

Saturday
October 28th (?)

Dear Hil,

hi babes. thanks for your letter, I got it yesterday from CRS which I've made my "Saigon headquarters". Am living at VNCS guest house, since it's cheap (300 p a night and 250 p a meal) and that's the only reason. The whole scene the last two months has been enough to give any red blooded american hepatitis. Whatever possessed me to be so stubborn and pig headed with the Bishop, Pat, and Marie Rene I'll never know. It certainly wasn't anything like I've ever done before, that's certain. All I intended was to ask for permission for Marie Therese to go to America for a few months, and when I kept getting half assed reasons like, "she needs to stay with her people these days of crisis as an example of self sacrifice in the cause of promoting Roman Catholicism ect.ect.ect", and also "she's too neurotic", she doesn't deserve to go" bla,bla, and bla again. I got hotter under the collar at each comment until I insisted they at least ASK her, which brought down the house because she said she'd leave the convent if they wouldn't let her go, and that's what happened! In the dark of early evening with rain pouring down in torrents, Marie Rene drove her to her sister's, (which is in a refugee camp in a tent), stripped her! and then Rene picked me up and dropped me at the camp, after which I sneaked her into our house at the Bishops without Pat seeing her, and the next day we left Kontum for Saigon. That was over a month ago. I went back only to be fired, to pack, to get the devil from Pat because I was at that time rather a sickly yellow color, to cry with Rita, and feel horrible because Pat wouldn't let me go down to the hospital and say goodbye to Gabriele or anybody, and then return to Saigon where Marie Therese and I are now. Pat left me with words of doom ringing in my ears about this and that, mostly about how I'd NEVER be able to get Marie Therese out of Vietnam, and my comment was something about "they got the Jews out of Denmark....." does that statement sound familiar??? Anyway, with great mounds of feeling totalling lost and incompetent I trudged throughout the inner sanctums of Vietnamese government officials and finally landed on the doorstep of Ny Luett the Montagnard Minister of Ethnic Minorities who wonder of wonders gave me his Vietnamese assistant to run (literally!) around Saigon getting papers and signatures and it took two days to do what usually takes 2 months and presently the papers are on the desk of Thieu or the Vice President or some joker and should be completed by December 1st. Three hospitals in Wenatchee and Chelan have agreed to let her observe and spend time in-service training for 6 months, so things are clearing up somewhat for the future. I doubt that the training will be largely productive because legally she can't handle a pill or look cross-eyed at a patient, but frankly that is immaterial at the moment! What she really needs is theory. And this presents a problem since she doesn't have a high school diploma (only a primary school diploma, and certificate from her training in X-Ray) - soooooo it looks like in order for the whole thing to be a marvelous flop by susan jean or a marvelous success is up to how quickly Marie Therese can learn enough English to get her legally into the beginnings of a class in Anatomy or something that looks equally impressive. Frankly, just the event of getting her into America when Pat and the Bishop refused to give any help and prophesied doom (they said she would end up a prostitute or something on the Saigon streets!) will be enough success for me. Perhaps we will just tour the U.S. for 6 months and hang the training. Yes, I want very much to visit you. The target date for leaving here is Dec. 1. and if you really still toy with the idea of returning to Kontum in Jan. I want to see you before you leave. Can I call you when I get home? I'll be getting an apartment in Wenatchee and will work probably beginning the first part of Jan. So be it. Rita is up there with Pat by herself - it was extremely difficult for me to say goodbye to her as we've become good friends. Dear Ed Baker is starting to work in Minh-Quy around the first or second week in Nov. - can't say Rita is too thrilled over that, or Pat either for that matter. well, guess I'll have my 99th cup of coffee. My Chronic Obstructive Bilirubin Disease is finished thank goodness, only I can't drink any beer for some hideously long time of 6 months to a year. ha! take care Hil.

oh say. thank you for Mad Housewife! Entertained me through my days of bed rest

if Pat leaves before Christmas as she plans, and who knows for sure what Rita's plans are, and if Ed Baker is there, are you SURE you would still consider coming back here? The proposed cease fire may have significance for Kontum in what may be a negative way me thinks. I would love to talk to you.

bye for now.

love, *Susan*
susan