



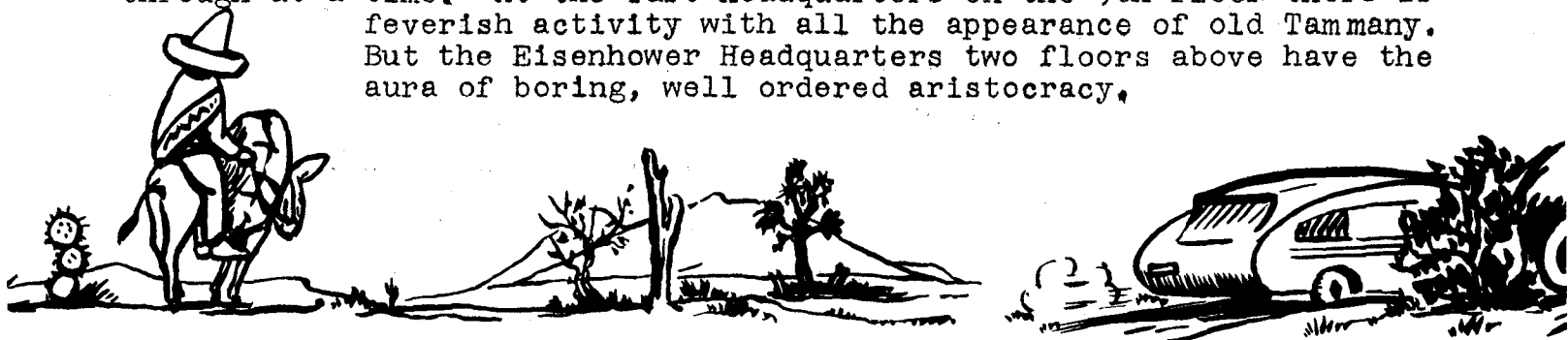
LANDLINER COMMODORE IV
Chicago, Ill. - July 14, 1952

My Friends:-

We are parked this week on a lovely lawn adjacent to the Ambassador-West Hotel in Chicago. The British flag flutters with the American flag from the front of the hotel honoring the British Ambassador who is staying here. This with our COMMODORE IV in its famous blue-and-white colors, carries the feeling of so much royalty that the Management of the hotel have dubbed our lovely parking location REGENCY PARK. All this through the generous assistance and courtesy of Jimmy Hart and Frank Bering, major-domos of the Ambassador hotels. It has been an ideal setting for our practically continuous round of cocktail parties - 382 signed our guest-book the first night. There were 16 Governors, 22 Senators and numerous congressmen, and a bunch of lovelies. Gov. Kohler of Wisconsin came by for convention rehash conversation at 3:30 this morning. A few top names I remember Joan Bennett, Mike & Buff, Mary Margaret McBride, Barbara Wells, Clifton Utley, Bob Trout, Sheriff John Babb of Cook County, the H. F. Johnsons of Johnson's Wax, the George Hearsts, the Broh Dahlbergs of Celotex, Gen. Wm. Harris, Spivak, Gene Fowler, Hal Block of 'What's my Line?', Frank Markey with Jim Andrews of NANA, Byron Harvey, Jr., prez of the Harvey Houses, Harvey Firestone, Ruth Stahl, secy. to Col. McCormick of the Chicago Tribune, H. Vandermortel the Dutch Consul General, Pamela Britton, the starlet and Zack Scott with his new bride, Gilbert Kahn, son of the late Otto Kahn, Irvin Kupcinet, the columnist, with the Earl Wilson's, the James Van Allens of the social register, Dorsey Connors with Verne Burnett, Jane Gregory of the Herald-American, Marjorie Richardson, MacKriendler who owns New York's famed 21 Club, Patricia Kennedy, daughter of Joe Kennedy the ex-U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain, my cousin Mrs. Edwin Russell, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough.

We space-shipped from Los Angeles across the mountains and deserts and plains-lands, stopping only long enough to feel the pulse of the countryside. These high points are obviously evident. Prosperity is everywhere. There is much talk and fear of inflation, high taxes, government bungling, graft and high handed tactics in Washington. Still it is plainly evident that the average man never had it so good. A few pointers in the wind indicate that there is a slackening. The milkmen and bakerymen were complaining in Albuquerque. One high point rears above the rest. NOBODY LIKES KOREA. The regime that comes out with a policy of "let's win in Korea or get the hell out quick" will sweep America with popularity. As for candidates, in the grassroots country it's Truman or Eisenhower and nobody else.

Here in Chicago the crowds are disappointing. I have covered every political convention since 1920 and there is less actual activity here than I've ever seen before. TV is probably the cause. The crowds and enthusiasm you see on the screen are staged for the act. Beyond the camera's range, there is plenty of room and dead boredom. Hotels have full registration lists but thousands did not show up. With the single exception of the Conrad Hilton my experience has been that there are empty rooms all over town. The Hilton, housing both the Eisenhower and Taft headquarters creaks at the joints in endeavoring to handle the mob. There is an hour's delay on breakfast room-service. Phone calls are rationed for the average Joe Doaks to one every 30 minutes. The elevators are roped off like a movie premier allowing only one load through at a time. At the Taft headquarters on the 9th floor there is feverish activity with all the appearance of old Tammany. But the Eisenhower Headquarters two floors above have the aura of boring, well ordered aristocracy,



Lunching yesterday at the Tavern Club, sat next to Eric Johnson. Said: "Arithmetic is against the GOP. Russell can carry the South and only needs 119 more votes in the Electoral College. Stevenson with the Illinois votes needs only 2 more states to be elected President." Stevenson has tremendous popularity in this area and should not be discounted as the Democratic strong-man. MacArthur and Hoover made strong impressions.

A word about my new landliner COMMODORE IV. It was built especially for me by AIRSTREAM TRAILERS in Los Angeles. Wally Byam, head of the company is travelling with me on this first shakedown cruise. It is 33 feet long, is made of aluminum and fibre-glass, done entirely in the modern manner, and in the famous colors of my great, great grandfather Commodore Vanderbilt's blue and white. The interior decorative scheme is the work of Charles Crique, Jr. of Buffalo and Beverly Hills, Calif. The main cabin seats 12 comfortably. The top feature of the new COMMODORE IV is the astradome, a clear plexiglass bubble from which I can take motion pictures either through the bubble or rolled back through the opening over the heads of the crowds. It gives the COMMODORE IV a rocket-ship appearance. We have gas-refrigeration from our own butane supply, TV and radio, a practical and luxurious bathroom, places for all my many trunks and bags and a short-wave, two-way phone-service. The names of all the principal places that the previous COMMODORE trailers have been to are lettered around the sides. It has plenty of picture windows, making it a perfect goldfish bowl for the crowds that are always peering in.

We had a sensational entry into Chicago behind a squad-car graciously afforded us by my good friend, youngish Sheriff John E. Babb of Cook County. We were escorted first to the Convention Hall for some very interesting movie-shots. We then wheeled, weaved and dived our way through the heavy traffic of the Loop and Michigan Avenue with all sirens wide open. I have never before had such an exciting entry into Chicago. We terminated our wild flight here at the Ambassador Hotels where, with the aid of a shoe-horn we eased our way into this, the world's most exclusive trailer park.

Post-convention scuttlebutt: Now that the GOP has the platform and the candidates settled, the question is what will the Democrats do to block them. It appears that the battling GOP factions have healed their wounds, and that the Republican Party is going to put up its best fight in decades. The GOP will make a heavy play to win the conservative southern Democrats. Note: that Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin, Republican Governor of Maryland, spoke well of FDR, stressing Warm Springs, Ga. Gov. Dan Thornton of Colorado had originally been scheduled for this spot. Obvious Eisenhower steerers are Lodge, Hoffman, Thornton. Rumor has it that the financial power behind the Eisenhower movement is the Chase National Bank and the Rockefeller interests. It was General Motors money behind MacArthur and the Continental Illinois Bank of Chicago that bankrolled Taft. It is rumored that the Democrats are going to stage a lot more bombastic show with a lot more money to spend. We will report that to you next week.

Between conventions, I'm going to make a quick trip to Beverly Hills and my family and I will sail to Germany for one month of picture-taking aboard the new ocean greyhound the UNITED STATES, the end of this month. If you want to write as hundreds have, address me at 1048 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Until then I remain, Your Space-Rocketting, Behind-the Scenes Informant, hoping that I can always keep my feet on the ground and my nose to the wind -- for you --

Neil Vanderbilt.