

March 7, 1994 - 1062 E 1010 N - Orem, UT 84057 (801) 223-2211

Sherlene

Dear Family,

It was fun to sit around last night and chew the fat with Nancy (Doug is helping earthquake victims in L.A.), Tracy (Betsy is in California with Zina visiting Betsy's brother), and Karen and David at Mom and Dad's--all in honor of Liz and Marty's being here on a short vacation with their children. We are all going Tuesday night to hear Emily's piano recital--is she going to have a cheering section! Mom made her famous pineapple fluff dessert, and Charlotte made the expensive mistake of calling while we were all sitting in the living room, so we passed around the cordless phone and ran up quite a bill for her. Now all we needed was a call from Virginia and Barry. We need to do it again before Liz and Marty go, as we only solved half the world problems.

This has been a very happy time for us. I love my classes. I took more than I should have, but this is the most fun I have had in a long time. It is great for family togetherness, too, because with the three of us at the "Y," we see each other all the time, and it is so easy for Dan and me to slip out for the most interesting dates we have ever had. There are all these noon-time lectures and seminars in everything you could ever imagine. Last week we went to a slide presentation by John Sorenson in which he showed some of the latest research about Book of Mormon sites--some exciting discoveries have been made recently. Last week I went to the student devotional and heard President Monson speak. Last night, while we adults solved the world problems, our college kids all walked over to the Marriott Center and heard Pres. Hinckley speak (Dan tapes all of these when they come over television so we can watch it later.) And Dan and I often go to two movies a week and usually a play or dance concert or such, in addition. The International Cinema series shows some of the world's best films, and all we have to do is walk one minute from Dan's office over to the Kimball Tower, flash our BYU cards, and walk in for free. I can drop in and see Mom and Dad any time I want on my way home to Orem. In case I sound like a PR system for coming to live in Zion, that's just what I'm up to. 'About time for you others to think about careers at the "Y." There is a little culture shock when you first get here--but I tell you, had I known it was going to be so good, I would have been campaigning to get here a long time ago. The Orem community has some great things going, too. We enjoy plays at the Hale Theater quite often--especially since members of our ward are often in the plays. Last week in Relief Society, the Hale family put on the most exquisite dramatizations representing "Women of Faith and Character." They had just experienced the death of their father Hale (who founded the theaters in Orem and Salt Lake). What a family! They were featured in the new women's magazine Cameo recently. The newly widowed Hale did one of the most beautiful dramatizations I've ever seen. Real gutsy. And real. And moving. She's a Helen Hayes if I ever saw one. Four members of their family performed--it was the best Relief Society I've been to in my life. The talent here is unbelievable. Jan Gilchrist is our neighbor. She directs the volunteer help-illiterates-read program Laura served with a couple of years, while at the "Y." She thinks Laura is the greatest, and vice versa. Anyway, she creates homemaking meetings I can't resist attending. This Thursday she's bringing in Florence Hansen from Salt Lake to talk about her sculptures (she did the Nauvoo monuments, along with Dennis Smith).

By the way, if you get a chance to see "Glory of my Father," a French film, which has a sequel, take it. We saw it last week (with subtitles), and it was about the most beautiful, sweet film I've ever seen. Barry and Zina would have loved it especially, I think--also Betsy. All of you, for that matter. We're taking some South African friends of ours to see the sequel next Friday before we go to dinner at their house (they recently moved here, we knew them when he was a UN delegate--converts to the Church who attends church at Scarsdale). They dropped in last night, so we were a little late

Dan was on TV news a couple of times recently as they advertised the work BYU is doing on the Dead Sea Scrolls project. Administrators did all of the talking, but the camera zeroed in on Dan at the computer quite often because he was the handsomest cuss up there and anybody with half a brain knows he's the one doing all the work. Emanuel Tov was here last week and did he ever get the red carpet treatment--general authority tour of Salt Lake, etc.

Have any of you read Harold Bloom's book about American Religion? It's sort of a two-edged sword--he's warning the world about the imminent rise of Mormonism. On the other hand, he seems to be absolutely dazzled by Joseph Smith's charisma and prophetic "imagination." He has a chapter about our temple work and genealogical activity in which he is equally dazzled about the granite vaults in Salt Lake. He compares us with other so-called Am. religions like the Jehovah Witnesses and definitely predicts Mormonism is the future in terms of religion not only in America, but possibly in the world. Very interesting reading from a famous critic and non-believing Jew.

I wrote some memories of Mom and Dad for an assignment in my Beginning Fam. Hist. course from George Durrant. He is so funny. The kids love him. He works you to death, but that's what I wanted. I handed in my 44 page typed life chronology. In the process of typing it, I got carried away and filled in enough detail that it turned out to be more of a short history. When he returned it, he wrote at the top that he thought it made magnificent reading--as good as the best novels he has read (my life?) You should all write your chronologies. I hate dates, so I have put that off a long time. It was a job, but when you compress your life like that into the most important things, it does seem more exciting. I used to wonder why real life wasn't as dramatic as what you read in the scriptures. We forget that it has been compressed and abridged. Their lives probably seemed as uneventful from a daily perspective as mine usually does. Anyway, Bro. Durrant told me that because of that chronology, he was giving me an "A" in the course, no matter what I do or do not do from now on. I couldn't believe it.

When I am finished editing the memories I wrote of Mom and Dad, I'll send you all a copy. What I am going to do is put my edited chronology in the front of my Personal History book (which I am compiling in an acid-free binder with a sleeve and doing in episodes which can be added to from time to time, as I insert photos, etc. in those top-loading archival "plastic" sleeves. Then, I'll insert comments in the chronology which say, "see episode one," "see episode two," and that way keep adding until my personal history is done. I've already written 75 pages of episodes for the "Writing Your Personal Hist." class I took last term.

By the way, there is a neat way you mothers with children can keep up on your children's books. Just buy a huge binder and put a lot of those archival top-loading sleeves in it. When you come to Utah, I can get you the heavy-duty ones from Dr. Norton for \$7.50 for 50 of them. Have one book for sacred things and one binder for scrapbook-type things. Then, as each child does something neat you want to remember, just come home with the program and certificate and put it in the next "plastic" sleeve. Don't stop to glue, organize, decorate, or put in permanently. 'Just put it in the sleeve. That way everything is already in chronological order, and it won't get lost or ruined. You can wait to finish the job later, and in the meantime it is protected in a way that your children can still look at it and gloat without ruining it. It's a way to keep from getting more behind than you already are. I wish I'd known that trick from the first day my kids were born. It's a waste of time to make a fancy book for them, anyway, because kids always take it apart later, wanting to do it their own way. I'd just keep the books that way and hand it over to them when they get married and let them worry about preserving it on acid-free sheets with acid-free ink and acid-free corners, etc. later.

Well, all my great tips are worth three pages, right? I am loving

teaching my family history course in Sunday School. It was supposed to be for 8-11 weeks, but we just go on and on and on. The bishop will have to kick me out. We have such a big class, we kicked out gospel doctrine into the cultural hall, and we get the plush Relief Society room (I'm not admitting people just come because we have softer seats).

I'm doing pretty well with my Fitness project and class. I have been exercising an hour a day, weight lifting, doing flex exercises and bicycling (stationary). Except for Liz's yummy chocolates and the treats at Mom's house last night, I've been good at sticking to my diet. So far, I've only lost seven pounds, but my teacher says I've probably gained that many pounds in muscle-replacement (muscle weighs more than fat, you know). He says I should feel good about how I'm shaping up--he's the one who pinched me to death for that awful skin-fold test at the start of class. At the end of class I get graded on how much less skin there is to fold. Getting old is tough. My cholesterol has gone down too, with this exercise.

Daniel has turned in his papers to go to England for a semester abroad of Shakespeare and the like. He's working four hours a day and plans to earn \$2,000 of it and he's also been all but assured a scholarship from the English Dept. for \$1,000. So, we said we'd foot the rest. I'm trying to convince Dan that we should go over to meet him and do a lot of English research. Daniel gets around. He dated three different young women last week and has lined up three different ones next week, too. He also met a girl who is going over to England, too, who he described as something spectacular. Youth is not so tough. Not that I would ever go back there.

Now, the news from Laura: I'll quote her Valentine's letter verbatim, so you get all the Laura liltng: "HAPPY VALENTINES DAY FAMILY" (in big, fancy letters with a heart at the end of each possible letter ending). "All you little sweeties! Thanks so much for the 3 computer-done pictures. Hello sweet! (underlined 3 times) I love them. I put them on my wall to admire daily. What a beautiful family I have. (P) Well today my awesome 1st comp Loor went home. A bit sad--especially since this month we've rocked the house. I shouldn't say us--it's definitely been the Spirit & God--but we've seen 16 baptisms, 6 of them being priesthood men older than 18 years old. Sweet month! In total of the 3 mths. we've seen 32 baptisms. I hope it continues. The thing that has been sweet is we've seen the coming back of several inactive families into the Church & seen the baptisms of some truly elect. This has been a very fun month w/Loor. (P) Now I have a new comp--she seems very cool--Herm. Gramal--a full on "Lamanite." You know, Dan--an Indian Cechua girl w/the clothes and all--I am excited--I'm sure I'll learn so much this month. I am still here in my 1st area--Machala. (P) Right now is the Carnival. 3 days of throwing water, mud, on whomever--buckets full. It would be fun if it stayed w/in these 3 days--but no--it basically started a month ago. I'd probably like Carnival a lot more if I wasn't a missionary & could play back! That would be fun! (P) Oh well, I am very happy--bien alegre--see Daniel I am fluent! (P) Things are going well. I got a really nice Valentine package from Cameron. Hm-m-m! Anyway--thanks so much for your love and awesome letters. Keep 'em up! Love Always, Laura P.S. Dan--I am jealous. England? W/out me? Go for it though. Mom--thanks so much for the stamps, stickers, & \$5. You are so awesome (had to include that!). I have the best family (don't we ever agree). Next week I should be sending you some RAD negatives!"

This is from her letter of Feb. 20: "I love you all so much you little Sweethearts! How are you doing? All is well here in Machala. I'm beginning my 4th month here--I feel ready for a change of scenery, but I guess being that I am a missionary, I should probably be patient and wait until God wants to give me that change of scenery! Yeah probably. (P) Especially considering the great success we are having here--the references, the baptisms, the members--it's all so miraculous. It really is. . . (P) Hello, I'm back (another color of ink). Last night, we had the most awesome

experience. We went to talk to this man who owns a store--a tienda--here. He's a really good man--has 7 kids, a wife. Anyway, he's not a member, but he went to church for 7 months every week, w/all his family--about to join--but then he had a very bad experience /w the members of the ward--they stole from him. (P) Anyway, we talked to him last night--had a discussion--read a chapter of BOM, talked to him--he's decided that he will get baptized w/us--and he has a goal to be baptized and receive the priesthood for the Conference in March! How awesome. (P) The thing that is so cool is this man is such a good man--living the gospel--and also in his store--he says that he wants to stop selling cigarettes and alcohol and of course close it for Sunday. Some awesome goals if you ask me. Anyway--like I've said before--I know this is God's work--Noone would make decisions like this w/out the Spirit of God. A beautiful family. (P) Anyway kids, what are you all doing at home? Oh--Mom--Why are you worried about Emily (a girl Daniel's been dating). If it's just because she's an editor of the Student Review that's not a problem. Relax. How about Dan--you send me some of the Reviews especially if she's written some articles. (P) Dan--how awesome--go to England--I'm next! Hee Hee. I am seriously thinking I will change my major--Yeah--I think I'll change my major to English--which I should do first-hand in England. Yeah. Sounds good. . .(P) . . ."The work here in Machala is incredible. I am happy--this week has been an adjusting time. After 3 months w/one comp--my 1st & trainer--it's weird to be w/ someone new & doing things a bit differently--but my new full-on Lamanite comp. is cool She really is. Her name is Herm. Gramal. She wears full-on Lamanite clothing. (She draws a sketch of her in her native clothing). I'll have to take a picture and send it. . .I guess the necklace the women wear represents maiz--on which they are dependant. The skirts are a very thick wool--everything in the outfit has symbolism which I don't know yet. Anyway, until next week, Smile--I love you! P.S. The other highlight of the week--we met a family--very unique. RICH!! Hello, money! The house they have is way nicer than even in the states--marble floors, the decor incredible. Anyway, they love us & want us to come by every day. I have no problem w/that! But actually it's prob. just for friendship. It's a cool family, though. I miss you all. Love, Laura." (she enclosed a lot of pictures--one of which showed her with a huge pig in a field together--funny! - Her companion looks good as gold. Laura looks very thin, tanned, gorgeous, and happy.

Here's Mom's recipe for low-fat oatmeal cookies (very good):

1 C shortening, 2 C sugar (1 3/4 will do), 2 C water from raisins, 4 C flour, 2 t. cinnamon, 2 t. soda, 3 C oatmeal, 2 C raisins, 1/2 tsp. vanilla, 1/2 t. salt. Set the oven at 350for 15 min. (Provo altitude). 1) Cream the shortening & sugar with 1 whole egg and 4 egg whites; 2) boil raisins in 2 C water for 2 min. and set aside to cool; 3) alternate raisins and water and flour mixture; 4) add nuts (2/3 C walnuts). They're very moist and good, keep well, and disappear fast.

Dad has a new press idea. The other day when I called, he had on his patent-attorney hat and was writing up some new patents. Mom spent last month organizing all her negatives and photos, which she is giving me on condition that I share them with those of you who want to borrow (and return) them to copy for yourselves when you come visiting to Utah. She really did a heroic effort--they are all numbered and catalogued. I am transferring them into archival binders which have sleeves which will protect them a little better, but she has done an incredible job with them. Most of them are Langford shots. Dad needs to do the same thing with his Hall photos (Dad?).

Dad passed around a photo of Aaron Tracy last night. What a handsome man. What brought it up was we were talking about the wedding reception of our cousin Alan Hall's boy, named after Aaron Tracy. Aaron Tracy was president of Weber State College and was mentored by Pres. David O. McKay. Dad explained that he was the son of Phebe Draper, third wife of Helon Henry.

There was more, but I cut it off - so sad! B
B Love, Sherlene