

80 Greenridge, White Plains, Oct 25, 1977

Dearest All of You,

(Sincerely)

I just finished reading the Hallmanack and I feel so filled with love and gratitude for each of you. We are so wealthy to belong to such a family--let's hold our relationships close. This is such an impersonal world, sometimes. We need you and it means so much that you belong to us and we belong to you. Thanks for your thoughts, pictures, and examples.

I just tried to clean the ball on this Company IBM Selectric (an interim machine until the one we ordered gets here), but it didn't work. Playdough seemed like a pretty bright idea...but it seems to think it was put on this earth to give me bending exercise scraping it off floors, and not to clean typewriter balls.

Thanks for putting up with all that Albany IWY material I sent. At the time I felt so overwhelmed by it all and so anxious. I still am, but have had a month to notice that there are about 100 other national issues equally in need of attention. We have had another extremely busy month. We put together at least a two-inch thick report of our Public Communications activities in our Stake (included news-clippings taped on pages). It has been vital, fun, and informative. But right now I am in the mood to let the Priesthood save the nation. My little children are growing up. I know that their seeing us anxious and involved and concerned has helped give them a testimony and love for freedom and a sense of community involvement, too. It is good for children to see this type of thing, and we have seen it reflected in their prayers "Help President Carter to make good plans"-Daniel). But I am anxious to settle down to a calmer, more serene kind of living. It just seems that each year Daniel and Laura come more and more under the influence of teachers and peers, and I am getting very jealous of the few hours of full-time mothering left me. You who have little babies, just enjoy them and full-mother them, and don't think I'm urging you to get this involved. Those years will whizz by so quickly, and now's the time to influence those young lives. I'm getting very jealous of the few hours of full-time mothering left me.

We had such a great time with Barry and Ginger over the weekend of September 24-26. They have created such a fun, happy home atmosphere. That little Nathan Spencer is going to be a great one, I can tell. A real contented, happy, "pleased to be here" kind of a baby. He CAN express his STRONG, URGENT, IMMEDIATE desires. But only on occasion. Most of the time he's simply glorying in the joys of babyhood. I had as much fun watching Barry and Ginger react to him as I did getting to know him. I feel so sorry for people who don't believe in babies. What a refreshing, soul-cleansing, purifying influence comes into a home when that baby arrives. A white light just plops itself into your heart.

Speaking of babies, after all this time, a Swiss doctor, come to America who is at the HMO-type Community Health Plan we've joined, thinks he's found out why we haven't had any more babies. It seems, I've built up an immunity to pregnancy. At least that's his current theory. He says it's not in the mind or body--it's a matter of immunology. He says people who are allergic to a certain pollen can move away for two years, then return and no longer have an allergy problem. He says my body is fortified against Dan's "germs" and if I would just go away for two years, I would upon return not be so immune to him. He described an alternative solution while remaining under the same roof which did not leave much joy in Dan's eyes. We shall soon learn how much he wants more children. I for one have achieved an acceptance of the situation which I feel is a direct gift from the heavens. It was such a joy to have all that anguish and anxiety worked from me--and I learned much from it--it was good that the Lord let me have that experience. But I'll keep trying if Dan wants to. Dan was upset that that doctor came to that conclusion after one simple test, after other doctors put me through that operation and other rigamarole.

I got the biggest kick out of Zina's "DANCINE FOR 10¢" sign. Shades of Nancy all over again. There must have been some ancestor in the Hall genes with a real business gene. Daniel got it. His big thing, now, is selling rocks. He dotes on the shiny, crystalline types most kids get excited about from time to time, but he also sees great glory in plain old round, ordinary boulders (especially if they are well-caked with mud). One day we had quite a tearful scene at home when Mom decided to put her foot down--I was getting tired of tripping over boulders every time I entered a room. I told Daniel, no boulders in the house.

(Shirley)

I wasn't prepared for his tears. I had had no idea he was that sentimental about them: "They might get lost if they're left outside--besides they would get wet!" So we finally compromised that they could go on his shelves in his room--but if I found them on the floor, I got to take them outside.

The next week our new neighbor Janet Duggan told me Daniel offered to sell her his biggest boulder for 50¢ (she didn't bite). He had a sign out by the front walk for all the orthodox Jews to read as they walked by to their Friday afternoon meeting: "Rocks for sale. Only 50¢." When an hour went by with no sale, he reduced it to 25¢. They didn't even go at 10¢. He finally brought his rocks back inside with the comment that he didn't really want to sell them anyway. I don't know what's wrong with the older generation. If I were an old lady, I'd buy the rock just for a kick. If I'd really been a good sport, I would have bought one--but I kept hoping they would all sell--outside our property. We also provide a home for worm collections (the funnest part is lining them up on the kitchen counter to see which is the longest), baseball card collections, bugs, ants, beetles and spiders, and long sticks ("for when we go hiking or when I need to hit a robber on the head.")

Betsy, I would like a copy of your revised story and all your other creations. I did not end up with the original of that pedigree sheet. It sure was a screech. If I were you, I would want to keep the original, too. Yes, I believe the IWY Conference in California already happened. That's the amazing thing. \$5 million in our tax dollars was appropriated by Congress to fund IWY Conventions in EVERY state so that a democratic cross-section of ALL American womanhood could be represented and a consensus could be reached as to what the majority of American women really desire in terms of a) delegates to the national convention to be held in Houston, this November, and in terms of resolutions to be passed at that conference and then passed on TO CONGRESS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION. Interestingly enough, most women in most states don't even know they happened. Publicity was kept very low-key and certain pro-abortion, pro-ERA and pro-gay rights groups were given vital information (delegate forms) before-hand, so they could be there and get themselves elected. It's a national disgrace--and it all happened with our tax money. I wrote a letter to President Carter and received a sweetly smug reply from Midge Costanza telling me wasn't I lucky that Pres. Carter had such an open administration and that she, his assistant, could respond to it and she was therefore sending it on to the IWY Commission. Oh, sure. That Commission of 24 appointed pro-ERA persons with only one from the other side (who was never advised of their activities and meetings) is going to pay a lot of attention to my letter.

The pictures of Richard Alexander are so expressive. What a beautiful boy. I hope all these cousins will come to know each other as they grow up--what a blessed day when the Saviour comes and there is peace and perhaps we can be more of a family community, (if I repent on time). Karen, I would love to have heard your "biased" account of what's been going on with that business business. Sounds hairy. I'm glad David isn't the type to get ulcers over it (at least it sounds that way from your letter). We are very concerned about the tax situation and are praying the Lord will bless Mom and Dad with the fruits they deserve for all their labors these past years. It's good I'm all the way here in New York. I really get upset when I hear what little real material benefit Dad is receiving for all he has provided financially and intellectually (and physically) to that enterprise. But we know he has always paid his tithing and lived the commandments, and I have faith that he will be blessed for it--even in financial ways. But I hope all of you are praying with us that the situation will right itself before Mom and Dad get taxed out of all their savings and life's efforts. It has been a comfort to me to know David was in their kicking and standing up for what is right in that company--sorry to hear there has been a change. What happened anyway?

Karen, I really enjoyed hearing about your activities and Stephen, Mark, and Michael. I miss seeing those cute little tow-heads. They reminded me so much of David when he was a little boy--it made me feel like a child again to be around them.

(Sherlana)

Liz, we are praying all will go right with your new baby. I vote for Scotland, too! I would jump at the chance--but then I'm part gypsy. Actually, it's probably very gray, dingy, wet, damp and cold there. I would still go. It's an adventure. Something new. Your children would speak English instead of American. The Church needs you there. And last, but not least, we could come and visit you. What did you decide?

Nancy, if I were a mother, I would have answered that ad, too. That showed some pizzazz! You seem to be a natural with children--that must be the greatest talent of them all. 'Hope Dough enjoys his new job.

Mom, hurry up and send me those tapes (While Mom and Dad were here I gave them all the questions--over 100 each--and got their whole history--the works--on tape. What a goldmine. It was hard getting them to sit down and really do it--but once they got started, I think they even enjoyed it. There are some real nuggets on there. But I sent them with Charlotte who has that library equipment to copy off five tapes at once--so there would be another copy in the family in case something happened. Now I just get to type off 16 tapes or so--how many were there, anyway? I am so proud of myself for getting that accomplished, if I might say so (and I do believe they're glad they did it now that it's all over).

I gave the literature part of the Relief Society lesson (Chilean) today in Relief Society and it was my first dig into literature for nearly eight years. I spent a whole afternoon in the library while Laura was in her afternoon kindergarten. I had forgotten what a rich joy it is to sit and drink in poetry for over two hours without being interrupted once. I was so moved at the end of the two hours I could hardly get up and go home. It was on two Latin American poets (Nobel Prize) who I had previously never even heard of. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to fill the entire ten minutes, and when I got up there, I could have talked all hour. I am not sure I really want to teach high school English. I want to teach literature, literature, literature--not themes and grammar. I just may go back to graduate school and get some degrees. The trouble is, right now we need money, not degrees. It would be fun to take singing lessons and some classes in creative writing and spend a few years just selfishly pursuing some development in some cultural directions. I could be very happy doing full-time genealogy next year, too. Right now I am at quite a crossroads--not quite sure which course I should take.

I promised myself I wouldn't go overboard telling you about our political activities again, but I want to at least mention some of the things we included in our report. Dan has really been a live-wire this month. We told you, I think, that he drafted a Pioneer Proclamation which was signed by Governor Carey, and another County one was signed by DelVecchio for Westchester County. Dan also wrote a letter-to-the-editor on capital punishment which was printed in the Gannett chain and from which Dan has received very positive feedback. He also has instigated a White Plains community campaign to clean up salacious displays on open magazine racks in the city. Working with Morality in media, he got a copy of a public display statute which gets around the loopholes in pornography laws, as it is only a display ordinance. He wrote a cover letter attached copies of the ordinance, and presented it (usually hand-delivered) to the mayor, six common council members, prospective political candidates, area religious leaders, newspapers, the P.T.A., League of Women's Voters, and our neighbors. He was given time at our community Highlands Association Meeting to tell about it, and he has generally had positive feedback. The rabbi at the synagogue down the street wrote Dan to say censorship was the greater evil, so he wouldn't back him--but that's the only negative response we've had--and Dan thinks he has a good answer for him. It's not really censorship. The magazines will still be available--but they'll be out of sight and away from children. Dan also wrote some other letters to the editor which were not published, but I was proud of him for writing them--he also wrote a raft of letters to government leaders trying to influence them on this and that.

(Sherlene)

One day while Dan was painting, he heard a pro ERA editorial on the radio which inspired him to climb down and draft a reply. Three drafts and a trip into the city later to tape it at the studio (I spoke it at Dan's request--since it was a woman's issue, theoretically), it was aired 7 times on Labor Day over WINS-News, New York City. We also took the station some Homefront spots, and the editorial director told Dan later in a phone conversation that when his wife heard it, she told him I had a rich future in radio broadcasting. To tell you the truth, in spite of that comment, when I heard myself it was a bit of a shock. I really do have Iowa O's.

Last, but not least, I was invited by Lucille Bachman, president of New York State Operation Wake-Up to attend a White House Meeting with Midge Costanza, assistant to President Carter, and present a statement on the rights of the full-time wife, mother, and homemaker. I did go up with a delegation of thirteen other women from New York (including one other Mormon, Helen Hicken, from Albany--Tom Hicken's wife) and it was quite an experience. When we got there, the meeting was changed from the Roosevelt Room of the White House to the ^{Executive} Administrative Office Building next door (which didn't seem nearly as exciting or important), and I don't think we did anything to change Midge Costanza's point of view. But she did promise to pass everything we said and our printed statements on to the President. Barry stayed up late one night and helped me re-work my statement, (one night I stayed up 'til 5:00 a.m. until Dan dragged me to bed. I had the hardest time putting that together). I have also had some interesting experiences with editors and written a letter-to-the-editor myself, and Dan and I held a seminar last week for all our Public Communications Directors--so we have had a busy, but fun time. I am anxious to share copies of our efforts with you and also I have some articles on the ERA and other issues that are very informative and that I would like to have you see. It's another book of stuff, but I don't want to add it to the round-robin postage, nor can I afford to copy it all off for each of you. So, if any of you wants it, let me know and I'll mail you another Bartholomew Book and you can read and send it back or make copies as you desire.

While in D.C., we visited the Temple with Barry and Ginger and also saw Dan's sister Joan and her husband Roy and their four cute children. It was a real thrill to be there for the blessing of Nathan Spencer. Barry gave a beautiful blessing. Then Dan took a day off work and we stayed over Monday, the 26th, when I had that meeting with Midge Costanza. I've made a complete report of that experience which Sister Barbara Smith asked me to make up. She was here to speak in Manhattan last Saturday--it was exciting to meet her and inspiring to hear her speak. Lillian Kogler, our Catholic activist, came to hear her and was very impressed. We've had a number of exciting missionary experiences recently, too, which are included in that other report (come on, beg for it!) We've also formed a political workshop group and had 20 women at our first meeting--what a group of fireballs. I was thrilled. We're having our 2nd meeting this Thursday in which we're discussing the pro's and cons of the ERA. We have Lillian Kogler coming to play the Devil's Advocate and acquaint us with the thinking of those women who are for the ERA. So it's been wild again around here--but certainly not dull.

We've been getting estimates for what seems like ages, but finally we've narrowed our choices down and everything is signed and sent in. We're adding a new roof to our house, blown-in wall insulation (urea formaldehyde, I think), a storm door and storm windows for all our big windows. We're also purchasing a wood-warmth unit for our big fireplace (a glass-door, self-contained unit that burns wood and is supposed to heat up your room instead of let all the warm air up the chimney). Dan finally got an upright Baldwin piano (2 yrs. old, but nice) which has now been tuned and we are enjoying, and we've ordered a Selectric II correct-type typewriter in earth tones. Our only problem is that after all that fun, we really need a new car. Our through-rusted Pinto is starting to ail but better survive a bit longer. The house still didn't get painted this year. Dan worked on the side, but our political and community activities took their toll, along with our very time-consuming but well-loved public communications activities. Some day it is going to happen. In the ~~meantime~~ meantime, we are learning about enduring. We

love you all. Did you notice? Only FOUR pages!!

Love, Sherlene