

Cypress C-3  
Stanford, California  
94305  
10-27-72

Dear Pa --

Really good to get your letter for the reason, inter alia, that it helps get me morally off the hook. (Had problem with twinge of guilt for black, back-of-the-head suspicion that your slow response was to some degree retaliatory -- well-deserved retaliation, of course, but that made it no better.)

At the risk of sounding impious, may I say that you seem to be becoming more direct in your advancing years (I know I am). It was really a wonderful letter.

If you sometimes feel ambivalent --ambiguous was, I guess, the word you used -- <sup>about the Island</sup> you can imagine what I feel. The familiarity you speak of is often almost unbearably bitter-sweet -- unbearably bitter and unbearably sweet.

I don't feel any irritation toward Nancy, except sometimes at her often doctrinaire political liberalism, but John really does seem hard to take sometimes. I'm not really surprised he hits it off with Stephie, but I don't think their shared somewhat intolerant turn of mind is an accident, if that's what you were suggesting. It's in the genes, as any non-porter (ask Aline, ask Jane) will quickly tell you.

Your report of non-success with the scenic easement proposal is fascinating. It's hard for me to understand why anyone would oppose it, at least in principle (the specific provisions could be tricky and controversial), but then I wasn't there. I wish I had been.

It's a problem in practical politics, isn't it? For some reason, John and Nancy have sealed their eyes to the merit of the idea. I would guess that before it (the problem) can be solved, it will be ~~xxx~~ necessary to ~~find~~ find out why J & N. are so suspicious. I've come to be more respectful of irrationality in my old age. Irrational or not, there's always some underlying cause for it, which, when fathomed, often turns out to have a scintilla of merit. Or logic, anyway. What I mean is, I guess, that behind every biased attitude lies an explanation which must be understood before the attitude can be changed. Which is why, in my opinion, McGovern hasn't got a chance: He's been disrespectful of the blind nationalism and conservatives of a great many, perhaps the majority, of Americans and they resent it.

The supt. of Acadia NP sounds, <sup>from</sup> your description, like a man of no great common sense. A man who tried to push through a little wild rivers bill in Missouri a couple of years ago narrowly escaped death one morning when he turned on his ignition and his car exploded. Relations between canoeists and landowners in the Ozarks were once cordial and accommodating, like the relationship between most of the summer folk in the mid bay and the locals. Now the farmers in Missouri are stringing barbed wire across the creeks and firing shotguns -- and worse -- at the canoes.

Beddies, it seems to me that Maine's coastal protection law provides sufficient ~~pro~~ security for the area if it's used. And used it has been, after all, and well. That law, properly exercised, prevented the de-sulfurization plant at Searsport and is forcing the Central Maine Power Co. to install the most elaborate thermal pollution controls in the world at its nuke near Wiscasset.

Land use control doesn't require eminent domain; all it needs is good zoning and building laws.

I ran into Jimmie Fairlie on the street in Berkeley yesterday and had a drink with him in a nearby bar. (The corner of Telegraph and Bancroft is the nearest thing to Harvard Square in the county and I think the inhabitants can be forgiven their belief that it is the intellectual and cultural ovary of North America) Jimmy is unchanged and engaging. I think the reason I find him such good company is <sup>his</sup> apparently absolute refusal to live his life according to any one else's expectations or advice. Right now he's driving a cab. His approach to life is a little tough on dependents, though, I should imagine. He's recently divorced and his wife, I mean ex-wife, is working to help support their little boy -- who is named, by the way, after you. Did you know that?

Iree had a very complimentary review in the SF Chronicle, which I was going to send, but lost. I suppose your publisher clips the reviews anyway.

Back to Fairlie: His feelings for central Penobscot Bay are about the same as ours. It's a sentiment which, if properly organized, it seems to me, will prevent any serious despoilation. The test is going to come when the EPA comes around and tells the proprietors of GSHI they have to start treating the sewage. Some will fuss and fume; others will start building septic tanks. It'll be interesting to watch.



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I'd love to see the show ~~in~~ at the U. of N.M., but It would be a little difficult. Perhaps I can see it during its travels. Is there an itinerary?<sup>?</sup>

Stanford is pleasant, though a little sheltered and <sup>n</sup>synthetic. Most of the undergraduates seem quite privileged, glossy and like little movie stars. They all seem to own their own horses. The countryside -- the Santa Cruz mts. -- is handsome and remarkably unspoiled, despite ~~sub~~ <sup>slurb</sup> building and the vestiges of logging. Many of the largest sempervirens in the hollows were left standing simply, I gather, because ~~their~~ the mills couldn't accommodate them, and the second growth has come up well. The coast is where the problem is and Calif. is now locked in a bitter battle over a referendum ~~pro~~ proposal to establish state-wide coastal zoning, a la Maine. ~~Thaxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ An unholy alliance of developers and power compaines have engaged the L. A. PR firm of Whittacker & Baxter to produce TV spots and billboards which are unspeakably mendacious. One thing about Californians: they never seem under any obligation to tell the truth. Different from Maine.

If you find yourself in SF between now and the time you leave for Egypt, please call.

Best to Aline and to J. & Z.

Love

B.

PS -- for a footnote on the curious attitudes of the Nat. Park Svc.  
see encl.