

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Wednesday,
February 1, 1940

Dearest Hank,

Finally you get the letter that you have been looking for all week. The majority of the turmoil is over for now, and I can finally get back to my own special seventh heaven which at present is my thoughts of you. These daily letters from Detroit really have been a God-send in the midst of the turmoil. Which turmoil, by the way, proved to be much better than anyone deemed possible. The U.S. Government agreed to grant our ^{aiding} budgetary requisition under one condition: i.e. that it be cut by \$4,000! in six months - Jan. 1st to June 1st; said cut to be in salaries of personnel only, not in rent, properties, supplies or anything else. Naturally, everybody, as I, expected a huge lay-off. But by a great deal of work, worry, plotting, planning, arguing, etc., the state managed to make that cut without laying off anyone. By demoting and cutting salaries on many. In fact many of them taking cuts as high as \$50 a month! However, it has all been checked

over and over - and everybody feeling lucky to have a job at all finally agreed in some manner or other. It's a big situation that you wouldn't be interested in so I won't go into it. Anything may happen yet, but I stay on is - job, pay, and all at present. Only those making over \$150 a month were affected at all.

So much for business. So Mrs. O'Doherty is thinking of moving into smaller quarters in a few years. Tell her to hang onto it until we can afford to buy it from her, or else why don't you tell her to give it to you for a wedding present? Haha. Besides it is probably too big for us for a long time too. Yes, it would have been swell if we could have rented Jim + Dory's place. I liked that little house a lot. Then last Sunday when I was talking to Jim about his new home - telling him how much I liked it and what good work he was doing with it and all, he said "So you really like it. What will you give me for it?" I immediately told him to move it up to Detroit and I would talk terms with him. But Darling, I agree with you that it is probably wisest for us to take an apartment temporarily till we see what's what. Since it will be right in summer we'll probably be able to rent cheaper right at the start.

Your ^{school} vacation comes the same as my second week. That's "damn" nice of Wayne. I would like to come up for awhile. I'll think I'll do that. At least I can try and plan a brief trip + visit. I'll see what's what by then.

I'll also see that you visit your eye and tooth doctors the next time you are home. Say I was lucky today. In the first place it was pay day, and in the second place I got my bill from Dr. Wroster and instead of being around \$17 which I expected, it was only \$12. Isn't that good news?

Darling I meant to say before - don't let Mrs. O'Soberly move until you get through with her room, on account of she takes such good care of you for me.

You say you had snow up there? We haven't had any snow down here since before that terrible cold wave. The two cities are just black with dirt + soot. I don't believe I've ever seen our fair twin cities looking quite so filthy before. And that snowy weather we had a year ago - indeed I do remember that night to + from the Dipie Grove. That was just after we started going together; how could I forget that?

Honey, what is a "Salvation Army Doughnut"? That's a new one on me.

Thanks for the g.t. on John Bittner's leaving. I'm having Martha call McCrady. She probably did it today but I haven't had a chance to ask her results on it. When he asks how she knew he needed a new man she's going to tell him we have a Dies Committee out there. But she won't give it away under any circumstances. He'll be surprised but that's all. Thanks again, and I hope we'll be able to help him. He seems quite well satisfied with Tom Plant I guess. It is a shame that you didn't know about it a year ago, but I wouldn't regret it. I feel as you do that accounting has much better opportunities in the long run; and the going away, the additional schooling, the parting between us, the getting out on your own and ultimately our own, all put together will pay dividends someday. And just as fast as two gluttons we are out to make that "tough climb" - you alone, and us together.

And now last but not least, dearest, may I say very briefly that I understood perfectly what you say you tried so bluntly to explain, and there certainly is no offense. That is a chance we are taking regardless of what date we choose but I'm trying to choose wisely but not worrying about it.

So goodnight, dear, it's very windy & getting cold out now, so
the turning ~~is~~ Love & kisses Colette.

Decided that an epistle like this if read at the office
would probably get you fired, hence it gets sent to 16213.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

February 4, 1940
138 Days more

Dearest Hunkey-Dory,

Mom just saw me getting settled
to write a letter and said "Are you going
to write to James for me?" and I said:
"No, guess again." She answered "To your
Hunkey-Dory?" So here goes to my Dearest
Hunkey-Dory. What the expression means I
do not know.

Am I right on my heading 138 days?
I was still counting the time by months
so I was surprised to see you have it
all figured down to days. Those days
will fly, especially with Lent starting
this week to take up a very good share
of one's time. I was just thinking,
you wont be able to do much church-going
this Lent due to school, will you. I'll
have to make a doubly good Lent this
year for both of us. I'm going to give
up smoking again which for me would be
no penance at all. The really one big
thing that really will be penance for me
but which I intend to do if possible
is go to 6 o'clock Mass daily. Not that

it will be a penance to go to Mass, but to get up for it, oooh! Yes, sis, this Church business is quite the thing. Last night I got my throat blessed and went to Confession, and when I got up for Sodality Mass this morning I had a brand new sore throat, although slight.

Saw Jim Cruise, Lois & John, Jerry & Adelaide, & Bertilla last night and the most of the gang at 7:00 o'clock Mass this morning. Imagine ? instead of 10 o'clock Mass. Pook said she was going to write you today. That she wanted us to come over some evening the next time you are home, if possible.

Yesterday noon I had lunch with Theresa Buttrick. I haven't seen her in a Coon's age. We had a nice chat about things that we now have in common i.e. our engagements, and to-be husbands. I'm so glad for her because I know so well what she and Eddie have been through for the past 3 or 4 years at least, and I'm happy to see her so happy. They've both been having a lot of hard knocks and tough struggling. They'll probably be married this summer although nothing is definite yet. They'll live in Indianapolis, where he is now working.

So you think Notre Dame could use a new Ed Building. Well I guess the fire was restricted to this basement section. I don't believe it did any damage to the upper part of the building at all so it'll be repairs only not rebuilding that will be required. On the subject of fires however, South Bend has a mania for them I'm beginning to think. Last Thursday Frank's Pants store located at Michigan & Western Ave. burned practically to the ground - just completely ruined. I don't remember how many thousands of dollars damage was done. Then over Friday and Saturday the one room house of a ^{widow} lady and her five children, in Ardmore, burned to the ground leaving them homeless. The \$600 home was insured, but the \$400 worth of furniture was not. Also on Friday a Roseland house burned to the ground leaving another homeless family. And at 12:30 Saturday noon when I was just leaving the office I glanced out my office window across the river and noticed too much smoke coming from a certain spot on the north bank. At the same time I heard the fire sirens heading that way. Due to trees blocking a clear view, I couldn't say

for sure whether it was a house, building, or what, but the smoke and flames just rolled out of the top of it. Whatever it was there couldn't possibly have been much of it left. All those, not to mention a too big number of small fires here, there and everywhere. If it were during that extreme cold weather it would seem more likely, but why now.

We've been having the funniest weather. All week it has been between 10° and 20° above zero. Then yesterday it thawed quite a bit and last night it got cold, froze and was plenty slippery. Then at noon today it started to snow again after several weeks without any, and tonight it's just beautiful out. The trees shine like glass with the ice on them and now there is snow on the ice yet. The snow is light, soft & pretty.

So Wayne got grabby with your wallet again. Doesn't it hurt to lay out that much money? It isn't so hard to pay out cash when they give you something besides a piece of paper to take home with you. A coat, a dress, a car or something, but to pay it to

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tuition, insurance, and such things, -
find it so little fun. But you won't
be sorry. Some day Wayne will give you
you a bigger piece of paper than the
receipts you get now, and you'll get
a huge thrill^{out} of that. Then there'll
probably be no stopping you from collecting
the "dividends" from that education.

Fabian just walked in. He + Velma
went to see her sister in East Chicago
today. After hearing his bedtime story
I'm glad that last week was your
trip home and not this one. He told
of at least six terrible accidents which
they saw either in the happening or very soon
after. He said they had to drive all the
way home at 20 mph. due to the slick
highways all the way.

Yes, Larry's folks lost their home.
Too bad indeed. But guess where they
moved to. You probably know by now.
To the 900 block Wilson Blvd. which is
right smack across the river from
here. Margie E. was here yesterday
afternoon and was telling me about their
new home. It sounds very nice. I don't
place it. They have four bedrooms upstairs,
and a sun parlor on each side of the house.
They have a very large living room again + seem

to be so glad for that, because they have such a large carpet and it just fits, saving them quite a problem I'd say.

Tell me how you liked "Gone with The Wind". I've decided to see it too. I haven't read the book and I'm quite anxious to see it.

You wondered why we seem to have so many staff meetings, and why the recent fluctuations. Well answering the second point first. You know how the government, Roosevelt, + Washington, D.C. in general are clamping down on funds, budgets, etc. This is just part of it. You've noticed how Washington has been cutting down on all disbursements toward relief, toward all the different governmental agencies, etc. Well, that's us. As for what seems like a lot of staff meetings, I've found that to be the case in most public offices as in comparison to a private concern which has it's own business to run with one man at the top who says what is to be said and the rest act accordingly and 9 times out of 10 don't even know truly why. Well in our case we cater to the public and every little change in almost all businesses affects us in some way. Then every little governmental whim,

law, idea, proposal, or change, whether it be good, bad, or indifferent, permanent or temporary, seems to come into our "happy home" in some way or other. Every law or political change we have to be at least reasonably familiarized with. Hence the staff meetings to keep us up-to-date, posted, forewarned, reasonably well versed, trained, etc. Then in the case of the actions taken in the past few weeks and those to be taken in the next few weeks or more are not just thrown in our laps; but they really get the men of authority here, call a meeting, discuss the situation, the hows, whys, and wherefors, prepare us for the worse, and really give us the details of every move made and why.

You say you heard from Johnny. Well I guess he got out of bed to come to the office and sign his voucher, which was dangerous. But if he hadn't he wouldn't get any pay for this week. Because by coming in to sign they didn't ever know he had been in bed all week. If they had - due to the low reading "willing & able to work" which he wasn't - he couldn't have collected. But, Honey, I guess he was

really in bad condition. When he came into the office ^{today} I was fairly stunned. He was white as a sheet, so pale! and noticeably thinner. He said he had lost 8 or 9 pounds in those 6 days since I had seen him. Poor guy. I wonder how he is since that trip out. I hope he is much better. I don't even know what was wrong with him.

Well, my dear, all this rambling on and on into the night, and all pretty impersonal and far from anything about you or us. But I don't have to write how I feel about you. You know that by now, and besides you can't put it in words. As for us - I again don't know of anything to be ^{said} now on that subject, so I'll think I'll go to bed and dream it all instead of writing about it.

So goodnite, darling.

Most sincerely yours,

Colette.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Shrove Tuesday

Dearest,

Here it is Shrove Tuesday already, 10:30 P.M. and only an hour and a half till Ash Wednesday and Lent. I think after I finish this letter I'll go eat the kitchen base to make up for the next 40 days, and I've already got the alarm set for 5:30; Mass is at 6:15. My cigarette case must have known that I wasn't going to be needing it because last night it took a leave of absence. So without any cigarettes and not even the case laying around to remind me of them I shouldn't be tempted with smoking. Last night Thelma Powell asked me to substitute at the office' bridge club which this once began with a chop suey supper at her house. I did and was it ever yum yum. Then to top it off I won second prize, a blouse. But I came home without my little wooden cigarette case so I really wasn't much ahead. I got home at just midnight so I didn't start writing this as I was plenty tired. I'm sorry to disappoint you every time you are anticipating a letter. Twice now that you expected one, and rightly so, but didn't get one

till a day later. I laughed when I read that I dated that letter Wednesday, 1st, when it should have been Thursday the 1st. Wednesday was the meeting and I didn't write till Thursday and why I wrote Wednesday or if I'm sure I don't know. "Absent-minded - f's" that's I.

So you are now Frank D. Hornung of Precious Blood Parish, Detroit, Michigan. Last Friday night at bulletins Father Klein said something about my going to Detroit and said that he had a lot of friends up there. He named a bunch of them. It seems as if a great many of the Detroit men who join the first word study at Kenosha (or wherever it was that Father K. studied), he knew that there were a number of his classmates located in Detroit parishes but didn't know which ones were where. I told him that I had heard you mention Precious Blood Church and Jesus Church, but he couldn't quite place them. His first name is Sylvester so your father Swift is probably one of those classmates.

So you missed "Home with the Wind". I have tickets to see it here. Jean Backiewicz and Doug wanted to see it, and Jean asked me to go so the three of us are going on Sunday the 20th. It's coming the 15th for a one week's run. It starts on a Thursday

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so there is only one weekend in that time.
We bought our tickets last Friday and that
was the second day of the ticket sales and
already all the decent seats for the weekend
shows were sold out, so we got good seats
for Tuesday night instead. All seats are \$1.10.
But when I think of all the money I saved
by not going to Kokomo I feel that I
can easily afford it and then some. So I
bought tickets on pay day. Perhaps if
you are home that weekend we can exchange
our tickets and you could join us. Gee, I'd
love that. Many times there are tickets returned
at the last minute and we might be able to
get in on some of them. I just can't wait
to see it.

Just stopped to get a sandwich and a
cup of tea. While I ate I was thinking
that your new schedule with the nights
switched around should be better than last
semester, because there is no doubt but
what Monday is a hard night to go to school
on especially after weekends at home, and
accounting seems to be easier than math
so you will have your easier subject on that
bad night. Or isn't that the case?

I got a letter from Mildred today.
She said that she had gotten a very nice
letter from you and she said also: —

"I think you're getting a good "guy" there, old girl". I'll have to write back and tell her me thinks so too. Her little "girl" is expected on the 8th. Wish she'd hurry. This suspense — you'd think it was my own.

Well, it's just midnight and the alarm goes off at 5:30 so I'm going to turn in. Goodnite dear, with oceans of love.

Sincerely
Colette

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Ash Wednesday
February 7th 1940

Dearest Frank,

Here it is Ash Wednesday after work, shopping, the dressmaker, Church services, & choir practise. I wish I had some hobbies or something to keep me busy day after day, & night after night so I wouldn't be so lonesome and wouldn't waste so much ambition sitting around home doing nothing. Yes, dear, that is I running off at the mouth with such irony.

I got your lovely letter this morn. I still welcome them each and every one just as much as the first one.

You say Monday was a blue Monday in Detroit. That is flattering it no end. It was more of a black Monday down here. Blushy too, and dirty, sooty; wet some places and dry other places. Miserable weather to be out although the warmer weather is welcome and the slush comes with it I guess.

You asked about the book - yes I've finished it and I shall be glad to let you have it. It's interesting, detailed, and in general all that I expected it to be. I'm not going to make

any further comments on it now though. Remind me of it when you come home. You know how forgetful I am.

Now if I may fall back again onto the subject of my business (I know you are getting sick of my petty office troubles) but a lot of things happened today, good + bad. Bad things first: Starting tomorrow night (Thursday) each of us has to work every other night from 7 to 10 for two weeks! 20,000 file folders to be pulled from the files, certain data notations written in, and then filed back. They figure it will take 200 man-hours of overtime. I'll probably have trouble making evening services now too. Then around March 1st that training school program for 5 mos. begins. I told you about that I believe.

Now for the good news - I had a nice chat with Mr. Thomas, Area Supervisor of the northern 3rd of the State - top man. He explained and more than apologized for the way my promised reclassification + raise fell through. We then discussed the other changes made and those being made + planned now, and he assured me that I was perfectly safe and set and had nothing to worry about. There was a lot more to it but that's the content of our 3/4 hour conference, and naturally I'm quite relieved and happy about the whole thing.

And so again dear, I must say goodnight. Good luck with your new semester, and all the love that I can send with 3¢ postage.

Yours
Collette.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
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Mishawaka, Indiana

Friday, Feb. 9, 1940

Dearest Frank,

Just decided that if I would get a letter to ^{put} into the post office by noon, you might receive it on Saturday yet. He'll see, let me know if you get this on Saturday or not till Monday.

Last night I worked till six with an employe, went out to eat and returned at seven and worked till after ten. It was just about eleven when we got home. And you can take it from me that work was strenuous if anything ever was. Mr. Trace asked me if I had a date and stayed up all night because my eyes looked it. I said "you know mighty well what kind of a date I had last night". He said "Oh that's right, it was your turn to work last night. That accounts for it then because I know how my eyes felt when I was through it the night before". Excuse please business is calling me away from you again. Dazzone this thing called business.

2:20 P.M.

Here I am again, Darling; now I know I won't get this to you before next week.

You don't know how lucky you are in not being able to come home this weekend.

On account of the latter part of this morning it started to rain! It was very icy this morning already and then to rain all afternoon — it makes me shudder to think what this evening will be. They say the highways are dreadfully slick. I am missing you terribly, but it's better to know that you are safe up there rather than risking your life on the highways.

In fact last Tuesday Jim Hurtle skidded down a 6 ft. embankment and simply demolished his car. His personal injuries were limited to a cracked bone in his wrist and an awfully sore hand. But he is still up here missing work as a result.

Johnny was in the office a while ago but he didn't come over to see me this time. I saw him over in the U.C. Division signing his vouchers.

You asked about Theresa's fiance's last name — it's Arvin, Eddie Arvin. Yes, she got her ring for Christmas too. He is the one we met at Kleins' that Sunday.

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some time ago.

You got your first report card. Fine thing. And I'm glad to hear your grades. I'm mighty proud of my loving fiance. I consider myself a plenty lucky girl. To think that I should rate such an ambitious, diligent, up-and-up young man to be my husband. To be your chosen girlfriend and ultimately your life mate is simply too good to be true.

To recall one of Jerome Kipling's lines in "Lavender and Old Lace" — He said to Miss Ainslie:

"The highest compliment a man can pay a woman is to ask her to be his wife". So I think that I was paid a very high compliment by you last Dec. 22, and do hope that I shall be able to stand up beside you as a model wife. That's why I'm trying to make a good Lent. I'll need all the faith I can get.

Speaking of Lent, Honey, I missed my early morning Mass this am. But I was just so worn out that I turned off the alarm clock and rolled off to sleep again without ever knowing I did it. However, I'm afraid that if I have to work as long hours and as heavily as that very many more nights, I won't even try to get up at 5:30. After all, I think we'd be doing wrong to ruin our health for penance sake, don't you, dear? I feel the same way about you. You can't possibly stay up late with studies, etc.

and then get up so early in the morning before a heavy days' work.

Well, I suppose I'd better clean up a few things here and get ready to leave at five; and I do mean leave at five. I'm going to bulletins at six-thirty, church services at 7:30, choir practice — no, I'm too tired to stay for choir tonight. So toodle oo, till over the weekend. You have a nice weekend and don't work or study too hard. So long.

Most sincerely yours

Colette

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

February 11, 1940

Dearest Frank,

You darling; what a perfect surprise! When I came home from work Friday night Regina rushed to get me a "box that come in the mail". I thought - what could that be. I wasn't expecting any mail. And when I saw it came from you I was still more stumped. When I opened the package and saw that gorgeous big heart full of candy! well, I was surprised no end. I just hadn't even thought about Valentine's Day coming this week. It was so sweet of you, and thoughtful too that you sent it so that I could enjoy it over the weekend. More so than you know, because I was confined to my bed from the time I got home Saturday noon till now. However I have my alarm set for 5:30 again, so rest assured I'll be alright again and ready to start another week. Don't know just what got into me but my pet "suck a nerve" went on a rampage until all last night and today I had a terrific headache and just wanted to cry all the time. I'd try so hard to calm myself but just let anyone look at me and the tears started rolling. So I'd just close the door, bury my head in the pillow and bawl my eyes out. It was the

craziest thing that ever hit me. I'd cry myself
to sleep and wake up a half hour or an hour
later and start all over again. But I ate candy
throughout all, and tonight I feel quite civil
again. So after some food, a good hot bath, writing
this letter, and then a good night's sleep, I'll
be a new woman and ready to dig in again.

The weather was so beautiful today.
Very warm and slushy as can be. So far
I've had both my bedroom windows wide open
all day and they still are. It's so wet outside
from the good thaw. It seems like a sunshiny,
rainy spring day. I wish it were because
June comes in the spring. I think that after
Easter comes the time will fly. But Easter
just seems to be a big barrier that has to
come first, and for some reason or other seems
so far away. And with Easter our plans and
highest hopes will really start moving. This
past week with all its busy nights, etc. I just
haven't done a bit of planning whatsoever. So
I have no news along that line. And inasmuch
as I didn't get to Mass this morning I don't
even have any news about town to give you.
So I guess I'd better get some more sleep out
of this weekend. Thank you again for the candy
parling, and I'll sign this with a kiss for you.
(and no lipstick)

Sincerely,
Colette.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

February 13, 1940

Dearest Frank,

Eleven thirty and guess where I just came from — The George White Scandals! The original stage production with only the one performance in South Bend tonight. Jeanne called and begged me to go, and I finally broke down and said yes. Helen Ryan had seen the show in Chicago and she said it was really very good this year, and much "cleaner" than they usually are, so I decided it would be fun to go — which it was. In fact it was very good. Wish you had been with me. But then I guess I'll just have to wait till this weekend.

You say Pooch wrote you — well she called me too and said it's all set for Saturday night — Ray + Ray, Larry + Dorothy, Jim + Pooch, you + I.

Don't wait — I think it will be fun. By the way, darling, she has been trying to find a bux-rac(?) board and cart. She said she thought that your brother, Herb, had made one, and wondered if it would be possible for you to borrow that one for the evening. You needn't bother about it till Saturday though, because

she said if she couldn't find it we could do or play something else.

While I'm on the subject of Saturdays entertainments, I might as well proceed to tell you your other entertainments for the day:

Dr. Slegel — 9:30 am

Dr. Wurster — 12:45

Do have a good time and believe you me that's one time that I'll be glad we can't be together. I called them Monday and at first I was afraid Dr. Slegel couldn't take you Saturday morning — probably school children appointments keeping him busy — but he said OK for 9:30. Dr. Wurster's nurse said that it's usually a day and a half to two days before you can do any close work but that you probably would be able to drive OK by Sunday evening. The last time I had a dilatation it was at one o'clock on a Saturday afternoon too, I could see pretty much alright as far as just seeing objects is concerned, but reading was out, and on Monday morning I couldn't read your letter even, but by Monday noon I could read the letter and it all wore off from there on.

Now I must get to bed. I worked last night (Monday) straight through from 5 till 9, and tonight from 5 till 8. (The show started at 8:30.) I'll write again tomorrow night. So long, sweetheart, with all my love
C. L. K.