

9. Friends

Jo and Earl loved their friends and were sought after by many, though Jo was more social in some regards than Earl. She was thoughtful and considerate of others as evidenced by the following note she received dated May 12, 1941:

Dear Mrs. Shaeffer,

Words cannot express the pleasant surprise it gave me when I opened my birthday card from you. It is very sweet to us older people to be so pleasantly surprised from the dear young people. You were a stranger to me when I met you, but now I claim you as a friend. Accept my most gracious thanks...My best love and prayers to you and yours.

Sincerely, Mrs. E. D. Getman.

One note, dated January 13, 1942 read:

Dear Jo,

We of Camaraderie are very sorry that you cannot join us more frequently. We would like to extend to you an honorary membership, hoping that you will join us whenever you find it possible. I hope to see you before too long.

Sincerely, Louise Roloff, secy."

A letter to Earl, dated July 17, 1942 is quite interesting:

Dear Mr. Shaeffer,

Because I thoroughly enjoyed our brief conversation in the Glenwood Springs Café several weeks ago, I wanted to write and make good my promise that I would send a letter. I find it rather easy to converse, stimulating in fact, but when one is hurried and tired it is quite different to write it. Perhaps you have found that so.

It was so nice having you tell me about your wife. She must be interesting. Her hobby, [book reviewing] I'm sure, influences her thinking toward the higher channels.

The climate here in Denver has been quite warm, making it difficult to sleep daytimes. You don't have that trouble, do you? I find factory work confining and uninteresting, so my thinking is influenced. But we must pursue outside interests diligently if one is to retain a good perspective on life.

Good luck, James Ernest Rea (Jim)

One of the friends that Jo dearly loved was Andi Anderson, whom she had met when she and Earl first moved to Grand Junction. Andi, divorced with 8 children, was "a perfectly beautiful woman" according to Bobbie Jo. She had left an abusive husband and got on the train in Iowa with her seven children, pregnant with her 8th. Her meager funds took her only as far as Grand Junction. One of the first persons she met when she got off the train was a prostitute. The prostitute knew a judge who owned a little house and she arranged for Andi and the children to live there. It was right across the street from the apartment building where the Shaeffers lived. The prostitute also helped Andi find work. Because she was a seamstress, Andi was hired by several of the "girls" to make dresses. When the baby arrived Jo went over to help take care of

the other children, and the two became fast friends. Eventually Andi became a much sought-after dressmaker in Grand Junction and was able to support her family. She also taught Jo a lot about sewing. When she started doing slipcovers for people Jo helped her whenever she had a deadline to meet. Theirs became a life-long friendship. As a wedding gift for Bobbie Jo and Will, Andi taught BJ how to make slipcovers. Bobbie Jo said it was her favorite wedding gift and has served her well throughout her life. Andi eventually retired and went to live with one of her daughters, but all of her children were able to make positive contributions to society. What a tribute to one woman's courage and determination!

After moving to Cripple Creek, Colorado, the Shaeffers kept up with their Grand Junction friends through correspondence.

May 24, 1943

Jo, my dear,

... I was interested in your description of Cripple Creek. It must be similar to Central City, where I have visited several times. Those old towns and the houses and people are always so interesting to me. I read a very brief review in a movie magazine of "The Human Comedy," but it failed to strike a responsive chord. Will try to get it here and read it in its entirety.

Jo, I want to tell you that I have missed you already. You are rich in understanding, my dear, that's why your reviews are so successful. So few people are gifted with a real insight and sympathy as you are. You must continue your reviews, Jo, for they are a real inspiration and a morale-builder in these troubled times.

Knowing you as I do, I feel sure that you will make a good life for your family and for yourself, no matter where you may be. And you will be an influence for good, too, Jo...

With a great many good wishes to you all, and love to you, Jo,

As always,

Elio. [Gowers]

In 1944 in Cripple Creek, Colorado, Jo was inducted into the Order of the Eastern Star, the women's auxiliary of the Masonic Lodge of which Earl was a member. Jo had many friends, but they were certainly not "birds of a feather." For a college English class in 1948 she chose to write about one of her more interesting friends:

There are three words I am not able to include in this character sketch: "loveable, subtle and serene" but the word "interesting" should be all capitals! E.'s personality projects itself with smashing impact.

Let me think—where did I first meet her? It's way back there in the storage room of my memory neatly tied and tucked away—now I've found it:

We were in a group of young matrons discussing Johnnie's formula and Susie's aversion to cereal when the attractive woman, to whom I had just been introduced, stated, "I love dogs but I don't care for babies or children!" One could feel the silent screeching of raising eyebrows and the plops of mouths as they fell agape! I remember thinking "Is this exhibitionism or unvarnished rudeness?" I soon found out it was neither. It was simply "plain vanilla" honesty. But, you say, is there not a time for silence? Yes, all adults know many times it is preferable to be silent.

Personally I admire a person that has the courage of his convictions enough to be himself at all times, and not afraid to speak the truth directly and openly.

In appearance she is a tall, stately, handsome woman. She dresses to type--wearing tailored frocks, simple elegance at its best. Her hair is beautifully clean and shining, simply dressed with none of the present popular set artificial curls that make one think of a doll's wig, and make one squirm with the urge to run one's fingers through it to disarray it a bit!

This woman has those rare attributes in women: trustworthiness and loyalty. If she has a derogatory remark to make concerning you she comes to you directly. It will not be said to another. Her loyalty is ever manifest.

Through the years E. has added to her excellent background of being a Vassar graduate. She is widely read and that, coupled with an open, receptive, brilliant mind, makes her the most intelligent woman I have ever known. Her fund of information seems inexhaustible. She is well informed on any subject. She is a sparkling conversationalist, though a better talker than listener. Being very sharp and quick, she picks up your thought before you have had time to formulate it into words. Conversation with her is challenging and thought-provoking. As in character with her whole personality, her conversation is most dynamic.

E. is an agnostic and will readily tell you so, and her reasons for so thinking. She says she finds in her flower garden what other people seek in their belief in God.

I was not at all surprised when she told me she smoked with whomever or wherever she pleased in the days when smoking by women was considered, if not taboo, at least a very bold thing to do.

I find her the most democratic person I know. She finds her friends in all walks of life. She never patronizes. With the house and yard help she is very exacting and demands much, which she receives, with the added respect and liking of those who work for her.

Though she would be the last to admit it, E. is kind, not by sweet words, but by deeds and those never too obvious. I feel sure any monetary gift she might give would be done so anonymously.

I recall a time when another girl and I were entertained by a group of E.'s friends. During the afternoon the other guest, being very much more deserving than I, received the lion's share of attention. E. tried her utmost to divert some of the attention my way. Though she was unsuccessful in her effort, it was a kind attempt.

I admire her absolute freedom from [artificiality] and her abhorrence of conventionality. After spending an hour with her I find other people colorless. She makes a steady diet of other people seem tasteless to me.

I am grateful for the hours of her life she shares with me. She adds the salt to my porridge of friends.

The letter writing tradition, rich with detail and gracious of expression has greatly eroded since the advent of e-mail and cheap long-distance phone service. But it was flourishing during the Shaeffer's young adulthood. Such a letter is the following from Marguerite Vorbeck. The allusion to "our" party referred to the Republican Party. Later Marguerite became president of the Colorado Federation of Republican Women in 1951. The following year she was an alternate delegate to Republican National Convention representing Colorado. However, with the references to the Axis leaders, the foregoing letter must have been written during World War II when the Shaeffers had left Grand Junction and were living in Cripple Creek, Colorado.

Undated letter from Marguerite:

Dear Jo,

If this letter should enclose a few mump bugs, as it very well may, I imagine that you will welcome them and treat them kindly and put them with your own so that they won't be lonely. And if they are congenial and multiply rapidly we will be doing the world a kindness to be releasing such a rarified and unique strain of mump bugs as this Vorbeck-Shaeffer brand. As my contribution to this new line, my bugs cause the most extraordinary facial contours to be found on this planet—on the left side a face which is thin and hollowed and grows thinner hourly—on the right side a face of such luscious and exotic lines and curves as would make an artist's (particularly a cartoonist's) mouth water. The perfect half of a huge double chin is indescribably alluring. Top off this picture with two utterly weary, disillusioned eyes and a mop of unwashed gray hair and you can see what my bugs are capable of. Oh, yes, and that reminds me of another qualification. These are adult bugs, you might almost say senile, for they will take on anyone from fifty to ninety two. They also cause a much more severe prostration than the common or garden

variety of mump bugs so that all in all I feel that with the virility of the Shaeffer strain combined with the virulence of the Vorbeck strain we will have something that has a good chance of winning the war. Just loose a few among the Axis war lords, with the especially good specimens reserved for Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito and presto, the war is over.

From the forgoing nonsense I take it that by this time you have gathered that your little friend has, after fifty years of being exposed to mumps and nursing mumps, finally succumbed to mumps herself, and I'd kill anyone else who made a joke of it. Saturday, Sunday and Monday I was completely prostrated. In fact, I'd hate to be any sicker. Today I feel a little better although my head still aches and tomorrow I imagine, I'll wake up to find them on the other side and I have the whole thing to go thru again. I'm staying right in bed, couldn't have done otherwise even if they doctor hadn't been so stern in his commands...

I just had a happy surprise. [I] found my lovely "Put Out My Hand & Touched the Face of God," poem reprinted in the new Reader's Digest. Since poetry is rarely found in this little magazine, it must be as good as my prickling scalp, when I first read it, told me. It is such fun to run across an old, beloved friend, isn't it? By the way, this is called "High Flight" where it wasn't named in the original newspaper clipping. I don't think that a very inspired title and I'll bet a cookie the boy poet (only 19) didn't name it.

John Gillespie Magee, killed in action at the age of 19 was serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Some days before his death he wrote:

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the trembling mirth of sun-split clouds
And done 100 things you have not dreamed of
Wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.
Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept hills with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle flew;
And, while with silent, lifting mind, I trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God!

Jo dear, your letter was a joy forever. Please do it again soon, with more reports on B. J. and Marty, the Mug-wump. Hasn't B.J. joined our party yet?

I am so grateful to you for the sheets. You put so much more work on them than I intended that you should, but you are just that kind of a darling. Have a good rest and a happy time with your Earl and your two fine children. I am missing you. I always miss you like the dickens when I know that I can't call 1450 and hear your voice. This all reminds me to warn you very ferociously, that if you don't keep your promise and bring Earl out to see us when you get back, you are in for a terrible reprisal. Herman knows him but so far the only impression I have of him aside from your rather rose-colored allusions to him, is the memory of a deep, very pleasant voice answering the phone one Saturday morning.
Much love, Marguerite

Jo responded to her many letters. For some responses she first wrote a draft. Her penmanship was developing into a unique calligraphy (sample in Chapter 10) that she used until her latest years. The draft of a letter Jo wrote to Marguerite follows:

Marguerite,

Lacking you these days, my books are my companions. I have read some of the classics and lived and loved them—read very slowly, just digesting the writing and flow of them. You are

the dearest friend and every day I appreciate your preciousness more. These days are lacking glitter, surely, but they have a charm—a beauty, a slow, lonely, lovely beauty.

I found a lone, protected, rather frail little columbine today, at least a month behind the crowd. It thrilled me: purple, white, a bit of yellow, slender, elegant, thoroughbred, roots under rocky soil. My roots too are in rocky mountain soil. My leaves are in these mountains, my flower in these purple hills. It is my country.

M., let me live a bit of your life and experiences by writing me about them. Jo

Jo saved another (undated) letter from Marguerite:

Dearest Jo,

I was on the point of writing you and asking ‘Do you by any chance remember a person you once knew by the name of “Marguerite?”’ Yes, I did understand why you didn’t say ‘goodbye’ and was relieved, but feel most bitterly disappointed and deprived that you didn’t come back. Some way or other I was expecting some of the long visits you and I were to have then, to fill me up in preparation for the long famine of your absence. Why is it, I wonder, that I am fated to live away from the very few friends who satisfy the deepest needs of my being?

We are glad, too, that we got to know Earl. We felt that he was comfortable, likeable and easy to know without a trace of sham. Interesting, too. He told us so many things that we had no idea of about the telephone and dial system. He talks well. We all liked him. But, Jo, you can’t imagine my relief to know that it is mutual for I was afraid that he might have turned thumbs down on me. You know what an unerring judge of human nature you have told me he is and I thought when I didn’t hear from you, that, at last, I have been found out.

Your picture of Cripple Creek, its people and their homes is most vivid. How will my beauty-loving Jo nurture her soul in such a place? Do the distant outlooks compensate for the nearer ugliness? It sounds most stimulating and I am glad that “the girls” have found you and are providing gaiety and companionship. Queer, that people could be content to live in such surrounds if they didn’t have to, so undoubtedly Cripple Creek and its almost obliterated evidence of past glory have a fascination which I don’t comprehend...

Send me some questions to answer or some thoughts to write about. I want to see if I could possibly hook even a tiny string of ideas if I threw in a chunk of bait. I haven’t any bait and as far as I know there isn’t an idea any nearer my stream of thought than the far off oceans.

I love you, Jo. I truly miss you, Marguerite

Then from Jo:

Marguerite, my friend,

So in spite of my apparent indifference I’m so sorry I’m so dilatory about letters, but that seems to be a progressive failing of mine. I just don’t make time for writing and when I do write, I wind up feeling just too defeated for words. It’s hard for me not to be a gruesome “E” on the end of the word Air Corps.

And didn’t you know that I am quaint, old fashioned and narrow-minded as viewed by the eyes of 16 and 20 [year olds], respectively. Some of these days our mutual astigmatism will be overcome and we’ll see in the same light.

Emotions are a luxury we will have to get along without. Clear, serious thinking and logical planning our only hope. We realize with our surface mind and emotions. It is horrible how we shout with hysteria and propaganda and still play politics and concern ourselves with tires and gas. Now I’ve apologized and moralized and told you the details of my life, will you stop looking grim and being annoyed with me and write me?

I write letters and letters to you in my mind,

Jo

Keep in mind that this was only a draft and that other thoughts and expressions were undoubtedly included in Jo's letter. Another line she penned on the draft, perhaps refers to people she was getting acquainted with in Cripple Creek: "You can't get to know these people in a day. Their lives run deep."

Part of Jo's description of Cripple Creek was found in the following draft of a letter that Jo wrote to a friend, unnamed:

You should see the entourage of males I have this beautiful afternoon. Handsome – Wow! Little past the adenoid and toothless stage but the most awkward gangly age of the male. To a man enhanced by a haircut, very fashionable in this Boy Scout age known as a GI haircut, which when the barber is finished, is a shiny hairless bean. Twenty years later how they do despise that which they pay a good 65 cents to have now. Dapper ...doesn't half describe their various allures. Levis rolled up, some bare legged, some boasting socks, topping old run down heeled shoes and yes, I spot a filthy pair of tennis shoes. Shirts are varied and multi-colored. One with the faded pen and saying of the wise old philosopher Confucius all over it, another smothered with cowboys on bucking broncs, another red and black checked. All have one thing in common: all are filthy dirty.

If there's anything more lovable than a bunch of dirty 12 year old boys fishing in a mountain stream, what is it? About ten this morning I said to Marty, as I took a cake from the oven, "Run to the store and get a pound of weenies and buns and tomatoes and pickles and potato chips and onions and cases of Cokes and I'll take you fishing. So here we are ten strong. Such fun they are having but I'm having the most of all!

[Last] night the Elks gave a dinner for their families, then dancing—circle dances, polkas. First you dance with the president of the bank, and then with a miner, then some officer from Camp Carson, then some 16 year old boy, then your husband. It's just more fun than anything imaginable...What a thrill I get out of a little guy that always asks me to dance first of all and with the enticing words, "Will my best girlfriend give me the pleasure of this dance?" True, as a dancer I wouldn't say he's tops, but his line is wicked and fatal—that Marty! I tell you we all four dragged in together at 4 am after burgering. I swear if you could have heard us hilariously laughing into bed, you would have sworn it was just four old drunks piling in!

We have been having such fun—real fun this summer—picnics, glorious ones. The weather here is just perfect. Still sleeping with three wool blankets—pleasantly warm in the daytime—Oh! I love it here in this ugly, ugly, deserted little mining camp – yep! I'm becoming a confirmed Cripple Creeker!

The people interest me no end—most interesting characters imaginable. I have a beautiful new friend. She is breathtakingly lovely. If you're so appreciative of beautiful women I wish you might know her.

An undated letter from Bertha George shows how Jo's letter writing cheered others:

Precious Friend,

The Lord seems to know just when to send messages of love and cheer to those who are trying to serve Him. Not often do things get to looking a bit off color when you can always go to Him in prayer, but things had been piling up so that when your letter came, I read it and cried for the comfort it gave me. My heart has been singing ever since. I too, had been wanting to write and tell you how often I had lived over the satisfying time I had with you and your lovely children... rarely do you see such beauty shining through a child's face. Ethereal, I believe is the word. Anyway something very precious. This only comes through living with the mother Bobbie Jo lives with. I know there is a "no" in your mind as you read this but I am not fifty-eight for nothing. I really know that is true...I think our Heavenly Father thinks of her as his real little "Princess." Everyone will look to Marty for the fun everyone so badly needs in their lives.

Am so thankful you know, that life isn't measured by dollars...

*Bless you again for writing and your thoughtfulness and understanding... and may God's blessing rest on you always.
Love, Bertha George*

Another undated letter, a bit wistful:

Dearest Jo,

How often I have tried to come into your life, but I have always been a little afraid that just now wasn't the time. For you know, you are special and I have been waiting for that special moment when I could have the time for a letter to you. Now, I find that time will never come, for this is just a letter to you and a very selfish one.

It is your answer that keeps you forever in my thoughts, for you are so generous, not that I should find my pleasure in just writing to you. For that I find hard to do! It is because I feel I don't know you too well, or is it that I hesitate, thinking you will find me out? But whatever the answer, I will not let it stop me another day. If I do nothing else this Saturday, the day, I know, will not be wasted, for I have written a letter to you.

To be with you is to know and enjoy you, but to have your thoughts before me is to inspire me to have thoughts of my own. So perhaps if we can link a few moments together through our letters, we will have more than just an acquaintanceship when we meet again.

How clearly you have pictured yourself on the hill in Cripple Creek, and with that picture before me I am happy that you love your new home so very much. I think it is grand that you and my brother Bob and Myrtle are such good friends. Bob thinks there is no other place in the world. He says the people and country are wonderful, and now you and your family are there to add to its magic. Is Bobbie Jo going to school in CC? Bob realized how lucky he was to have her working in the store. He said she was the most skillful girl they have had. She is a charming girl. I remember watching her mouth, as she talked to me one day in the dime store and how fascinated I became with the fairy-like movements her lips suggested as she spoke to me. I was completely oblivious to what she was saying so naturally our conversation ended. But after she left I felt cheated that I had not said some little nothing, only to keep her before me a little longer. "So like her mother," were my thoughts and I promised myself that the next time we met I would converse with her more thoroughly.

My children must be fed and put to bed, but then I shall return to spend the rest of the day with you. If I do nothing else this day I am going to finish a letter to you. How many I have started... [Several pages are devoted to discussion of books including "No Hiding Place," "Human Comedy," "The Cup and the Sword" and "Jamaica Inn."] The time goes on and here I am still with you. The things that need to be done are still waiting for me. How patient dishes and housework are with me... Of course, I have done other things today, but technically speaking I have spent the day with you. Do spend a day with me soon.

Thank you for your very welcome letter – and more!

Love, Bette

Jo practiced her own letter writing, and in her scrapbook she saved some notes for salutations and endings:

1. Hi, my tip topper --
2. Top o' the mornin' to you --
3. Is this the lady with the indefinable oomph?

Endings:

1. It's a gay life darling, Ever your own, Jo
2. You're a little bit of alright—so there! Jo
3. Please take me down into the depths of you and will you not write me a letter out of your world soon? Fondly, Jo

It is unfortunate that no correspondence between them could be located, but possibly the very best friend Jo ever had was a girl by the name of Edd. They met in high school when Edd took a job doing housework for a lady that lived across the street from the Osbornes. They hit it off instantly, though they were quite different in many ways. Edd was tall and blonde—beautiful as well as voluptuous, not like tiny, late-blooming Jo, whom she dubbed “Little Jo.” Jo and Edd became inseparable. Because Edd came from a poor family, she had to work after school in order to help out. Jo loved Edd’s large, loving family and often spent time with them at their home in the country some distance from Denver. However, Jo’s mother never fully approved of Edd and this disappointed Jo. Her daughter, Bobbie Jo, explained that Grandmother Osborne “was just a bit snobbish. She would never be unkind, but she was always distant with Edd.”

Edd had a sister, Babs, quite different from Edd, but who also loved Jo. After both sisters married and moved to San Francisco they kept in touch with Jo and Earl, urging them to follow. In 1938 the Shaeffers went to the World’s Fair in San Francisco and truly considered relocating because, as Edd explained, they were always seeing ads seeking experienced telephone men. It was during that trip that Jo and Earl went with Edd and Babs and their husbands to see the famous Sally Rand, the fan dancer. They were quite captivated by her. About Earl’s promotion as manager of the Cripple Creek telephone office Edd wrote, “Congratulations, Earl! I am so happy about your advancement and I feel this is just the beginning. I know you will be successful and keep climbing up.”

Always good at maintaining friendships, Jo nevertheless, never neglected her family for the sake of her friends. In the years before Cripple Creek, Earl was usually on the road with his job, and Jo had long evenings alone (she somehow managed to always get the kids to bed early) to devote to reading, letter-writing, sewing, etc. After they moved to Cripple Creek they had a much more normal family life with meals together on a daily basis, and family activities during the evenings.

During her days at Mesa College, Jo wrote the following in longhand (most of her schoolwork was typed) about Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay on friendship:

The weak poetry introducing this essay was followed by his beautiful poetic prose, “the whole human family is bathed with an element of love like fine ether.” His writing has very little embroidery or embellishment. It is very absolute and to the point, full of challenging statements. His is a sermonizing, thought-provoking style enhanced by flowing poetic style and magnificent word usage. His positive factual lines are sumptuously adorned with significant metaphors. He refers in this work to “water”, as he has in previous essays, “then shall we meet as water with water,” How well this metaphor expresses the soft, effortless merging of two souls in friendship.

Emerson expresses the thought that our friends come to us unsought; real friendship is the communing of two souls. It is wise, he tells us, to enjoy our friends singly, not many at a time. A conversation cannot reach as searching a depth when there are more than two. Social conversation is a necessity in a gathering so must needs be indulged in, but as a soul-filling experience offers nothing.

We must approach friendship with trust and “in breadth impossible to be overturned off its foundations.”

He defines the two elements that make friendship as truth and tenderness. A friend is one with whom one may speak the absolute truth, not sifting, not coloring, not covering up. With a friend no form of hypocrisy is practiced; sincerity is always engaged in.

The thought is repeated that every man must be himself. He finds agreement repulsive to him if it is no more than an overt gesture of amiability. “I hate, where I looked for a manly furtherance, or at least manly resistance, to find a mush of concession.”

We find some paragraphs of discourse on how to treat a friend. He admonishes us not to be possessive of our friends as possessiveness is an emotion of the very young and belongs not to mature minds. Reverence should be given our friend, which means we should regard him with love and awe. We must not trespass on friendship by interfering. Rash, personal relations should not be engaged in. It is not necessary to know too much or too well your friend; let the bit you know suffice you!

Real friendship does not attempt to rape a man's soul. Purer friendship is a more surface friendship and yet is most profound because it strikes deep enough to discover the vein that merges two souls.

The line "we walk alone in the world" caused an avalanche of thought to seep through my mind. Do we not all walk alone at times in our life? I believe that we do.

"Let us drop this idolatry." We admire a friend; we idealize him; we discover he has feet of clay. We must not expect too much and accept him just as he is.

Emerson believes that unrequited love should be engaged in, as the great can see that true love cannot be requited.

"The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust."

During the time that Jo was teaching in the Grand Junction school district, she was asked to run for public office. The following letter, written by Jo, was attached to a note that said, "This is the letter I wrote to Judge Hotchkiss telling him I would not run for the state legislature." It was probably during the summer of 1954:

Dear Judge Hotchkiss,

Here I am in Greeley plodding along little by little gaining in my long fight toward my degree.

I intended to write you 'ere long before this but I have put it off thinking long and seriously. One delightful course I am taking that you would revel in is called Exploratory Reading. It's been a wonderful experience. Two profs have taught it and many, many doors they have opened to be sure.

I have thought much and deeply about our short talk that busy morning. First I do want to tell you how deeply grateful I am to you and to anyone else involved who so believed in me and trusted me as to even suggest my name for such an honor.

Really and honestly I must refuse. Firstly, I am not the type. The first unkind remark (and there would be many) would probably bother me way too much. And Judge Hotchkiss, in all sincerity, I wouldn't or couldn't do you or the party justice. You really wouldn't be proud of me as I am terribly lacking in very many respects.

In this field of teaching I feel in my way I can be of service and that is my urgent prayer. You know how I've always loved 'kids' and you remember:

The only crown I ask, dear Lord,
Is this—that I may help a child.
I do not ask to stand among the worthy or the wise
Or the great hand in hand—
Only that a little child and I may enter at Thy gate.

While I am really baring my soul, I want to tell you in deepest sincerity I think you are one of the finest men I have ever known. Thank you for being you. And thank you for being a friend to me. It's meant much to me and has made life richer.

Yours,

Jo Shaeffer

Friendships were essential to Jo throughout her life. Even in her later years, when fewer and fewer activities were convenient for her, she maintained her treasured friendships. Though letter writing became less frequent, telephone calls were always welcomed, even vital when she

experienced difficulty reading due to failing eyesight. A friend that Jo made during her years teaching in California, was Bea Bradley. Bea made a number of trips to Clovis to visit Jo in addition to her frequent phone calls.

One particularly delightful visit Jo had from an old and treasured friend, Charlotte Hyre, took place in Clovis about 1993.



L-R: Jo, Charlotte, Bobbie Jo

Equally valuable, perhaps more important to others than theirs to her, was Jo's friendship. She was very much admired and sought after even in her later years. In her scrapbook Jo saved the following note that accompanied a gift:

*Some neighbors are close. These are called next-door neighbors.
Some are dear and pleasant to know. These are rare and are usually somebody else's neighbors.
Still others, in more than rare cases, are both close and dear.
I DO have this privilege: her name is Jo.*

* * *