for more than five years, and would have retired early if it hadn't meant sacrificing most of the miserably small pension I'll get. With Social Security we think we can get by, especially if I can shed some of the AP inhibitions that all AP men acquire and find some place to sell a piece now and then. We'll be poor, but don't feel we'll mind that unless we run into a disaster of some kind. Anyway, to say we're looking forward to living our own life for a change and do what we want to do is the understatement of the year. Never have we looked forward to anything so much. After all, not everyone gets to retire with a functioning STM, nor, for that matter, with a devoted clipper and paster of raw material for the STM to work on.

Among its other limitations, the AP has an invariable habit of locating its bureaus all over the world in gastronomical deserts or areas where ptomaine poisoning is endemic. Consequently one of the crosses the STM has had to bear (and I with her) has been the preparation of lunches, including sandwiches. We get around this daily emergency partly by making up sandwiches a couple of loaves of bread at a time and then freezing them, in individual baggies. Even so, it was a drag, and the STM can be reliably described as taking an unholy delight after a sandwich inventory and discovering that with 13 days to work, we have exactly 14 sandwiches. Today she has devoted considerably time



and thought to making out a sandwich schedule for the remainder of my AP career. And with five kinds to choose from it works out that never in a single work week will I be forced to repeat a single sandwich! She zeroed in on this monumental /problem with the same concentration she used in fixing up Mr. Hunt.

We have not yet decided what to do with the leftover sandwich, but are thinking seriously of having it preserved in plastic.

The one thing we never have worried about is what to do in retirement. There is much to be done around here that has been let slide during the last few years when the work at the office has been so demanding and exhausting (Like everyone else in the AP, I've been absorbing speedups for the past 20 years as new equipment is introduced with never any admission that they create many new problems while solving old ones). And we both are keenly interested in what goes on and have our own reactions to it, although we must agree with you that times are already here when unpopular ideas run into a falling market, to put the problem in its most innocent form. But we're overjoyed at the prospect that at long last we may be able to do something we want to do and believe in, something we can feel has more meaning than pro football games, murder trials, and multiple-fatal highway accidents. Murder trials, of course, can be important in some cases to the whole society, but three or four a day, day in and day out?

And, we both feel very strongly with you that these should be the best years. We're both in good health and look and feel younger than we are. Oh Boy!

One of the things we want to get back to is weaving, although it's far down the list. We have a beautiful 40-inch loom which we've had almost 20 years but had to quit using after Nov. 22, 1963. When you were here it was lent to an acquaintance in order to get it out of the house and make way for a desk and files for the STM. Since then it has been returned and has to sit unused in the living room because there's no other place for it. It's a jack loom, made of very light colored maple by a true craftsman and is very handsome, even telescoped in its storage position. When we were weaving we made scarves, vast quantities of table mats, and some skirts and a few cushion covers, but never really had time to do very much and then had to quit altogether. But it's probably the most relaxing and satisfying thing of its kind, we thought. After my father died in 1954, my mother had the same loom in a 30-inch width, and we feel it probably prolonged her life several years. She made quite a career of it, taking all the prizes in sight at the Napa County fair and surrounding communities for several years. As a small girl she had seen the itinerant weavers come round, converting rags into carpets, and had always been fascinated by the whole idea of weaving but never before had been able to learn anything about it.

Although we fully intend to try to keep our files as current as we can afford to, we plan to drop the States-Item when our subscription expires, and but will continue to get the NY Times and probably subscribe to the SF Chronicle. So we probably won't have as much stuff to send you as we have in the past, but will continue to cover you as best we can.



I may have to give in and subscribe to the Examiner, but naturally recoil at paying Hearst for anything. Bringing home a copy every day from the office is another matter, and I have to admit that the Ex, by and large, for all its despicable editorial policy, carries more hard news than the Chronicle, which is owned by an outfit that is making all its money from a TV station and judges its readers accordingly. We'll see how it goes.

To answer your 26 and 27 a little more fully, I for one do not yet believe that the Chinese and the Russians have been leaning very hard, if at all, on the North Vietnamese to agree to a peace settlement that would be to the disadvantage of the North Vietnamese and the NLF. I think the impression that they have been so leaning has been carefully promoted in this country by the administration and the mindless media, the latter being unable to think far enough ahead to realize that any settlement that costs the DRV and NLF too much is going to cost both the Chinese and the Russians a hell of a lot more in the end. And both the Chinese and the Russians are competing in this area of the third world, remember, and neither can afford to be branded as having sold out such an important element in the socialist cosmos.

If there is one realm in which either the Russians or Chinese could have talked themselves into something, it would be along the line of the traditional Leninist thinking that capitalist powers inevitably dig their own graves and that a character like Nixon is more predictable than a democratic leader like McGovern who is regarded as confused and unreliable. Chou is supposed to have said something to the effect that he felt he could deal with Nixon and Kissinger, and I have no doubt he has said something along that line, but that doesn't mean he has parked his brain somewhere. Remember that Mao and Chou initially wanted an alignment with this country, not Russia, and took Russia only when the activity of people like Nixon precluded any alternative. There is no reason to think that now that Nixon needs China -- for whatever reason -- the long term preference of Mao and Chou means they've lost their marbles. Quite the contrary. It means they consider Russia the greater problem from their standpoint and will use us to help deal with it as long as we serve their purpose. I think your analysis of the Russian military influence in preferring Nixon as an indispensable enemy during a period of arms buildup is probably as near to an explanation of the Russian motive as we'll ever get.

I find little to disagree with in your analysis of the election, and particularly go along with your criticism that McG and the Demos waited far too long to attack. Thinking it over, I've been unable to put my finger on anything except simple circumstance to support your theory that some of the water from the Watergate may have slopped over into the Demo high command. It seems to me to be ascribable to normal Demo confusion, McG's apparent mild leadership, and a demoralization caused by the Eagleton incident -- particularly the failure to deal with it intelligently -- from which no one recovered enough to put any real dynamic and guts into the fight. One big failure, it seems to me, was the way no one did anything to counter the central GOP strategy which was to run the President instead of Nixon for re-election.

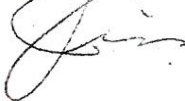


As you say, poor staff work. But that wasn't the only area. No one really tried to wake the American people up. Perhaps no one could. They clearly prefer to dream. For at least 50 years Madison Avenue has been determining the basic moral standards of this country. The lie is legal tender, especially when it does not disturb the sleeping and makes the truth look counterfeit. The good Germans accepted it. Why not we ?

The time available has run out, and I'll have to send this along without having been able to make copies of several things we have to send you. We'll try to set up the copier later, we hope in a day or two, and send them along. Nothing earthshaking, but little things you'll probably want.

Enclosed is an attempt to put shui men on graph paper for Lil. Clipped to it is the way the characters actually are written, the important elements being the continuation of lines and their curves, where there are curves. In the written "men" I probably have got the two elements of the gate a bit far apart, perhaps about two-thirds the distance shown would be more proper. (We calligraphers are a sloppy lot).

Best,



jdw