

BEATRIX FARRAND  
THE VALLEY CLUB OF MONTECITO  
P. O. BOX 1140  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

December 18, 1943

n 26

Dearest Mildred:

It was a joy to be able to send the fruit you wanted even though it may not have been of quite the exhibition quality you desired. The figs I think are really good and the raisins eatable. The total cost for fruit and expressing on the two packages was \$6.12. They were sent by express prepaid last Wednesday and so should arrive in plenty of time for the holidays.

Lucking seems to be rather miserable although better and as soon as I can go to see him you shall have a further report. He says he hears nothing from Casa Dorinda and as the sign most emphatically says to keep off I have not attempted to pass them.

Next Monday we have a meeting of the Botanic Garden Planning Committee and I think you will be glad to hear that the sagacious Mrs. Thorne, by asking an innocent question at the last meeting, has made it possible for the good director to be a part of each committee or at least invited to each committee meeting, so that he will meet with us next Monday.

As neither the General nor Anne seem to understand as clearly as I do that you have already promised to give the extra \$200.00 for salary, if needed this year of 1943, I said -- I would gladly write and tell you that they hoped you would do so as I was sure you meant to.

Max has gained two pounds since getting here and is beginning to look less like a scarecrow. His patience and determination are splendid. How one does respect just these homely and rare qualities!

Yours ever,

Tri x

Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss,  
1527 Twenty Eighth Street,  
Washington, D.C.

Tuesday

BF/hwh

This is a postscript written three days after the first letter and it will give you news of a very successful planning meeting for

the Garden at Mrs. Thorne's yesterday. Mrs. Thorne was, as always, kindly and wise and where there were possibly difficult points with regard to planting details and etc., that came up between Mr. de Forest and the Director, Mrs. Thorne and I steered clear of them and the net result was -- approval of the planning committee suggestions made in 1937, and for the new committee, agreements on the following:

- (1) Wide paths or roads leading throughout the Garden to all places where upkeep is necessary: in order to reduce hand and wheel barrow labor.
- (2) Parking space provided within the Garden, possibly one where suggested along the Mission Canyon road, and if needed two auxiliary ones on the west side of the Canyon on two flat places in present unoccupied spaces.
- (3) Decision to make no definite planting recommendation until after at least a skeleton plan had been agreed upon.

We kept off the controversial subject of the walks immediately surrounding the boulder and I am hoping that when Mr. de Forest and I have another meeting at the Garden tomorrow it will progress as well and as smoothly as yesterday.

You probably will remember the nice, sturdy, little Italian-American secretary called Madeline Verga, whose father worked at Casa Dorinda for some months before you left. Miss Verga has, as you know, become a Wac and has apparently done extremely well, because she has been in the Recruiting Office in Washington for over six months and now writes me that she has the desire of her heart because, "My days in Washington are numbered", and she goes on to say that "at last it looks as if I am to use the talents which I possess because they are my birthright." This undoubtedly means that she is going to Italy where she should be of real use. The part of her letter which I am quoting for you makes it seem as though Johnny Weeks were developing into a first class bully. "Three weeks ago I was unexpectedly given a ten-day furlough, and Uncle Sam arranged for a round-trip to California aboard an Army plane. My, but it was wonderful. You can't imagine how thrilled I was to see my parents and my beloved California. Before I knew what had happened, it was all over --. I shall not get home again until long after the "duration", but I won't even allow myself to think about that.

"Things at home were going along very smoothly. There was only one fly in the ointment: Weeks. He has become more egotistical than ever - if possible- and has full say. The day I arrived in Santa Barbara things were in an uproar. Weeks had decided my Father's services were no longer needed, fired him, then was informed by headquarters he had no authority to discharge anyone unless he could prove the services of said employee were unsatisfactory. So he had a letter written asking for a discharge, and insisted my Dad sign said letter! At that precise moment I appeared on the scene--it couldn't have been better timed! My Dad didn't know what he was signing. Weeks told him it was a



mere formality, as he was fired anyway. Well, I phoned Weeks and asked for an explanation -- and you can imagine the long-winded story I got. I told him that in order to avoid a similar performance, I was going to the officer in charge of Casa Dorinda and explain the mixup about the "discharge". I believe I got the matter straightened out, and I thought you might be interested in hearing about it."

Apparently Miss Verga dealt with the matter with authority and effectively and the news is merely passed on to you so that you may have this ammunition if and when you next see Johnny.

After four days of storm the sun has come out brilliantly and it is a delight again to be alive. How I wish you were here and how intensely you are going to be needed when the question comes up, probably at the next Botanic board meeting, as to planning policies.

Yours ever and always, my dear,

*B. Goen*

*Trix*