

Wood letter 1995, FEB.

February 5, 1995

Dear Family,

Can you believe it? Two months in a row! This has got to be some kind of record. Actually, I shouldn't crow before I get this done. Choir starts at 5:30. If I had the courage to take the phone off the hook, I could finish my correspondence. Unfortunately, I have teen-age children who notice when things like phones off the hook happen.

We had a real storm blow through here on Friday night. It dropped the temperature and six inches of snow on us by seven a.m. Saturday morning. The sun came out, temperatures rose a little and we had a ball for most of Saturday building snow caves and a real big snow hut as is Barry's tradition when we have enough snow to comply. He was working on it as late as midnight last night, but temperatures dropped so precipitously and the wind kicked up so strongly that it has been abandoned at about six feet in height. He still hasn't finished the windows and cathedral doorway, but it is so dry and cold (5-10 degrees with the wind chill) that it may remain unfinished. (Phone for Warren.) (Jonathan wants to know how to make cornmeal mush.) We even managed to recruit our up the hill behind us neighbor (he and his wife are anesthesiologists) to come work on the hut with us. I videotaped it as evidence that doctors and lawyers can indeed accomplish something together.

We appreciated the opportunity to use our fast to think about Tracy and his family. My fasting is a lot more meaningful when I have a purpose in mind. In addition, I felt much more spiritually alive during fast meeting and found the testimonies to be moving and meaningful to me personally. We have had a young native Japanese couple recently moved into our ward by the name of Tak and Yoshiko Mochizuki. He is here attending graduate school at George Washington University. Tak was a missionary in Kobe and his parents live there. He bore testimony of the power of the Lord's hand in the lives of the members of the Church during the earthquake in Japan. He said that if you were to apply to church members the statistics of death as it affected the general population of Kobe you would expect that over twenty members would have died in the earthquake. As of today, only one member death has been reported. Interestingly, there was a zone conference that required the missionaries to travel out of Kobe very early the morning of the earthquake to some island where the conference was being held. So, there were no missionaries present in Kobe at the time of the quake.

(Someone is at the door. There are six children downstairs, but they are all deaf to the tones of the doorbell. I get to go down stairs and answer the door as they are all deaf not only to the doorbell, but to the particular frequency their mother's voice operates on.) (Door is for Warren.)

This week is our stake conference week. Twice a year during the week that precedes stake conference all those who hold temple recommends are asked to do five sessions in the temple. Our stake president feels that a personal sacrifice of time on the part of members blesses our lives personally and puts the entire stake in an attitude of spirituality that enhances the conference sessions and draws us together. We have been doing this for several years

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and I have only once managed to get in the five sessions. (Phone for me, was Ellen Holsinger offering her home school child to watch my not yet in school child so we can spend all day Tuesday in the temple.) I count the blessing of wonderful friends as a real miracle in my life. I find it so much easier to accomplish what I need to in life when I have a little help and sometimes a big push from my friends and family. I am very sorry that I live so far from some of you. I am sorry that my children don't benefit from knowing their cousins and uncles and aunts very well. I acknowledge that there is sure a whole lot more that I could do to make this happen. I propose a cousin exchange this summer. If you can get them here, I would be happy to have them. This is Jonathan's year to go out to BYU to take a summer course if we can get him in one that is still open. I'm going to let him stay for two weeks in the hopes that he can spend a little time getting to know his cousins. (He's fourteen in May.) (Back door blows open and amazingly, I am able to rouse Rose-Ellen to shut it.)

(Sarah has to come to school dressed as one of her ancestors and wants me to find Aunt Sherlene's poem about Johannah Charlotte Scherlin. Barry blows in the back door deciding to abandon further work on the ice castle due to extremely cold temperatures.)

This last weekend seven stakes in our area were reorganized. Our stake was the only one in Northern Virginia that remained unaffected by all the changes. One member of our ward who is secretary to the regional rep. said this was a major undertaking of considerable concern to all involved. He related that this has been under consideration for years and years but has not proceeded for several reasons, including the seeming unreadiness and unwillingness of local members to accept the changes that are always necessary when stake and ward boundaries are realigned. I'm wondering if our Stake's lack of involvement in the changes lies in our saintliness or sinfulness. He said that there was quite a bit of consternation that groups of members would refuse to support boundary changes. He was overwhelmed by the spirit of the meetings and the willingness of members to support what was proposed by their leaders. He also was surprised to have revealed to him (he said by vision) answers to a particularly difficult matter concerning one of their wayward children. He didn't elaborate, but says he felt very much that the many hours of work on these changes for seven stakes, and the combined spirit felt in those meetings did much to bring about this revelation.

I have noted a dropping off in my spirituality since my release as Relief Society President. I understand the nature of this occurring, but realize the responsibility I have to put more effort in to maintaining both the desire and the hard work that comes in an effort to keep the Spirit alive in my day to day life.

So, Tracy, I hope our fasting in some way helps to open doors to the circumstances of your life. I firmly believe in the power of asking for specific things in our prayers and in the powerful force that comes from groups uniting in prayer for a single cause. But I also have benefited today receiving a wake up call for putting my own life on a course that will allow personal revelation on a daily basis. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO ALL!