

May 3, 1976

Jim Coffee
P. O. Box 268
Point Reyes Station, Calif.
94956

Dear Mr. Coffee:

In a recent interview with Dorothy Montgomery, your name was given to me as one who knew Bert Schievink. Bert was a very close, dear friend to me. During the last two years of his life we spoke many times of the possibility of my writing a book about him. On his deathbed I promised him that the book would indeed be written.

Even though I knew Bert for nearly ten years, I know that I cannot fulfill this promise in the multi-dimensional way I want to without the help of those who knew him. Because of this I am writing you to ask your help.

Because I want this book to convey all sides of the Bert we knew -- his complexity as well as his simplicity, his arrogance as well as his humility, his humor as well as his pathos -- I would greatly appreciate your sharing your knowledge of him with me.

At present, the book I project will be along the format of the Sierra Club book, ON THE LOOSE. It will have pictures along with vignettes of his life, his experiences, his humor, his philosophy, his insight. I already have some fine photographs, as well as a sketch of his shack done by a Morro Bay artist who went to meet Bert in February, 1974. He has volunteered to help with the book as have many of Bert's friends. If you have any pictures you would be willing to share for this purpose I would be glad to bear the expense of having them duplicated. I am especially interested in photos of his earlier years.

More important yet would be your recollections of Bert, the way you met him, how long you knew him, any anecdotes of him that would reveal his unique "Bertness." I am enclosing a list of possible areas about which you might want to contribute your own unique knowledge of him.

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I have a couple of tape recordings of Bert you might want to hear someday and I have tape recorded many of his friend's recollections of him in research for the book. I only wish we were in closer geographical proximity so that I might share these with you if you happened to be interested.

Bert was and will always be very special to me. It is important to me to keep my final promise to him and to do it in a way that would please him. I can think of no better or truer way than through the collective recollections of those who knew him. I eagerly look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jane Elsdon