

80 Greenridge Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
March 5, 1979

Dear Family,

Now, Mom, how do you expect me to write a letter on March 1 when I don't even get the request until two days later? I THINK THE IDEA IS MARVELOUS--the Bartholomews are doing it, too.

Our news is nothing monumental. But I have ordered my priorities with less community and more family emphasis--we've both been making a deliberate effort at making quality time for the children and it has paid great dividends. Dan and I are making more time for each other, too--we have been even caught sneaking out at noon to meet each other at various restaurants and enjoy gourmet meals at 1/3 the price without losing an evening and having to worry about babysitters. I have accomplished such unheard-of feats as cleaning in the basement, wallpapering the hall, and (HEAR THIS!!) keeping up with laundry, ironing, and mending. The house has almost been clean. We have been much more cheerful. Doesn't that sound boring?

Daniel and Laura are doing well. Laura has been plagued with ear-infections since January and fluid build-up behind her drums has affected her hearing (we hope not permanently). It has had a big effect on her schoolwork, reading, and even speech, and we have been giving her extra time with reading, speech-practice, etc. to try and compensate. She has been her usual patient, sweet self through it all--though she talks about three volumes higher than she needs to--I guess she figures if she can't hear, no-one else can, either! I've had a very dignified health problem, myself. Wax in my ears. I can't get it out with any of the prescribed warm-water, oil, and peroxide treatments. Any of you have a magic cure? It is weird. For a month now I've been walking around with this sensation that I am under water.

We've been trying hard to lengthen our stride in a number of areas, but sometimes get that feeling that we're striding backwards. I think we're on the verge of conquering this house. One more year and we'll be done. Then it's going to look kind of silly without any furniture in it. It doesn't look so empty with all the paintbuckets and supplies all over. We may end up selling it and moving down where we can live a little more comfortably. Dan's boss seemed to think Dan would be really happy with his 9% raise (since the government has committed AT&T to a ceiling of 5%), but unfortunately costs in New York rise faster than raises (even as we learn more and more ways to save.) I have been really behaving myself in terms of spending, and we are proud that we've paid off and quit using all our credit cards and just paid Mom and Dad back the \$1,000 we borrowed last June to go to Utah. So we're headed out of the abyss. If our (cough, cough) rusty old Pinto will hold together just a few more months, we might even get a new used car. Then, again, with the world oil situation, we may get a horse. Dan is talking seriously about going back for a higher degree--and this time I think he means business with the way he is tackling the house. The way homes have inflated in value, we should do well come sale-time.

(Thanks, Mom, for giving us a page 2)

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Church-wise, we've been busy but not overwhelmed, as in the past. I finished up my 12-lesson Teacher-Development series and presented them with graduation certificates of my own creation (even burned around the edges). The bishopric has approached me for teaching the adult gospel-doctrine class, but Bob Jordan, our S.S. Supt. was upset when he came back from a trip and heard about it because he wanted me to do another round of teacher development. I hope the gospel-doctrine wins out, as I'm still not converted to the concept that you can teach someone to teach. I think most teachers are born. Besides, it was miserable trying to be an example of all the principles I was supposed to be teaching. Talk about being on the hot spot!

Daniel just joined Cub-Scouts, and I'm learning that it is a lot of work for Mom and Dad. Noone ever told me I'd have to teach my son how to carve a sports car for a derby. He also just joined the More-Able-Student Program in his school which selected ten students from the three second-grade classes. He is so excited about that program, he can hardly stand it. I can hardly stand it, either--though it was a happy moment when we learned he had been selected. They excite him about all these creative, research-doing projects--and guess who gets to do all the follow-through at home? You should see him in his Cub Scout uniform, though. That kid is growing up.

It was so exciting to see him baptized. Really a satisfying experience. Bishop Stone gave a talk so well done with an electric bulb and lamp analogy--I don't think any of us will ever forget it. Daniel was very proud and made sure the Bishop was lined up for his baptismal interview a month in advance. He was so anxious. Since then, he thinks he's at least a foot taller and keeps saying things like "Of course I know that, Mom,--I've been baptized now, you know." We have observed the Holy Ghost at work. He does learn faster and seems to be more spiritually perceptive. It's a grand old Church. His piano is picking up, too. (It had better be--guess who doesn't practice unless Mom is sitting there beside the whole time?)

Since November, I've participated in a few community/political activities. I told you I got to spend a whole day with Phyllis Schlafly, picking her up at the airport and taking her to Poughkeepsie and back. I also attended a two-day convention in Albany with Phyllis Kimball, our Stk. R.S. Pres. on ERA and right-to-life. I gave a talk in Poughkeepsie at a Stk. Fireside on ERA, am giving an ERA workshop at our regional R.S. affair April 7, attended an all-day Conference in Manhattan as part of the "executive council" to organize CINCH (Council to Insure National Character and Honor) under former Gov. Meldrim Thomson of N.H. (a great man) last week, and am helping this next Tues. with a group of church members in Conn. who want to organize politically (I'm helping by telling them all the mistakes we made trying to do the same). This Wed., Bishop Stone asked if I would play "assistant pastor" and represent him at a day-time conference of Westchester clergy on the abortion issue--so I'm still keeping a toe in the waters.

We went to see the KING TUT exhibit last week. Really an adventure--the kids loved it, too. And I'm all out of space--aren't you lucky. We love each of you and look forward to the letters. D,S, D&L