

Tracy Jr. and Betsy

Sun. June 3, 1979

Dear family:

Tonight at the dinner table Robert peeled the label off the gallon milk carton, pasted it onto my hand, brought up a paper cup, and said "there, now you're a cow and these are the milk things", proceeding to "milk" my fingers into the cup. Then, at bedtime, after I fixed Richard Alexander's bottle and handed it to him, he proceeded to try and eat it like corn on the cob, with a big mischievous grin. Moments of humour sometimes make the mad race almost tolerable.

Spring has really been nice here. We've had quite a few pleasant, breezy days, but Betsy, Zina, and Robert have been suffering terribly from hayfever. Robert, who tends to be irritable anyway, just can't stand it--his eyes get so swollen, and he just becomes an ogre. Antihistamines help somewhat, but I sure hate to see our kids drugged up like that. Anybody got a folk cure they want to pass on to us?

I was released from my Sunday School (young adult) teaching assignment and am now just teaching the elders quorum. It's sort of my ideal church job--hope it can last. Our ward, which is only 2x3 blocks, still is about half undeveloped, and we have about two families a month building homes and moving in. I can see 2 or 3 wards from this area in a couple of years. We're meeting four wards in our chapel, but when the new stake center is completed in the fall, it looks like ward divisions will make four wards meeting in both.

It's just amazing to us how many of our high-school and college friends are finding jobs in the area and moving back from outlying areas. I helped a high school friend, Dennis M. Clark (who won the recent all-church poetry contest in the Ensign with his poem "New Name and Blessing") move into a house a few blocks away--he's Orem's new librarian.

Western Widget company is currently holding on by the ~~hair~~^{hair} of its chinny-chin chin. Our savings ran out about two months too soon, but with some help from Dad and (at last) an eight week order for 4,000 burs; I may be able to hold on long enough to develop some sales of our own. I've had a real breakthrough in my production--having built a new fixture at Dad's shop which enables me to eliminate many of the tedious and time consuming steps in the process and at the same time have an improved product. With this trial fixture alone, I can make about \$60,000 in burrs per year, working alone--if we could only sell them--and not accounting for the (inevitable) breakdowns that occur in production--like this last week. For some inexplicable reason (I've explained it three-different ways without yet being sure) my nickel plating process has gone bad, giving me a brittle nickle which flakes away from the steel shank. I'm sure I'll get it fixed, but it sure is frustrating not to understand it. Just prior to this, we received a panicky phone call from our present sole buyer, informing us that because of a diameter variation on the bur shafts, most of the 18,000 burs in his inventory will not work with the new top-of-the-line air bearing handpiece he is promoting them with. I have a fix in mind, but I don't know what Al and his Partner Ron are going to do about the 18,000 burs (only 2,000 of which are mine). I think they'll have to re-sort them into categories that will work with this handpiece and those that will have to be used in the other (more widespread) handpieces where we have not seen any problem as yet.

Still, with all the uncertainties and belt-cinching, it is good for me to be on my own. It's sometimes just too good to be true. If we can just pull through the critical one or two months ahead, I think we can actually

begin to make a comfortable living from this business, and maybe I can finally turn to my inventions.

I have hedged my bets by applying for a consulting job at Megadiamond, addressing my request to Duane Horton and Art Frigo. They have some research problems that would be an interesting challenge to me, but I get a pit in my stomach at the prospect of going back to work. David tells me there's no escaping having a boss--that when I'm in business for myself, my customers will be the worst bosses in the world, and he's probably right, but for the time being, I'm hoping to hold onto my illusions. Independence is an elusive goal--it might not even be a righteous one, considering the Savior's teachings about our need for one another, but the short taste I have had of it has certainly whetted my appetite for more. And I keep telling myself that it's the only way to get rich, and that I have to be rich to reach my greatest effectiveness in the kingdom. I've had friends who speak the same kind of rubbish, but who put off all service in the church because they first have to set their worldly house "in order," only to totally lose their spiritual values, but Betsy and I know that ~~WIKNAME~~ we have always been blessed for trying to keep our priorities right, and though our life has sometimes seemed hectic and the burden of unfinished and sometimes seemingly unassailable tasks, looming over us has sometimes brought discontent or anxiety, we feel that generally speaking, our small efforts have brought good fruits, and laid the foundation for greater things. We certainly feel that way about our children. We sometimes wonder what we've possibly been doing right, they have brought such joy to us. Zina is in the kitchen right now, cheerfully doing the dishes. She will be baptized on the last Saturday of June. She and Mary have both been taking piano lessons for the last six months or so, and are both doing very well. Their teacher is very perceptive and wise with them, spotted the difference in their temperaments and aptitudes right away (Mary is probably the more musical of the two) and put them in different courses, which eliminates much of the competition. We never have to tell them to practice--they enjoy it, and sit down for a short period almost every day.

Tracy, Zina, and Mary all love to read, and devour several books a week each. The last week of school, Betsy decided it was time to give them their bedtime freedom. What a heady experience! The first night, Tracy stayed up until 5:00 a.m.. They still stay up sometimes till 10 or 11 reading, but after missing a few breakfasts, they're beginning to get a little more sense. Surehope the experiment works--we were sure beginning to have some terrible bedtime battles before this. For a mother's day present in school, Tracy and his classmates were supposed to stitch their favorite animal on a cloth banner. Tracy did an amoeba. He was lucky this year to have a very understanding teacher who genuinely likes him, which helped a lot, as he tends to be a daydreamer and has a hard time finishing assignments. I'm afraid his math teacher, however, succeeded in reducing math to sheer drudgery for him--something I thought would never happen. * She sent him home one night with ~~ten~~ pages of multiplying problems--I figured it would take me two hours to do them myself, and I just excused him and told him not to worry about it.

Betsy has started a woman's cultural discussion group or book club or something of the sort with lots of her old friends that meets once a month and seems to give her something in life to look forward to. During my recent period of feverish business activity she has parted with many of the Wednesday's I promised to her when we began this venture, but I'm really trying to get back to a four day week-- the work that needs doing around our house, car, and yard, would kill an ox, and I've got to start paying some attention to it.

*on primary day

Love to you all,

Tracy L2

Betsy's
kibitsing!
Karen is
in it too.
I have lots
"in life" to
look forward
to, but this
group has added
a lot of sparkle.