

Friday noon

Dearest Family,

Fritz dictates, I type, and thus it is more often. First we will talk about Anthony who calls the pupil of the eye (the round part), money, and we say "show me your money". He thought this up all himself--I guess from putting money in piggy-bank. He knows about 25 nursery rhymes now and is changing so fast day by day, that by the time his portrait, which is practically finished, reaches you, will be high time to start another.

The cold snap seems to agree madly with him as we can hardly drag him into the house. He picked up a bean scoop at the grocery which is his favorite shovel and there is much snow-shoveling going on ever since, even with his frozen bibs. It is simply amazing, with all this drooling that his chin has never chapped.

Despite the fact that the thermometer goes down, we have not yet been cold. Both house and studio are extremely comfortable and we use approx. one-half the fuel that our neighbors do.

Thanks for the fire-extinguisher which will be very good to have around. However do not worry so much about night fires, as only one night so far have we had to have the stove on in the house and most always we have a window open. The blessing up here in the winter is that so often it is windstill.

Now to get to your letter with the delightful enclosures. Thank you so much for the check and the \$20 extra, and especially for the go-ahead signal on the building. Naturally I will do everything to keep prices down. However on Monday Muriel called that Stevens wants me in N.Y. from approx. Jan. 21 to Feb. 8 when she leaves. On returning I will plunge into the work immediately. However while in N.Y. I will get a plan from Tony for the addition to studio and the general layout for the additional shed, also to gather together the furniture that is in N.Y. for shipment up here, to save further storage costs there.

I will use whatever money I can save from the job in N.Y. to start the bldg. I can charge materials, which I hope will be a negligible item, as I intend to use every old board and stick in sight. I found a very good old carpenter, thru Tarvers, who works for \$1.25 per hour. I shall get him to help with framing, then Silva and I can do the rest. All this is by the hour according to weather, not day or week. A considerable saving over the Roses at \$1.75. Also I really think electrical equipment is preferable because of the fire hazard with people not used to using oil. Also we can get much better rental as you know how city people go for electrical kitchens---plus the fact that we can buy all this equipment here in town thru Rivard with down payment of one-third and carry the rest over summer.

We would be very happy to have the lanterns. Also do you have any more iron basket stands for outdoor tables? Also if you see any old deck chairs, please ~~send~~ along for added attraction on porches. I think there is enough wicker in N.Y. but will be able to tell better when it is all up here.

I will take the portrait of A. to N.Y. and have it framed correctly and sent on to you. Will you have it photographed by the people there?

Sears R. has a complete bathroom unit for \$162.50 including tub, toilet and bain. Silva also knows plumbing -- works part time for a master-plumber in town. Of course I shall try to discover the cheapest way of doing everything.

I think it is a very good thing you sold the insurance bus. and stopped the Reflections--a little less worry for you anyway.

My vice came and we ordered a plane and drill with money Muriel sent for Xmas, so gradually will have our own tools on the place.

The food box will be wonderful to have--it helps a great deal as prices are sky-high--worse than ever and don't look as though they will come down. The Reis's still give us fish every week, and good clean fish--last week Gomes brought over some haddock already french-fried, and little new potatoes from their garden and home-made relish--a whole hot meal ready to eat. Everyone is so generous. The oranges sure spread a lot of good will! Prices are so damn high you can't buy anything to eat that is reasonable--even hamburger is 89¢--but we do well with the red beans and fish--still have ham, which A. screams for at every meal--he loves it--also eats a great deal of butter with a spoon, and fruit, espec. oranges. He is a very peculiar eater, to say the least, best of all loves cod-liver oil and screams if we take the bottle away--I think he would surely eat it all with a spoon.

Suggest you send any kind of canned meats, spam, etc--no tuna or other canned fish, as we always have plenty of that--ate local caviar last night--a tin of olive oil is always good to have, and cheese is always welcome--we eat so much of it. Still have plenty of jam, candy and veg. Will need coffee soon.

Fritz will call and see Lily Pons in N.Y. He talked to M. again last night and she said he can stay at Bill Alexander's apt., which will be better than bunking in with Donnie, and he will go down Sun. as Rise sings Carmen on Monday. Don't have Pancho out as we think he is lonesome--he writes often--we saw so much of him all summer and he is a sweet boy and close friend of ours. I will not try to go to N.Y. at all--first of all money, then house would have to have all water shut off, pipes drained, and Fritz is afraid if his cement studio floor ever gets cold it would take a month to heat it up good again. But I never mind being alone, and A is good company--the best. We take walks and go ice-skating. So for now, thanks again for everything and Much Love from us all.

J., F., and Anthony

1/16/42