

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

THE PULITZER PUBLISHING COMPANY

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Dear Pa,

We were all disappointed to learn that you neglected us on your return trip. The time of day shouldn't -- doesn't -- matter since someone is almost always home and we would expect you to stay the night anyway..

Did we tell you when you were here that you have a large public in St. Louis -- larger, indeed, than in New England? I am continually meeting people who ~~xxxxxxx~~ ask me ~~xxxxx~~ whether I am the Eliot Porter, am related to him or remark on ~~xxx~~ what they assume is a coincidence of names. St. Louisans as they call themselves may place a higher value on nature than people in other parts of the country because nature here is so relatively unpressessing. The Post-Dispatch, as you know, is a dogged advocate of preservation and has recently been subjected to a good deal of criticism for opposing the Rampart Dam in Alaska. The Alaskans feel the P-D is commenting beyond its proper jurisdiction.

We hope your operation turned out well. Prostatectomies can be serious, I'm told and I think its pretty game of you to undertake scuba diving under the circumstances.

We're looking forward to both Forever Wild, and Edge of the Sea. We wish we could come to Maine but I don't see how we'll be able to.

Jane liked your letter to LBJ and so did the P-D editorial writers who have been saying approximately the same thing. I have been undertaking the role of the devil's advocate on this recently, partly because I don't feel LBJ's position is being fairly represented by any competent journalists. Lipmann, who really deserves the credit for insisting on negotiation in the first place, is now about the only reporter who seems to be able to explain the rationale for the current policy. It's the familiar paradox of superior wisdom, I guess. A fairly good presentation of the Johnsonian doctrine was made today in the P-D by, ~~xi~~ of all people, Drew Pearson.

Please be sure to visit on your way east next time. If possible, let us know the day, but stop anyway.

I've been spending the last couple of months in a sort of orientation program which was designed for reporters with less time in the trade than I've had so I've been a little bored. The course does, however, provide a glimpse of the bureaucratic machinery of the Post-Dispatch which would not be otherwise available. The course is the brainchild of Everts Graham who himself is a stimulating instructor but who is too busy ~~xx~~ often to make himself available.

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Two reporters at a time are assigned to the program and since the P-D is trying to enlarge and broaden the scope of what was once the society page, my classmate is a ~~gm~~ giddy middle aged, socially well connected hominy grits type from Selma, Ala., who is interested mainly in her ancestry and ~~xxx~~ enlarging her list of acquaintances. She makes ~~xxxxxxx~~ the twin causes of racial equality in Selma and democratization of the P-D society page seem pretty hopeless; not because she's malicious, just because she's stupid.

St. Louis is a curiously ambivalent place from the point of view of racial equality. Many of the political and religious great are very progressive. Cardinal Ritter, who makes Spellman and Cushing look like fascists, desegregated the parochial schools in his archdiocese in 1954, two years ahead of the 1954 Supreme Court decision. The Catholic clergy have been in every picket line here since and the diocese sent a huge contingent to Montgomery last week.

The Washington University people and many of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Methodist, Jewish, Congregational, Unitarian and Episcopal clergy and laity are equally liberal. The city reform Democrats have pushed and won fair housing and fair employment legislation for St. Louis.

On the other hand, there is an enormous block of conservative German, Irish and southern Anglo Saxon ~~xxx~~ citizenry that is just as bigotted and intransigent as any anywhere. Much of the downtown economic establishment -- the banks, department stores and breweries -- is tacitly in their camp. Some of this element has retained a foothold in the Post-Dispatch, I'm sorry to say. The result is that while the P-D is a less than diligent champion of the underdog in St. Louis, its record on national and international issues notwithstanding. It's a ~~xxx~~ phenomenon in American journalism sometimes known as Afghanistanism: ~~xxxxxx~~ Righteous and intrepid in exposing wickedness in faraway places and just plain chicken in tangling with local white collar hooligans, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Real Estate Board.

Give my love to Aline, Pat and Stephanie and Kathy if they're around. We'd love to see all of them.

Affectionately,

B.