

Thurs. Oct. 6, 1949
Bethesda, Md.

Dear Pop,

For once I have more news than I can conveniently deal with, although I'm way behind in my correspondence with you. We do so very much enjoy hearing about your wonderful times in happy places, and were especially mystified by the amazing consumption of pepper in Andorra. That's not how you spell consumption, above. Ah me, to think I used to win spelling bees in my distant youth!

Well, let's see: we went up to Flemington last weekend, taking a day off on Friday to do so. What gorgeous autumn colors! Dona drove down with the two children on Sunday, so we got a chance to talk to her, though John wasn't with them. I got a letter from him a short time before we went up, much to my surprise, and was even more surprised by the contents. It appears that he is most interested in a new sort of what I would call psychoanalysis that involves hypnosis, guided by an expert who somehow manages to make you remember everything that has ever been said and done in your presence. The advantage in the process which jumps to the eye is that it would be infinitely quicker to get at the nagging memories which cause psychoses and neuroses. Well, John is head over heels in the business with Ron Hubbard, who learned it from his own experience in a Naval hospital during and after the war. It's too complicated to go into in less than 20,000 words, but John is more excited and earnest over this than I have ever seen him before, and that is really saying something, I'm sure you'll agree. Dona says he eats, sleep, lives for it. He says it had cured his bad headaches and heart palpitations, although Ron hasn't been able to get to see him enough to completely "do him over". Dona is sceptical and afraid of the business, but will admit that it cured her of headaches after only a treatment or two. Anyway, the poor girl is once more a widow day and night while John flies off on his new hobby horse. I'm sorry not to be able to go into the matter more deeply, because I'm afraid I will give you all the wrong impressions of the experiments. John claims he can drag out the conversations that went on at his birth, for example. Well, I'll say no more, because I'm sure later on John will want to explain it all to you in the correct way. At present he says he doesn't want to see or talk to you or mother! I am sure that you both will bear with him, although from my own mundane point of view I don't see why a note would throw him off the beam, still, I repeat, I don't know enough about it to be able to pass judgment. In any case, he is very excited, it is a fascinating matter, and I hope it will turn out to be even partially as important a discovery as he and Ron feel it is. Not having seen him, I didn't ask him if he minded if I told you about it, but since Dona claims he won't write to you himself yet, I thought it would be nice if I just let you know his reason for not doing so. It's all syrology, as Amos and Andy used to say.

We had a quiet social week, but yesterday I went out with Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Gerberich to call on the newly arrived wife of the Colombian Ambassador, Sra. Suleta. Dark and gloomy paneled embassy, but the lady herself was most pleasant and conversable, as was one of her daughters, who is studying chemistry in graduate school here. First Colombian girl to do so. My going out was a matter for much arranging, and after nearly giving up the struggle I found that a neighbor was willing to have me pass

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neighbor was willing to take the boy at her house till I got back. Life for me simply isn't arranged to make it easy to sally forth on afternoon visits.

As far as I know they have finally settled on a way of rearranging what used to be American Republics Affairs, which has been renamed the Bureau of Interamerican Affairs, for some obscure reason. In the new set-up William has sole charge of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, but the people who used to be called the "desk officers" of those countries will still continue, only from now on you aren't allowed to call them desk officers. I am vague about the whole matter, and if this is the last change I'll be most astonished. If the change had involved a salary increase for William I would have understood it far better, needless to say!

Two freinds are getting married this month: William's Fletcher School and Dartmouth Friend Grant Meade, and our best man Jack MacSweeney. The former was no secret, the latter a big surprise. We just got the announcement of the wedding today, and no more do we know than what is in the announcement. I mean invitation, not announcement, we hope that mother will come down at the time of Grant's wedding, so we can go to Norfolk where he is stationed and attend it. He is in the Navy now. For some reason I'd rather enjoy the fun of getting away and seeing the festivities as well as the city of Norfolk.

I wrote a little thing about my adjustment to life in Washington which was intended to be screamingly funny, sent it in to the Foreign Service Journal, and had it accepted by them, which means that I am about to receive almost fifteen dollars in cash. When it is published I'll send it to you. I wish I could find the time and subject matter for another article, send it to some well paying magazine, and coin a fortune, or at least recoup a fortune. I was very proud of myself, though, for having the gumption to do something useful with my typewriter at last.

We are expecting to receive a set of silver (only knives, forks and spoons, thought) as the legacy of a distant relative of William who recently died in Florida. We visited them in 1944 when on our way to Caracas. We are very pleased to have the prospect of some real silver, the purchase price of which would be far beyond us at this juncture. We needed it so much in Caracas, and will need it as much or more on our next post. Fortunately we don't need it so depperately here. But it will be nice to be able to entertain more than eight people without borrowing the silverware to do it, the next time we go abroad. I am also saving Wheatie coupons for a set of silver which should really come in handy at large buffet suppers, funny as the idea sounds at first glance. I would have welcomed anything down there in Caracas, even if it had had the magic word "Wheatie" stamped on it. I always used to borrow from Virginia Hoover and the Davises, but at a new post where one doesn't know the people it would be too humiliating to do so. Now I shan't have to do it, and we will have a set of real silver; I was also sent a beautiful large diamond ring, but I think I'd better send it on to Annie, because I don't really feel I'm entitled to it, since I only met the lady once. We spoke to Annie about the silver when

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she was here in August, but she has two sets from her mother, so she kindly let me have this one that is coming. We didn't know about the nice diamond ring then, so didn't discuss it. Knowing Annie, I'm sure she would urge me to keep it, so I think the best thing is just to send it on to her without any discussion. It is as large as any of the diamonds in my lovely three-diamond ring, or larger; and I'm sure the lady's executor must have made a mistake in sending it to me, who hardly knew her, rather than to Annie, whom she loved.

The boy had a spell of weeping in school at the songs, and now appears to be over it. Each morning he would tear my heart out by crying pitifully not to be made to go to school and hear those sad songs. He has stopped it this week, and now he almost always reminds me, when he is having his lunch, that he didn't cry a bit when the taxi came, and that he didn't even cry at the Sad Songs! When one asks him what he has learned at school, he says "I have learned to pump in the swings!" He has also learned, though he doesn't realize it apparently, that the flag at school is the flag of United States America, ~~like~~ a place which he identifies as being vaguely near Washington. He simply can't get in proper focus the relationships between cities, states, and countries. When asked where he was born, he will say Caracas Venezuela, but he doesn't know which is the city and which the country. We were having an astronomy lesson before his nap, and I told him about the various movements of the earth on its axis and around the sun. He was simply fascinated, and began to illustrate my points by gyrating furiously himself, on his axis as well as simply round and round. The natural result was complete and happy dizziness. He was puzzled when I told him the world we live on is round, and quickly ran to the window to see. "But I don't think it is, mamma- sometimes it's round and sometimes it's flat!" So I tried to explain about relative sizes, and told him the sun was an even bigger ball than the earth. This irked him, just as it irked men for so many ages, and he refused to believe that HIS world was smaller than any other heavenly body. At that point I gave up and put him to bed, after he had revolved just once more simply around, on his axis, and in a large circle around the sun (that was I). He still can't write well at all, in fact not at all, but he has retained completely his mastery of the alphabet when he sees it on a typewriter or in signs. He loves to pick out the letters in signs. But since he ceased to pass the entire day in my presence he has also ceased to be the little intellectual he used to be, and has become a playboy, which after all, at three and a half, is natural and right.

I have purchased, with the birthday check, a handsome Clair McCardell dress in beige Miron wool with just lots and lots of lines, in which I consider myself quite a sight for sore eyes. I dearly love it, and thank you very much indeed for it.

Past the boy's wake-up time!

Love to you both,