

**Lorna Livesley Chambreau
letters to family and friends
1948**

December 24, 1947

Dear Lorna:

Here it is that time of the year again when everybody is filled with the spirit of doing and giving and trying to crowd ~~any~~ a few short days a lot that they should have been doing thruout the year. And I am no exception: I am writing this on the eve of Christmas when I should have written several letters to you since seeing you:

We take so much for granted : since Mom writes you so regularly and I get a chance to read your letters in reply, I assume that you know that I would write to you if Mom didn't and I did not hear from you. I also assume that because mothers know so much better what daughetr's and little kiddies want and are so much more qualified to select such things that you should know that I love you and think of you and your family even if I do nothing to show it. So, maybe, I have assumed too much and should do something to impress upon you that I really do care even if I am delinquent in expressing myself. So if this Xmas spirit which is so prevelent has impressed me enough to convey to you some alight expression of my feeling, it has been worth while.

Your letter is the inspiration for this letter and I assure you that I can really appreciate your feelings as you expressed them as I have, as you say been thru the same situation, and it is not pleasant to say the least but ten years from now it will all be forgotten. As you grow older you appreciate more that it is greater to give than receive and I think that this has a lot to do with your feelings. How would you like to sit down and order presents that you knew all the recipients wanted for all those you loved without thought as to the expense? You wouldn't care if you got anything in return or not; would you? That is just what Mom is doing now after a great many years of what you are going thru now and she is getting the thrill of a lifetime from it. So don't worry your pretty head about that list you sent: let her go and have her enjoyment and let me have the pleasure of not having to hold here down, for one, for financial reasons. To us you are still kids and your kiddies are you over again: there were some pretty lean Christmases and Mom is just trying to make up for what she would have liked to do all her life. She couldn't spoil you when you were a kid and I doubt if she can now, so let her keep trying: she loves it.

I am sorry I have delayed getting this burst of wisdom off in time to reach you by Xmas, but ever if a little late a very Merry Christmas to you and all of your s and may the New Year be more kindly and prosperous. Lot and lots of love to you all,

Dad

Mom says to tell you your Dpecial Delivery package arrived.

12/31/47
I gave Dad this letter to mail and he has just given it back to me as proof that I did write you. I will send it anyway. Altho it seems kind of silly now. He received your letter and the records and

all got a big kick out of Carl - Also thought you
could love my plan and you sure did a nice
job on it. Raggedy Ann doll for Jo Ann

She started a record Xmas night on the wire-
recorder with the object of taking it and the wire-
recorder down with us and add a message to
you from Jake & Tiny and then put some new one
on to bring home. But it will probably not
materialize or be too corny to feel with (In case
you do not know what a wire recorder is, it is one
of those new-fangled do hickies that records sound on a
wire instead of a record)

Sis is still sticking around - Saw the Dr today
and he told her to go to the hospital Sunday so
I hope produces then and everything is O.K. we
will probably get away the latter part of Jan-
guaranteed in time to get down there by Feb 1st
So we will be seeing you before too long, I hope

Love -
Dad

1547

January 2, 1948

Dear Handsomes,

Well, it was a swell Christmas and thank you a million times ! Pop's letter today made me feel better about it--in fact it made me weep, but don't tell anyone.

The day before Christmas was pretty wild. Julie smashed her thumb with a big rock and suffered all day. I was isolated with her and Dennis and no aspirin. Michael had gone down with Ed and the Harknesses to see Pebe. Max was very busy brewing her sumptuous feast for us the next day. The day was very warm with carols--mostly by Bing Crosby blaring out over the valley on a public address system--and it made me mad to like it.

I was busy trying to be ready for anything--you know--Edward might bring someone home, the Harknesses were to come for a few drinks and bring their presents; Max wanted to stay all night to see the kids open their stuff in the morning--not to mention what the KIDS themselves intended----so we were all clean and neat and pretty for----

the frantic evening that followed. Edward came home, tired, disgruntled and sober. The studio xmas party, it seems, was very miserly and he only got ten dollars bonus etc. etc. The Harknesses couldn't stay because Henry thought it unwise to expose Harry too long to liquor, as he'd been threatening to go on a binge. But they put a crimp in what drinking there was as Robert appeared with his girl friend and they had to chaperone THAT little deal. I couldn't drink much because the kids were evidently catching the flu and screamed and screamed till midnight--MOST unusual ! Besides I had a splitting headache--I can't imagine WHY ! Edward defaulted on his usual xmas spirit and went to bed leaving Maxine and me to do all the work. So I fell in about 2 a.m. and fell out about----

seven. It was funny. Max slept on the floor in the living room. At daylight it was quite obvious that all three of us grownups were awake listening (and hoping) for the first kid to wake, but none of us would admit it. Then there came a toot from a xmas horn way back in Michael's room, Max giggled---and we were off ! The rest of the mornong I remember as only a daze and maze of paper with me conscientiously trying to force juice and coffee down everyone's throats ahead of the increasing amounts of candy....

Robert has taken up where his elder brother is leaving off and had bought a bottle of scotch--which, being an amateur drinker, he found afterwards he didn't like. However I am no amateur and proceeded to build up my xmas spirit soon after the fifth present was opened. So by the time we went up to Henry's for an afternoon dinner I was feeling right fine, thank you, and I had a lovely day. Max's dinner was lovely and it is so good to eat out !

I say Max's dinner because she has taken over the major cooking achievements and, like the minister's children, who always go to the other extreme--she does a thorough, nice and very dainty job of it. We had a centerpiece and a tablecloth and silver and dishes even ! (Henry always just puts a big bowl of something on the table ~~and~~ which is NOT set, and then it's every man for himself.)

We all fell into bed when we got home and slept till nine am--also most unusual ! Oh, everyone except me--I sat down after everyone else was in and had MY xmas. I sorted, and gloated, and beamed and found things I didn't know we'd gotten. I suppose you know all about these mamas' xmas'es, Ruth !

To Ruth, the Great Shopper!

But I want to tell you about each thing. If I'd sent somebody such a huge, generous amount of expensive gifts I'd want to know their reaction! So I'll sit here in my nice, new warm pajamas and tell you about everything:

My favorite presents: (Aren't I my mother's daughter!)

The pictures of you and Clyde. They couldn't be better...I like them so much better than studio ones...I wept right into my housework when they came...I love them....

The camera and the films. oh joy! Mike took the old one--so now I have one for me at last. Used it yesterday and it's wonderful will send some pictures (prints even, maybe!) as soon as I can///

Our magazines. Oh, how I'd miss them if they didn't come! We're excited about "Pacific Pathways"...Breathed a sigh of relief when Better Homes came today as I didn't get a notice...As Ed says Time mag alone is a gift....

My purses....with the cans box Tiny sent me--yum! My only feeling of power comes from squeezing, milking and manipulating my \$loo a month--takes some milking these days, too! That big, black one is ideal for me....

The book of poems--have collected many of those over the years, not knowing who did them--see he just died--feel as if I could have written them...

the foodstuffs--the apples, the candies, etc.--You've no idea how it helps--we've been getting along without such dainties... Your latest box came today--the one with all the tin foil in it--Ha! Hunger! Foiled again!

the clothes--SO badly needed and so just right--so Lorna, shall we say--the lipstick and the cream--all of them such a morale lift for a tired mama...

my boxes--(including the stamp box Max gave me,) the nice wooden box the apples came in--the money box Tiny sent--the quilted stocking box Max gave me to complete the ones you sent--I've wanted some of those things for years--silly, isn't it? This was a box xmas for me....

the calendar--JUST what I meant. Had Mike get me a day-by-day also with Northwest photos--so I can sit right down and be really homesick now...

the household items--especially the magnagrip; the ironing board cover; the pastry set; the clock (Harknesses gave us a wall clock)

Max also gave me two "new look" dark silk stockings and a silk scarf, so you see, just ME personally did very, very well....

thanks.

Edward's Thank-yous.

Those are beautiful shirts--both the T. and the white ! How much do you have to pay to get a T. shirt that washes so nicely? He is quite impressed with his named-matches--he's one of these people that loves to see his name spread around on things..also the cork-man Mike bought him a tie for 60 cents--you were asking.... He certainly fared well where he worked--about 25 presents in all including a fifth of whiskey, a dozen cartons of cigarettes, sox, hankies shaving lotion galore etc.... The Harkies gave him a shirt and an impractical white sweater !

Mike's thank-yous.

His big three are--the erector set with electric motor we gave him.. was a little dubious about it remembering Pud's tantrums, but he's swell about it. Must say Mike gets one's money's worth out of expensive toys...

the chemistry set. Did you send that? Gee, it's a honey and he loves it--he dotes on stuff like that anyway--also those booklets--he's way ahead of me on that stuff now--I fell panting by the wayside.

a wonderful roller printing set from The Harkies.

He also got a squirt gun, a spark gun, a Golden Bible, a radio from Tiny, a belt, a football and things I don't know who sent----

Pat's thank yous.

The brother-sister set is very, very cute on them and I like it. Hope I got some pictures of them ...they wore it up to Henry's xmas day.

Her dresses and slacks are so darn cute on..sure needed some pants to keep her poor lil legs warm. She and I dressed up and went shopping the next day--just us two--fun,,

The dishes, the doll, the books, sox pants, purse all from YOU? The cute plastic dress hangers? He got another purse but much different--that black one's cute--just like mama's. Who sent that amazing plastic glassware? Gee, it's cute. I can't get over how real it looks. I can't get over plastic.

We got her a tricycle. Henry gave her a darling mahogany rocker for which she made a needlepoint seat. Max gave her the doll,y know...

Dennis' thank yous.

Max and Bob gave him a big panda like the one you gave him because I had to "murder" the other one (gee, I felt mean) He was sleeping with him and he was all infected with impetigo.

His "toot" (the wooden car) is his favorite toy. Funny how boys go for those things and girls don't...

Those blocks are wonderful, aren't they...the other things he got I don't know who came from which, but I know he sure needed some things to play with....

We got him a small wagon and Henry gave him a peasant chair that's squat and fat and sturdy like him....

Thank you.

Jan 2, 1948

Dear Clyde —

Just been sitting on my back "Stoop" (in the warm sun!) and reading your Ymas letter —

I almost threw it in the fire by mistake — and you almost didn't send it — so that I almost didn't get to bawl over something you said that I needed somebody to say to me — right now more than I ever needed anything — what? Fate?

I am coming into the realization that I (and the other kids) are exceedingly lucky to have a ^{man} ~~father~~ who feels that way — and have the kindness to tell you so. The more I live with Edward the more I realize that lack of such things in a person's life can do tragic things to one — you & Ruth ought to know that! You & Edward never had fathers & Ruth never had a mother — if I can stand it!

Edward's a fine guy essentially and I feel my job is to salvage some of it for his kids — but boy! it's a hard job sometimes to buck a mess of other people's mistakes — (as we all have to do —) They started cracking down on drinkers here during the holidays and our charming play-boy — finally — after all those years! — got picked up! And it took Harry \$50 to bail him out! He was lucky I guess — 'cause they were giving sentences for the duration of the holidays — As I've said — what a year!

It was a good lesson — we had a sober New Year's — but, of course, not enough of ~~a~~ ^{a lesson} these guys are pretty hopeless — and one shouldn't marry them, I know — any way, you can understand that dinner at Medcalf's is plenty "outing" for me when you come down — Don't say anything about this in your letters —

Julie + Dennis are full of trouble & woe —
so I'll have to cease this — as usual —

Shouldn't have told you all this, I suppose —
~~to~~ please don't worry about it — will ya, huh?
Got it said now — so —

I'm looking forward — as I hope you know —
to seeing you so SOON — I never have gotten
around to telling you — that Pepper Tree Lodge
has a nice coffee shop now — and there's a
big Super-Swank Market there — so — after you
finish your breakfast you can buy mine and
bring it to me — ha! ha!

I have the pictures of you + Ruth over my
desk so I can really Talk to you when I write.
I think they are the BEST things — I just love 'em!
Don't feel like you're so far away now.
How do we keep warm during these cold
streaks? We almost don't. I have at last had
to succumb to the horrible Harkness habit of
heating the house with the oven — that plus an
expensive small electric heater is it.

Well — must away again — this is a
jumpy letter, but the way I have to do it.
That was swell letter + I'm glad you did send it —

Lots of love —

Will write ^{more} soon — get this much off — any way
Norman

Dear Paw, Maw, Sis,

Wednesday

Jan 6 1948

Well, well we've got so many babies now we don't send telegrams ! Ruth's letter and the announcement came in the same mail, just when Edward said they would (he's so psychic !), so I had details to complete the picture without fretting. I held the card in my hand a minute and took a big fat guess--and guessed wrong ! Guess I was really rooting for a boy--feeling that Sis, too, should have the unique--and I do mean unique !--experience of raising a man-child. Also, sorta spoils the hand-me-downs, huh? Michael says "well, she can still have a boy--she's young, like you, isn't she?" Glad she kept up our tradition of speediness and it was nice of her to wait till the holidays were over, wasn't it? I approve of the name--always did like Barbara--that's Robert's fiance's name, too.

Now that I've basked in your favor for a while I must disillusion you about the baby book. Meant to put a note in explaining, but got too rushed. Thank you for attributing "the insight" to me, but I copied all that stuff verbatim out of my Gesell book (the Five to Ten) Sis may think it's dumb, but I think those things I put in are more interesting in later years than some of the dumb things they ususally put in baby books. And I've also found from "my great experience" that those are the things in which kids differ and I get tired of running around putting things in 3 baby books. The "deviation from normal" referred to some things like Dennis' birthmark and Julie's hole in her left ear and such stuff--DOPES ! However I will take credit for the pictures--first I've done in two years !

Well, you do right by Sissy and then come on down and tell me all about it. I shall be thrilled to make you reservations any time you say. I told you about the new coffee shop. I told Henry about Brennamans but she isn't very playful these days--know she will get them, though. I don't plan to go anyplace as I have NO new look and you'd be ashamed of me---

That is, if you're the good looking couple in the picture you sent me. I think the picture of the "Persian Lamb at the zoo" is very good. I approve of your new coat--muchly. It is quite generally agreed among all whom I know that the duchess of Windsor may be the best-dressed THIN woman, but we all say you are the best-dressed--how you say--WIDER woman ! And what you don't realize about "your chin" is that no one else thinks of it at all but you. Why, you'd look awfully funny without it ! WHO took those pictures of you and how come?

Xmas
Speaking of pictures, I have some from my new camera--which is more fun !--they weren't as good as I expected--will have to practice. May give you a treat for being so nice as to give it to me and send you some prints for a change (but don't be surprised if I don't).

Glad you liked Ed's record. I never heard it myself. He made them down where he works so I don't think Petrillo has anything to say about that. Yes, I got THAT close to the phone on Xmas day, but finances were so bad and get so involved when it's on Harknesses phone and I was afraid everyone would be tight and talk too long--and so, being so miserly, I didn't. But I WANTED to. Our xmas tree was \$1.25 and we had to cut it off to get it in. We got in on a sale where they were trying to get rid of them. It was very dry however. Whenant's box of greens came they were so unbelievably green--and they lasted about one day when I put them up in this desert air !

Yes, we had a cold snap before xmas and then it's been VERY warm lately. Everything is sprouting and there's green beginning to show in all the vacant lots, ~~though~~ Isn't that silly? In January? Afraid you won't see much change in our lawn though. The weather's nice but it's dry, dry, dry and quite impossible to get plants started--at least cheaply. They tell us we have enough water to keep ourselves and the movie stars' swimming pools full until 1960 and then???

I can't tell whether Dennis is so smart or whether he picks stuff up from the other kids or whether the last one just seems to grow up faster. Anyway it does seem that he does things earlier than normal --"deviation from normal", y'know!

Who lives at 2703 Fraser Way? Will you tell them to please sign their xmas cards? And tell Aunt Marion her card was the first one we got, which touched me for some reason. Liz didn't get a hand-made card because if the kids hadn't been ill enough to sleep all one afternoon I wouldn't have even gotten the ones I did done.

Bring your address book when you come. Might surprise a few people next year. Also the feather quilt. Thanks!

Is Paula working? Nice of her to waste her money on a mere in-law!

I LOVE that dish cloth--that queer one. So does Edward. Have been using it all this time.

The impetigo is gone (knock on wood)

No, Mike didn't stay out of school BECAUSE of the xmas tree--he's not shy--the Harkness influence--maybe? He had ~~that~~^{our} famous flu as it turned out. So did Edward. So have the Harkies, but Julie, Penny, and I have gotten by pretty well so far (knock, knock again!)

Ah, the wild Harknesses. They're beginning to feel that Robert is a gone goose and they don't like it. By hook and crook they eliminated Maxine's boy friend and I suspect they might fix Robert up, too, before they're through. Ha, ha, they couldn't get rid of me! Now, Bebe, the "heart trouble" aunt is going to marry a man she saw for four hours on a plane--so she says. At least he sent her the money to come up and spend her vacation "with" him. We usually see the Harknesses on Sunday but they really aren't as chummy as they might be--what with two cars and all----

No, I think I told you we had a cold sober New Year's. Edward, the LAMB is voluntarily on the wagon for a month. Gee it helps. He was getting pretty bad--and I was getting pretty ornery----it was a tough year....He wasn't the only one, I note. Charles /Chaplin, Jr. was picked up, too. and they charged HIM fifty dollars!

Well I must get to bed so I can try to beat my merry little throng to the kitchen tomorrow morning--HO! I hate kids in the kitchen!

lots and lots of love to all,
and tell sissy I might get around to congratulating her personally by her birthday!

Norder

71' Hwd

Friday

Jan 10
1948

Dear Mom, etc —

Pardon me if I don't get the typie out — it always seems like such an effort. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a typewriter always set up? — You do, don't you?

The Harknesses came by today & ~~fixed~~ took me and the kids for a fun ride — to the park, ice cream cones, and leisurely around to the great and beautiful nurseries here finding a tree for Edward's birth day. I must admit that's the sort of thing I always hope they'll do and they ~~never~~ ^{Seldom} do.

Maybe it was because I asked them over for dinner Sunday.

I especially enjoyed your letter this morning — don't ask me why. A dash of cute pictures, a dash of ME (the hair) and such a long, chatty one. I knew you were writing me that day, I was writing you!

You grandmas and your inability to cope with kids! Doesn't it occur to you that they bother us younger folks ^{too} because we're inexperienced and impatient? My nerves are always raw and sore by the week-end when Edward's home one day to help. I grant one must get used to a state of being nervous — one has to — So there!

You have no idea how it burns me up that I've never gotten "in" on Sis's family. To think I've only seen Jo Ann once — when I want ~~to see~~ so much to know her —

I do hope Clyde is "boning up" on his ultrasonics and Super-^{etc.}sonics so he & Mike can chat — He's way beyond me in that stuff and the poor kid can't find anyone that will talk about them with him —

I know Ting sent the plastic glassware, but I didn't know about the hangers. O dear — I'm all bawled up! What did Sis send? — I remember getting a package from her because I thought it was understood her canned fruit was her Contribution & didn't expect anything else —

Pop's letter got me (if I must drag out my inner emotions again.) partly because in this, the first year when I irrevocably joined the grownups at Xmas, I found — much to my surprise! — that even the most cynical grown-ups do feel a Xmas spirit — and all is not lost — shall we say?

And what did I write to not to call forth that? I will confess to a secret vice of formulating my thoughts into bright little

"bundles" as I go about my house work, but I always feel ashamed of them —

My washing machine is the nuts — thank you. Wash day has become a bug-a-boo for me again. I was sorry to hear you had bought one. It is "frozen" with rust and the wringer won't ~~swivel~~ ~~swivel~~ "swivel" & the agitator won't stop — so getting the clothes out is a dangerous little game to say the least — Besides — it is too small — (However it is better than the way I used to do it!)

Don't know about Henry — She's always a trifle cool about anyone outside her immediate family — doesn't seem to sparkle much these days —

No — Julie doesn't have a doll buggy & I certainly started something when I asked her if she wanted one — that's all I heard all day — an orange one she says! ^{little one}

I sure laughed at those two today — they came screeching into the house & when I went out to investigate it was only the cutest, littlest, mildest puppy —!

Well — Mike wants to go to bed —

So adios for now —

Be glad to see you turning some of that d.m. look on this red-head instead of that one in the picture!

Why "old"
hair is redder
than my kids —

Dear Ruth and Kide,

Tuesday

Jan. 14
1948

Well, I sure got a nice lot of mail today; Ruth's letter, Sissy's VERY nice one, and Edward's birthday present.

He did!
The latter I'm afraid to show him because I know he'll love it and want to keep it. I fought with myself over whether I should hide it and send it back for a polo shirt --which he needs so much more. He only has the one you sent for xmas and he got three shirts for xmas. But especially I'm thinking about the ironing! Poor me. I see it's one of those tricky things that has to have special attention and I just never seem to get the shirts ironed as tis--also the washing--those are the kind that shrink when washed like I do things--How ever it's HIS birthday, so we'll see what he says....it is a beauty and we were just noticing this morning that his other old yellow favorite is finally a goner---It was nice of you to remember his birthday--I didn't expect you to....

And I do like those pictures. You have no idea how you and Clyde permeate the house now--and I used to strain trying to think how you look! It really keeps me from being so dol-garned lonesome. Also I get more and more glimpses of your house with each one. Max and I --who are interior decorating experts, we'll have you know--think it looks very swank...

Speaking of pictures I have gotten myself into something--all because you said you wanted a picture of us. If it costs me twenty bucks you'll have to pay it--so there! One of those introductory offer hooeys they have. This damn mercenary, rathole down here is evidently the mecca for all photographers, who turn to pestering poor housewives to take their kids pictures, when the studios turn them down. I swear I turn away six a week! And then after all this time to finally succumb to one all because I could be in the picture, too! I forgot it was to be your birthday present--I shouldn't have told you, should I?

Turned if I'm going to start over, tho, and know it would drive you nuts if I tore the page off--so....

How imminent is your leaving! I already worry about your leaving ME! Do hope pop won't succumb to the charms of that shiny new Plymouth, because now the kids are bigger we do like to go for rides.

Pop, please don't wish Dode's life off on me--I wouldn't enjoy that social whirl, I betcha.. Let Maxine read it--ok?--she'd love to live like that. However I am interested--very. (in Dode's letters)

Yes, I got my dishcloths--Thank you! I was sorry I threw that address away after I used them--but they did look so QUEER. Maxine is very sold on them too so I gave her some.

I thought that would be Phyllis Holt's address--the handwriting looked like her----

Speaking of weather--it just couldn't have been nicer than it was today. Everyone was speaking about it--just exactly right--spose it will stay that way for you?

Imagine being bored with a trip from Yakima to Redding!

Am not thinking up excuses not to go up next summer. Am thinking up ones to go ! I am quite the prodigal daughter or something--I think I bit off more than I could chew sometimes marrying into the nomadic "Harknesses" and I'm quite anxious to come crawling home---

My imagination dwells on sissy lying in bed and nursing--really ??--though I know my timing's a little off. OOOOOOthose first two weeks home with a new baby--are the hardest ones in life, I think. Does that encourage you any, sis? Am going to answer your letter personally one of these soon days--promise, promise, promise.

Edward had a nice birthday. We eked out a few practical little gifts. The Harknesses bought him a tree for the back yard and made a huge cake. Then we all drove to the beach--at his request--only to find it enveloped in fog ! Made me glad we weren't in SF. again, especially when Mike started hacking and coughing till we hit the sun again. Funny? Suggestion or real?

Had the Harkies over for dinner, Made some chicken a la king as a very special splurge and some lousy biscuits. One of the trials of being poor--you have to stretch a little tiny chicken so far----

thought I might make you a list of reminders--(me and my lists !)
so meeting the queer Chambreaus won't be too much of a shock again--

Don't expect; us or our house to be well-groomed
Henry to be a baby sitter
Henry to be here--she may go back with Harry
me to be free of kids--though Max has offered to sit evenings (after eight maybe) and there is a "sitter" in the block. Mike gets out of school at 2:30. Ed is home Monday and Wednesday mornings and Sundays. Also Saturday evenings.
us to have much "buying power"
me to go anywhere swank. I'm too self-conscious about my short skirts; missing front tooth; and missing diamond from my ring.
Henry to have forgiven you for walking out on her dinner
me to bake lemon pies and goopy surprises--too many bothersome kids !

Do expect; me to want to go on rides--the kids are bigger and better about such things than last year
me to weep either at your going or coming
to be missed horribly when you leave
me to worry about you en route
Edward to be drinking again, though not so much (we hope)
me to be quitting this right now as it's my bed time

Lots and lots of love--know you will let us know!;;;

hello to that cute Barbara--isn't she CUTE ?

Lorna

Tuesday

Near Birthday Girls —

Well — Happy Birthday to you both! I always miss 'em — you'll just have to put up with me these years — Wotcha doin? Something fun?

Doesn't seem possible you're still there, liveslappers are you? Seems as if you've been gone months. However the boost in morale you gave us lingers on. I was truly in the doldrums before you came — I realize that now — expected to fall back into it, but instead ~~feel~~ a lot more content & cheerful and ambitious. Have gone on fixing things that Clyde started and really enjoying it. I certainly was being a Harkness & putting up with a lot of annoying little things —

The ^{Kitchen} door is wonderful — helps so much — as do all the things — and new clothes and stuff —

Max & I still can't "Settle" tho — we want to go places. She says she doesn't feel a bit like cooking & house keeping this time. She took Julie clear into L.A. one day with her to see Bebe — which was nice for all of us —

Edward says the reason for your trip every spring is to take the birds back north in the back end of your car — because the minute you leave there are suddenly millions of birds. And they subsist on the grass seed I persist in putting in. And every time I have planted grass seed at this house the wind comes a whooping down on it for 2 days! Maddening.

"Lcky-zoo shey" is now a house hold word via Julie! Seemed a TREK to go to the dentist on the bus this time.

The wedding goes on apace, Barbara was so excited about buying her wedding gown that she widened her eyes —

Maxine likes you people —

Well — must trek to the store — seems amazing that most of the groceries are gone already —

Much-much love —

to all of you —

Lorna —

Dear Ruth:

Well, that little (?) package Saturday was a pleasant surprise. Everyone is very pleased with their little gifts. How cute of you to make things for the doll-buggy - next-cupas? It was just what she needed to make her put her dolls in the buggy instead of everything else.

We had to take the 3 baby dolls to the Store — I was scared to death somebody'd think I had a real baby in there — besides the other two.

Edward can always use the shirts — much as I hate to iron 'em. Tho I'd rather iron that kind than those darned, heavy Sport ones!

I especially like those suits for Denny, you nice girl. They are wonderful — cute, good size, convenient, practical & FREE! thank you say I and dankos! says he, for he can talk like anything now.

Nothing special to say — a very nice, peaceful homey week-end at home. We've been going up to Henry's and having such a "social whirl" it was

a relief to stay home. The weather is ideal now — wish it would stay like this. Swelltime to work in the yard if one had any.

Michael is home to day with a wheezy — makes the 3rd week-end with a sick child.

Dennis has been "launched" I guess. He tend toward dry beds, dry pants, much "I won't"-ing and conversation. He even goes to play at the other kids house.

So that's the week-end report, Maxine's little shoulder ailment is cleared up now (~~leaving~~ a defect left by the T.B) but she still has no job.

Much love to all and
thanks again for the
unexpected

Lorna

~~Her go~~ A neighbor is expecting in Sept. too
so I can keep tab on this one.

Sunday

Dear Ruth —

Guess where I am! Up in our park all by myself! It is simply beautiful now. I have "escaped" from my family — with their permission — for an hour or two. Have to unhook my brain and let it sag awhile —

Your letter yesterday with the pictures. I was beginning to wonder! So it was house-cleaning that was my rival this time!

The Buds' house looks good to me — quite largish. It has a 610-ish look; like mine does, that should make Bud feel at home. Evidently he hasn't done his dark green walls yet?

Well, we certainly had ourselves a day Thursday (I guess it was.) Mike had been home from school till then with the usual. Guess it was a cold, as both the other kids have honeys today.

Anyway - he wanted us to visit their "open house" they were having at school (at which his oil well was a featured exhibit). Max appeared and wanted to go, too, so we took the "twins" & went. It was very interesting. Schools ain't what they used to be — Mike and another girl spent 15 minutes or so over a game of checkers! Dennis created a furor by shouting, "There's Michael!" every time he saw him.

So — we came home — and we peacefully doing some dull duty when scream! Scream! in tore Michael clutching ^{what seemed} a horribly mutilated nose! He'd taken a spill on his bike and cut a deep inch-long gash right on top of it.

Of course it was doctor's closing time and all my usual emergency difficulties arose. Max had no money — neither did I; no phone; no car; no friends. So I ran to the most likely neighbor & phoned. We finally

found a doctor and she kindly filed us all into her car and took ^{us} ~~us~~. We didn't have to have stitches (too goused out or something) but we did have a "lockjaw" shot and they were nice enough to bill us. Mike was this usual very brave little self about it and everything came out all right.

Only to have almost the same thing happen to Julie on her tricycle the next day. So Michael is delightedly sporting a bandaged nose & Julie a cut and swollen lip — (and mama a case of nervous exhaustion.)

Also Thursday night Robert appeared — all pale and romantic — and announced the wedding was off. Everyone had tiny, secret hopes it might last, but the next morning he and Barbara patched up their little tiff and we're off again.

It really is getting to be one of those Harkness things. Even Robert

is beginning to realize that marriage without money or place to live is not a pleasant prospect. Barbara won't live with her family because this is her escape. Henry won't live with the newlyweds, after having experienced it once. And she and Harry won't live together. Maxine won't be able to live anyplace but at home, not having any money. Finances and city regulations won't let Henry build a place for the kids. And the kids won't postpone the wedding.

The present plans are that mother bird is flying north for a year, not being able to stand it all emotionally, and leaving her ~~nest~~ three immature chicks in the nest to fend for themselves. Guess who'll get the brunt of it?

Max is working very faithfully at job-hunting. I must say that. She had to turn one down because it turned out to be a wolf (how peaceful to be no longer wolf-prey!) but she goes out on one tomorrow.

3.

Hope something comes of it because the situation is getting on everyones nerves as you can imagine.

She has borrowed the typewriter for the day to practise - hence this. Hope I get it back!

I meant to say - in case you care - about the Harkness situation - that I am getting old enough to know that time has many surprises in store ~~for~~ and there's no use going to pieces making plans - is there?

Well, I seem to have exhausted the most of my news - didn't bring your letter. So will have to chat that one out later.

Picture me now - wending my fat little motherly way home to sand, work, work, noise, friction etc. etc - remember? But I wouldn't want anything else!

Lots and lots of love -
Lorna

Monday

Dear Ruth -

It's been right warm today - even this evening, which is a little "unusual". I can't say we can compare with the picture you sent, but it has seemed cooler this spring. My, my that picture is almost unbelievable.

Spring does things to one, doesn't it? When you haven't the money to do all the improving you'd like to and you see your neighbors doing - it about drives one nuts. If we don't have to pay the fire insurance this month we want to do the walls in the dining room - that would at least be some thing.

I got a letter "from" Maiana because you enclosed one, nut!

I see in time that Van Johnson - or some one that matters - had gastro-enteritis. That's what we had! Henry had quite a surge, herself.

The doll buggy is now fine and a most popular toy. Can be quite a nuisance when you're in a hurry to go to the store!

I really expected you to whip down for the Brennerman funeral. I think the truth was that some one broke it to him that you deliberately passed him up when you were here and he couldn't take it.

Max was supposed to go on a job today, but it is now 10 p.m. and she hasn't appeared — but Edward has and he says she didn't get it — poor kid!

I don't know boys' underwear, either! Thought you'd be more up on that than I. As it is they wear ~~short~~ training pants & sleeveless shirts or white T-shirts depending on the weather. Is that permissible, ma'am?

How is Barbara? Edward's sitting here saying you'd be broke if you had all your grand children in one city.

Well, I must get to bed — or I shall be crosser even than usual —

Not much of a letter, was it?
My injured children are doing nicely, thanks
you.

Yours truly and lotsa love —
Mrs. C.

Tuesday

Dear Ruth —

Hello, again! Can you stand it?

What a wild evening! Henry is instigating "grandmother calls", I guess. She and Max appear just when I have the kids all but down, laden with candy and ice cream. So all the kids get up and we have holy hullabaloo till they leave on the ten o'clock bus. But since it doesn't happen very often I figure it's fun memories for the kids — which it's supposed to be. It's fun, any way, but Lord! those Harknesses are noisy!

We had ourselves quite a day. It's warm again, but just-right warm — I like it. Took Dennis and Julie on a long walk — clear to Ralph's, remember? — looking for paint for our walls. It was a little too long, but we enjoyed it.

Michael had 5-6 friends in to "play" all afternoon. They ended up

playing guns - which, in case you don't remember, involves much hiding, running and yelling. I ran around yelling after them for awhile, but finally gave up and just heaved a sigh of relief when they left -

Edward is now whipping up his little late evening dinner and I must fuss around in my Ruth-ish way clearing up the havoc that Henry always wreaks.

Goodnight for Tuesday. Are you liking your Mother's Day "present"?

Much love -

Mrs. North Hollywood

Dear Ruthie -

Wednesday

Your assortment of letters today. Another package? Goody!

Today was mama's pay-day, which is an agonizing day for me. Trying to do all the shopping for a family of five on three short mornings a week without a car sometimes makes me think raising your own food is the only answer. (However, I wouldn't really like it!) One has a conference with papa pointing out on paper that IF one is going to buy 2 pair of shoes AND paint the dining room AND get those ten thous and little items I'm supposed to buy for them - one needs - say - \$20 extra. And father says "Yes, yes, that's fine" and hands you \$10 extra. WHY don't they say it isn't fine in time for you to change your plans? But I'm sure you understand and don't care to be bothered with such trifles.

Any way, the whole family was in an uproar this morning because - mama got interested in interior decorating yesterday - and, for the first time in months - forgot to get anything much for breakfast. Yipes! you'd think

the world was ending because there wasn't anything to put on their toast!

Well, after that, I suggested that Ed might walk up with the kids & bring a few things home while I went a-big-shopping. No, he couldn't do that with the kids. But what did they do but trace my foot steps & ride back on the same bus with me empty-handed!

Once a week letters are really better — one forgets these daily gripes —

Well, in the afternoon, I took my three & 2 neighbors up to buy Mike some shoes, plus the usual bag full of groceries — quite a parade we made! I bought Nenny his first tennis shoes. & they're so cute on. They look so much like him I laughed out loud when the man showed them to me.

I also dyed our old curtains and mixed the paint to just the exact shade it had to be before I could live with it — feeling very much like Tiny — but not enjoying it.

I'm getting old & tired; quite convinced that interior decoration and small children do not mix. Tell Bud to paint that living room before Junior — or he'll never do it!

And so into the evenings — which, with day light saving — are most summery. Still warm to day. Julie & Dennis did go to sleep for a change tonight after all their expeditions and grandma visits and every thing —

So, Roddy has a NEW bike and Judy has a NEW permanent —!

Ant sounds so much like Henry — all that flailing around at one's "retirement" age — am I going to be like that? I wonder? All my Eaton blood is constantly in revolt at living a life which makes one constantly tired — I dream of a time when one's body feels as serene as it does in those rare weeks in the hospital — humn! And don't tell me it never does — I know it!

Well — I'm getting maudlin — I accused the "package-man" of only bringing me packages on Saturday. He assured me that was a lie. But I still betcha it won't come till Saturday — how the weeks FLY —!

Much love —

Lorna

Dear all,

Wednesday

April 1 -
1948

Well, Julie has gone with Max and Denny is asleep so here I am--free!

The buggy came Ruth, and I peeked in to be sure it was all there. Didn't attempt to set it up as I didn't know where I would hide it. It looks wonderful and so big! I know she will be one thrilled girl. That was darned nice of you, wasn't it?

The pictures I think are swell of everyone except you. Like Tiny's coat. Howie's going to be as bald as Ed. Jo Ann looks huge. Ed thinks she and Julie look somewhat alike. Be that as it may she is a fine looking lil gal--and so her baby's sister--exceptionally so, I think. I think that's a honey of Sis and Barb.

Well, whadda I know? Easter was a strange, gloomy day as to weather--too it didn't rain. Henry broke a front tooth out of her plate and refused to go to church that way, but Max, Barb, Bob and Mike went. Mike said he liked it--his first time. Then Henry, Max, and Bebe came over for dinner which we had early while Dennis was down. It was all very pleasant and a VERY good dinner if I do say so.

Friday I took all three of the kids over to the dentist (a la bus, natch) while Michael got his teeth cleaned. He put some of this Flourine on them--have you seen your Time? Then Friday night Max and Henry came and stayed with the kids while Robert took me down to meet Ed and go to a play.

Seems an old chum of Edward's who is now in radio work down here had a part in it (small) and had free tickets at the box office for us. So the evening didn't cost us a cent, really. It was at the Coronet Theater, which is in about the same place and looks very much like the Turnabout. Anyway I was quite impressed when we got in, and also by the ritzy looking people in all their fur and feathers. I felt every bit as good as they, tho, in my new silk print.

However the play was lousy--it was folding the next night--so Ed and I left after the second act. I prevailed upon him, much against his will, to contact Monty before we left, thinking it the only kind thing to do--and also do as the Romans do and not pass up any contacts in this town. So he went backstage, found out she was across the street in a cocktail lounge--where we went and joined her for a drink. It was fun. Some of the rest of the cast came in in their make-up and sat at our table. The rest of the place was full of obviously actory people, and tho they were all definitely Cornish, they weren't corny--one had the feeling one was "in".

Especially when Edward nudged me and whispered that the man I was standing beside in the lobby was Edgar Bergen. And so it was! He looked bald, middle aged, gray and soft and well kept. I had been wondering if that oldish man was actually married to that beautiful brunette (not Hollywood beautiful, but really beautiful) that he was with. While I was thinking this some man rushed up and gushed "why, so and so, you don't look a bit like a mother!" and she looked at the middle aged man with a look that quite obviously showed he was responsible for it. Well well.

other that that I know little. The sun bath I was bragging about in my last brought a persistent cold for all of us that kept Mike in bed most of his vacation. Then we had another colossal rain, so all in all Easter vacation didn't seem too wild with kids.

I couldn't swear to the facts about how long those two letters took because I didn't particularly notice, but I sort of figured it out that the air mail came one day faster!

When young people start buying houses one smells a stork. Did those platinum pills work, by any chance? (speaking of Gus and Paula) Max and I consider ourselves quite authorities on interior decorating and we both muchly approve of Bud's ideas.. Henry says it should be stunning with his red hair--bet he never thought of that, huh? Wouldn't that be FUN to go out and buy a bunch of furniture like that? Never did it myself.

I don't know what Ed's neck size is, sorry. Seems I was lucky to get that picture of me and the kids. Have heard more people say those guys seldom show up again.

The dentist said \$40 for my tooth. The other guy quoted me \$25. Hmm. They also both said it would be \$80 if I had a permanent bridge. So guess that must be what. Sis is getting.

The writers assured Henry they didn't steal the Worry song, so she's satisfied now and that is another mistake for our pasts. She is still trotting around. Like you I trust more to the miracles of love rather than her knowledge of what she's doing!

I didn't mean to upset you about my "childhood frustrations"--I certainly am not blaming you--I simply think I was a dope--still am....

Clyde, we don't know what we'd do without our queer heater. All this rain has been rather chilly.

Yes, I noticed the kitchen door. I often see lots of my "original" ideas done up in magazines! The door is splitting, tho I'm sorry to say. All right so far, tho.

Barbara doesn't grow on me that much--I was just trying to be nice. Peeves me that I have to trot around to dull showers for them and spend all this moeny on them when I don't feel that it's going to "take". Poor Henry is agonizing over a shower for Friday which I'm supposed to be in on. Henry has NEVER done any entertaining and it's a trial for the poor girl.

Sorry about the waffle iron--hope it was the cord. Assure you it didn't do that for us. Well, must write to Cora. Maybe I'll enclose her letter as I think she writes a good one and you might be interested in her strange life.

lotsa love,

mē

Dear Mom and Sis, howzat?

Monday

April 13-
1948

I'd like to get this done before the traditional Wednesday, but a mama never knows, does one? This is a queer birthday I'm having today--all the celebrating is all over and Dennis is trying hard to be sick like Julie was. He is alternating between being all right and vomiting some. What they've got I don't know. Seems to be mostly vomiting--if you care for the word---I don't.

Let's start last Friday as nothing happened between my last letter and then.

Tis evening. Mama has two down, one to go--is very tired, as always on Friday--appear Max, Bob and Barb. Max is taking Mike to the library, and Barb and Bob want to know if they can buy me a drink and drink it at my house. Thought maybe it had something to do with my birthday, but those two aren't those kind of kids. Seems Barb had had a fight at home and wanted to drink it off (which means about two for her!) Ed appeared. It was not a gay evening as Ed finds ~~the~~ Robert and Barbara very boring and doesn't hesitate to show it. As I said Barbara goes out on 1½ drinks and, that of course eliminates Robert, too.

Sooooo---Saturday Mama has a splitting headache and is not a bit cheerful when father has to get up at 6:30 am and all the kids get up, too. Besides it's raining and Mike is ornery as hell from being up so late. Your packages hadn't yet come, which worried Julie (and me) considerably. Max was supposed to show up in the afternoon and never did.....interim...

BUT, in the afternoon the packages came, addressed wrong (one of them) but the postman said he knew where I lived--"You haven't gotten any packages for a long time," he says---Julie and Denny both passed out for hours; the sun came out; we went to the store; and got dinner all ready just in time for---

Max to come--Dennis to rip open my package in frantic search of something for him, I guess. (Julie had already opened hers, and gone to sleep dressed in two dresses, the coat, and the rest in her arms.) In the mad melee in which everyone but mama opened her package and got a present + found myself blowing up balloons until the room seemed full of them. So we all dressed in our finery and new cars and balloons and went to meet Edward whom we found halfway home carrying a gift of cologne in addition to the skirt I already had gotten. (I still hadn't opened my packages)

So we went home, mixed a drink and I did. More about that in detail later. Then we had an hour of two of gay little family games, which we seem to have gone in for, a scrambling of kids into beds, a peaceful drink or six during which Max decided to stay all night and then one of our late candlelit dinners.

Sunday dawned--not clear--ensued a wild morning during which I had almost "too much help"--Edward vacuuming; Max ironing; radio going full blast; ice cream man coming; a couple of ubiquitous neighbor kids about, etc.

We reached more or less of a climax around noon when we all seemed to be ready to go up to Henry's for my "birthday dinner" but no one appeared to take us up. So, while waiting, we sneaked another drink or two and that didn't help matters any when we did get up there into the middle of a family fight. Guess Bebe's visit was telling on everyone's nerves.

Anyway, it all blew over as those things must, and we had a very good chicken dinner and a very good cake--served with the usual uproar and disorganization. We older girls, Bebe, Henry, and I take the two

younglings for a short walk and so the day gradually unwound into a nice peaceful conclusion with Michael in the bath tub taking a bubble bath with the new bubble bath the Harkies gave me.

Henry showed up her line of "jewelry", which is rather cute and I was relieved to find she isn't going from door to door but only wholesale.

So I had my usual nice birthday. Its fun to have ONE day a year when everyone makes a fuss over you and good for the morale. Now next week we can do it all over for Julie because she and I are just thirty years and one week apart. We have more or less started a tradition about our festive cakes; Henry makes them and Robert is getting very fancy as a cake decorator. Also we seem to have a run on Monday birthdays this year which we celebrate on Sunday, so we've had a lot of pleasant Sundays on the family record.

Henry is getting very "hot" on her song selling and keeps us titillating (is that a word and, if so, may I use it?) with her ever-hopeful enthusiasm. She really is getting around. Decided--in my weekly bath--that it's Raggedy Ann she's always reminded me of....

Bebe's love--or meal ticket, depending on your cynicism--arrived this morning after driving down to claim the hand of the blushing lady. Ed and I really felt sorry for her yesterday. I was glad to know that she did have qualms--she is quite ready to back out of the whole thing by now--tho it may turn out to be only a case of bridal jitters---

Poor Henry is having quite a time with her tribe again. They seem to get their crises all at the same time and always at her house. Bebe has been edgy all during her two week visit; Max is edgy because she can't find that job; Robert edgy about his problems; Barbara straining to get "free" from home--as she calls it; and Harry is aching and illing and bemoaning his fate up in Portland. For once I don't think we're bothering her much except that we are drinking again--but nicely. Anyway, I thought she looks all done in yesterday, and was glad, that, as I say, I wasn't the cause of it for once.

Well, guess that's about all. The weather? Is beginning nigngigngi (oh hell) to act like April-warmer and nice.

Will write my little thank you all to itself so Ruth can take it to bed with her if she wants.....

Dennis is still having his second nap--think he (or I?) will sleep tonight?

Lotsa love,
Lorna

Thank you Madlin. For the spice racks. I won't rack my brain over adjectives to describe how pleased I am with them because I know you don't like people to get maudlin--ha ha ha ha ha and ha--- but I'm like Tiny--I DO like my gadgets !

And Ruth.

I don't believe I've ever before had so much nice underwear all at once--have I? You ought to know you've always bought them ! What a nice silky, slimy pleasure ! I like the elastic in the legs even tho this is a country where it's a good idea to show proof of the natural color of your hair now and then ! And they're big enough.

The slacks I shortened and put right on and wore and have been wearing ever since. You see they fill a gap in my wardrobe.

I gave Julie her present by mistake. As I say it was all very hectic--Mike had already copped the balloons and I was trying to make everyone happy. I've never had a chance to buy Julie a dress even if I could afford it, which I can't, but she gets the styles I'd pick out anyway so it's all the better, isn't it?

The toothpaste is a cute thing. She carried it around half the day. Where do you and Tiny find all those cute things?

The jacket for Edward was VERY good. He wore it this morning. I was glad to get the London Holiday, as I noted it was listed and especially wanted to see it, being an Anglophile, like my mother---or is it phobe? And Henry has a secret yearn for Arizona--will have to let her see that one.
Cute cards.

Perfectly delightful--OUT OF THIS WORLD--scrumptious darling wonderful
-----puddings !

Did Denny have his passion for cars when you were here? Well, anyway he's now a very proud owner of the most glamorous one put out in that size..

Julie, as I said, literally loved her dresses. She and Max ironed and mended them and tried them on and filled the closet with them. How wonderful to have Jo Ann. Wish Jo Ann had a brother for Denny. I gave him the pants because he is truly, truly destitute. Were they his or Julie's? The coat isquaint. I KNEW it would be that color, but I think it's pretty on Julie. She looks like something out of the gay nineties--in plum velvet. Max and Edward think it's beautiful and I like it, too.. She certainly needed a coat.

The brown coat I am sick about. I love it and want it very badly, but it's impossibly big. It just fits Max, tho--shall I let her have it? Do you have a better home for it? She'd love to have it...

And don't think I've mentioned everything ! I didn't mention the shelf paper ----which I think I'll give to Bebe as a little giftie if you don't mind. She gave me a pretty little hankie for my birthday which I know damn well some gave to her--so we'll play games....

again much love and
THANKS

May - 48
Wednesday

Dear Ruth -

Can I get by with just a note - have been meaning & thinking about thanking you for that package every day - but those elusive moments!

Ever since Sis said I sounded like Noddy or something I've been selfconscious about going on about things - but anyway - your package was WONDERFUL - something for everyone - even the bath room! Do you know how good it feels to be straggling along in rags & have some one just send you just what you want? Ruth, you really "send" me!

Any how - the boys love their shirts (not kidding - they really said so with no prompting) Julie went around crowing "Sun-suits! sun-suits!" & wanting to try each one on, which she didn't get to do - as we're cold again now. My dress is exactly what I needed & wanted. I think Julie sunsuits are so darned cute - you're quite a sewer - maybe Tiny gets it from you - please all -

I'm awfully tired of my black, dirty
bath room things - so appreciated that
little offer - in fact - thanks!

Life is going on very much the
same. We seem to have fallen into the
groove again now - and some moments
seem almost promising. Edward brought
me flowers & "Mrs. Wiggle-Piggle" for
Mama's Day & did all the dishes etc. - so
I had a nice day. Still have moments
when I feel like screaming "Wait a
minute! Hold on! Don't go so fast! Dennis,
wait! tomorrow for sure I want to sit
down & get acquainted - Kids - Wait!
Don't grow so fast - I'll get all the
dishes & washing done etc. SOME day -"

We've eliminated the 10-11-year
old boys & life is much more peaceful -

But it still hops along - must
get to bed or I'll be a cranky
mama tomorrow

Love

Morder

Thursday May 7 1948

Dear Ruth—

Well, today we did it. The dining room is now pale green with dark green curtains—NOT the shades of green I wanted, but I haven't time to fuss as I use ter. (If painting were just painting without all the upheaval that goes with it)—I am exhausted—as one always is after such. Max & Henry painted their Kitchen white today & put ivory wall-paper on the ceiling!!! Haven't seen it myself yet.

Our dining room looks nice & cool in the daytime, but oh—so big & cold at night. However I've learned from experience it takes time to work out the details of an effect. We had to have one cool color room—the rest all need some sunny yellows—don't they? Anyway I finally made some ~~spring~~ ^{spring} "improvement" & got that out of my system!

This morning I did my laborious grocery shopping—toting home more than I could comfortably carry. (Robert is no good to any one these days.)—and that's

only a beginner. Would sure like to have a Crosley station wagon or one of these cute jobs too small for Ed to get into!

Don't think I could have done my dining room all today without "my crew". As usually happens to me for some reason all of a sudden I have the whole neighborhoodful of kids working for me - Had all ages washing windows & scrubbing woodwork, they really stayed with it and helped a lot - like a bunch of brownies! Didn't cost me anything, either.

Well, still being Ruth's daughter, and not yet a Harkness I must do my dishes before I fall into bed - tho I die in my tracks -

That's all for for now -

Much love -

Lorna

Dear Ruth AND so forth,

Thursday

May 14
1945

Well, I'm glad you liked my letters. There were certainly moments when I wished I'd hadn't started either that or redecorating the dining room all in the same week.

Do you like our dining room? It's quite green now, with fat, bright yellow pillows on the window seats, but looks good on these warm, sunny days. Won't look so good in midwinter I'll bet. We put some wall paint right over the wall paper and it worked fine. Then, being Lorna, I painted some greens coming out of that copper pot you gave me--sort of hand painted wallpaper effect--and the copper sconces over the cupboard thing....

The kids are much better about such things now and I can paint and do things without such agonizing. Things are smoothing out very well now that Dennis and Julie are bigger. In fact I have moments when I just love Harmony street and our funny old house, and all my funny little family. Just like that clipping you sent--which nearly got me-- These green-gold May evenings when the dozen or so kids of the neighborhood are all playing ball in the dead-end street and all the little guys clotted around watching-----

-----and along comes an ice cream man !!!-----

To continue our continued story as of last week---Max went home Sat. evening and Ed and I, both being very tired, got ourselves quite pie-eyed all by ourselves and fell into bed. Our picnic Sunday was one of those rare plans that work out. It just couldn't have been more perfect. We left the crowded part of the park and found ourselves a private, spreading tree and a bench; Henry had brought her checkered tablecloth and we just spread it on the grass. Barbara was spending the day with her mother, but Bob came. The ONLY thing I objected to--desiring to rest--was the Harkness insistence on playing games with the children every darn minute...

Also--why, when or how I never know--but Mike produced a honey of an asthma attack and spent the next three days out of school--- And those three days have held nothing exciting--just the usual and the finishing touches on the dining room----

We have our announcement for the wedding, though there were rumors that the thing nearly fell through last week end. Guess we're going to do it. Evidently we're expected to come through with a gift and elegant new raiment--but don't see how----or why----

Edward is in the throes of changing jobs--it always takes him months. It's quite obvious that's a dead end place down there, and holds no hopes for more money or opportunities. This is a change that has to be done. I realize, but I'll be glad when it's over. I laughed at your plans for Edward--not because they're impossible or anything--sounds very good, but no one who knows that guy can get by for long without dreaming up a career for him---

Well, really haven't much more to say. Want to finish some ~~st~~ ironing as we have to go to Henry's for lunch tomorrow. Some friend is down from Seattle and has to meet me and my kids. Aside from that I'm glad for the outing.

So, if you'll pardon me....good night and lots of love,

Lorna

(over)

Forgot to say my mother's Day present
from Michael. Aside from the dear, sweet
card they had them make in school he got
all of the breakfast Sunday morning (the coffee
~~was~~ made) - boiled the eggs & set the table
very nicely - then he made his bed.

Thursday

May 21
1948

Dear family,
Wrote you a note this morning, but forgot to mail it, so here goes
and her attempt.

After writing every day like that I find it very hard to think back a
week to see what, if anything happened.

One thing, the washing machine fizzled out, and I was sore distressed.
But, remembering that it cost us \$17 last time, I thought I'd pull a
Clyde and just have a look see first. I diagnosed it as a minor ailment
and sicked Edward onto it. Result; it cost us 17 cents and he's so
proud of himself.

Also we got a check for \$50 back on income tax and while I was having
so much fun spending it, altho I knew there were a thousand places for
it--Ed revealed to me that once, during a time of stress he borrowed
thirty dollars from Robert! I guess people never really change even
when they seem to. Robert of all people! Is one I wouldn't borrow
money from. However we decided to pay him some back, skip a wedding
present (tho we'll probably be in the dog house for that) and buy some
dull things like screen doors and garbage cans and a shopping cart.

The latter I think is going to pay for itself. It's a very new, very
fancy one that weighs nigh onto nothing and steers like a new Buick!
In fact, it IS my new Buick! I've tried it already and brought back
in one trip and no aching arms what would have taken me three with the
shopping bags.

The garbage can as you may remember is a necessity--I'm tired of maggots--
and the screen door is a necessity; I'm tired of maggots parents, the
flies that come in if I let the kids use the bedroom exit. And I'm tir
tired of the latter tracking across my nice, Ruth-iental rug.

Speaking of which reminds me. Julie, too, even as Judy copped that pice
for HER doll house, so that it slipped my mind. Do you by any chance
think I wouldn't like 900 dollars worth of such beautiful stuff? I thi
think those "sculptured" ones are one of the nicest patterns put out now,
and the color I shall have to wait to see--not knowing your house, but
it looks pleasant to live with.

Back to my fifty dollar spending; that last necessity to buy was white
shoes for Julie and Dennis for the wedding. I'm getting a big kick out
of the provincialism of this wedding. One would think it was the
British Royal affair! I suppose they are all that way, but this is my
first experience with one. The two mamas are getting themselves very,
very deep into debt trying to outshine each other. I guess the Harkies
are very worried for fear we'll disgrace them, for they are hinting what
they'd like us to wear (my print) and insist on outfitting the kids
in white, which they can ill afford and which Ed and I think is ridicul-
ous, but obe has to humor them. Maxine's outfit is going to cost as
much as the bride's before she's all through. Henry has a new fifteen
dollar hat, etc. etc....aXX/

What gets Ed and me though is her going up north, much against her wishes
and away from everything that matters to her and giving Robert and Bar-
ara her house and yard, completely re-decorated on the inside and de-
nuded of their by minor belongings for \$20 a month! All thos for an
indefinite length of time! Max is staying up in her little room, much
against HER wishes because she has been definitely told that she cannot
morth with Henry--no one knows why.

My, my we kids and our marriages sure make it hard for the parents I can see now. The thing that worries me tho, is that Harry is not well--he has lost fifteen pounds this last month--and he carries very little if any insurance and it seems rather a rash thing for Henry to give up a home at her age. I can appreciate the fact that she couldn't live with a daughter-in-law agin after living all those years with me, but seems as if that's what it would take to make the kids git out and GIT. Oh, well, as you say, no one asked ME!

Well go t that off my chest.....

We are getting a phone! It is to be installed the 27th, we hear. Instead of all those things you seem to be offering why don't you call us up some Saturday night when some of my brothers and sisters are there (or Sunday) and YOU pay for it? ha ha

I did get Julie and Dennis some white barefoot sandals today--the time has come at last---got them both the same size! Guess if Mrs. Edgar Bergen's (yes, that's the one we saw and she's that pretty) child can wear them in this week's life, mine can!

Speaking f actors and sech--Ed looked up Ford Rainey (he of the mysterious phone call to Yakima) who is playing in a local production of Macbeth, went backstage after the show and found himself crammed against the wall with Charles Chaplin--whom he says is old as old! Have here a telegram from Ford--we have no phone yet!--so imagine Ed is having him out sometime.

Tomorrow Max and I are taking Julie and Denny into to Hollywood. We were going to buy shoes, but since I found some we're going anyway for fun. Saturday Ed is haiving some kind of company--don't know who yet--Sunday we go to Henry's for a farewell picnic....

Had Henry and Max here for dinner last night--very impromptu--Max was here and it looked like such a good dinner we called Henry up and told her to come down. The surprsing thing is that she did!

I swear I had another letter here from you, one with cute picture of R cyde and JA but can't find the darn thing...Didn't you say saomething about Henry playing with Maxine. Anyway the term struck us all very f funny--none of us can imagine Henry playing. She just doesn't. She is a very, grim determined, who stops doing "things" only to catch her breath. She seems abssessed with arranging all of our lives just so according to some strange mental plan of her own....

Jo Ann's nighties undoubetedly don't get the wear and tear Julie's do. She probably doesn't wet her bed as much or have a young baby elephant (as he calls himself) brother swining on hers...

Have scads more + could say, but still have dishes to do and am getting sleepy--remind me of all these unsaid things when I come up, huh?

Lotsa love, Norder

Don't be alarmed at the air-mail stamp
only one I had.

June 194
Tuesday

Dear Maw -

Your package just came - I thought it never would. Can't tell you how it cheered the morning. If it weren't for you and Maxine I don't know what I'd do.

Let me talk about the package first and maybe it will keep me from going on like I have been. I'm horribly ashamed of my letters lately and cringe to think of anyone but you reading them.

Who taught you to do packages so cute - a little of this - a little of that? Wish I could turn back the clock and send you some like them in your years of stress so really show you what they mean.

Anyway! Julie's dress is sure cute. How I love lil' gal's dresses. Maxine will love it as it's the things she wants on Julie - yellow + eyelet embroidery - She's her fashion "adviser". It seems to fit but don't think I'd venture another 2 after this. Will get a lot of use out of that style.

The pants are always welcome.

I could use another dress like that - it was so apropos & I like blue better - don't you? Tell Lou I much approve of the blouses - just threw my only shirt style blouse away - in shreds. One for my brown slacks - one for my black skirt & black slacks.

Julie loved Dennis' toy - immediately pulled a foot off & handed it over to him. He was a wee bit afraid of it - the dope. The little suit is a most becoming color & swell for "going to town". However, (only criticism) I find I don't use that style much as we're so dirty around here he gets his skin filthy & I find it easier to change pants than bathe him. So, if grandma is maybe thinking of his first birthday next month (ain't it awful?) tell her we prefer long pants, huh? (And he sure needs clothes, pure kid!)



this style, y'know or these

Not hunting - just find it hard to stop grandma!

Also I imagine the "nuts" are for him - since he hasn't any. Helped, too, as one has "come down", I think.

The food items add glamor + change to a cupboard that cannot boast such little luxuries.

THANKS,

Henry seems to be having a fine time back in West Virginia - doesn't write much, of course.

Maxine graduates next week. Guess even the evening classes have some doings. She's bought herself a white dress even tho none of us can get away to see her.

Mike's school gets out next week. I refuse to think further.

Edward won't have to work Saturdays during the summer.

I'm getting chummy with the gal across the street who has 2 ^{small} boys 10 1/2 months apart - (wonder why I am?) In the first 5 minutes I talked to her she said "If I could only get away from these KIDS sometimes."

Our front lawn is beginning to look nice - quite a pleasure to sit on our front "stoop" in the evening.

North Hollywood has a big klieg
lights display to initiate their stores
staying open Friday nights. Couldn't
quite "get" Maxine's pleasure, pride,
and excitement. Age - I guess.

Edward says Mrs. Maglin told
him Shirley Temple's mother is a horror
one of those mothers y'know. The Fox
Studio finally had to hire her as
a "mother" at \$250 a month just so
they could order her out of the
room!

Dennis is losing a finger-
nail where mama stepped on it
in one of our kitchen "dramas".
(Don't have your children underfoot
in the kitchen - the book says. Ha!)

This is the last Ruthie
envelope —

lots of love + thanks
lots —
Norder

Thursday

Dear family,

I'm tired, but I just have to tell you the news. That is, if it goes through and I won't be like Tiny and count my chickens before they're hatched.

I HAVE PURCHASED A REFRIGERATOR !

You inisited and Edwa d insisted, so I dood it. It is supposed to come tomorrow and the whole family is very very thrilled. We are planning popsicles and ice cream and a com letely frozen week end ! After ten years of waiting I find myself thinking of nothing else but advantages big and little. Perhpas we can even eliminate the Good Humor man--that would make a big payment, huh?

However one does have qualms, especially LITTLE people like us. My main ones are that perhaps I should have been content with a samller, less glamorous box and not the \$360 de luxe--VIPES ! But I kid myself that it's a lifetime purchase and with a family the size off mine one is going to need more and more room. Tell me I'm right somebody! My other qualm is that there might be a feeling in some parts that I might b responsible for Edward's staying on at the bar AND drinking by making hi responsible for such payments.

But I had really decided to wait another year; and he kept talking, talking about getting one and told me to go ahead etc. Besides, I find I have very little to say about his bar and drinking talents. Not that he is drinking a lot, but he's beginning to show signs of getting so tired that he slips now and then and it worries me a little. I even called the people (Curley, y'know) and said Edward had to quit and have been working on him, too, but all I did was succeed in getting him a five dollar raise. I would gladly go without a refrig another year if he'd quit the bar work and build up a daytime job, but as I say, Ed seems to run this little family HIS way-----

Am I right or am I only rationalizing?-----

Well, anyway it'll be Fun !

Do I know anything else as startling without going into it? I have at last finished the black and white checked dress and it's very fine, I must admit. Would like to take pictures for you but the dam nd camera acitng up so that I hate to waste films...Still owe you some of Max's wedding don't I? I have lost about ten pounds and look and feel much better thanks.

We are getting new neighbors across the street--with three kids--just like ours, only a girl's the oldest. They're stictly Grade B Harmony Street type, but will be a change.

Ed took the kids to Van Nuys on Memeorial day giving me a nice rest with Michael who was wheezing and therefore not talking.

Always like your cartoons.....

Edward says the puppets look corny--professi nal jealousy?

LOVE colored sheets--- Yes, I got the sheets thanks and Max liked the mats and took them---and I do think it would be better to let mike buy his own train stuff--he's so d---- particualr----

A nd that's about all I can eke out tonight--been kinda hot today and since thae kids don't sleep-nap anymore I get kinda tired evenings....

lotsa love,

Norder

June 1stish 1949

Wednesday

Dear woos,

I'm glad YOU like my refrig. I just simply utterly LOVE it! It inspires me. It uplifts me! It gives me an entirely new outlook on the whole food situation! Page the GE company and let me write them an ad!

As I say it certainly changes my whole food problem. There is a whole chapter to modern food that I haven't been able to join all these other women in. This week, of course, I'm playing with it and we're rolling in popsicles (I dream about them) and ice cream etc. My shopping problem is so much easier already; no ice man, no panemptying; no Good Humor; no constant shopping every day; no throwing away--and I'M amazed already at the left over possibilities. And all so white and gleaming and beautiful! That butter compartment is really wonderful--only I always forget where in heck the butter is.

ardon me if I bore you, but right at present I'm enjoying so many little things you other people probably take for granted.

We got some films today and loaded both cameras and Max turned the battery on me in my new dress, so maybe we'll have something to show you yet.

Mike's the only guy in this family with much news this week. He had such an exciting week end that he's spent these last three days in bed--durn him! Saturday I let him and his chum, Harold, who is a year older go clear into LA by themselves to Wrigley Field to the baseball game. It was quite a decision for me to make and I certainly worried. But when he came home safely and VERY happy bearing me a gardenia he'd purchased and nursed all the way home I melted in great gobs of mother pride and love and stuff.

Tell Bud the arty Chambreau's are actually producing a baseball fan. He said it was the best Saturday he'd ever had--except maybe the beach last summer. My, my how they grow and go!

So Sunday he and I and Harold went to the show at the observatory, as I'd promised him. And I wore my gardenia, which kept beautifully in new fridgy.

Edward took the kids to Van Nuys on Memorial Day because the park was so full of pusing Jews that he couldn't stand it. And, since, we own no transportation and the street car is the only thing that runs on Sundays and holidays, he didn't have much choice of short trips.

Your art center sounds like Cornish.

Say hello to ant, etc. for us.--if you get this in time. You can tell her we have returned her compliment and named OUR pig "Alice". She claims their sow was named Lorna! But our pig happens to be a fair sized pig bank which we expect to devour \$35 tip money so we can at last pay ant the rest on this stove. We can pay her right away if she really wants it, but I'm afraid if we did, Drois might get it or something.

My typing is terrible--I'm a little weary on the uptake this late at night.

I'm supposed to come up NEXT summer, remember? Michael is lamenting already that there'll be no trip this summer. Maybe by that time we'll be able to hold up our end more.

Didn't know Paula was considering taking the baby back east. What Dr. Rew said kinda makes something or others of us war-time mamas and your mother for instance, doesn't it?

Julie says she'd love some nightgowns--tho she really doesn't need them too desperately. Michael thinks he'd like to buy his own birthday present, too,--you asked.

No, my dress isn't sunback. But the one you sent me I feel the same way as Sis about. Isn't that I'm modest so much as middle-aged. I ain't got to show what the gals have!

Would you prefer my letters air mail? Think I might afford it if important even though it has gone up another cent.

Marilyn was born last September wasn't she? Took care of the neighbor's baby who was born just after we got back from our trip last summer and she doesn't even sit yet--honest. Sorta dumb isn't she? Or is Marilyn really advanced?

Herewith some junk that's kicking around. I did not make the sketches on the Da Pron folder--wish I had. D'ya spose my funny lil daughter's going to follow in her mother's misguided footsteps--note drawings. Also note EARRINGS on the woman; Ah me I'm tired of talent--it's so burdensome.

Well, I tired, too. Must fix Edward a snack and hie me off to bed. Not like my younger sister--I seem to crave a lot of sleep.

That's all for now--good night and
Lots of love,

norder

Tell Bud I bought a GE ref'rig because I'm so fond of HIM!

Wednesday--

June 10 1948

Dear Clyde, (and Ruth may read, too!)

Firstly, I am very upset about you, Clyde. No, I didn't know you were in the hospital--how would Ruth think I'd know? I wondered at the long silence and then to open a letter that reads you're in the hospital just about got me. I certainly hope you're better; that it won't occur again; that it's not serious--poor guy! Please keep me informed. I appreciate the letter from bed....

Are you STILL wanting me to come up with this extra expense, too? I'm all for it--more so than ever now, but if you can't manage--say so, huh? And it sounds like Ruth has company all the time--will she be wanting me and my wearying brood come August? Well, just ask me again! Have been thinking about the place on the beach, Ruth. I know it would be a treat to you guys and it would to me, too. But got to thinking that chasing kids around under primitive and precarious conditions sounds an awful like ~~like~~ the last year I've been through--instead of a rest. Dunno for sure till I tried tho. Your civilized, luxurious life up there sounds good to me even if hot. You forget I'm the poor relation. (over)

You no sooner mentioned the package than it came, mom. Julie loves her nightgowns--"just what I wanted" she said. They're a little too long, but easy to fix with the machine (more about that later). The blue one is especially cute. That BeeNut goo is good, tho not on my diet I decided to go on after seeing Tiny, and hearing YOU and SIS are making ME baked Alaska! tastes like that peanut butter fudge we used to make.... Those HATS! my kids look like something from Mars going down the street--every time I see them it makes me giggle. Michael calls it his thinking cap--shows when his minds working--he says.... Thank you, dear.

We think your ailment sounds very strange, Clyde. "ever heard of such a thing--anything to do with sludged blood as of Life Magazine? You must look cute with your face all swelled... nice you have such a nice room--sounds good to me...

who was?

Speaking of Max--her job at Vinton's may not pan out due to lack of a place to live and then, too, Vinton's is right in the flood area, tho Henry would never think of letting us know whether they were in it or not. Harry is pretty upset about business, I hear--don't know why. From what I know of that place think it's just petering out from lack of new, good strong blood--anyway back to Max. Ruth says your office girl quit on you and you have all kinds of lil troubles. (There must be sun spots or something--everyone's lives seem to be in upheaval lately.) Anyway it's too bad Max isn't better trained (she could have trained herself all this time she was sitting around, but Harkies don't do things like that) or that peg might go right into that hole, huh? She's a good kid--conscientious, orderly, well-meaning, but she's only an amateur typist, slow as the seven-year itch and terribly forgetful--often wonder if she could hold a job if she got one---

well, how'd I get off on that? Pardon me, Ruth, I see, on second reading you didn't expect me to know about pop.

You haven't heard from me because of wedding, Jacobsens, getting Henry off, Max staying here all week and getting her off--a very social whirl for us, but precedes a great lonely calm, I fear. Decided I've always been wrong about me--I LIKE to have people around--provided I have breathers to catch up on the work and they aren't people I'm afraid of.

Baraba says she needs cake tins and/or cookie sheets--maybe a magnetic knife holder like mine. Last thing I expect to say to her for ages as they don't seem to want to be any chummier with us than we with them. She

.....

Asked Henry for her Sewing machine
Since Barb can't Sew — and got it.
Sure helps + is fun,

.....

didn't even demurr about your buying her a present. I don't see why you should, but it's very nice of you. Boy, they sure got a haul!

Michael held up pretty well during all our extended excitement--had a slight wheeze--but Monday he collapsed and has been in bed these three days. Don't know if the excitement had anything to do with it, but it usually wears him down. Lordy! How I hate to see school out next week. I know that's one thing you sympathize with me in, Ruth!

Max stayed here all week after Henry left. We put the cot in the "dressing room" or rather left it there from the Jake's visit and so she had her own room, albeit a pretty dreary one. Henry certainly skipped out on her and left her to do all the dirty work. There was absolutely no reason for Henry to leave so abruptly, either, as the kids stayed at Hosses till after Max left.

Some day I'm going to have to write a book about that Harkness woman! She is the damndest. As far as I can figure it she didn't have the heart to cross Robert in this marriage, and then, knowing he's in for a few good socks on the head, she lavished them with her all--and more than her all--bought them a beautiful set of dishes, went into debt to outfit Robert in a complete and expensive wardrobe; caused insurance so he could buy orchids and gifts; "gave" them her house for an indefinite period of time; moved out all her minor belongings; had a rare drunk with us and got a lot of family cattiness out of her system; and then set off on one of her cheap busses in a frenzy of fear that she would have to face the kids when they got back. Set off in the face of Harry's disapproval and not wanting her; a flood; uncongenial relatives, etc. We tried to get her to phone or write and find out if there was a place for her to stay or how things were but Henry doesn't EVER look before she leaps. She prefers to close her eyes, hold her nose and VUMP! Now she writes us that there is no place for her to stay--she has had to move in with Aunt Edie, whom she can't stand, (Bebe is the ungrateful sister who wouldn't think of having anyone visit her now) Aunt Edie--well, that's another story, but I'd like to give you an inkling of what Henry got herself into--has a son out of work, so she is housing his wife and baby twins (their older baby is in the hospital with some strange incurable malady) and two other grandchildren of various ages ~~and~~... Oh yes, another Henry set off "in-the-face-of"--Bebe brought a rumor that he had disappeared--had gone off with bags and hadn't been heard of for three days. Well, he showed up but no one knows or says why or where he went. Besides, he's quite ill.... Anyway Henry is house-hunting in flooded Portland now (with what I don't know). She wrote Max "to come on up" and they'd see--Poor Max. She thinks she'll stay with her girl friend in Salem--and I can't say I'd blame her....

I don't expect anybody but Ruth to wade through the above --but it's too wild and wonderful a tale not to pass on--I think!

Oh yes, Mike has been wearing his "Yakima Pirates" shirt--he loves it--how it brings back memories....

Have you ever heard mocking birds? I can sure appreciate the ~~sp/nd/~~ song now--such warblings and sheer joy! they go on and on all day! love 'em

our house is inhabited by others than us--we have tenants; Mr. Bird and family whom we can watch his private life of from the living room window; and Mr. Mortimer Mouse, who dares all for food. But he dared once too often, and Edward, our Prave Edward, murdered him--with a trap. He says it's fun to be a big trapper.....

- 3 -

See I have quite a few letters piled up here --will certainly give Clyde something to read if he convelescing.....?

That poolittle set-up sounds as wild as the Harkies....wow !
Poor Jid ! Poor Clyde ! Looks like that '08 class reunion was going to be in the hospital !

Boy, you kids sure had the weather, didn't you? Managed to glimpse the picture of the tornado you had in the paper Ruth put in the package before the kids ripped it asunder (speaking of tornadoes !)

our telephone number is Sunset 3-7581.

Remind me to have you tell me about the Watson girls when I am there--alwayd was interested in them--somehow... Ruth

Max wept when she left us. Had sort of the same feeling myself--as if things will never be quite the same again...I'll sure miss her. She's one of the most congenial people I've ever had around--could it be that one likes to be admired? The kids are sure crazy about her and she certainly is nice to them. Hope she has some of her own some day--she's the type. Didn't blame her for wanting to stay down here that week in spite of the fact that Bob and Barbara were obviously waiting for her to get out of town before moving in. They're sure cold-shouldering us all....S'all right with me--I don't feel like breaking in a new relative right now....

Robert and Barbara had some of the best wedding pictures I've seen. They took scads--(said they never had such good subjects) and they're every one of them just perfect. They sure are a photogenic couple. In fact, one of the difficulties before their marriage was that Barbara wasn't sure if she didn't want to be a model instead of Mr.s Markness. But they seem to be satisfied--all wrapped up in each other--natch.... Have a few pictures to send to you eventually when I can get some prints....

Must fill this page--- /

Edward is sitting here laboring over a hot orchestration, much to his disgust. He says he doesn't know what he's doing. Seems he told some woman he'd charge her \$25 to do it, so she wouldn't insist, but she fooled him--she did..... Wish he'd wear one of those "thinking caps" so I could tell when it's safe to talk to him....

Well, I've been typing all evening; guess I'll quit, Am I caught up?
Can I bring Clyde's yard man back with me for a year?
Well, take good care of yourselves--you two--am getting that auto court finished over here--it's right cute, too--and I expect you in it in Feb.

Let's agree not to have another long silence
huh? Keep us posted....
lots of love,
Norder....

P.S. How do Sis & Em feel about my trip? Is it all right with them for Clyde to pay? Do they know?

June 23-
1948
Tuesday

Dear Clyde,

I suppose You wonder why I haven't answered your very exciting letter. I've had it on my mind--but really haven't had a chance. Our family is all in an upheaval--School just out; Edward coming and going at unexpected and unusual hours, Dennis half sick with a touch of some intestinal business--(nothing serious), and the Bamford's to visit from San Francisco--just for the evening Sunday--not an all nighter--

So I haven't had a chance to tell you how really excited your letter made me. Ed and Mike and I sat around and talked about it that evening and go all hopped up. In fact --Edward will bear me witness to this-- within ten minutes after I mentioned the train trip and a few details Michael started to sneeze and cough and got all clogged up--and he hadn't shown a sign of either ten minutes before. Poor guy--I'll probably take him off on a stretcher--he'll get so excited. Edward feels very sorry for himself, too, natch---

I'm afraid we'll have to come whether you want us or not now as the dear Meglin establishment's id a of summer vacation is to simply close up shop and let everyone scramble for a living for two weeks. No vacation pay or anything--isn't that dirty for a long established firm like them? So poor Ed is going to be on the loose for a couple of weeks. He says as long as we're gone he may do some night club work. However in spite of how lonesome and stuff he'll be I think it'll do him good to be free of us for a little and give him time to think...

Well, about the ticket, which is the most exciting part--I find it better to trust to your judgment and just not say a word to anyone else as everyone seems to fancy themselves as ticket agents or something. I never heard such a wealth of advice and conflicting statements--such as--Edward says we don't get on the train at Burbank, but at Glendale. Please check that one or I can when we get the ticket--you know me! and how I get on and off trains!

That is the only point I'm not clear on. Otherwise your plans sound wonderful. Leaving at 7:30 at night sounds like a good time to me. And you'll meet us in Portland. Should I let the Harknesses know? Spose they'd be insulted if I didn't.

I think to get the ticket for August third as far as I'm concerned. I almost have to wait for a payday--(we run so close)--and that's the nearest to one. That would give us a month anyway--could you stand us that long? Won't it go fast?

Well, I won't try to put any news--if any in this,,as it's late and I'm tired and Dennis simply will not get to sleep. Just to let you know about the ticket and how wonderful-we think it is and I'm glad you're up and around and stuff. Getting a letter written from the office made me feel as good as anything....

Lots of love to all---
Lrna

Thursday

June 26
1948

Dear Ruth,
Where ARE you? What are you doing in Seattle? The reunion? Oh, I forgot. Havn't much to say but it seems like an opportune moment to say it. My correspondence is picking up in inverse ratio to the social life we ~~don't~~ lead. Max is proving a better correspondent than I expected her to be and it keeps me hopping. Also Tiny and Clyde have suddenly appeared in the mail box. But where are you?

As I told Clyde we've been busy "changing the guard" around here. All my carefully laid schedules are flooey with Ed and Mike changing. The neighborhood kids just about drive me goofy, until one of them came down with the mumps and then they all suddenly disappeared. Edward says "I'm too lenient with the kids" but, being a St. Bernard himself he doesn't know the trials of a Pomeranian yapping at a pack of wolves. Boys! Geez!

Mike is down today too. Since all his ailments assume the same form one really can't say what in hell ails him. HE doesn't seem to have the mumps. If they're going to get them I darn well hope they do it before August don't you?

Julie and Dennis are fine except Dennis never goes to sleep these light daylight saving nights. Also he chose to throw up the night the Bamford's were here. But that seems to be his secret, too. Julie has a plain old dutch bob I finally sneaked off and bought her. No one would let me before, she having to be a glamor girl. I had to try it once--get so tired of fixing it---

I asked Clyde in his letter if I should nitify the Harkness girls about arriving in their wet city, but got to thinking afterwards that they'r both working gals so that's a good out.

There's a good article in the new LJ Journal about alcoholics and their women I want you to get and read so we can discuss it this summer over our baked alaskas SIS is making us!

Tiny sent us the nicest package of some cast-off luxuries they didn't use--quite Ruthish. I was quite overwhelmed...

Well, well, are we going to like Dewey?

I think I forgot to tell you what I consider the most typical Henry story I've ever heard (seeing that you enjoyed the other so much); (stop me if I repeat myself): When Max was here she said to me --I'm going to the bank and IF I get any money I'll take you to see "I Remember Mama". Which she did and we did. However it struck me funny as Max keeps the accounts and she'd kept me pretty well informed how her finances were going that last week and she sounded pretty broke to me. But she came out --all grinning--with fifty dollars. Seems Henry, when she writes a check fills the stub in in round numbers--upwards!--just to kid herself into saving money. So we took the money and went to see "I Remember Mama" which struck me as very appropriate, it's Beeble plot being based on mama's imaginary bank account!

Well, I'm finishing off a dab of a pint left from the Bamford debacle with Edward and it's not conducive to either typing or thinking so I quit....this dumb letter was just a filler while waiting for you to come back from Seattle....

so good night and lots of love,
me

Dear R. Th. —

I left this letter open in case a letter came from you today — which it did.

Don't get me wrong — I will go to the beach if anyone wants to go —

You're certainly having some hellish weather up there, aren't you?

Did I tell you Henry was working in — curtain store?

If Clyde's doctor knew anything about asthmatics he never would have told him ~~that~~ what he did about that thing may come back or it may not. He would know that a state of anxiety, whether conscious or subconscious, is the very worst thing for such people!

Also — while I'm being so wise (at the risk of boring you) if you don't read the article about

"Alcoholics & Their Women" — I want you
to know that he seems to feel
wines of such are trapped. They have
4 alternatives: 1 — Leave 2 — Turn
into a shrew 3 — Turn into a martyr (Henry)
4 — Be a nervous wreck the rest of
your life! (Ant)

So bear with us poor girls, will ya?

No more to add, I guess —

Thursday

July 2
1948

Dear Ruth and Clyde and everybody up that way...

our weather is always surprsingly akin to yours. We must have the same currents or weathermen or something. ours is beginning to warm up now, too, though not badly as yet, thank heavens. Its' been just right lately which makes vacation a lot easier to stand. And then, the thought that I only have to stand it in THIS hole for a month anyway keeps me buoyed up !

Got so enthused at Clyde's letter that I went righ up and got myself a time table, and sure enough !he's just as right as he can be. Find myself thinking, planning and budgeting already. YUM !mas far as I'm concerned I'd just as soon scoot through Portland without seeing the Harkies at all. I certainly have no idea of straining anybody to see them. Ands, since the three of them are living in three rented rooms, I'm sure they don't expect us for a stay. Got to thinking that both Henry and Max are working so they might not be able to see us after all--unless for lunch. Kinda think Max doesn't go to work till noon, but am not sure. I should think Clyde would want toget going in time to get home before dark and before the heat of the day---I should think--will have to be further informed on that score..

Well, we had ourselves quite a week end last week. Did I tell you that so many of the kids onthis street play musiaal instruments that my remark about a Harmony Street orchestra agrew into something since Ed has been teaching a kids' orchestra? Michael printed invitations for "all kids to assemble at our house" last Saturday. In the meantime I had rigged the kids up a curtain in the garage and they were also planning to stage a big show for the parents after the "orchestra" rehearsal. Well, they got pretty wild and impatient as kids do so I gathered the reins and got erverybody going about 11. It was fun and cute. About three of the kids got together with Ed at the piano and were so pleased thatthey invited a bunch of mamas and aunts and things and then we all had to go to the show, which was pretty good, considering they did it all themselves. Good way to get acquainted in the neighborhood. We never even thought of that, but since everyone has been real friendly.

The mumps scare turned out to be tonsillitis, thank goodness. But it kept things pretty calm this week, so I havn'thad a bad week at all, tho I AM tied down. In fact I could almost say I enjoy vacation. There isn't the time deadlines to meet all the time--kids sleep later and can go to bed later etc. The neighborhood bully has moved away.... and we stillhave our trip to look for ard to--I can hardly believe it !

In the meantime--we are acquiring a BUNNY ! The pet parade has to start sometime I guess. Larry's folks keep rabbits and in the way the rabbits do they are sort of overflowing the cages, so I told Mike IF he was interested enought to build a cage for it he could have it. (I expect it to fry in that heat out in back by the time we leave) So he and Larr worked all day long and whipped up a most professional looking "hutch"--so I guess tomorrow I shall be a farmerette !

Edward works more human hours during the summer. Leaves in the morning and sometimes gets home almost in time for dinner. Han has Saturday and Sunday off, which is a refreshing change..

So that's about all I know about us---

If I look sound and act like mom--MOM should be complimented !ha ha What? no letter from Ruth to answer?

oh, hello jakes ! lotsa love;...Lorna

Friday

Dear Ruth,

You'll have to excuse my not writing. It seems as if I'm always surrounded by kids, heat and/or husband these days and never have a waking moment to myself. Used to write in the evenings or when the little kids were napping. But now Ed gets home early and Julie won't nap with all the big kids around all the time soon....

We have been having 90 degree weather this week but somehow I don't seem to mind it as I did last year. Seem to know more what to do--or rather, what not to do..

I'm very sorry I didn't get a letter off to you about the boys' birthday as I had some very definite ideas. But your letter hid from me in my uncleaned desk and didn't remind me to say it. Besides the time goes so all-fired fast--- Hope my vacation doesn't whip along as fast as the Jakes' seems to... Was going to ask you to get Mike a volley ball and Denny a big beach ball if not too expensive or difficult to mail. They need something like that (and I need it, too!) to get them outdoors. The kids here all like to play ball but seem to lack good ones-- However, I wouldn't want to wrap a volley ball....! As tis you know we can always use clothes, tho the Harkies got us pretty well fixed up for the wedding. Seems silly to send em down and then for us to lug them right back doesn't it?

We had a very nice fifth--a couple of them, in fact! Ha ha! Mike and Ed and the kids went a-bussing to Burbank and purchased a few--very few--fireworks for three dollars. So did the other neighbors, so, when night fell (with the kids all pulling the shades off it down as hard as they could) we had a Harmony avenue display. The chambreaus first, and then, lured on by their kiddies, they went to few others and ended up drinking beer with the neighbors. Imagine!--the Chambreaus

Monday, we all, en familie, took "an Expedition"--to the observatory in spite of the fact that Mike was suffering a severe attack. Need I relate that the attack cleared amazingly while AT the observatory and returned when he was forced to leave? It was fun, tho hot and mostly a matter of waiting for busses and street cars on the dull streets they always run on. But, as Edward said, it was satisfying if only in proving that we are "a mobile unit". And home did seem good.

Saturday night we spent much as usual--trying to justify each highball we drank. Robert and Barbara dropped in just as we were ready to drop, period. So Ed went ahead and dropped and Robert regaled me till 2 am with the intimate details of his and Barbara's complete sex life. The subject being rather interesting, I managed to stay awake. Seems Barb was a little worried--havin't checked up on her. Hope things are all right as I KNEW I've have to bear the brunt of such confidences when Henry fled. Also Barb smashed up Bob's car to the tune of \$150. my my....Don't see much of them as a rule...

It has happened at last. A neighbor offered to take me shopping with her. And I went (giving up all other plans with alacrity--tho I didn't tell her). Then, in the afternoon she called again and we took all the kids to the park for awhile (hers and mine). Today she is giving me corn for dinner out of her yard. Anyway I like her and the feeling seems to be mutual. It's nice to just "fall into" a friendship through mutual interests, problems and attitudes, without having strained over it.

other than that I know nothing exciting. The poor bunny still exists, tho I daily expect self-fried rabbit out there in that heat. Bet it will disappear if Ed has to feed it while we're gone!

We have stopped buying ice cream from the ice cream man. Guess that IS news. The Jakes will be interested. But they raised the prices to twelve cents a cup and that even got the kid-spoiling Chambreaus! 'Sfunny--the kids have raised a murmur---maybe they never really wanted it?

Bud could be right about Carole Landis. Everyone seems to take it for granted down here that that newspaper gag about "sleeping pills" is really just dope. Guess from what you hear that stuff is really prevalent down here....

Don't like the sounds of your weather. Do I have to pack for two kinds of weather?

(I am now in the midst of commenting on three old letters of Ruth's I found kicking around the desk in case anyone else but Ruth has some pots boiling or kids spoiling or hops brewing and would like to tend to them.)

Don't plan on feeding me either, Ruth. I'd DIE if I gained any more weight. Guess Tiny's right--have been picking it up.... That beach place is beginning to intrigue me--even if cold--imagine we'll have some more heat here after we get back....

If I did try to contact the Harkies would only be for lunch or something could you stand that? Ed thinks they'd be hurt if I ignored them... Haven't heard from them so it remains to be seen....

I told Julie she could take her doll with her, but don't think we'll attempt a bicycle--ok?

Six years? Vipes! Can people forget ME in a mere six years? Am I going to be sleepy? I shouldn't like that...

Well, life complicates--goodbye for awhile again....have done a lot of mental work about my trip, will find the time short suddenly and wish I'd done more than mental work I betcha. Doesn't somebody short-change us on the years when you get over thirty?

welll welll I go

Lorna

I have several plans for my trip I won't get around to, I know. Such as having my kids checked by Dr. Row (or whoever you recommend) Want to make me an appointment? I'll pay--watch. Can Sis teach me to knit if we go to the beach?

Tuesday

July 28
1948

Dear Folkies—

Well—the tickets came today and I must say it's one of the most thrilling things that ever happened to me! Thank YOU!

The kids and I are so excited—and poor Edward feels so sorry for himself. But I do hope he'll find some rest in not feeling responsible for us for awhile—

Yipes! d'ya realize what you've bitten off—all seven grandchildren together? It's amazing the amount of things I can find to do—one would think one could just go—

I hope to get the full money's worth out of my ticket if I have to lick the walls—There's one fly in the ointment—

Robert has sicked one of his dull, dull friends and her baby ^{off} on me. (I know she's dull—I had to talk to her at the wedding!) She would have to take the same train—but then—with all my swankiness—I can high-hat her!

Don't feel like saying much - when one gets
this close it always seems like it will
be easier to tell it -

By the way - my new neighbor "Chum"
offered to take us to the train - nice, huh?

I can't find my bathing suit anyplace
— just as well as I would NOT be able
to get into it. Henry very sweetly sent Mike
& Penny some fancy trunks for their birthday —
As for me — didn't you say there was a
tent there?

I see you are like me — worrying
about what I'll think of your house.
Please don't; I know it's no mansion;
but remember what I'm used to — surely
better than that!

Well, enough for now — all I can
talk, think, smell & taste is TRIP!

Whewee!

Love —

Ole lady Chambreau

Tuesday

July 28

Dear Mom etc.

pardon me for not writing but I'm so obsess d with thoughts of my impending trip that I can't tear them away to write. It really is wonderful I can't get over it--like having three wishes from the fairies--and the fairy even waves her wand and says "You may even have a new dress" !

Instead of not likin it t e beach business intrigues me greatly--it sounds perfect to me. And I quite agree with you that that's the way for us gals to visit--no housework, no distractions etc. I feel quite flattered that Tiny's staying to see me. Does that make all three of us together? What fun? You havn't said how long we'r to b at the beach, though...not that it matters. My kids are very enthused--couldnt be t at mama sold them on it all???

I find myself confronted with innumerable little details that hadn't occurred to me before--like luggage: my favorite bag the kids have used for a stage or something (can't use it); my second choice has the bottom rusted out of it; (can't use that); my third choice is too small and tricky for convenience; and my last choice is a small tin trunk with the lock broken. Can you face it? That and two hand bags plus the this-a's and that-a's it takes to transport three kids. Just letting you know what you'll have to put in the car besides your own--

Also have heard from the Harkansssssss (meaning Maxine--Henry's letter are too incoherent to count) and they plan to meet the train--at least Max does. Now, that wasn't my idea, so grin and bear it---I mean they'll be there, too.

The dress is so perfect and som very much what I would have bought (if able) myself to buy, Ruth that I don't know what to say. As I got to primping in the mirror over it I found, much to my amazement, that, as Tiny says, I DO look like you--more and more--HOW did that happen? What intrigues me is--do I have the same thoughts?

Well, to more mundane matters; both the boys had swell birthdays--spoiled brats. The Harkies came through late, but through, with clothes and trucks and skates; we broke the pig bank and got Mike's bike fixed and broke ourselves to buy them each \$5 worth of other stuff--wood-burn ng set, balls (sorry about that volley ball--didn't know they were so MUCH) hammer toy etc. Had neighborhood kids in for ice cream an cake--made a couple of ready-mix cakes; sked one of the mama's (t e one I've be n "chumming" with) and her husband in for a drink/ SHE came but papa scorned our offer and I havn't seen her or her kids since--spose we overdid it?

Michael and I went to the observatory show--a trip to the moon--remind me to tell you--creepy.... Sposed to be a diversion for mama, so what does papa do---meets us in Hollywood with a couple of tired, sleepy kids to hold all the way home and then I have to rush around and get dinner for everyone--and by the way, Lorna, I finished up that little dab of liquor--hope you don't mind.... These men----

I'm not going to go into any detail mor than this as I hope soon to sit on the beach or around the fireplace or something equally different and chat as I think of it

So here I go back into my various duties--- thank you for the nice birthday things. They were NOT dallas you thought, Ruth. Altho kids don't like clothes t e other things mor than made up for them.

The Ford was Mike's second best present and mama sure likes the clothes.... Edward LOVES his shirt and you never can go wrong on books for this family...This is the end of my paper and the end of me

Lorna

J E R S I (G O L D)

OLD G O P L i e s
 R E D
G O R I G
G O L D J i d O L D E R
i s D O S I R E
S O L D O F E S I R
L i e L E D L O D E
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D O E S R I S E
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L O S O L D E R
G L I D E S O L D I E R

51

E G O

L E G

On train



Dear Ruth + Clyde + Powells etc -

It's hard to write on the train
and it's hard to write + mind boids
— so what, huh?

Want to say, tho, that I feel
very peeved — it's the first time in
my life I ever hated to get on a
train or go on one. I HATE this train
because it's wending it's way
farther + farther into this stupid, old
scorched California, which I also
hate. I hate it in spite of the fact
that our compartment is better
than the other with a closet + a
cupboard + wonderful "airfoam"
"beds". I hate all the covey
looking people — the dining room

Steward says there are 700 on this train! I'm lonesome: I haven't anyone to talk to—

The kids went to sleep fairly soon after we got on—Thank goodness—(so I could have my own private weep.) I lay awake a long time full of thoughts of people & things of this last month. It was all wonderful—and I find I'm very fond of you all—damn it!

Michael woke the kids up at 7:30, damn him. I'm not buying cigarettes, Sis, tho I sure want one. S'pose I'll hold out?

That evening in Portland seemed so hectic & like a

dream - I was so glad I had to keep busy with the kids as my insides were secretly rebelling against the whole damn leave-taking -

I certainly appreciate your help with the kids, Sis - you did just what I've been wishing someone would do for a year. And Ruthie, that lunch in the car was fun - all those lovely surprises!

Well, the kids are draped around my neck so I'll have to quit for now -
Sure wish I'd never

gone to California in the
first place —

As the woman in the next
compartment was saying
"Goodbye, mama. You be
happy darling!" (Dicky-gooshy!)
— more later —

I feel very cross —

Love

Lorna

ON TRAIN

Well, the day is almost over, thank
heavens. The books were very
successful, Ruth. We went
without lunch — nibbled candy
& coke instead, then had dinner
brought into the Compartment.
Didn't cost any more altogether
& the kids made their "mess
to end messes" in private.
The compartment ~~was~~ cooler —
probably because we didn't
leave the woods until
afternoon. Any way we spent
most of our time in it.
The kids didn't nap
and I didn't smoke a
cigarette, sis, so ha! ha!
Got over my grouch but
still hate like anything
to go home —

Sis, Max and Henry raved
about how cute you are!
They said your pictures didn't
begin to do you justice.
It's that hat — I swear
it is!

The Sun is now setting!
& we're about to get into
Sacramento — hope we can
get out ~~for~~ a breath of air.
Then to bed and my
leisure is over. Makes me
feel good that everyone
comments that I "have my
hands full" — Sure was a
long walk to the end of
that train Sat. night!!!
Enjoyed Ida's letters —
(read some more on the train)

Tuesday

Sept. 8
1948

Dear Everybody, and I do mean everybody !

Will try to write while the kids are napping and before I launch into everything and get more or less adjusted to our strangelife again.

Your letter this morning, Ruth, you quickie--I have so many things to say to you I'll never get them all said in a mere letter--- I, too, am having a heck of a time "getting over" my trip. I haven't been able to do anything--haven't even unpacked yet and feel awful lonesome and sorry we ever moved way down here. Edward's blue, too, after all my raving. For two cents (or more) we'd all pack up and move right back to Yakima. Ed was very intrigued with my ideas for him up there. Guess our coming here was just another of Henry's unsuccessful transplanting efforts. However I'm too old and encumbered to set out to seek our fortunes again, and I suppose in another week I'll get back into the rut. Besides I have a vague suspicion Ed and I might be a couple of never do wells to whom the other side of the fence will always look greener...suppose? Besides we've only been here a little over a year and I guess that's not a fair trial. Anyway, if fate should give us a chance to come north again, I doubt if we'd hesitate as I would have in bygone years.

I, for one, would be quite content to spend the rest of my life in the bosom of my nice, nice family (have you been waiting for the day when I'd finally admit that?) and it was quite clear to me when I came back the Edward is one of our "dependent personalities" who has shifted his dependence from his mama to me and will always follow where led and never be able to stand on his own two feet. He says for Clyde to get him a job in one of your radio stations and we'll come back. He wasn't interested in having anything to do with Gerald, which, in spite of it being the smarter thing to do, I suspected he'd rebel at. Oh well,---another pipe dream under the bridge....

It was also depreddingly clear to me that our main trouble is lack of friends. It was most odd to come home to no one but Edward. (Bob and Barbara are as nothing to us.) No wonder our family is such a little "closed corporation". We must make a supreme effort to get acquainted and so on and see how it goes then, huh?

Well, I seem to be in a bad, bad mood. Certainly feel low, I know.

Edward and I were awfully glad to see each other. Hmmm. We ate dinner in our compartment, did I tell you? The train was over and hour late getting in and what with the mix-ups on time, I really don't know how late. Anyway, Ed and Mrs. Thomas and kids were all there to meet--(all looking very tacky and corny) and it was not, even that early in the morning.

Edward, as I said, had the house all clean; a breakfast of bacon and eggs ready for us; and a yummy quick mix cake with Edward-made seven minute icing (better than I can do) setting in the nice, clean re-decorated kitchen. He'd painted ~~the~~ the nasty, moldy drainboards and gotten new bright blue rubber mats for them and covered the table and shelves with gay, strawberry print oilcloth stuff. Also,--typicallly--- had lettered a motto gaily across the kitchen wall! He had stuff all ready for dinner and enough food for three days in the house. So all I had to do was sit and tell him EVERYTHING. Dennis went to sleep,

Michael to a show, Julie to the neighbors to play so I really felt rather at loose ends.

The yard looked good (for our yard) but pretty sad after Yakima's beauty. And the house looked better than I expected but so SMALL.

Robert and Barbara dropped by, but Ed wasn't speaking to them partly because they never even OFFERED to meet the train. Barbara IS a dope there's no question. As Ed says, she's just a dumb blonde--and Robert's simply nuts about her. Seems the two main things Ed was mad at her about was that when Bob was ready to go under ether, she not only seemed completely unconcerned but whined around about absolutely HAVING to have a hamburger; also, he gave them ten dollars he couldn't spare because they professed to be so destitute and Barbara went down and bought a lot of new clothes! It seemed to irk him, too, because it happened to be his thirty dollar day at Meglin's that he had to chase around getting Robert operated on, and he could ill afford to lose that much.

Poor Edward had an awful time, I guess, in his typical Harkness, dithery way. All his troubles kind of piled up on him. Also typically Harkness that after spending a frantic morning chasing hither and yon over this great city looking for insurance policies and trying to contact Henry to get written consent for Robert to be operated on etc.--going from bank to vault and through all Henry's drawers for their insurance policy he finally had to give up only to find out a few days later that the policy was in the ~~WAXING~~ PIANO! I was relieved to find out, tho, that both Robert and Harry had some hospital insurance and it was not life insurance they were after.

Maxine, in her youthful optimism, expects to be back the first of October after Harry's out of the hospital.

Michael produced a wheeze already last night. Guess he was just holding out...I MUST get busy and get some things done around here---California's very dry and hot and unfriendly and stupid.....

I am going to try to get some things together--Tide, and Sis's clock and stuff and send up. Would like to make individual packages but don't be hurt if I don't--I'm not very efficient about such things....

Was tickled you called, but made me blue all over again. Edward never ceased to rave about how nice it was of you to call. Etc. etc. Tell Sis I finally figured out how to knot the sock--and I love all of the Powells very much, and I think the GE's are very nice, too. Will be anxious to hear about Paula....

I can't begin to tell you what a wonderful trip we had and how very, very much I miss you all---so I shan't---because I feel like weeping right now.....

will try to be more cheerful in my next--

much love,

Lorna

Friday

Sept 13 1945

Dear Ruth etc.

It is now 90 in the living room and not enough shade yet to go out in back, so guess I'll write while I'm still inspired after your juicy letter this morning and the package. Have a feeling I won't want to do much for the remainder of the day.... I got back in time for the heat wave, you see.

I don't know whether to be bick or thrilled about your getting Mike the tennis shoes. It was certainly nice of you--nice of you to outfit him--sure saved us a lot. But I made two major efforts in the heat and just got him some with the five dollars I happened to have in my purse!! They are just the right size and I wish now I hadn't been so zealous about getting some. IF I sent them back with this package I've been threatening could you get your money or exchange them for size 5 rubber boots, which cost about the same? Or shall I keep them and have him alternate, which would be a good idea with those stinky things and something we never could afford ourselves? Anyway thanks very much again. I shall solve the problem eventually.

The pictures were good. Thank you again. We always like to be a little more flattered than we were in that first batch you took. Made me wish and wish and wish I were back there. Also to sit in Sissy's nice sady yard.

I liked the clipping. Wish you'd keep me informed about that movement as I really haven't given up yet. It is my private project to move us up there within the next five years now. I feel it is just the set up for Ed and I KNOW it is for me. Edward is too susceptible to Hollywood and all its faults. Seems a shame to corrupt a potentially nice guy when I'm sure he'd love leading a small city around by its undeveloped artynose.

But I can see that we missed out on this year's developments. What I need is a scout up there to keep me informed and angle us in sort of. Perhaps we could get them to have Ed produce his Pinocchio for next year's schedule. Some one might put up with him and him up for about three months and then, if Yakima wants him, we'd follow, huh? It occurred to me that you, who are looking for something to do in your spare time should go arty and join their little movement with the specific aim of having your eldest daughter come home to live. Hmmm? I'm sure they'd have some use for a charming, intelligent rather idle woman with her own car! With your "in" at the paper I have even figured it out that you could help them on promotion and publicity! Ask Sis what she thinks of it. Maybe I'm just crazy.

As for specific information I'd like to know if this Hatton woman the Little Theater Group imported from Portland (good pun hiding there!) is paid for her "guest" directing? Edward has had experience in that line (won a prize!) and could do it as well or better than anyone in that Portland Little Theater! Enough of business----

I've gotten over my doldrums but am falling back into the morass of frustration and self-pity that Edward is still wallowing in. Hope to keep my larger view of things my trip afforded me.

Oh - skip it all - I can see Edward would talk at anything his own family didn't think up -

Michael goes back to school Monday and seems glad to go. He's almost over his large attack of wheezles he seemed to think it necessary to produce on getting home. With the neighbor kids all going, too, wish I could look forward to "peaceful" mornings with just my two little ornerys, but I can't win--when Mike goes back and is gone mornings Edward starts staying home till afternoon !

Course it will make the grocery problem easier (a little sweet with the sour--as ant says !) Sure was TERRIBLE to start off on my seven block, trundle cart trek with my two "helpers" in the heat the other day. What a vacation I had when I stop tho think of it ! The prices are higher than when I left, too, which was discouraging to say the least. HOW did you manage to feed us so well?

My few acquaintances greeted me most cordially and made me feel better--the two neighbor women and the ice man ! Don't know whether the mail man's glad I'm back in this heater not!

Robert has been sort of haunting me--needs a shoulder to cry on I gather. Like our wringers, as you so aptly put it, after four months of supporting a "family" he, too seems not quite able to cope. He wants to chuck his job "because he doesn't like the way they're treating him" and has written to Harry to get him a job with the Vinton company, so he and Barbara will evidently follow the family's traditional search for "greener pastures". Thereby leaving us fully stranded on this desert that Henry swore was our pot o gold at the end of the rainbow. Spose they were just trying to ditch us?

I was very glad to hear the details of Paula's production. I can imagine how proud a papa Bud is. Bet he'll make a good one. Still want to hear whether it has red hair at this hard to tell point. You tell Paula she was braver than some of us old hands to go shopping and have lunch after she knew ! I couldn't have done it !

I suggest four matted prints across the back of your davenport? Maybe scenes from your travels? Always good for conversation for new visitors--at least the mags say your living room should contain something that a strangers can chat about. That's why we keep the music up in ours, see?

Sure, send Henry a clipping, I don't care. Edward seemed rather to like it. Her address is 2137 N.E. 13th-Portland.

Well, what else. Hope to write Tiny in one of those tomorrows that won't be quite so busy as today always is. Would like to write Sis personally, too, but I'm sure she understands....Did Sis tell you Harry had a gall stone they didn't take time to remove?

Well, away to the back yard to knit...about my speed on a day like this----

bye for now...
love to all....
Lorna

Wednesday

Sept. 16
1948

Dear Old Soul !

I have been reading Ida's letters, so don't blame me. Notice she says in one " Jim is just a fine, healthy baby and I hope he always will be"

You are a dear old soul though to slip in the buck. But remember what I said about paydays--just before one again. However I'll use it to send your "Tide" as I've been a little embarrassed about putting it off so long. Ed's two weeks without pay is quite a set back for people who run as close as we do. But I must say it did better than he would have in by-gone years. He's managed to keep his head above water anyway and I think if he hadn't had that operations business that he might have gone out and earned some more.

Speaking of such Gotour first note from Henry since we came back--finally dawned on her we were there, I guess. It was the usual,--much palaver about how I love you all, a crack at Harry, who is now home; and a page of daydreaming about her careers for Ed--no news at all.

Our weather is still hot though not so unbearable--gives me a good excuse not to work. There is still some talk about closing the schools. Boy! won't I be mad if they do! Will be awfully glad when this scare is over--it's worrisome to parents.

Things don't seem so bad as when I left. It's sure wonderful to get away and get a new viewpoint. Wish Ed could. Dennis is more mature and therefore less trouble and less wet pants etc.; and my neighbors seem real friendly and I don't feel so obsessed about the housework when I saw that we really had made some progress in our year.

I even went up and registered to vote for the first time in my life! Republican, too--tell Clyde. So I can cancel Ed's vote!

Thanks for the present for Paula, tho I don't feel right about it.

You sound awfully busy up there. Pet Bud and Paula are in a tizzy--I still say that first two weeks with a new baby are some of the hardest in life. I trust Marilyn doesn't have red hair or someone would have said so. Pet Paula likes her anyway.

Don't seem to have much to say. I am getting into my rut--as we all must--willy nilly. When I read Ida's letters about HER dreams of moving back with her family--guess we should just appreciate what we get to see of each other, huh?

Tell Sis I did quit smoking. Two days I've gone now. Am certainly enjoying the mixer--have built a "home" for it already.

It's NOW I realize how nice it would be to run in and chat with you whenever I felt like it---say--let's just run down to Liz! or up to Sis!.

Well, must stop thae twitter--life descends----

much love....

Lorna

October first

Dear Ruth,

Well, here it's October and another week end looming and I still haven't written you! Guess I'll have to give up waiting for a quiet spell and write in the midst of. Julie simply won't take a nap lately, darn her.

First, thanks for the package. Getting a package from you is the very nicest thing that happens to me in this set up. Just like any-day xmas. Edward is wearing the shirt (one of 'em) and they always look nicer than his own. Could it be your super special ironing? The curtain I have put up on the back porch and Ed and I have decided that just what it needed. The flannel I am anxious to get sewing at. How nice to have such big hunks! I'm a little leary of Sis's nighties--I'm sure that polka dot number must be what brought on Barbara! Julie adores her "apron" as do all the girls in the neighborhood. She has had to do dishes for days for me. I perused the Herald for something pertaining to us but found nothing. Was there?

We have been in the throes of rearranging the house a little, which always takes up all my spare time. I came back full of ideas and improvements that I was too tired to bother about before, so here I am caught in them now. Decided Julie was too clinging and should have a place of her own to "nap"---so we ripped out that built in thing in the "dressing room"; moved my bed in there and now have a new "bedroom". A little small, but sure makes the living room nicer with just one bed.

Course that started a merry go round of furniture changes, especially as we're TRYING to purchase a heater for the living room and that entails some changes. So bear with me if I seem rather uncommunicative. And, of course the shopping, cooking washing and ironing NEVER end!

Maxine is coming back the sixth. Think I'll be glad--someone to chum with any day and now that I know I can move around with my kids maybe we'll get downtown once in a while and stuff. Did I tell you we dashed down clear into Hollywood one evening and rode back with Ed? Didn't my trip make me brave?

We've had polio on our street and maybe you think we mamas aren't holding our breaths! Some girl the kids didn't play with very much, tho. Will be so glad when it's over.

We have a new baby, too. My friend across the street had a girl. AND Micha I is taking music lessons! Imagine! Most of the kids on Harmony street do--in fact ALL Los Angeles darlings take lessons of some kind!--and he begged and begged so we're trying it out. We thought he'd take it more seriously from some one else than from Ed, tho it seems so silly to give lessons to get money to pay for lessons. I went (with all my tribe plus one neighbor kid) yesterday to his first lesson and he was so thrilled. The kid really likes the stuff, I guess. The teacher seemed overwhelmed at his "great talent". He whipped right through the first grade book in ten minutes, so the man is starting him on the pices I left off with after three years! Ed and I find it a little depressing to have a talented child with so much wasted talent in the family already...

Julie and Denny certainly re-live their trip in their play. I heard Julie tell Dennis "not to stay at Sissy's for lunch but to come right back and they'd go with Ruth in the car". All Julie's dolls are named Emery; all babies are Barbara and grandmas are the nicest people, who'll do anything and buy you anything!

Michael is still talking about moving to Yakima, especially so he can help Clyde in the hop yards.

Weather? dumb. We had a week of winter and now it's uncomfortably hot again. Makes it very hard to sort, and organize our clothes as I've been trying to do. I sent for a monkey Ward catalog--getting the idea from Sis--and maybe we'll do our shopping that way.

Had a letter from our friends who used to live near us in San Francisco. They have had two more children since we left and they named the last one after me ! (I'm Lorna)

The enclosed is for Jid's benefit.

I finally wrote to Tiny. I'd like to have them for Thanksgiving again, even if it will break us, as it no doubt will.

Well, I've been home a month now--it seems longer. I just yesterday finished washing and ironing our dirty clothes from the trip. Slow, aren't I? Even yet when I hear a train along our too-near track it is a very familiar sound...

Did you know I haven't smoked since I last wrote? Really get along better. Would have been better company up there if I hadn't. Edward and I pulled a dumb one Saturday, though. We had our usual drinks before dinner and were already to eat when that blinkety-blank Bob and Barbara dropped in to chisel a free drink. So we had to go out and spend some more money and help them drink it and we both had hangovers the next day. I was so MAD at myself ! Robert and Edward fight all the time they're together--(which their mother wouldn't approve of)--and Barbara is like talking to a wooden image, so we really don't enjoy their rare visits----

I don't know as I approve of the effect those jeans have on Denny--when I ask him to do something, he says, "I YAM, ya big dumbbell !"

Have a new way to get grocery I figured out for myself. Not that it's ever fun, but I found it's no further down to the A and P than up to the Safeway for my larger, must-be-cheaper loads, but it's through one of our nicer residential districts and a much pleasanter walk so I trundle my cart thataway about twice a week now. Took all three kids with me on bicycles and tricycles last Saturday, but won't try THAT again !

We are burned up that you only paid \$1.98 for Mike's shoes ! I paid almost \$4 for the ones I got--they're that all over here--how come? If you have any intention of getting that raincoat for Julie or any other things she and the rest of us hinted so broadly for let me know. I don't want to duplicate AGAIN. Please don't consider this an order ! Does Sis have any old coats of Jo Ann's to pass on this year? I've forgotten what she said. If not have to get Julie something--so just wanted to know.

about Tide. I don't say that a gal like you that has used soap for so MANY years will take to the new detergents like Tide (or the old detergents like Clyde !) especially because it gives things that funny feeling to them. But I think you should know before you give it up that that is because it cuts through that scummy film that soap leaves. It means things are cleaner ! Ask Clyde, he'll explain it to you. If you put a detergent in the water a duck is swimming in the poor thing sinks because it cuts through the oil film on its feathers ! I still think it's super for greasy things.

I think maybe your mother and her family had rheumatic fever--have an article about it. The "rheumatism" and swollen joints, periodic fevers, and twitch in her shoulders are all signs. Years of uncared for rheumatic fever enlarges the heart till it collapses. Just an idea. No one will ever know, will they?

Guess I don't want the yellow dishes. Ant could get more use out of them. We use those plastic plates you bought me for everyday and they work better for my careless kids. I do want those others, tho !

I might have left ^A wash rag there, but I'm sure I didn't leave that many. Can sure use them though.

Oh my yes, the beater bowls are quite intact and usually used at least once a day ! I'll get modernized yet with your sweet help !

Well, Mike is practising a d Denny awake and my duties pressing, but I got quite a bit written after all my excuses, didn't I? So now I can rate another letter from you, huh?

much much love,

Lorna

Michael said to put this in !!

Dear Ruth,

Oct. 22 1946 Thursday

Must get this off my chest, though don't know what I have to say, do you?

I shall expect a better picture of Marilyn! You and Tiny are ALWAYS fixing your houses! Sounds like she has neuritis (I psychoanalyze ailments, too--no charge!) Quite possible the way she drives herself. Speaking of sycho----(which I don't spell well) her with a couple from the LHJ---others on request, but I don't want to start any family fights!

No one has told Henry yet about her house--wouldn't it be awful to be thatway? I don't dare mention Max's boy friend to her either, which seems pretty serious, by the way. Max is supposed to be trying out a job today and, since she doesn't answer, I suspect that maybe she finally landed one--dunno.

Our picnic Sunday that Max asked us to turned out to be a rainy day affair, but very enjoyable. She serves good food and serves it prettily. And John serves a good drink--seemed funny to have drinks at Henry's. The boys went out and cleaned up the yard some in spite of the weather. It looks better already with the work Max has done on it. John is so tall--6-4--that Edward looks short and fat beside him--a funny sensation!

WHY are Jo ann's front teeth loose? I don't like that! Have been trotting Mike to the dentist, again, which I detest. Especially when he finds \$20 more of work to do just before xams. Seems a couple of permanent molars are mal-formed and have to be fixed. HMM.

You and your pheasant. Did I tell you a neighbor has been giving us deep sea fish? I did?

No, Max couldn't stand to read "the Plague and I". Neither could I. When you're too close to it, it's not funny any way--only depressing.

I'm glad my gloomy predictions for Phyllis Wolt didn't come true. I really am.

We got our new heater from Ward's, so guess our credit's good. Haven't gotten the rest of the order yet, though. Edward, with his new-found talents, hitched it up himself without blowing us up and it seems nice after our funny one. As you say, sure is an easy way to shop.

Well, the kids are getting cross; the dishes are still undone and it's time to get dinner (shame!) but I decided I'd write first. Had to write Henry, too.

ALL RIGHT -- here 'tis!

Michael

Julie

Denny

Love —
ml

belt

Golden encyclopedia

wood burning pictures

any of your cute ideas

books

Set of figures to play

with train?

As seen in that Toy
book you sent me

domestic toys

fancy underwear

nightwear

Golden book of

poetry

finger paint

crayons etc.

books

plastic furniture

skates

Buddy L cars etc.

Tot's tool box

cars, trucks etc.

all those dull,

boy things

books

wooden puzzles

Wooden train

Edward

Sox!

Time mag.
Fireside Book of
Folk Songs
Matches

Lorna

Ladies Home Journal (a must)

Washable house coat glamorous
enough to serve Saturday
night dinners in !! or

forest green slacks or

white shirt blouse or

dish towels or

scales or

yellow bathroom set or

any of your bright ideas

or addresses envelopes
(I have one left!)

Please notice how our needs have
been well-filled by you in the past
year. Surprising as it is we are
not as destitute as we were last
year. In fact, you may even
send me your lists.

Dear Ruth —

Oct 26 1948 Tuesday

Well, thank you for giving me those wishes!

Thursday night Edward came home with my ring, which a jeweler customer of his had re-done; Friday night he came home with a set of glass cups & saucers (8) that he'd won; and Saturday came the package from you! So I said I had three wishes.

I am thrilled to have the material to make me a new dress — if I can just get around to doing it now. Julie is out this minute wearing her rain-cape in the "frog", it being the nearest thing we've had to rain this week. ~~She~~ She has to fondle & play with it every day. The lollypops — as you know — were a great success — very handy! The panties — needed; & so nice of you. The curtains I shall try in my bathrooms (plural! — ahem!) The crab — I am very sorry to say — disappeared. And my mouth was watering so! The last I remember was seeing Dennis with it — !

This friend of Ed's went ahead & fixed the ring without consulting him. He charged him only for the material — said he would get it sometime — it didn't matter — \$20. Also said it was too bad I lost three of the diamonds as they are really good cut ones — tho the metal was no good. He put 2 gold "ring guards" on either side & replaced the diamonds with rubies, which he says are cheap because unfashionable now — very Chambreaux, anyway.



before



after

Ed played a show where they had a drawing & got the dishes. They are plain glass cups with saucers in that apple design?!? However, they go well with my candlewick & I sure needed them.

We had Max & John for dinner Saturday — yum! & then went up there again Sunday & worked on the yard again. Max said the neighbors called to comment on what an improvement! John is more "our" type; a swell worker & a quiet amiable person. Hum. Max isn't sure she's "ready to marry" yet — afraid she'll miss something — like all Harknesses —

Robert & Barbara are really having a trip. They sold the car because they were so heavily in debt, but evidently they're spending the whole amount as they are flying to Victoria - staying at the Meany in Seattle, etc., etc. Ah, youth!

Well - don't have enough to finish this page - Edward is doing all the housework & he'll be mad at me in a minute - won't you, Edward? (He said, "sure".)

This is my last envelope -
will I hear from you to day?
Much love -

Lorna

Monday

Nov. 2
1948

Dear Mom and Sissy, (howzzat?) and Clyde,

Since I enjoyed sisy's letter so much and was so flattered to get one all to myself from such a busy lady--she can read this, too. As if she wouldn't anyway! Haven't anything to say to interest anyone, however. But pretend you are, won't you?

It's warm this afternoon and I have just washed some windows--a most unprecedented thing for me to do! I only do it about once a year! And then when I can look out and see what the kids are doing without going to the door--I wonder why I don't do it more often! I should like to have a general family shampooing--but being fresh out of Tide and mon guess I'll have to wait for another warmish day. They are getting rarer and rarer now. Of course I couldn't possible use SOAP to wash our hair. Remember how it used to be to wash your long hair, Ruth?

Well, the first of the holidays is over--Hallowe'en (a word I hate to type). It is a wonder the kids aren't deathly ill from all the candy they've eaten. This trick or treat business--don't know whether it's better than the old way or not, never having experienced the other. Was just being thankful that the candy was about gone when the mail man came with some cute boxes for each of them from Henry! Oh well, we haven't much food anyway--being just before payday....

We had a wildish evening. Max insisted she wanted to take the kids, but she was late and they got impatient. They were most excited and noisy of course--we took the little neighbor girl, too, and I had to do most of the knocking on doors. However I found out a lot about the neighbors! Michael and his friends went out again last night and got a lot more stuff. Friday afternoon Max and I took the kids up to the doings at school--they make quite a fuss over Hallowe'en (a word I hate to type!) in the schools here. The kids all dress up and they have carnivals and shows and things. Kinda cute.

Then about eleven--when the kids were finally down--and we had finished our bottle of liquor and could relax Bob and Barb (who are just back) called and said they were bringing Manhattans over (ick!) They were decidedly not invited nor welcome, I fear. Robert is too much of an amateur to buy Manhattans and they were so nasty we couldn't drink them so they went out and got some more (equally nasty) and then got mad cause Edward wouldn't pay him for them. Barbara pulled her usual kid stuff drinking (which is why we don't like to have them come). She drinks one drink--then goes out and pours herself a tumbler full--swigs it down--passes out--gets sick and has to be carried home--EVERY time. Perhaps you can see why I wish they would move up north--but they aren't going to, I guess.

Max has broken up with her love suddenly. After weeks of hinting that they were practically on their way to the altar, she very abruptly decided he was too dull for her and I guess that's that. Guess that's the straight of it, too. Sometimes I wonder about her. I think the main thing was he's too old for her--and she's missed so much kid stuff that's she's really younger than she is--if you know what I mean. I'd raid she's going to miss something as we all are at that age....

Guess I haven't done anything different. Spent a busy afternoon in the kitchen with the electric beater and emerged with a nummy coconut cake. Was quite proud of myself as seven minute frosting is something I've NEVER been able to do b.b. (before beater).

As I poured hot coffee into one of my new glass cups the other night one of them just fell apart--so maybe they aren't so good.

Barb and Bob were at that feesieball game, too. They got wet, too.

We got our order from Ward's--most of it anyhow and had an exciting afternoon wearing rubber boots like mad.

I put the plastic curtains in the back bathroom and they look good. Sure snaps up that dreary little hole.

So Marilyn's going to be a Lutheran! Well, guess it won't hurt her any. Was Bud holding out for her to join HIS church?

You're so sweet about not mentioning the real reason why your expenses were so unusual this summer. But it was worth it, I can assure you. I'm feeling good about Edward, too. He's getting out from Meglin's and has a couple people wanting his services when and if he wants to go. He seems to be "finding himself" again if you know what I mean. My trip did that for me. We decided we kids (oh?) really knocked ourselves out moving down here. Now we're beginning to wake up and come out of the fog again.

Oh, speaking of coming out of the fog--I'm voting tomorrow for the firsttime in my life. S'fun. I even sat down and read all the issues and made momentous decisions about them. We have an oh-so-mild prohibition measure that I'm going to vote for. Edward isn't!

I suggest you have creamed chicken for dinner, Ruth. Well, you asked me. I made a good batch with a can of seventy cent chicken. By the way I found the crab when I got mad at Edward Sunday and shut myself up in the kid's room and cleaned it! It pays to go crabbing!

Don't tell me about Junior Heggins again. I gather by this time that he's found a girl!

That's sorta funny about Slim and the new Ruth Eaton, isn't it? That's one thing I'm looking forward to about growing old--I'm dying to see what makes middle aged people marry again---

No, I haven't gotten the Ward's toy catalog.----No, Julie isn't sleeping by herself. I just put her on my bed for her sometimes-nap. Don't worry about that crying business this summer--it wasn't YOUR fault.

Well, must bustle. If I sit here too long the kids run amok.

much love to all--geez I'd like to see you all right now--

Lorna