

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

January 2, 1940

Darling,

My first letter of the new year.
I wonder how many more of them there will be.
Honestly, I don't know just how to ask
tonight. It's 8:30 and no 6 o'clock
date. Guess I'll have to send Albert after
you. Hope he doesn't want to go upstairs
now. The usual game of Parchesi is in
full swing. Mom, Dad and Albert.

Last night besides missing a swell
time at Jay's, you missed a lot of fun here.
Angie had a date with Johnny, so Ang asked
Jimmy and Fran to come along and Fab
brought Velma down. They had a riotous
game of Rummy Royal. James played too, and
got the biggest kick out of Jimmy Cruise.
Everybody kidded Jimmy about the way he
acted Sunday night; he wouldn't believe most
of it. After you left I "flopped" on the
bed, clothes and all and thought back over
the two weekends, everything we did and how
wonderful it all was. I finally fell asleep.
I awoke about 11 P.M. and came down to
brunch with the gang. Then went back to bed.

Sleepy-head that's me.

And while I slept you had a stiff job of driving to hold down. Did you arrive O.K.? I hope. And I hope not too worn out. The four people from the office who went to Chicago over the weekend, and the three who went to Toledo, the two who went to Michigan and Mr. Trace who went over to Illinois, all said that there was hardly no snow outside of in Indiana. How do we rate here? We had a really beautiful winter day here today, snowed all day, and not too cold. We were very busy at the office, for a change.

Not to mention applicants and claimants, I had oodles of end-of-the-month and end-of-the-year reports to get out. Then about 4 the statistician got snowed under with her reports and I tried to come to her rescue until I was veritably swimming in figures. But that's all over now.

Our Manager was back in the office today. She has been on vacation for the past two weeks. And was she ever surprised when I showed her my Christmas present. Now I'm going to watch my step so that she doesn't let this engagement affect my status in the event that there are lay-offs between now and then. There are going to be some grave changes probably around February, and maybe not till June. So I'm keeping my fingers crossed. I also asked her if it will be possible for me to have my 2 weeks vacation just

before the wedding. She said she thought it was o.k. but she'd have to check the rules + regulations on it before she'd say definitely. I can see one reason why they wouldn't like to do it that way, but I also know a way that I can do it without their noticing it, and yet not paying them dirty by it. You see by taking my vacation then I would still be on the payroll and either would be replaced thereby doubling the payroll on my job for two weeks, or else just not be replaced. All in all I'll have to see how it can be arranged. I'll probably be arranged by walking papers before then anyhow, because the changes and transfers are going in fast.

Well, the children are milling around here getting ready for school tomorrow. You don't start till next week, do you? Jim doesn't go back till Sunday. He's out ice skating now. It's a perfect night for it. But I think I'll settle for a little ice skating between the sheets. That doesn't surprise you, does it? After all Daddy warned you to bury dynamite to keep me warm. That's another item to add to our budget.

But now I think I'll say goodnite with love + kisses from me while the radio plays "Faithful Forever"

All my love, dear
Collette.

P.S. I was talking to Mrs. John Hooring,
your cousin, again today, and in the
course of the conversation I said something
to which she answered "you sound as if you
knew me and my set-up here." So I
told her I did and whom I was. She
remembered being here for Jerry's shower too.
Then I told her we were engaged she
was so surprised. She said "To think
that I've been talking to my future cousin
all these times". and that she couldn't
wait to tell John. I remember her well,
and for some reason I always did like
Bertha, although I haven't seen her since
Jerry's wedding. Remember that?

So long — again

C.R.T.G.H.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

January 4, 1939

Dearest Frank,

Talk about an off day, this was it. I'm in much too bad a mood to talk to anybody, and I suppose I should hesitate before trying to write decently to anybody, even you. But you know how it is, and I know I can always fall back on you. It all started last night when we had one of these take-it-and-like-it staff meetings at the office. It lasted 2 hours and when we got out of it we thought Ernie Morris was our boss, the way we were getting told what we were going to do, how we were going to do it, when we were going to do it, but not why. No more time off (except for a mother's, father's, brother's, or sister's funeral) absolutely nothing else; no more Saturday mornings off, no more sick leave, no more talking to fellow workers, even if it be business talk except that if it is business we may use the phone from one desk to the other. All that, however, didn't even draw a comment with what followed, the subject of vacations! No two people may be out of the office at the same time. There are

24 employees in the D.S.E.S. Each gets 2 weeks vacation which must be taken together and no extensions even to 1 hour. 24 sets of 2 weeks apiece means 48 weeks out of 52 to be used for vacations. 4 weeks left which are these four weeks in January. Our vacations start in February! We were told when we are to take our 2 weeks figured by seniority with the Service and several other figurations which I can't go into now.

My vacation falls, and get a good look at this, on March 18 to March 30. March of all the "ugly" months to take a vacation. Even then it's too early for me to do the necessary preparing for the wedding, etc. I can't see why in the world they won't give me the last 2 weeks of my work off and just not come back. Not a single one of the 24 of us, except Naomi, is satisfied with the set up. She got the last 2 weeks of August. They don't have a single reason for this arrangement, not one advantage to it. It's just somebody's idea. Then to top off my mood, when I got home tonight, my glasses (in their case) fell out of my purse, and BROKE!! Well, can't you just see me boil by then? That was just simply the last straw. I didn't swear or curse or anything else, I just flopped in a chair, coat, hat, rubbers, & all, & cried! of all things.

All that probably sounds like just a lot of silly griping ~~from~~ from me to you, but there were a lot of other little things that just put us all off the record. Then so many other petty things such as a disconnect on a long-distance call (that's about as maddening as anything to me). Also one of my applicants failed me on a very weighty order which took a lot of straightening with the employer on my part. Had to pay my gross income tax today. Why, even my little budget came out wrong today! This couldn't possibly be Friday the 13th could it?

Oh well, when I look over on the stand beside me, you are smiling, so I'll smile too. But heck, that doesn't get my glasses fixed, nor does that smile get my vacation charged to May or June. Now I'm laughing. To think that I should spread all my blues up to you. The irony of it all. I suppose I should tear this up. But then I'd have to start all over again with writing you a letter, and since I don't have anything nice to tell you I'd probably still tell you nasty things.

Yes I do have one thing nice to tell you. That is that I love you and I don't appreciate how lucky I am 'cause

regardless of how the office runs I've always got you to look forward to, and to tell my troubles to, petty as they are. Each day that passes only shows me how much I need you.

As for Monday night when you left. No, dear, I didn't think you were making off anything more than the fact that it was getting late and you did have to hurry. Yes, you are right; each time is harder than the one before to say goodbye. & everything has been mighty empty this week. But then, there is nothing we can do about. Unless it were that way, I don't think it would be love, do you? Then too, it will make us appreciate each other so much more when we can be together. So we'll both go on preparing for that day, and pray that nothing will interfere with our complete happiness and success together.

So now, dear, I'm going to roll over, and with you right here watching over me, get to sleep.

All my love
Colette.

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Sunday, 7:30 P.M.
1-7-40

Dearest Frank,

To think that I have gone three whole days without writing you! Probably the next time I hear from you, you will want to break our engagement on the grounds of neglect, and stuff. But then you probably have been too busy with exams to even miss me and my letters.

As for exams how are they coming along? O.K. I hope. You probably won't know for a week or two about your grades though, will you. Here's wishing you good luck on them all, Butch.

Have you been having winter up there like we've been having down here? Plenty of snow; good and cold; good ice skating, skiing, etc. It's been very cold - the lowest was 10° below on Thursday, but it really has been very nice, clear winter weather; even I don't mind it. And that is something when I don't mind the cold, isn't it.

Today was Sodality Sunday so I didn't get to see the gang, except the Hubers, Adelaidis & Bestilla; and then

I rushed home so fast after Mass that I didn't get to talk to them, so I know no news - good, bad, or indifferent. This week, that is - this past week, there were no meetings; so with the exception of going to bulletins I was home every night, catching up on my sleep, and my work at home. A good idea I suppose, but it makes one feel very much out of circulation, and like a lot of time wasted. This coming week, however, I'll regret saying that because tomorrow night is Lordalities meeting; Tuesday, choir; Thursday, Player's Club (maybe) and Friday - bulletins and then you (I hope).

If you can't make it this weekend, Honey, don't worry about it. You know I'll understand, and after all, it's you who will be suffering for it. As for the party, I don't mind missing it, if the trip home in the midst of your exams will handicap you with the exams. You know, of course, that from the bottom of my heart I want you to come this weekend - not so we can go to the party, but just so we can be together. Christmas truly seems years ago, and New Year's too. James went back to school at 2 this afternoon, and it just didn't seem possible that he was just going back from his Christmas vacation, because

that seems so far away.

My ring is beginning to feel natural now. I'm getting used to it, just as though it always was there, and it always will be there. I think often about how I'm going to get it fitted. This idea of working a minimum 44-hour week is not too convenient, but I'll do something about it soon.

I haven't yet mailed Eleanor's Christmas present to her. Mainly because she is still on the coast and I don't know her address, or rather Gwen's. However she doesn't expect to hear from me until she gets back to the Mount anyhow. I intend to do that tonight yet.

Mom expects me to write to Mildred too tonight. She hasn't been feeling well today and yesterday, and Sunday night can't go by without a letter to Mildred and one to James, and when she is unable to do it, I'm expected to do it or it doesn't get done. But I'll write Millie tonight. I've her a letter myself. That will be killing two birds with one stone.

Angela and I were talking about the wedding a while ago. A happy subject any day to me, Darling. She suggested three numbers that are nice for the music. But I already had them on my list. Of course this is not for circling, but don't you like the number —

"In a Monastery Garden"? I'm just crazy about it. It probably would be a nice fill-in to use strains of it. Not to be used as a solo of course.

Three other girls that Ang. knows quite well are getting married next summer too. So she thinks she will be taking in stores after showers. In fact has 2 invitations already.

Well, my dearest, one and only, fiance, being an un-merry person, I don't know of much else to do but sign off.

Most lovingly,
Colette

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Thursday morning.

Darling,

Had 12 1/2 hours sleep last night and feel like a million today. How about you? Let's see, this letter will probably reach you on Saturday, unless things change and you manage to get home this weekend. Naturally I was disappointed to read that you couldn't come this weekend, but since I am confident that you would come if you possibly could, and that nobody knows your obligations there any more than you do, I just won't let myself be disappointed too much about it. I'll just consider myself lucky that I had you here for those two long weekends over the holidays, and I'll make the joy of them hold over still longer till you get back. Also I'll hope that your weekend up there won't be too forsaken or busy, and that this letter may help to shorten the time for you.

The weather has turned warm again. It's thawing; wet and dirty, but nice and warm. No sunshine though. And only this morning it was so icy that I decided maybe it was lucky for you to be staying there this weekend, because even the highways were icy around here. This morning I was still waiting for the bus at 5 after 8 when finally Mr. Probst came along and brought me down. The bus comes through from Elkhart so if the roads were icy that would account for its being so late.

Darling, I just called the County Clerk's office for the information we both wanted about the Indiana law requiring a physical examination before granting marriage licenses. It goes into effect March 1, 1940, and requires the parties to have a physical examination within 30 days previous to application for a license. So we will have to have our examinations after the middle of May.

Remind me to tell you about the place that Naomi + Jim went to for their honeymoon. Excuse me now, please, till tonight. I've got to go to another staff meeting and this is supposed to be a powerful one. So long till later. I'll tell you what happens.

8:30 P.M.

Back again and guess what happened? Our beloved manager, Miss Smith, is being transferred to Indianapolis in answer to her request of about 6 months ago, and in accordance with the rearrangements being made in all the Indiana Employment Services. Our new manager, a Mr. Studencki was formerly manager of the Fort Wayne office. Gosh, but we do hate to lose Betty Smith. She's a genius in skirts. She doesn't plan on leaving South Bend till spring, but we expect our new manager within a week. There are oodles of changes going on now, and will continue for about 6 months.

Dad just got home a while ago from Chicago. He's been up there since yesterday morning at the furniture park, and he was just telling us about Bill Galvin's new apartment in the DeWitt apartment hotel. You remember Bill don't you? The bachelor who was Aunt Mary's sweetheart? His new apartment is on the 18th floor - corner, overlooking Lake Michigan and the Chicago University campus. It sounds exquisite. Very elaborate, valet service and all furnished! Daddy just raved about the place. He stayed with Bill last night, and of course part of both days. Bill is the Vice President of the Hedstrom-Barry Printing Co. He makes \$1000 a month and all expenses, Dad says he averages \$25,000 a year! Up until the last couple of weeks he lived at his home in LaGrange and drove 18 miles to work. So since his mother died he moved into town - and how! There's one swell Irishman that you'll have to know better, & will some day. He'll probably be one of our wedding guests.

I should have gone to Players' Club meeting tonight, but didn't, and really for no reason at all. Angela isn't home yet, as I don't know how it's going to work out yet. I have a 36-page mimeographed book of rules & regulations in personnel administration of the office which I've been putting off reading so long that I'm going to get caught. I thought tonight would

be a good opportunity to get that taken care of, but I barely got started and had to quit. It's funny but I can write away without having my eyes bother me to any extent, but any and all reading is nil without my glasses - which are still broken - I simply can't read any printing without having my obs starting to swim around till I can't tell black from white, so all reading gets set aside. Newspapers, magazines and books are taboo without the specs - the two spare eyes.

About the party and Jerry's gift - certainly I'll be glad to chip in for you. Stupid of me not to think of it before and offer to do it for you.

But for now I think I'd better say goodbye till I see you again.

Love
Callett -

Colette R. Gerstbauer
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Mishawaka, Indiana

January 16, 1940

Darling,

Here I am again finally coming through with the letter I planned on writing last night, but which ended up in a game of society craps. Yes, and I lost 5¢. The boss called a meeting for seven o'clock last night, so I had to cancel my date with Tilla to see "Drums on the Mohawk", which made me furious. Then the new manager didn't show up, probably due to the weather, so the meeting proved to be very brief, and five of us girls went to Naomi's and gambled. One girl won 77¢. I got home about eleven.

How was the trip back Sunday night? It certainly was "blizzardy", but beautiful here that night and it's been cold and snowing ever since. It was 9° above at eight this morning, and now, at 10, it's so white and pretty; it's snowing fast and furiously.

Sunday night around eight Johnny, Jim & Franny, and Ed Lattimer came down after Ang. who got home so late that she had barely started to get ready. So they all came in and Hal came home with Velma. While the four waited on Ang. and Velma waited

for Fab to change to go ice skating, we had a little fun. All except Fab & Velma went to hear Bill Carlsen. They said the place was jammed - dance floor, lobbies, downstairs, restrooms and all.

Darling, remember Sunday afternoon when we saw a picture in the paper of Mrs. C. Allan Bishop and thought she looked like Mrs. Daly, Well, yesterday - Monday - Mrs. Bishop came into the office and gave me an order for a maid. She gave it to Miss Smith who is a personal friend, not to me. Then today she came into the office again to interview the girls I had lined up for her. So in having her right here in my doghouse I got a good chance to see her. She resembles Mrs. Daly a lot, but not as much as the picture did. The picture flattered her. She's not as pretty as the picture, but she is nice. It's funny though that she should come in just after seeing her picture and talking about her the day before.

I just heard about this accident and managed to get the newspaper article on it, the one enclosed. Do you remember this Hilda Randolph? I worked with her in the Employment Office at Bendin. I positively got chills when I heard she was dead. She's only been married about a year and a half and now she is a corpse. What a life.

Perhaps you will ever know her husband. I don't. One of the girls in the office here knows them both very well and she says that Mr. Devere is going to be well enough to attend the funeral Friday. But what a terrible feeling to think that he was driving and she was killed. Poor kids. That will be somewhat of a shock at Bendix I imagine, because she was pretty well known there.

The same paper that carried the news of Hando's accident, carried some lovely pictures of the new Bishop O'Hara. I'm going to keep them for my scrapbook.

I can't make up my mind whether to go to the choir's spaghetti supper tonight or not. I love spaghetti - yum, yum, - but I've been out every night for so long now that I just can't seem to get anything done. It's going to last for the evening with a party. I think maybe I will go. I surely can't resist spaghetti. How do you like it? or do you? Tell me how you like it and I'll practice making it your favorite way or ways. I like it almost any way.

Honey, I have an invitation to hear Rubinaff in person Thursday night, free! along with some other musical program. I don't remember who is sponsoring it, but

somehow Ann Feferman Janovsky gets in on it and can bring some friends. She asked me to go. It will be at the Stude athletic auditorium, I believe she said. It will consist of a banquet and musicale. I hope I'll get to go.

Well, dearest, I've been piecing this letter together between work all day, and it is 20 of 5 now. I want to get my income tax return (Federal) made out before five, so I'd better sign off.

With sincerest love
Colette.