

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

February 14, 1940

Darling,

Here comes your last letter this week. Just got back from Church services. Father/Klein gave a nice sermon. It seems wonderful to be home and ready to go to bed - this early. It's only nine-thirty. No more night work - whoopee! (For a while) Our boss agreed to loan one of our girls to the U.C. Division for full time work for two weeks in order to do away with the overtime. They worked and fussed to figure out which one of us could be spared. Helen Ryan was finally "elected". So they asked me to take over her work on the reception desk for two weeks. So with her job & my own I manage to keep plenty busy but it's worth it to be free of the night work, so I'm not complaining. I always have liked the reception desk work anyhow. It used to be my job so I don't mind. It enables me to go to Players' Club meeting tomorrow night and I won't have to miss all the Sadality & choir meetings, etc.

I've got your income tax forms for you!
1040-A; that's right isn't it?

So you have been listening to the Dreamer's program of beautiful music. That's one thing we do have in common - not the only one, however - I just love those Dreamer programs, and those beautiful old numbers; yes and especially those two you mentioned, "The Touch of your Hand", and "Moonlight Madonna". Honestly I could sit all night and listen to them. Especially in organ music. Oh I just love that kind of music. By the way that reminds me. I'd like to go over to the Eldritch Hotel and hear their organist again sometime. Honestly I'm nothing but an old dreamer and sentimentalist sometimes.

Speaking of the worthwhile things in life - something very worthwhile is coming to our school auditorium next Sunday for one afternoon showing and one evening showing. It's a movie called the "Perpetual Sacrifice". It's something about the cross I believe, but really you know as much about it as I do. Except that it is supposed to be very wonderful. Our Senior Young Ladies' Sodality is sponsoring the engagement. I think it's a two hour show and the tickets, afternoon and night are only 5¢ and 10¢. I'm going to get two and then if you'd like to see it we could go together Sunday afternoon. However, if you have any other plans or suggestions for them -

let's have them because I can always see it Sunday night after you start back to Detroit mean words "start back to Detroit".

Fifteen different ways to fix potatoes! whoopee you are going to be a wonderful help to a poor cook. Mr. Trace knows several hundred ways - verbatim. Also he knows 350 different salads. I like to cook but I hate to plan menus because my "vocabulary" or "supply" of different ideas is very limited when I sit right down to thinking them out. So I do think you'll be a wonderful help to me from that standpoint.

Well, lover, I think I'd better say an revoir for tonight till Friday night. A good idea for you to pick me up after church, or if that is too early or inconvenient then I'm certain that I won't be too hard to find down in the neighborhood of 1201. In case you don't get your early start - don't worry about it or rush, cause I'll wait up.

Don't forget to bring your list - just list - along home this weekend. And don't forget your little book; and most of all DON'T forget to bring yourself. Haha. So long, sweetheart, darling, angel, George.

Colette

P.S. The weather was beautiful today with a pretty sunset. Hopes it holds out for the weekend.

Co.

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February 20/19th

Darling,
Twenty-six hours since your departure and I'm still alive! I'm very anxious to get my first letter of the week from you so that I can be assured that you arrived back safely considering the hardships of the ice, slush, snow, and the extra big brown eyes. The weather has been very nasty here today. It wasn't quite down to freezing and was just very slushy with ice underneath and gray and dreary all day. But it didn't make much difference to me, however, because the Monday after you leave is always gray, & blue, and dreary to me.

I'm not going to mention my day at the office today because you wouldn't believe it; the facts and figures of those nine hours were too astonishing to be believed possible by anyone who hadn't been there to see it all.

Something else you won't believe — I should have told you Saturday or Sunday but forgot — Last Saturday toward evening Helen Kemper^m, a Mish. High School senior, came over to see me when I was just climbing out of the bathtub, and asked me to make a speech

and then lead a discussion before the Forgers' Club of M. H. S. next Tuesday night - one week off. It's composed of Juniors and seniors - some commercial students, some engineering, some drafting, some college prep, and some home ec's; both boys and girls. Where they got their name not even she knew. Their aim, I believe, is to better themselves on "How to Land a job and How to Keep It", and they asked me for a speech on account of my job service and training. But me!! a public speaker!!! Darling imagine it. No, don't just imagine it but come to my rescue. Well, anyhow, I couldn't just say no because I certainly wouldn't have a very good expense, and they were giving me a week and a half notice, and besides it's a chance to give the kids some damn good pointers much needed by Juniors + Seniors. Well I finally agreed to get someone at the office to do it and if I couldn't I'd do it myself. I was so busy today I completely forgot to mention it to the mgs. But tomorrow I must do so. However you going to tell him that this girl (Helen K.) is a neighbor of mine and inasmuch as I worked there would I see if I couldn't get someone to speak to them. The jinx is that they are giving me a whole hour to speak and then

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a discussion to follow that. That makes an awfully big speech to plan, and a group like that will be most critical of anyone else's opinions on a subject like that. So anyhow tomorrow will tell.

Honey, I've already got a "date" or "dates" for every night this week. Two-timing again or yet. Tomorrow night I'm going to see "Gone With The Wind"; Wednesday night - Church + Choir practise; Thursday night ^{play exhibit} see the M.D.; Friday nite - bulletins, Church + Choir, + Saturday afternoon I want to get Tilla and Ang. and do some shopping around for ideas, etc. for the big day. And by hook or by crook I intend to squeeze in a shampoo + set somewhere along the line. Too bad I don't have to attend school four nights a week yet like you do. So at least you can see what V. Itala meant when she said I was stepping out on you.

I'll bet you had a good school session Monday night after all the studying you got done over the weekend (thanks to me) At least, my dear, if you ever flunk any

subjects you can always blame me for it, can't you?
That's another place I'll come in handy.

Well, darling, again it comes time
to say goodnight. I can't wait till
tomorrow night to see "Gone With The Wind".
From the things I hear about it, it must
really be good.

Toodle oo with oceans of love,

Colette.

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February 21, 1940

Dearest Hankard,

Dreadfully sorry to hear that you had such a bad drive back to Detroit. I thought the weather would make it not your nicest trip back, but I didn't think it would be as bad as all that. I told you, you should have stayed here. (Just as though that was all there was to it. Stay home and let your pay checks roll in.) Kidding aside though - to arrive at 4 AM! and then get up and go to work all day and school at night! You poor guy. The world can be pretty mean sometimes, don't you think?

Darling I finally saw "Gone With the Wind" and, I think it was simply wonderful, marvelous, superb, beautiful, exuberant, astounding, dynamic, and stuff. Honestly I was just crazy about it. I'd love to see it over again. But I cried. Yes, I cried, and cried, and cried.

Tonight at the office we heard what we are going to do for the next 16 weeks. It will call for one night each week for training school and at least 2 and probably 3

nights a week overtime; not to mention having each person do about two peoples work during the day. I don't know what they have come to in Washington and Indianapolis but they'll soon find out that there is a limit to everything. The gang already seems to be falling in their tracks. Bea Porter got the flu last week about Tuesday or Wednesday, and with her resistance right down to a minimum from overwork, she has been out ever since; this is the 8th or 9th day. She got some bronchial trouble and all kinds of other complications. Then last week Naomi had a sore throat and Monday was too sick to come to work. I saw her tonight and she insisted that we stop for her tomorrow even though she was still in bed, couldn't sit up long enough to eat supper, still had a little fever and still had only half of her voice back. We finally agreed to stop by for her but I doubt if she'll be able to go anymore this week. So with Helen Ryan still loaned out and Naomi sick you can readily see what a good time I'm having at the office. So I shall not have any trouble keeping plenty busy this week, and it will help to make the week go by fast. You'll probably have the same thing with studies this week too, won't you?

Well, darling, I'll try to write a more decent letter soon. Till then -

Love & Kisses

Colette

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February 22, 1940

Dearest Frank,

February 22nd - exactly four months from our big day! Also Washington's birthday. I must tell you the cute joke I heard on the air Sunday or Monday night. A father was telling his young son about Washington. He said that Washington was a very honorable, honest, and trustworthy man. To which the son asked "Then why are they closing all the banks on his birthday?" He had a somewhat dull day today - probably because since all the banks and the other government lines were closed the people probably expected us to close too. But we don't do that anymore. He said to a year or two ago. Our constitution reads that we are here to serve the employer and if the merchants are open we must stay open. So that is the way we must operate.

So they've got you snowed under with studies - 20 + 25 problems! That sounds like a terrible assignment. Honey, how can you possibly get that much studying in? With your work besides. No wonder your eyes are going on a strike; I would too. Be careful it doesn't

get you down. Whenever I get just fed up
with it all - tired, nervous, etc., I always
have the satisfaction in ~~is~~ thinking that
in four months I'll be able to go away
from it all and have just a complete
change. It's really heavenly to think of
it that way. But gee, when you get
tired of studying and working you can't
sit down and say "in four months I'll just
pack up and go away from it all". You'll
just be taking on an added responsibility and
worry. There's no satisfaction in it for you.

I wonder how the Players' Club pot-lick
supper came out. I didn't get to go. Simply
had to catch up on the work. The whole division
was going to the logs today with things so
far behind. I sorta think Naomi will be
back by tomorrow. As I thought, she didn't
make it today yet.

The weather has been fair; some snow
today but not much and it didn't last. Otherwise
it's just the same old town with nothing doing.
So till later, my dear, take it easy, don't
work too hard and remember I love you
and I'm always thinking of you

Sincerely
Colette.

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February 25, 1940

Darling,

Talk about a coincidence —
To think that both you and I should write
a letter on February 22, and both make
special comment on the fact that it was
"four months until!" Our minds must
certainly be running in the same channel
as they say. And four weeks from today
is Easter.

To start right from the beginning
of your letter you say you regret the fact
that you'll be so busy with school work, but
after all I think I'm lucky that you have
those three months, almost, before school
takes up again to be with me, and by that
time we'll probably be pretty well settled.
So that you will have ample time to study
and go to school. And don't think for a
minute that I would ever begrudge you
the time that you devote to school rather
than to me because after all you'll be
doing it for my own good as well as for
your own good. I'll only hope that I will
never be a handicap or a hindrance to you

progress with your school as well as work.
How is that cold you were threatened
with last week? All gone, I hope. Was it
tonsil trouble? And have you done anything about
it? If it is your tonsils I'll come up there
and work them out for you. I can't have
anything like that stand in the way of your
well-being. As for my tonsils I haven't had
any trouble of late with them. They never
bother me except in the fall, so maybe they
will still bother me but if they do I'm
not going to monkey around with them; I'll
pay a visit to cousin "Pat" (Kamm) and
leave the crazy things with him. They tell
me that he likes to take people's tonsils
away from them. Their tonsils and their dopamine
too. (But then what ear, nose, & throat specialist
doesn't like to do that,

I saw Tilla this morning for the
first time in a week. I asked her about
Daddy Horning and she said that he was
feeling better but not O.K. that he was
still being bothered with the cold, flu,
or whatever it is. She said he wasn't
down in bed but that he was feeling
pretty junk. I was going to take a
stroll up that way this evening and stop
in and see them, but just before supper
Aunt Ernestine and Uncle Leo came over
and they left just a short while ago. Until

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By the time I got the dishes done the time had crept up on me and now it is a little past 8:30 and pretty late to start out. If Pop is feeling bad he should get to bed early so it's best for me not to go this late. There is so dreadfully much of that flu around. It seems like every other person has it. We've all had a touch of it. Momma and Regina had a pretty good dose of it.

You speak of Don Hoffman. Yes, I have heard you mention him often but I've never met him. I should like a get-together with him and his girl friend. Why don't you arrange it?

Seven more trips home — that isn't much time to tend to arrangements is it? But seven trips means 14 to 16 weeks and that time can't go too fast for me. I think Friday night after services is a fine idea as far as seeing Tr. Laner is concerned. That only makes it about 8:15 or 8:30. He surely doesn't go to bed that early. Or supposing that at bulletins before services I mention to him that we'd like to come over after church to see him? Then he'll expect us. Tell me whether I should or not. I think Friday night is a golden opportunity to do it.

As for the weekend party at Larry's —

I saw Pouch at High Pass today, and practically in the same breath we both asked each other if she had heard anything further about the party. Well I hadn't, but she said that she had heard something about its depending on whether they could get the lights connected or something. So evidently it is still indefinite from that point. She also said that since the weather has been cold again and not as nice as that last weekend when they got the idea that maybe it would change the plans. However, she says "If they want to go it's ok. with me - if they can stand the cold & snow." So what comes of it I don't know. Have you heard anything about it yet? And what is your idea in the matter? Just between you and me, sweetheart, darling, do you mind if I be a fuddy-duddy about it? You know that Dad's always pretty game about going anyplace anytime, but Mom + Dad won't be able to see any earthly reason for anybody to want to go to a lake in the wintertime. Not that they would mistrust you or any other person in the whole crowd because they do think the best of every one of them, honestly they do. They don't have a word against any one of them. But it would seem so silly to them. You know that I'd

Go in a minute, anywhere for that matter as long as you were going, but I know it will just be a difficult situation. Another thing it's sodolity Sunday and I'd think that a swell excuse. I know you are probably laughing at me, dear, but down in your heart doesn't it seem not just right for a party of us to go on a weekend party at the lake in the wintertime unshapared? In spite of the fun we could all have. However, I'm not going to do anything about it until I hear definitely whether it will go through or not.

On the subject of wedding suits. That usually is somewhat of a question. If this will help you you any, I'm planning definitely for very summery dresses, since so far our day will be the first day of summer, June 22nd. That might give you an idea for white pants and dark coats or some such thing. † That is one way to get around wearing black at a wedding; and too the men would probably be buying white flannels, or what have you for summer anyhow. But that's your problem. I'll tell you what I'll do tho, if you'll come down here and outfit all of us - women, I'll see that your men get properly outfitted for the day. It's so much fun tho fussing over such things - planning

for days, weeks, and months and it's all over
in such a short time, but the memory lingers
on. Let's ask Fr. Lauer for 9 o'clock and
insist on it too because 8 is too early.

Gosh on my fifth page already, what
in Heaven's name have I been talking about.
However, thinking back I don't think she said
anything but what I meant to. One other
thing: that beloved niece. Typical of
the southerners is right. He got a letter
yesterday and she said that the doctor
says it will be any along any day now.

Her own calculations of March 8 were
probably right from the beginning. She's
feeling fine however and is standing up
nicely.

Well, the alarm rings at 5:30.

Better fold up the "framework" and get
the sandman to work again. Last night
I had nightmares about you. Not dreams
but nightmares. If that happens again
Mister man there'll be trouble somewhere.
He'll see right away now. Bye, bye.

With oodles of love

Catie.

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February 27, 1940

Dearest Hank,

Enclosed is the verification of something that we were talking about just a week or so ago. In fact I have already changed our guest list to Mr. + Mrs. Robert Schalliol.

Also am I to understand that your brother Bill and family won't be able to get here for the wedding? That is very disappointing. Knowing that they were planning on making the trip this summer, I was more than hoping that they would make it in June. I'm anxious to meet him and Mary. I hope they will still be able to make it for the wedding.

So you are going to win our new home. Gosh wouldn't it be wonderful if you could win that house though? Of course it would be too much to furnish and keep up but we could sell it and buy house and furniture too out of \$8,000. After all somebody's got to win it, why can't it be you. No such luck though, is there? When does it get raffled?

I'm glad to hear that you got a lot of good ideas on household equipment and furnishings. Wish I had been with you. Don't forget though that even though the stove price was "mighty" we're going to fool them when

we start buying furniture - we get over all at cost. Daddy and I mentioned furniture just the other night and he promised us that - as long as he's in it and can do that much for us. So that will make a huge difference. You know most furniture has a 50% to 100% mark-up. So we have that to count on some day. Your information on a four room house sounds delightful. One of these weekends let's talk over the advantages ~~or~~ disadvantages of buying right at first with Dad? He has some awfully good information and ideas along those lines. I definitely agree with you that it's foolish to pay rent and not have anything in the long run, except the use of the place. All the money put into rents could make a huge dent in the cost of a home. But there are so many things to be considered.

So you and Joe were out helping Ruth and I out with the cooking task - mighty sweet of you. They sound too good to be true. I'm a nut on gadgets anyhow. I can't imagine your being able to get five such useful things for \$4. It sounds like a real buy. I can't wait to try them.

About the book - certainly I don't mind if Joe reads it, or anybody else you say for that matter. In fact Naomi glanced through it the day I got it and Helen asked if she couldn't read it some day. Helen has studied and heard a lot about the system from her sister-in-law who is a nurse from

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New York. Her ^(Helen's) boy friend, Jack Hyges, who finishes law school this year at Notre Dame, has had it with his school work and they have taken it up together too. They aren't engaged but as good as so you might say. So while she knows a lot about it she has never actually studied the book so I thought I'd let her read this one.

I'm enjoying your book very much. I haven't read quite all of it but what I have ^{not} read I have already glanced over. It is indeed very very interesting, and very good advice, not?

Darling, I wasn't going to tell you that I had been sick for the past week but since you asked me how I came out at the M.D.'s I suppose I'll have to explain. I know I ran myself down a plenty last week when I was working so hard trying to hold down three peoples jobs. Then with everybody around me at home, in church, at the office and the people coming into the office all having colds & flu & flu & colds I couldn't help but pick it up with my own resistance down practically to rock bottom. I got to feeling it coming over me too but tried to hold out. Then last Thursday when I had an appointment to see the M.D. my monthly "company" came to visit me and I didn't feel like keeping the appointment. Then Friday Naomi got back to work and Monday morning they gave

Helen back to us. By that time I felt the flu coming on right, and with the help all back I guess I just gave in to it because I just made it home to bed by 5:30 last night (Monday) and didn't care whether I ever got up or not.

I took three aspirins, almost a water glass of whiskey, two Epsal and I don't know what all else the folks got into me, and then stayed in bed all day today and tonight I feel good enough to go back in the morning. I'm sure I've over it all now; it was just a case of giving in to it. I know I'll be as good as new now. Either tomorrow or Thursday night I'll go see my friend Van Rie, M.D. I might as well be frank with you, dear - Two things that are on my mind which he can get off of my mind for me are first, the fact that when I was small I had kidney trouble which is always very threatening all through a person's life (especially a woman's). He's been warned about it and now is the time for me to have a check-up. Another is that two years ago when I fell down the stairs, fast as greased lightning and fixed myself up so that I couldn't sit down for 5 weeks and that is not exaggerated, Roomie can still tell you how I was her receptionist and did my typing standing up, the doctor ~~warned~~ ^{warned} me to have my spine checked later. He was afraid I had cracked the end of my spine. So all in all that's how mind might be wrong with me (and might be all alright) but

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I'm going to ease my mind and yours (in case you want to change your mind after you find out I'm nothing but a broken down invalid) before we announce our plans. So I'll have some news - good (I hope + am quite sure), bad or indifferent, by Friday night, then with all that takes care of, together with all the good things we've been reading, we'll talk to Father Laner and settle it all with him, then tell the world and "live happily ever after". How about it? I've decided to run an announcement on Easter Sunday, because this Sunday is out of course, and I don't like the idea of Passion or Palm Sunday. So don't you think Easter Sunday best? Then we'll really be able to put all our plans into action, and materialize all arrangements. And I haven't forgotten the big thing of your vocation. He'll probably feel safer when that is definite too. Such a business - this getting married. Why didn't we elope? Haha.

Well, darling, now that I've got your head swimming with a lot of stuff that you probably didn't know, and don't give a damn about, I should keep my troubles to myself; I think I should get some more rest in tonight but because I do intend to go back to work tomorrow.

I was supposed to have worked tonight too, but phooey, I'm going to get out of it every chance I get.

The fact that I hope to find a letter from Detroit on my desk in the morning of course couldn't be an added inducement to go to work tomorrow. Not much!

So goodnight, dearest, can't wait to see you this weekend. Friday night? I hope.

Love + kisses

Colette

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February 29, 1940
The extra day.

Dearest Hank,

I don't have a bit of news for you, but I do want you to have a letter before you start for home. I do have some comments on your last letter but I can't go into them now, so I'll save them for the weekend.

I worked last night because I refused to work any other nights this week, and then didn't write last night as I should have, so now I've got to make it short in order to get it to you on Friday.

Can't wait to see you - I've got lots of things in my head to tell you about, but I insist on saving them for about 36 more hours. Have a nice trip home, and I'll see sometime Friday night. OK. So long, darling

Sincerely
Colette