

Bethesda, April 1, 1949

Dear Mamma,

I must sit right down and tell you all about Laurence John's latest adventure:

He was missing on Wednesday from 10 A.M. till two in the afternoon. I didn't start looking for him till about eleven thirty, but Mrs. Meleny said she had seen him last at ten, so that's when I say his adventure began. By one o'clock I had looked in all the places he sometimes goes- through the woods, out in back in the field where he lost his rubbers, all through the brook, over in the Country Club, in every child's house, up and down Georgetown Road. NO Boy. Mrs. Meleny kindly hopped in her car and drove around looking for him, I called the police and told them what he looked like and what he was wearing, etc. Then I came home and ate my lunch as calmly as I could and waited. At two the doorbell rang, and there was a very muddy little boy and a man who had kindly brought him home. The man was working on the construction of the new National Health center, which is located about half a mile from here. He said they had found Laurence John rolling down a muddy bank, happy as a lark. When they asked him if he was lost, he said no, but he just didn't want to go home yet. They pointed out that there were bulldozers operating there, and sixty-foot deep holes for caissons were being dug. "Peachie and I will run after the bulldozers", announced the boy. Yes, Peachie was there, naturally. "But do you know how to get home?" they asked him. "Yes, I'm not lost- this dog named Peachie led me astray, though." So the men thought they had better call the police and have them take L.J. home. When my friend who had brought him home asked him if he could show them the way to his house. "Yes, it's on Glenwood Road, off Hazelwood", replied the boy.

"That's a smart boy you got there, ma'am." said Sandy, the construction worker. I asked him to come in and have some beer and a cigarette so I could thank him properly. It was an unusually hot day, well into the eighties.

Sandy said that they brought L.J. over to the little office of the construction site, and that he had asked them for four glasses of water, which he drank all in a row.

"What's your name, little boy?"

"Laurence John Krieg."

"How old are you?"

"Three years old."

Sandy said they didn't believe him, and thought he must be older than that.

"Where does your father work, do you know?"

"At the State Department."

"Can you take me to where you live, if I drive you over in my car?" asked kind Sandy, who explained to me that he has a small boy of his own with the same tendencies.

"What kind of car is it?" enquired the boy

"It's a station wagon. Would you like to go home now?"

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"I want to take a ride in a station wagon, but that naughty dog Peachie must walk home because she led me astray." The little hypocrite!

So Sandy found his other rubber for him (lost in the mud, as before) and he said Laurence John talked to him all the way home. He told him he was going to be an engineer when he grew up, and that once he'd gone to watch them build the new Methodist Church, and how they had used an "ingenious motocrane" to help build it, and that He (L.J.) was "never sick", but sometimes had a tummy ache and drank bicarbonate of soda, and that his mother loved him all the time, even when he was bad and ran away. He told him that he had been on a big ship called the Alcoa Clipper which had a bow and a stern and decks and a big whistle that frightened him because he was only a little boy then. He told him that his father worked at the State Department "to pay the baker", as Sandy said it. "hereupon Laurence John interrupted us and remarked "No, I said he worked hard to bring home the BACON. The bacON!" Sandy apologized handsomely for the mistake, warned him that he had better not go so far away from home again or he, Sandy, would never hire him as an engineer when he grew up. Laurence John gave him his hand in a man to man fashion and said "I'll never wun away again, I pwomise!" Hmm, a likely tale!

Well well. What do we do now? I do wish we had the money for nursery school. By gum, we'll have to find it somehow because that boy is getting seriously out of hand, and my feeling is that if he had some stimulation in the mornings he would be willing to stay closer to home in the afternoons. He enjoys playing with Betsey and Coit and the others, but he is a little young for some of their games and wanders off from the group when boredom or confusion arises. ....Time has passed. I got so intrigued with my own idea that I called up the Lady Isabel nursery School, and learned that they could take him in now and until June 15, and that the fees are, by the session, 25 dollars a month, and by the month only, 30 dollars a month. That's less than we thought it would be. I think we might possibly be able to make it if we could work out some transportation arrangement that would not be too expensive. At least we might for two months or so, and every little bit helps, is my motto.

Our social life has been in the doldrums for the last three weeks, and as usual is about to pick up all in a bunch. We will have the Harts and the Rewinckels in on Saturday night, go to the Mills for dinner on Sunday and to the home of one of the Canadian Embassy people on Monday. I'm having Catherine Breuer to lunch on Tuesday. Why does it all happen at once?

Oh-oh, there he goes. Maaaaaamma!

Love,