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Subj: A Mormon who is a Democrat? And etc.
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Hi y'all,

Prayers are with Tracy III with his thesis and orals on Monday. I am VERY well qualified to empathize with him right now. At least he will be sure to get a job when he's through. I went through all that and then found out I'm as unemployable as I was with just a B.A. Of course that was during the first couple of weeks when life seemed pretty dull after all that adrenalin, pushing deadlines to get graduated. Now I'm finding out it's great not to work. This could get to be a habit. I got on a semi-hot genealogy lead last week that should keep me going for several months, now.

Tracy, we will put your name in the Las Vegas temple on Saturday--so for sure your room will be filled with angels, feeding you all the right responses and muzzling your professors when they are just getting ready to ask you something totally irrevelent, stupid, unnecessary, or downright obnoxious. Hard questions are allowed, since you will know all the answers anyhow. I was so scared the night before my orals, my teeth were actually chattering--especially when I found out the grad. sec. was wrong when she told me I could only be questioned on my thesis--not also on all my past coursework. And you know how my memory is--I can't remember my own name half the time, never mind 35 semester hours of coursework (actually I think my memory is getting better since I started taking Ginko tablets--have you

heard of this latest fad?--I used to laugh at all these health nuts, and now I'm trying some of it and liking it). And while I'm on this subject, you all should try Boiron Labs' Ocillicocinum (or something like that), which you get at Fred Meyer's on sale and take at the very first symptom of

flu or it doesn't work. But if you take it right away, it works wonders. I haven't had the flu in 18 months, and I used to get it all the time (or bronchitis). The other miracle worker is Coldcalm, also at Fred Myers, by Boiron. You take it at the first signs of a cold, and you suffer 30 minutes, instead of two weeks. Really. It's amazing. I had my doctor

check out both to make sure I wasn't killing myself, and he said he checked with his favorite pharmacist and said they have found no dangers, no side-effects, and many say it works wonders. The flu-symptom medicine theoretically has some dead bacteria in there that inoculates you and improves your defense system--it does not work for some people--only those

with the most sensitive systems. I gave some to Dad and he thought I was trying to kill him. 'Wouldn't touch it. But admit it. He looks better than he has in ages. He actually went back east and did not come back with

a deadly virus. I saw the Ocillico. I had given him, checked inside, and lo and behold, some of the medication had been used. He won't admit it, but it is this magic cure that has him going again. So y'all ought to keep some on hand. When it went on sale, I got a two-year supply for my food storage.

Anyway, getting back to oral defenses, I actually got a blessing from my bishop (since we both showed up for the baptism of one of our local sisters' husband, and it seemed convenient, after all (my visit teachers seemed to think it was very important that I do this--which seems crazy when Dan gives such beautiful blessings, but he was in on it). Anyway, in this blessing, spoken by the bishop at Dan's suggestion, he told me my mind

would be clear, and I would do fine. I have to confess my faith was not sufficient that I was not still scared to death, but the blessing turned out to be exactly on target. I was not stumped by one question by three profs in 2 1/2 hrs--truly a blessing. Of course I thought afterward of all the things I should have said or could have said better, but I was told I handled myself very well, and I felt absolutely euphoric when it was all

over. Tracy, it also helps to take a little food--it's amazing how much nicer profs are when their blood sugar is up. I brought a big basket of all kinds of the most exotic and strange fruit I could find, along with some cheese and crackers, and a non-sugar drink, along with the others, for

Dr. Cracroft (he's diabetic)--told them this was an example of the systemic approach to international relations--told all the crazy places the fruit came from, yet how it was all purchased right here in Orem. I think they had fun sampling all the weird fruits, while I told all the fascinating things I learned about them (and believe me, I found some weird ones--at

SuperTarget). By the way, all you smarties, which fruit is consumed by most of the world's populace? Bananas? Apples? Nope. Mangos. Now you have your trivia item for the day. I know all struggling students can't afford that kind of a display (I hardly could), so I anticipated that they would protest and say this was not fair to the other students, etc. In fact, just after I got it all laid out, Ray Hiram poked his head in and said, "What kind of bribery is this?" I said, "Well, I didn't want all of you to think I didn't do my homework. Everybody knows bribery is an important part of American life (my sub-specialty in International Area Studies was American Studies). That got a laugh, though he refused my offer to come and join us. I figure that little display shaved ten minutes off the interrogation (hey, every minute counts, folks). I just remembered I told them I wouldn't tell any other students I did that, so I didn't tell any of you. I talked with another graduate student at the Kennedy Center who just picked up some donuts and had some chocolate mints in a little dish. The profs kept dipping and the blood sugar stayed high. 'Just a thought to consider, Tracy, especially if your orals are at a time when blood sugar is apt to dip. Above all, you want them to feel VERY good, and by then you might need a little sugar fix, yourself. Also drink lots of water. It is supposed to help electric connection in the brain. So I'm a nut. I admit it. These things work for me. You'll do just great--'wish I could be a fly on the wall, listening in to what will be a smashing success.

Laura and Brandon called tonight and actually begged me to go to Las Vegas

with them tomorrow. Actually they are begging Dan, too, but he has a long list and does not enjoy spontaneous surprises like this. So I'm leaving him to his chores (but hoping he'll change his mind), and in the meantime, the three of us will have a ball. Maybe we'll take our new (old) car. We

started to have so many car problems, and so we started looking and praying. We lost a car by only bidding what we had (we did not want to get financing), but that turned out to be a blessing, because we found a much better car for which we could also pay cash. We found this ad for a Geo Prizm in the paper. It had been bought new in 1995 by an older man in California, who subsequently had a lot of health problems, so did not use it much. After he died, his children in Spanish Fork drove the car here from California and put an ad in the paper to sell it. It is a blue, 4-door, with only the basics, except it does have air conditioning, air bags, and automatic transmission (also extra speakers). What we do miss in it is cruise control and back window defogging. But heck, what do you want for an absolutely new looking car with hardly a scratch, only 7414 miles and that fits your bargain-basement budget? We bought it before even taking it to a mechanic, but on condition that the check would not be cashed until it passed. The mechanic said the insides looked brand new, and we were darn lucky. So we are counting our blessings. Since I don't use a car much anymore, Dan is driving it around, and we are now saving for a new car for me. We went to the wedding reception at the Empire room of the Joseph Smith Memorial room in SLC last night (of some Westchester Ward friends last night--it was nice, Mary, but I'd take a garden reception any day), so tested it for the first time on a longer drive, and it seemed to do very well, though Dan misses the cruise control. Our old Honda is sitting out on the street waiting for Daniel to come home and claim it, if the junkyard doesn't, first. Sarah will be glad we finally did it. Of course a teenager back-ended Dan last week and put some pretty deep scratches in the back, so we got to drive a new looking car for about one week. The first time I went to see Sarah's apartment, my car got stuck in the gutter outside her drive, and so she got a good look at it, while it was getting hauled out, so was qualified to say the next time I was going to take her to an eye exam, and I did not get there in time, because my car was stalled in the driveway and would not start. "Aunt Sherlene," she said, "I have some advice. You need a new car." We don't believe in new cars around here until the last spring brings out, but I think it finally

did. Anyway, Sarah, now that you aren't here anymore, we're ready to take you where you need to go. We expect you back anyhow, right? Those of you who did not see Sarah while she was here, missed out. What a beautiful and talented young woman. Apparently she did not go unappreciated by the male population here. 'Hope you have fun visiting with one of them in New York, Sarah, and the rest of your family has fun on their eastern tour. We have fond memories of some of those experiences and would have loved to join

you for a repeat. Maybe you'll bump into Robert while you're there. Robert is going to be kind of shocked at all the begging that goes on in New York. Daniel loved to go into the city, but it was impoverishing. He always came home with his pockets empty, because he couldn't stand not to give every last cent he had to those poor beggars.

I called Mom to tell her we were going to Vegas early tomorrow and coming back Sunday night, and she suggested we take a little fridge to my cousin Joan Hall Coon (Uncle Gene's daughter) that one of their children left at their place at one point (the Coons' live in Vegas). That reminded Mom to tell me that Aunt Joyce (Gene's wife) had a stroke. Did the rest of you know that? It happened about a month ago. She spent about two weeks in the hospital, with Gene there at her side much of the time, and she has been home since then. Nathan, who has lived in Vegas several years, has come up to help lift and move her around. At first she was totally paralyzed, but now one side of her body is improving, and she can make a few noises, but she still does not have her language ability back. Also, they have to move soon because they were told it could be a matter of life and death if they needed to get her to the hospital down all those stairs in a hurry. So they are finding a place that just has one step, but have all that moving on their hands--a difficult time. Gene says Nathan is really strong, though, and where Uncle Gene can hardly lift Joyce, Nathan takes it all in stride. Uncle Gene still had that sweet, patient, hopeful attitude he always has, but I'm sure this is all very difficult for both of them. I wish I had known sooner. Anyway, I told him I'd be putting her name on the temple roll, Saturday, too. Some of you who are able might want to go visit her--Uncle Gene said he thought she would enjoy that.

Uncle Gene gave me David and Joan Coon's number, so I called to see if we could meet for lunch or something and leave them the cooler, and it turns out they're having a big shindig at their place tomorrow night for Harry Reid, the only Democratic LDS Senator running. They've ordered all this catered food, said they are hoping for a big crowd--the more the merrier, so invited the four of us over to eat and hear Reid's one hr. presentation before he has to leave (we're supposed to bring lots of questions). Doesn't that sound fun? It will be good to get to know Joan and her family better and see what a Mormon looks like who is a Democrat. Ho. I haven't

seen Joan since she was a teen, I don't think. Also, you all need to know that Wendell's family is in town for a reunion. Uncle Wendell has been scanning lots of family photos on disks, and cousin Jeannie and her husband

Richard (Brooks) dropped by our home the other day to bring some copies of the disks that I begged and bartered for (Uncle Wendell is always so sweet). He also generously shared some slides he scanned, which are now at the photo shop. There are some darling shots of us as kids that the rest of you probably have never seen (also some not-so-darling ones of us pulling faces). My plan is to send my siblings some for their birthdays and Christmas and when I have had my fun with this discovery, then I'll share the whole disks with all of you. They are a treasure.

Sat. we're going to the Las Vegas Temple, we'll go to church there somewhere on Sunday, and in-between times Laura and Brandon say we're going to take in some (not too risqué) shows, see some fantastic sights (they have friends there, so have been there enough times to know what's worth seeing), and they are telling me in advance that they have two rules: I pay, and they make the decisions. Just joking. We're sharing everything. I laid down the law that there will be no gambling (you have to watch out for these Texans--Brandon has incredible luck winning--the last time they went, they decided they would only gamble a few dollars, consider it entertainment, and absolutely stop at \$10. Before the \$10 was up, he had won enough to pay for their entire trip--so they thought they might as well do that again this time. No way, hosea. I laid my foot down on that. So now they're telling me I can't see any nude big hunk shows. They have no sense of humor. In addition, they

say that we are NOT going to visit any cemeteries or stop at any Martin Harris Farm type things beyond going to the temple and to church. It was easy to agree, since to my knowledge I don't have any genealogy there anyhow. Although I can't imagine a vacation being real without tromping through at least one cemetery. Sigh. It's awful when your kids are big enough to order you around. But we are going to have a ball. I can hardly wait and hope Dan changes his mind.

Well, bye for now. We're looking forward to Mary's wedding. Be sure you get lots of photos. I just finished mounting Laura's archivally ('hope

they don't fade like mine did), and those photos brought back joy and memories like nothing else could, I think (unless the rest of you are more visual in terms of memory than I). Besides, these bridal couples in our family are particularly gorgeous, if I might say so.

'Bye for now. 'Hope you all have fun on the Fourth. I'll tell you how much I rake in when the kids aren't looking.

Love, Sherlene

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