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June 5, 1980

Dear Family,

These past several weeks have been a whirlwind of plans and activities. We are going to have the kitchen done (finally). Or maybe I should say, we are going to do our kitchen over. We'll rip out everything, paint, wallpaper, put in a new floor, and then have the cabinets and dishwasher and sink installed by someone else. Oh, we're first going to rewire the house with the help of several of our friends in the ward. We're going to put three new outlets in the kitchen and at least one in the bathroom, which will be great. We've discovered (oh joy, oh rapture) termites in the wood pile and near the garage (but not as of yet, in the house) so we have to get the place debugged. Last night I went downstairs at 3 a.m. to get some Novahistine decongestant for Nathan who couldn't sleep because he was coughing so hard. I didn't have my glasses on and saw this dark streak run across the floor. I thought it was a little mouse, due to the fact that we have seen evidence of mice in the basement. I ran upstairs and got my glasses (wish I hadn't) and discovered that these little streaks were none other than nice fat 2" long cockroaches. Not these nice little ones we once had at 1711, but the great big southern variety. I've only seen one, but that's enough for me! When we've had the garage sprayed, we'll move everything out of the basement into the garage. Then we'll have the basement and kitchen sprayed for spiders, termites, and of course, cockroaches. Then, while the basement's empty, we'll do the rewiring, seal the cinderblock to keep out the dampness, paint it a nice light color, and BUY A DEHUMIDIFIER so everything doesn't mold and mildew away. We want to get some shelving for food storage and make a play area in the basement for the children. That will free the porch area solely for my sewing which is currently over-run with toys. This we all hope to accomplish in six weeks time which will bring us up to vacation time. We've been delaying this for a few months, as we thought I was pregnant and threatening to miscarry. After six weeks, two pregnancy tests and much frustration, it has finally been concluded that I am not pregnant, I do not have cysts or tumors causing problems, but merely a mixed-up cycle, which I blame on my weaning Warren but which my O.B. pooh-poohs.

Maybe we should just scrap all these renovation plans and buy a new and bigger house. Our former Bishop is a big-wig on the Joint Economic Staff^{spoke} to our graduating Laurels. He talked for some time about the economic pressures they would face in the future and urged them all to have a marketable skill to provide them with some security for their future. He predicted gas at \$2.50 a gallon within two years. He also said that while the average price of a home in the U.S. is in the \$60,000 range that with a few years it would be well into the \$160,000 range. Some friends of ours are leaping with joy at finding a 2 and ½ bedroom home 40 minutes from the District for \$89,000. Our \$55,000, 10 minutes from the District home is looking mighty good these days! Unfortunately by the time we have two more children, we'll have outgrown it.

Nathan is having another round of pneumonia or bronchitis or allergies or something. He was in a lot of pain last Saturday, had a fever and chills, and was coughing. As he was saying his back hurt, I was worried that he had kidney problems or something. I called our pediatrician, who said that if I was worried enough to take him to the emergency room at Georgetown Hospital. Barry gave him a blessing and he finally went to sleep. By morning, he was much better and though still coughing didn't moan every time he breathed and wasn't at all bothered by his lower back. But as Dr. Stroud had said to bring him in on Sunday morning to the office, I complied. He said my description of his symptoms sounded like pneumonia, but he couldn't hear anything in his lungs. To be on the safe side (and as he had an earlier bout of pneumonia several months ago) he sent me to Sibley Hospital for a chest x-ray. The radiologist told me he had "minimal" pneumonia. My pediatrician however, said the x-rays

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Went already reached the deductible with Warren this year and by the time we get hospital X-ray charges Nathan will have reached the two-hundred dollar limit!

were negative and that he probably had an asmatic attack. I'm a little more inclined to believe the radiologist. Barry thinks it's just a reoccurrence of his former pneumonia. I think he's got bronchitis. Whatever it is, he's no longer awakened by night-time coughing, so I guess he's improving. I wish I could find a pediatrician I really like. I feel like Dr. Stroud is only good for check-ups and referrals. If there's any kind of emergency (like stiches, or in-grown toenails or any thing else) we're referred to some other doctor. What happened to the good old family doctor type who did more than look in a kids ears and prescribe antibiotics? I think I'll go to med school. We'd sure save a bundle. Our insurance is \$200 deductible per person up to three deductibles. So every year we shell out \$600 in medical expenses before our insurance touches a thing. Last year (1979) Warren's medical expenses were \$197.50. GRIEF! The \$600 doesn't include the payment of monthly premiums, of course. Still, it's nice to have in an emergency and a pregnancy. With what it costs to have a baby here, I could fly to Scotland, have my baby, and come out smelling like a rose.

Speaking of Scotland, I had a real treat last month. I picked up the phone one afternoon at 2p.m. and this thick brogue came over the line. I thought the Birnies were in New York or something. As it turned out, they were feeling so guilty about not answering the last four letters I'd sent, that they surprised me with a call all the way from Scotland. What a treat. He's in the District Presidency, teaches Seminary, teaches the Adult Sunday School class, and is a Home Teacher. Dorothy teaches the Mother Education Class and was just released from her additional job as Primary President. (She just had her seventh child, a boy.) When I knocked on their door six years ago they had two children and were athiests and socialists. (They lost their first child, a girl several hours after birth.) They did not believe people should have more than two children (which is highly encouraged in Great Britain.) A belief in God and membership in the Church has really changed their ideas and life. They are looking forward to becoming a Stake sometime in June or July. It was such a kick to hear from them. I've been living off that "high" for a month now. It's such a blessing to be able to still see the rewards of my missionary efforts.

My dishwasher just arrived. We really liked the features on the Kitchen Aid, but they cost so much! So we finally settled on a GE Potscrubber III. If I had to live with it for 20 years, I'd get what I wanted, but we really don't anticipate living in this home for too many more years. Actually, anything is better than washing dishes in a plastic bowl in a one-sink set-up. The young man who sold us the GE dishwasher said that in the five years they've been selling the GE models they hadn't had one service call to make on them. He was quite up-front with us, so I don't think he was feeding us a line. We'll find out, I guess.

Last Saturday we went to a garage sale and bought a piano for \$75.00. It's 75 years old (a Hamilton) and appears to be oak. It's missing one hammer and is generally in tune. It also needs refinishing. I've never seen a piano for \$75 advertised in the paper, so I feel like we got a good deal. And like the one-sink set-up, anything is better than no piano at all. Barry directs the ward choir and I do the Primary music, so we really can use a piano!

We unfortunately still need to move it! Any volunteers?

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I'm getting so itchy for vacation time. We've been delaying getting our tickets and in a month's time they've gone up three times. New reports say they're going up again at the end of the week, so it's now or never. We'll go to Richland to stay with Mom Wood around the 16th or 17th of July and fly down to Provo on the 1 or 2nd of August. We'll probably fly out on the 11th or 12th. Barry's supposed to get down to a travel agent today and get our tickets, so we'll have some firm dates in the near future. I'm even dreaming about our vacation. We were there less than a year ago, but it seems like years and years.

While we're in Richland, Barry will baptize his mother into the Church. We're very excited about that. They have a very active home evening group in her stake for widowed and older couples. She's been very actively fellow-shipped and has had all the missionary discussions. She's come a long way from forbidding Barry to attend "that" church and insisting that he visit and investigate every other Church in Richland before joining the Mormon Church. Barry had an older brother (Warren) who was killed in an automobile wreck while he was investigating the church. Barry has since done his work and feels that Warren has accepted membership in the Church. We hope Warren's been working hard on Dad Wood, so Mom can go to the temple in a year's time and be sealed to him. That just leaves Barry's sister Nita, which may prove to be a lifetime's challenge. When Barry and I were married, Brother Lesheminot (wrong spelling, I'm sure) came down to the waiting area to meet Barry's folks and talk with them. He was so forthright with them as to be embarrassing; told Dad Wood to listen to his son, and said he was sure that not too many years would pass before they'd join the Church. I guess I should write him a letter.

Warren continues to be a delightful child. He is, however, beginning to resist Nathan's toy-snatching. He has such a clutch and it makes Nathan so mad. They had a knock-down drag-out punching match in the bath tub last week over a plastic jar. Nathan would punch Warren on the chest and Warren would slap Nathan's head. They traded punches for about six blows until Mom interceded by putting another plastic jar in the bath tub. Warren is a real charmer. He's irresistible. I just hope his sweetness lasts till family camp. He insists on feeding himself. I have moped up so many spilled glasses of milk this last week. It makes me so mad. I think Warren likes to see me mop things up. He has taken to cleaning the floor himself when he can get his hands on a rag and likes to pretend he is washing the walls. It would be such a switch to have a "clean" type in our family. Unfortunately, he's still at the stage where I clean up a whole lot more than he can keep clean. (Did that make any sense?)

Nathan has been a hoot this last week or two. He has a little teddy bear that has become his baby. I weaned Warren about five weeks ago. It therefore seems funny to me that Nathan would pull up his shirt and put his bear to his chest to "feed" him, as it's been weeks since he's seen me feed Warren. He also steals tissue and wraps it around his bear as a diaper. I wouldn't mind if his bear didn't need changing so much. There's tissue all over this house. He keeps checking his bear for "stinks" and spansks him soundly saying "bad, bad, bad bear". (Do I really sound like that?) He tucks his bear under a tissue blanket, kisses him and tells him to go to sleep. I wonder if people who choose not to have children know what they're missing. All the struggle and effort of childraising is worth these quiet, precious moments of growing.

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Well, I could go on and on and on (I know it seems like I have already.)
However, we have one of the nicest days of the year going on outside my
window and I can hardly stand it another minute. A day like today can almost
erase the memory of hot, horrible, sultry days last week.

We look forward to seeing you all in August and hope that this letter
finds you all healthy, wealthy and wise!

Love,

Virginia, Barry
&
Kids

P.S. Liz and Marty, your birth announcements
were so clever! Welcome John Patrick!
You've come to a great clan!