

5 September 1978

Dear Harold and Lil:

Herewith what clippings have accumulated since I last wrote, and I hope they may have a crumb of two that you may not have seen. Also thanks to Lil for the large 3rd class packet of clippings which arrived today.

Regarding your ribbon traverse failure on your Hermes 3000, we've never had such trouble on the two machines we have, Jenifer's which is identical with elite type, and mine which has pica type. (I've kept mine around -- it's practically new -- as a backup machine for this SCM electric which I got shortly before I retired after the office got me hooked on electrics). However, I did have what seems to be the same trouble on my old Hermes 2000 which I bought in 1938 in China and which still works. I finally figured out that something went wrong with the ~~gears~~ gear train when it stopped traversing without any discernible cause. It never got to the repairman stage because I found that by working the ribbon reverse key back and forth a few times I could get the gears engaged somewhere inside, whereupon it resumed traversing until it went wrong the next time. Could be that a shaft is worn or a bearing loose somewhere so that the teeth of two gears don't mesh properly, I don't know. If you can run ~~run~~ your repairman down you might ask him to check out the ~~gears~~ gear train on the ribbon mechanism and see if something is loose that could account for it. The Hermes 3000, I'm convinced, is about the best portable manual ever built. Jenifer's got an enormous amount of use and never gave her the slightest trouble. I liked mine too, but its action was much stiffer than her's, and when this electric goes to the shop for cleaning or overhaul I find the Hermes -- any manual -- very hard to use.

I've continued subverting selected elements of the Bay Area population to Mongolian barbecue, with at least three batches fed since last I wrote. This in itself means quite a lot of work, as it takes most of the day to prepare everything, but of course once that's done it then becomes up to the guests to feed themselves. At any rate, it's a good way to repay accumulated social obligations with something that still is unique and new to nearly all of them. In one lot that was here was a couple who have travelled a lot in France and who do French cooking themselves. I was surprised to find that they were even louder in their praise of how good it tasted than were those with more plebian palates. Also in this lot was a young French girl, a teen-aged exchange student, and man, did she stow it away. This in spite of never having encountered chopsticks before.

Between eating occasions I've been doing more volunteer work for Hospice -- this time making a whole raft of bulletin boards of pressed cork framed in redwood for posting memos and notes with pushpins. Every nurse and executive is now so equipped. Also I have begun to paint the house outside, which is getting to need it. This will keep me busy for a while.

Last time I forgot to register your complaint about foot fungus. Tried Desenex? It always worked for us. Any drugstore. I suggest try the powder first. They have a cream, but it's gooey.

I saw very little of the House committee hearings, but may try again in the coming session. The one segment I saw featured Lane ~~hanging everything up, and I had other things to do.~~ They're not going