

November 29, 1958

Dear Mother,

Heavens, what a week! I keep struggling, but I get farther and farther behind. Hasegawa, Porter, Kamienski, and Kepinski all want comet positions. Only Hasegawa has gotten any so far. He's got to have them or we can't observe next year. The rest will have to wait a bit.

The de Vaucouleurs will be leaving for Cambridge tomorrow, so I had them and Bill Sinton in to dinner this evening. We had a good time talking shop and listening to music. I'd heard all sorts of stories about de Vaucouleurs pirating Bills stuff to report at a meeting recently in San Antonio, but there's nothing to it. de Vaucouleurs was authorized by Bill to report briefly on his results, and certainly Bill is not upset. Hall seems to be the main calamity howler--seems to be a matter of Lowell publicity! If the two principals aren't mad at each other, I can't see that anybody else has a right to complain. I suppose that this will go down in the record as more de Vaucouleurs plagiarism. I'm glad I got the straight dope, for once.

Bill says that he's disappointed in Hall's directorship so far. From what he says, it's worse than I thought it might be. He's likely to lose (or drive off) both Bill and Harold if he continues present tactics. If they leave, then what has he got? de Vaucouleurs is glad of the change he made, remarks lack of cooperation on the present visit, and I gather, does not expect to visit again in the foreseeable future. Too bad.

Mary Lou Torgerson, who edits the women's page on the paper, called a few days ago to arrange an interview with me for a feature story. Though I'm not eager about seeking publicity, I think it is a chance to call attention to the Naval Observatory, and I expect to cooperate fully. (She called me "Dr.", which is gratifying. I don't know who set her straight--perhaps Evelyn Roat--for last time I appeared on her page, it was as "Miss".)

I've got a mole or a gopher, too. He's been excavating in my backyard for a couple of weeks now, and I haven't done a thing about it. I hear that Dean Pederson is an expert gopher-trapper, so I'll probably consult him about my problem child.

I had a fine time over at the Pedersons for Thanksgiving. Dean had shot his first duck that morning, and John and Dean left after dinner for Springerville to look for their elk. I certainly must admire Miriam and her family. And I enjoyed the day more with non-astronomical company. I'd had an invitation to Art's, too, but declined with thanks. I much appreciated the invitation, but I'd rather see somebody else some of the time!

The "Classical Optics" arrived in good order a few days ago. Bank balance acknowledged.

The Pederson kids enjoyed very much the opening to your last letter--dinner from the garbage can to the oven. Mrs. de Vaucouleurs asked especially about you this evening, as do various other people I run into. Last Wednesday evening I ran into Helen Oswalt in the Food Town. She was shopping with the Bryants, so I had a chance to meet them. Mrs. Bryant also asked about you, of course.

Dr. Hood is resigning his pastorate at the Baptist Church here to go to Denver, so my problems with Paul over the paper are over. Now I presume I'll have them with somebody else.

Speaking of problems, I was awakened Friday morning to the sound of footsteps running across my roof! I couldn't believe my ears for a few moments, but finally awakened and moved fast enough to chew the dickens (through the window) out of a middle-sized boy who was seen to clamber down off the roof and onto the new cinderblock fence at the corner by the garage. Of all the hazards that wouldn't occur to me! Naturally walking on the roof greatly accelerated its decay, to say nothing of the liability to me if somebody gets hurt, even if he's trespassing when he gets hurt. If I catch anybody up there again, there's going to be the devil to pay! Any suggestions, like grease on the roof or broken glass on the fence???

Tennis has been proceeding in interesting fashion--and I have not been calling Hall. I've played several times with Rudy, and had three good sets this morning with Miriam Pederson. (6-4, 6-1, 9-7) Last weekend I gather Hall called me about 2 p.m. trying to promote some tennis. I was already on the courts with Rudy. This morning he happened to drive by while Miriam and I were at it. As far as I know, he hasn't played since we got together in the gym two weeks ago. It wouldn't surprise me if he calls tomorrow, but he'd better call early or I'll be off with somebody else. If he thinks I'm dependent on him, he's got another think coming!

What was the name of the little booklet of sermons that you had circulating in the Fellowship here? Peter Sanson the author? I've not heard anything about its whereabouts in some time, and I think perhaps it's time I inquired whether it is still making rounds or has stagnated somewhere. The last person I knew to have it was Ed Gaines.

The January SKY & TELESCOPE should carry a picture of ours of Comet Burnham-Slaughter, plus various comments based on our observations. They requested information of Burnham and Slaughter, but they passed most of the buck to me, since they don't know anything. I have a thank-you, plus an open invitation for anything else I'd like to send on cometary matters, now or in the future. If Dr. E. C. is going to be "Mr. Mars", I guess I can be "Miss Comet". Only I'll take the judgment of my peers and not that of the local press.

I don't remember whether I told you of the information from Marsden that the Astronomer Royal, at the time that Comet Arend-Roland was bright, forbade the use of any telescope at Greenwich to observe it. Seems that comets are on the verboten list there. Any observations have to be made without his knowledge, and Candy has to take leave to compute orbits. Good, popular business we're in!

Love,

Pat