

Dear Family,

Well, today makes our allotted week, so we'll get it in the mail today. I find it's really easier to sit down and write my letter the same day I receive the Hallmanack, or I just don't get around to it.

Except for missing letters from Charlotte and Brian and Doug and Nancy, this round of letters was extra nice! I especially enjoyed Mom's letter. Liz, if you're able to get Charlotte's Springville address, why don't you send it there. Then she can send it to Mom and Mom can pass it on to David and Nancy. Nancy, please try not to sit on the Hallmanack for six weeks on this round. If you find you just don't have time to write in it, get it back to Mom so she can send it on to us.

It won't be long before Nathan's six months old (February 10). He's currently 26½" long and 18 lbs 3 oz. So he's still in the top 10 percent for both height and weight. He's trying very hard to crawl, but I have my doubts that he'll ever do it properly. He pulls himself along the ground with his elbows and is able to reach whatever he wants to in no time at all. Actually, I think he's just too fat to get his belly off the floor. No, really, he's slimming down quite a bit as he gets more and more active. Nathan is my pediatrician's first test case in a study he's doing on breast feeding. He (Dr. Stroud) just returned from a conference on breastfeeding and says there is growing evidence that babies really have no need for solids for a much longer period of time than previously thought. In the past he has encouraged starting solids at six months, but Nathan will not start on solids until he either demands them, or blood tests indicate that he's not getting the iron and other minerals and vitamins that he needs.

We had a very nice Christmas here in Arlington. We sure missed being with family, but had a lot of fun with our own family this Christmas. Nathan didn't care very much what was in the boxes for him, but he sure had a lot of fun with the wrapping paper. Barry got Nathan one of these little bath toys that winds up and swims around. Without a doubt, that's Nathan's favorite toy.

Barry writing now:

Virginia has Book Club tomorrow, so she has been cleaning house, baking 3 carrot cakes and 2 gallons of chili (with our food storage pinto beans), and otherwise getting a lot accomplished. Fortunately another woman (Evaun Stephenson) will do the book review, so at least she doesn't have to worry about that.

Virginia had an unusual birthday this year. Monday was the March for Life which the anti-abortion people put on each year on the anniversary of the regrettable Supreme Court decision in that regard. Sherlene had a place on a bus chartered for the purpose, and we had worked out all the details, but over the weekend Laura came down with the chicken pox, so that ended Sherlene's participation. We proceeded as planned, however, and Virginia came into town on the subway to the Farragut West station, where we were to walk to the White House. (The march route was down Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House to the Capitol.) Virginia was delayed when Vicki MacDonald was late picking up her baby Leslie whom Virginia was tending, though, and so we just got back on the subway and went to the Federal Triangle stop where we joined the march. We might as well have just walked to the White House, however; it took hours for them all to leave the White House. Estimates of the crowd size were from 26,000 to 70,000. The majority were from out of town--N.Y., Pa., Michigan, etc. We had nice weather (40° and sunny) despite the 6" of snow still on the ground from the storm a week ago; the roads were clear. There were a lot of Catholics in

the crowd, as might be expected--not a few priests and nuns. Nathan, all bundled up in his blue snow suit and riding on my back, was a big hit, and he seemed to enjoy it thoroughly--lots of smiles and never a cry.

After the march we skipped out of the program early because I had already taken too much time off work, and went back to my office. Nathan obligingly went to sleep, so Virginia went out shopping while I finished the afternoon. At quitting time we were walking to the subway, crossing M Street, when Virginia slipped on a patch of ice in the street and hit the ground. She wasn't able to break her fall properly since she was carrying Nathan, but she did a good job of protecting him. He started to cry just from the shock, anyway. She could hardly walk, but I pulled her out of the street and tried to think how we would ever get home or to a hospital. Traffic was so tied up that we couldn't have gotten a cab very soon. Providence was looking out for us, though, because just then along came Felix Torres, a fellow FCC attorney (from Berkeley). Although he usually rides a bus from Reston, that day he had had some errands to run in the morning, so had driven his van, which was parked just half a block away. He gave us a ride to our door, and we then tried to decide whether or not to go to the hospital. It didn't feel especially like anything was broken, but the pain didn't subside quickly, and her shin continued to swell. Finally we decided to go to the hospital just to put our minds at rest, so we set out for the GWU emergency entrance. It seemed reminiscent of when Nathan was born (we had left him at Margot Van Orman's, who got mad at me for trying to help Eric Blaylock (their neighbor) get out of where he was stuck on the ice). As it turned out, Virginia had sprained the inside bone on her lower right leg--apparently twisting it as she fell. She is getting around just fine now, however.

Speaking of Margot, she was recently released as Relief Society President, so Virginia got the idea of making her a friendship quilt. She has distributed 36 squares of fabric, and people are supposed to embroider or applique something and sign each square. The ones who lack time or talent are contributing \$1 to the batting etc. She has gotten about 25 squares back, and some of them are extremely clever. In a week or two she'll plan a party for Margot where they'll do the actual quilting. Some people are doing patchwork squares, so there may be enough to do pillows for the other members of the presidency. Right now Virginia has a baby quilt set up in our dining room for Betsy Ricks, who had a little girl named Celeste (6 lb. 10 oz.) last Tuesday. The Drs. want to fix a hernia that Betsy has had while she's in the hospital, but their insurance won't pay for the baby's continued stay, so the Baby and father (Tim Ricks, from Provo, in his last year of law school) are going to come here for a few days so Virginia can feed the baby while Betsy recovers from that operation.

I wanted to get an issue of the Quasar out this week, but have had a sore throat and have concentrated on eliminating that first. I feel better tonight and plan to go back to work tomorrow.

Every time this Hallmanack gets here I have a new church job. This time it is Elder's Quorum Secretary, which includes being a Home Teaching Supervisor as well as a home teacher. I don't really enjoy having to keep track of everyone's attendance, but at least it makes me more conscious of who the new people are. They wanted me to continue with the Quasar, but Glenn Dickey has picked up the rest of my publicity job.

We also have some sad news since the last letter. Our little white cat, Blanche Neige, was run over a couple of weeks before Christmas. This was too bad since she was a pretty obedient little thing, a good mouser (killed all the ones in the house), and solicitous of Nathan's welfare. Whenever he cried she would come over to see what was the matter. She followed us wherever we went, but had one fault--she like to lie in the road.

We hope you are all well and making progress towards your eternal goals.

Love, Barry + Virginia