

Subj: Wood News
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It's been a busy month for the Wood family. Our building closed for rennovation and Seminary moved to our home for the rest of the year. I've always gotten up early to make sure the kids were up. I'd see to it that they had some breakfast, made lunches for them, had family prayer with them and hustled them out the door in time to drive to the Church for 6:10 a.m. Seminary. Now, I find myself having to get up even earlier to make sure that not only are Sarah and Rose-Ellen up (Sarah usually is, Rose-Ellen needs about five wake-up calls), but that heat is turned on, the hot water for cocoa is turned on, the front walk is swept of leaves, and the outside lights are turned on.

Before, as soon as the girls were out the door, I could sneak another 45 minutes of sleep before I had to get Christian up for middle school. Now I actually have to get up and GET DRESSED. Furthermore, I can't very well go back to bed when the Bishop is in our front room greeting the kids. He stays for about twenty-five minutes each morning, greeting even the late-comers and then heads off for his office.

What used to be my "formal" dining room is now three long Church tables set with chairs to seat 22-25 Seminary students each morning. The room is filled with a large rolling chalkboard, a tall metal cabinet with all the Seminary books, scriptures, and kid notebooks, an overhead projector, a table for the Seminary teacher and four or five large boxes of Seminary overflow. My "formal living room/music room" is now permanently set up for choir. I told the Bishop we should just dedicate that wing of the house for Church meetings. I guess there is a reason that I never got furniture

for those rooms. The music rooms holds two grand pianos, an organ, and a narrow bookshelf /drop-leaf desk and thirty chairs for choir, and the huge wreath that hung on the wall behind the podium in our chapel. Certain individuals decided it wouldn't be "safe" in storage and preferred to hang it up somewhere. It's size pretty much fills a wall of my front room. I wonder if these rooms could be deducted as a "home" Church? Hey, there are deductions for home offices! Barry also holds his meetings each week on Sunday for the ward missionary committee meetings in those rooms.

We have moved to our Stake building for our Sunday meetings. It is about twelve minutes away by car from our home, which would make it an even longer trip for the Seminary kids from the Falls Church and Mekong wards were we to meet there for Seminary each morning. We had to move

Seminary up to 6:00 a.m. to make it feasible for the Falls Church/Mekong kids to get back to their schools which are further away than the Yorktown highschool that my kids go to. We sure do miss our beautiful colonial building. The Stake Center has an interior chapel surrounded by hallways and classrooms. There is not a single natural light source in the chapel. Who came up with this idea anyway? I think it must have been somebody with their eye on the bottom line of the heating/AC bill not somebody who might consider the bottom line of a human heart! We hope our building renovation doesn't take any longer than a year.

This week's schedule has had to include several visits by Barry and I to respond to distress calls from one of the elderly couples that he home teaches. They are in their 90's. He's gone from the ability to mow his lawn to an inability to even stand in a matter of weeks. The doctor says it's a muscular degeneration, but it seems so sudden to me that I think they must have the diagnosis wrong. I believe it is quite a challenge to age "gracefully". There's not much grace in a failing body that refuses to respond to normal activity levels. Virginia is now so blind that she didn't even recognize that Barry was standing behind me at the door when we came to help them. I was speaking, so she knew I was there, but she couldn't see Barry.

Also this week, I got a call from the missionaries from the hospital. Barry is the Ward mission leader. We found out on Wednesday that one of our Elders had been admitted to the hospital on Monday for internal bleeding. He'd lost half of his blood volume from what was finally found

to be an ulcer in his upper GI tract. This very nice young man is the first missionary in his family. He comes from a less-active family of eight. None of his older brothers went on missions. His Mom and younger brother are active in the Church and some of his older brothers and sisters are returning to activity. After visiting him in the hospital and hearing about his symptoms and prognosis, I offered to call his Mom. The mission president had called her on Tuesday, but I thought she might appreciate hearing from somebody else (A MOM) who had seen and talked to him.

After a short conversation with her, it became apparent to me that she had no idea of the serious nature of his illness and was totally disconnected from what had happened to him. The mission president had apparently told her only that he was in the hospital having tests for some

stomach discomfort he was experiencing. I'm sorry, but if my son was in the hospital and was bleeding internally so much so that he'd lost half of his blood supply, I would want a little more information! Furthermore, until yesterday, they could not figure out what his problem was. I gave her all the good news I could (they decided NOT to transfuse him, but to see if his hemoglobin started to come up and if his hemocrit levels improved, that he was smiling, had good color, was enduring the invasive tests well, that he had a missionary with him at all times, and that the ward was there to visit and support him as soon as they learned of his situation) and then told her as best as I was able how he happened to be in the hospital and what the immediate prognosis was.

I know she was grateful to have my "first hand" report, and wonder why the mission wasn't more forthright with her in this circumstance. I wonder if it may have been different had the mission president actually seen and talked with the Elder and his doctors. This mission in this area has a "central clearing house" for Elders with medical problems. A missionary couple handles missionary requests for medical treatment, advises them which doctor to call and where to go, and what treatment to get. This Elder was advised to call a certain doctor and arrange an appointment. This was after he'd come out of his bathroom, white in the face, after seeing a toilet bowl filled with blood. Fortunately, when the Elders called the doctor for an appointment, he advised them to immediately get to the Emergency room. What if that Elder had not had a doctor's office who asked what symptoms he was presenting, but had only made an appointment to see him when they could "fit him into their

schedule?" I don't think that it was until almost a full day later that the mission president was aware that he was in the hospital. Even then, his mission president (whom we very much like) did not visit him at all during the three days he was in the hospital. These missionaries should have called the Ward mission leader or Bishop immediately. I intend to write Warren and let him know that his local Ward leaders should know immediately if they have a health problem, in addition to the missionary leaders. I'm sure that if I'm ever in that mission president's shoes, I will better understand how difficult it is to deal with all the missionaries problems at all times. I'm glad, that thus far, this story has a happy ending. It may well be that the mission president would not approve of the fact that I called and talked to Elder Kohn's mother. However, his mother was VERY grateful.

Sarah and Roland have both appeared in local newspapers this past month. Sarah's photo was in an article in the Northern Virginia Sun about the Seminary program of the Church. Rose-Ellen's Winnie-the-Pooh slippers were also mentioned in the article. She happened to be wearing them to Seminary the day the article was written. This was written before Seminary was meeting in my house, as Rose-Ellen now regularly wears her Winnie-the-Pooh slippers to Seminary. It was a pretty disjointed article, had lots of incorrect information (Mormons don't drink soda, for instance), but did the job of sparking some interest in Seminary as I had many of my neighbors comment on the article and ask questions. Roland's picture accompanied a very favorable article about his elementary school that appeared in the Washington Post.

I've got to run Sarah to work. This has gone on long enough, anyway. We are all doing well, though we are ALL busier than we should be and long for the soon to come vacation days of Thanksgiving and Christmas. We hope you are all well and happy and look forward to connecting with you at the holidays, if not in person, certainly by mail.

Mom, both Jonathan and Nathan appreciate your invitation to Thanksgiving dinner. Jonathan wonders if his Colorado roommate might also be included as he has no relatives in the Utah area?

Congratulations to Lili on her mission call!

Love,
Ginger.