

## **The Absent-Minded Professor**

October 24, 1986 (Friday)

An incident happened this morning (about noon actually), after which I thought out the idea of the “absent-minded professor.”

Of course, the episode was not entirely Tracy’s fault, but could be attributed to a failing of my own—not listening carefully.

I remember Tracy talking about Leo Merrill, who is now working for Eastman Christensen Diamond Tool, bringing down two Chinese gentlemen to meet him. The Chinese gentlemen heard that Leo knew Tracy and desired to meet him. This gentleman was apparently responsible for developing G.E.’s saw-grade diamond, and had been hired away by Christensen.

David came over last night and Tracy was talking about Leo bringing the gentlemen down—but I didn’t pay attention to when they were coming. As a matter of fact, it may not have been mentioned. Whatever.

This morning I had been involved in getting football tickets for Alan, our nephew, who is the manager of Ballet-West. David had mentioned that Alan was coming down and I somehow got the impression (from not listening carefully again) that it was today. By noon this impression was cleared up as I found the game was Saturday.

I have not been feeling too well, and so have put off cleaning and waxing the kitchen floor because it is the most wearing job (almost) that I have to do around the house. I had decided it could go no longer, however, and so had finished cleaning it and had the kitchen chairs in the LR out of my way so I could mop and polish the floor. When I got through mopping the floor I was tired so decided to lie down and browse through my genealogy course manual while the floor dried.

I was not exactly the most glamorous sight at this stage, but I guess it could have been much worse. Anyway, I answered the door in my stocking feet. There was Leo Merrill with two Chinese men, one young and the other older. Grunk! Of course I realized immediately that Tracy, who was down in the computer room engrossed in his new music computer program, had forgotten either the time or the place where he was supposed to meet Leo. I invited them in—embarrassed, of course, because before they could sit down in the LR, I had to move the kitchen chairs back to the kitchen before they could sit down. Leo helped me. I then went down and gave Tracy the good news. He was more flustered than I had been. He had completely forgotten the time.

He hurried into his bedroom, shaved, dressed, and then took his visitors down to see his computer. They then left to go to lunch.

After they left, I removed the chairs back to the LR and polished the floor. I had better get back to it now and get the chairs out of the LR before they return.

Now it looks all right in case he should bring his visitors back to the house.

This reminds me of another time when he forgot he was having a visitor.

I don’t remember the year, but it was before our mission (1981). Tracy was working on the shed, building on a bathroom addition—and he had a day off from school, as it was a state holiday (either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> of July). I had no idea that he was supposed to have a visitor so when our phone rang; I was surprised to find that a visitor from India was waiting at the Royal Inn for Tracy. I told him to wait and I would call him when I could reach Tracy.

I finally located Tracy and he was very distressed to find that not only had he forgotten that he had this visitor coming, but also he was distressed that he had to take time off to show him around. Tracy did a lot of “showing around” in the days when he was director of research for the university. Most of the visitors who came to the Y came to see what was going on in Tracy’s laboratory. High-pressure research really came from the Y—not from G.E.

Anyway, I finally convinced him that he could not very well leave this guy cooling his heels, and so guess what he did? He picked up this Indian Dr. in his old blue Chevrolet truck, took him out to the only lumber place that was open on this holiday, and got him to help him load and unload plywood at the shed. Then he took him up to the Y and showed him around his lab and made diamonds for him.

The next day at school, he looked him up on his calendar and found that he was a big whig from the Indian National Science Institute, Dr. Agarawala. Later, after visiting India himself in October of 1975, Tracy realized just how much he must have insulted this gentleman. Instead of rolling out the royal carpet for his visitor, he had him unloading plywood at Tracy’s shed.