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Feb 1981 Message

Dear Children:

Dad is busy practicing for a supper-sing-along which we are having on Feb 14 for the ward. I guess I told you he bought a new shiny-black piano and it is gracing the living room on the north wall by the fireplace. He is busy writing some papers when he is not working for Mega. He is enjoying his work at Mega, and I am proud of my scientist-engineer sons and husband. They are all doing important development-new product-process improvement research that will aid Mega and improve the value of your stock.

I am taking two classes this semester, D&C and a History class on Mormon History. Very interesting. I am exploring the pros and cons of Mormon and anti-Mormon views on subjects like The Church's beginnings in New York, The first Vision, The Kirtland era (including the bank failures there) etc. There has been some really good research coming out on the early history of the church and those of you who have the BYU studies can get out your old issues and read these if you have not already. I am taking the class from James Allen.

Dad Langford's nose was really thrown out of shape when the three Hall neices moved in to stay until June. I have a good deal—they are doing all the cleaning and all the cooking. I buy the groceries, plan the menus and cook Sunday dinner. On Sat and the rest of Sunday we all peice and clean up after ourselves (except for Dad Hall and Dad Langford, who I prepare for). Dad Langford got just like he was that Sunday when all the children were here this summer. 'He wasn't going to have those girls living here! And when I finally got through that it was OUR home and he was living with us, he said 'Well, if they stay, I am going to move!' Scared the Hall girls to death. I called (at Tracy's advice) Dr. Wallace and he gave me some kind of tranquilizer which seems to have solved the problem. He no longer paces angrily or glares at us, so I guess it is working. I will let you know further about this.

He seems to feel very threatened when anyone else shows up on the scene. I guess you are all working to get Uncle Sammy your Money for 1980. Did all of you see the pageantry on T.V. when the hostages were honored at the White House. T.V. should be a boon (and a nuisance) to the President. In Jacksonian days the nation felt the white house was there—and they could visit any time they wanted. Now days those who feel that way can visit vicariously via T.V. I was touched by the spontaneity and seeming goodness of the people who showed up for that parade. Even the TV commentators commented on the fact that they felt that day that the root-american is still a very good person. I hope so. Because the country will be far stronger if that is the case.

Well, this year when Feb rolls around I will be 60. Virginia was worrying about approaching 30. I am double your age, Virginia—and it shows. Thanks, Liz, for loving us enough to do the round table for us. I like the idea of the children taking over these responsibilities. My generations time is over.

Love, Mom and Dad Hall

NEIL FAMILY, February 6, 1981

Dear Family:

Well we got a pretty good response from all of you for our first Hallmanac, published on a monthly basis. I hope this works out for all of you. Just make an appointment with yourselves to write a family letter on the first of each month. I loved getting all your letters!

I would like Nancy to design us a letterhead. She has most of the artistic talent in the family. How about it, Nancy? Something really dignified, befitting a family of our high class, sniff, sniff!

We've survived the flu season with only John coming down with it. He was pretty sick for a week and a half. The rest of us have had a good share of colds, but nothing serious. Sounds like Richard Alexander has had a rough time with the croup!

Marty has had some good success with missionary work lately and has helped teach some wonderful people. He has taught the Elders Quorum several times lately, and really seems to enjoy it.

I have taken up singing lessons again, taking from a man in Palo Alto who is the opera director at San Jose State University. He seems very competent. I go for one hour every other week, and am happy to be getting back in practice. I am also proud to announce that I am still doing race walking three times a week. Some mornings it is really tough to get out of my warm bed and go out into the cold air, but I feel so much better than I did before I began exercising, that my agony is rewarded. (Can agony be rewarded?)

Marty's folks are coming out in April and we have plans to go to a condominium at the beach for four nights for a little vacation with them. The kids are already excited.

The children are all fine. Greg is preparing to play in a recital on Valentines Day. He's really working hard on his piano. Emily is just beginning piano--from me. Erin just dances when they play and John just smiles a lot. Guess we're just pretty happy these days!

Love, Liz

Dear Family,

Well, if Liz can pull this off, she deserves a gold medal! It may be that those in Provo don't feel quite so out of touch with family as we do. It'll be great to have more frequent written contact with everyone.

We had a nice Christmas season this year with Barry's mother spending about five weeks with us. It was wonderful to have some daytime adult conversation and company, not to mention the help! What a luxury to be able to leave the kids and run necessary errands without a ten minute hat and coat session every time I needed to run a five minute errand. What a luxury to have enough room in the grocery cart for groceries! It wasn't until near the end of her visit that she had any kind of opportunity to visit some of the historical sights in the area. We all battled flu and colds during the Christmas "vacation" (not that Barry got any!) (Everyone except Mom Wood who took care of us all.) Then by the time we were all well, she came down with a chest cold and took to her bed in order to nip it in the bud. We did manage a Christmas tree cutting expedition (was that in my last letter?) and enjoyed some Inagural festivities as well.

Some friends of ours in the ward were actively involved in the Regan campaign, and thus were able to come by some tickets to some of the events. As I spent well over a week helping her cut and sew a formal for the Inagural Ball, she "rewarded" my pains with tickets to the Inagural parade. Actually, we only had two tickets so Barry pushed, prodded, and carried Nathan around looking for a good standing position, while Mom Wood, Warren, and I sat in \$100 dollar seats. (I wonder if any people actually paid for tickets, or if the stands were all full of gift tickets to Regan campaign people?) We were within eye distance of the reviewing stand where Pres. and Mrs. Regan reviewed the parade. In spite of a two hour wait for the parade it was quite exciting to be there. Warren was getting quite cold and I was getting tired of sitting on hard benches toward the end of the parade. I kept telling Mom that we'd leave just as soon as the Mormon Tabernacle Choir came by. Well guess what? You guessed it--they were last!

Living in the Washington D.C. area has really been quite nice. It's a very political environment but is also very cultural, educational, and really very beautiful. (If I could just do away with the traffic, the muggy weather, the high cost of decent housing and food and the distance between here and family it'd be ideal!) It seems that I have developed a habit of talking in parentheses.

Barry has been very busy of late at the office. It's been about six or seven weeks since the poor man took a complete Saturday off work. In addition, he's been keeping late night hours, arriving home for dinner well after seven and eight, and nine in the evening. Three of the partners seem to think that he's working full time on their cases.

Some of you know about the nibble Barry has had from an L.A. based law firm. One of the partners had called B.Y.U. looking for the names of graduates who had law degrees and French language experience. He chased Barry down here and after speaking with him three or four times via telephone said he'd like to come out and interview him for a job at their Paris office. The gentleman who called is a partner in their Paris office (they have offices in D.C., London, Belgium, L.A. and Paris) and is also a member of the church looking for someone of similar background, interests, and experience. He was unable to talk with Barry before having to return to Paris, but we did receive a letter this week from him expressing continued interest and asking for an updated resume and asking Barry to contact another partner in this firm. (The name of the firm is Omelvine and Myers.) The phone just rang. It was Barry saying he just had a call from a partner in the firm who wants to have breakfast with him on Thursday to talk "business". While I think it would be a wonderful opportunity for Barry and provide him with a much broader base of experience than he now has, I'm not sure that I can get too excited about it if it means more than four years abroad. The firm "ships" families home once a year at company expense for medical and dental treatment and time with their relatives. It'll be interesting to find out what is said at Thursday's breakfast.

Warren has had pneumonia this past week. Dr. Stroud put him on Slophyllin GG and warned me that it might make him a little hyperactive. A LITTLE! He slept a total of two and a half hours the first night he was on it and three and a half the second. He slept a little better the third night (exhaustion, I'm sure) and by the fourth night Dr. Stroud had mercifully taken him off it as his wheezing had stopped. I decided I should have been on it. You've never in your life seen a kid with so much energy (and a mother with so little!) He's still on Pediazol and seems to be improving, though the fact that we are today without heat will not help much. The oil burner man says our ignition something or other is on the blink. Only \$76.00 for the parts to replace it. ARGHHH. Meanwhile, Nathan has started up coughing so here we go with round two. Oh dear, here comes the postman. I'll close quickly so I can get this in the mail. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY, everybody!

Love, Virginia, Barry & Kids

TRACY HALL JR. FAMILY, February 2, 1980 (Tracy doesn't know it's a new year yet)

Dear Family:

It seems I just wrote my letter for the round robin, but I can't remember what I wrote--see if the stories jibe.

After weeks of miserable, smog and fog we finally had winter this weekend--just 12" of snow--that lessens the chance of drought, anyway. Saturday, Tracy and I finished his third (and last) pinewood derby car--hope our "new theory" works out--it's mostly lead, and we really polished and burnished the wheels and axles with graphite.

Richard Alexander had another frightening bout of croup Saturday about midnight. I wrapped him in a blanket and took him outside: the cold air seemed to have a quick effect. Spent the rest of the night in a room with him under heavy blankets with the windows wide open. Our dry forced air heating seems to be a contributing cause.

Elizabeth is really starting to talk. She still misses most of her initial consonants, though. It's sure a cute stage.

This week I'll be finishing my first year at Mega. Made a list of my activities and accomplishments this morning for Duane Hortan at his request for my review--mostly just ideas and unfinished projects. I can point to one or two solid contributions though.

My friend Ken Kartchner just got word that he'll be going to Egypt in March to build a (drinking) water treatment system for the northern port city of Alexandria, which means our Elders Quorum will be reorganized again. Sure hope I can stay on as teacher--this is probably the most enjoyable church job I've ever had.

Our chapel gym is reserved Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. for our Quorum, but so far the kids and I have been the only takers. It's about the only exercise I've been getting this winter. It's been fun to see the kids skills increase, and we've been having a lot of fun together.

I guess I've been kind of gloomy and hard to live with lately as I've worried about our debt situation and schemed about how to begin work on my invention. For whatever reason, Betsy had each of the kids write a little note telling why they appreciate me. It sure was a boost! If you ever need a lift, just find out what your kids think of you. You're wonderful!

Love to you all.

Tracy Jr.

I am fine, if anxious. We should have news of new arrival by next letter. Thanks for your letter, Sherlene, we really appreciated it. Thanks, Liz, too, for doing this job.

Betsy

WEIGHT FAMILY; February 1, 1981

Hannah was given a name and a blessing this morning. I made her a lilac dress with tucks and trimmed with eyelet and dark purple ribbon. Everyone oooed and ahhed over her. She looked so sweet! We taped the blessing in order that she would be able to listen to it later. In addition to hearing her blessing, Hannah will hear her sister Sarah on the tape saying, "I want a raisen..." Sarah hasn't mastered the art of whispering yet. Everyone in the chapel can hear when she needs a drink or to go to the restroom.

Sarah is a delight! She loves to go barefoot and she tries every excuse to remove her shoes. Last week she threw off her shoes and socks because her feet had a headache. When Hannah cries, sometimes we say "Oh, it's a hard life!" One morning I ask Sarah what cold cereal she wanted, and she said "I want some hard life!" These two sweet daughters of ours add a lot of spice to our home! Well--that's my half page. I'll get a new typewriter ribbon so I can get more in next time.

We love you all very much!

Charlotte

from Liz: One of our children's favorite books is Where the Sidewalk Ends, by Shel Silverstein. Here's a sampling:

WON'T YOU?

Barbara's eyes are blue as azure  
But she is in love with Freddy.  
Karen's sweet but Harry has her,  
Gentle Jane is going steady.  
Carol hates me, so does May,  
Abigail will not be mine,  
Nancy lives too far away...  
Won't you be my Valentine?

WARNING

Inside everybody's nose  
There lives a sharp-toothed snail.  
So if you stick your finger in,  
He may bite off your nail.  
Stick it farther up inside,  
And he may bite your ring off.  
Stick it all the way, and he  
May bite the whole darn thing off.

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THE CROCODILE'S TOOTHACHE

The Crocodile  
Went to the dentist  
And sat down in the chair,  
And the dentist said, "Now tell me, sir,  
Why does it hurt and where?"  
And the crocodile said, "I'll tell you the truth,  
I have a terrible ache in my tooth,"  
And he opened his jaws so wide, so wide,  
That the dentist, he climbed right inside,  
And the dentist laughed, "Oh isn't this fun?"  
And he pulled the teeth out, one by one.  
And the crocodile cried, "You're hurting me so!  
Please put down your pliers and let me go."  
But the dentist just laughed with a HO HO HO,  
And he said, "I still have twelve to go--  
Oops, that's the wrong one I confess,  
But what's one crocodile's tooth, more or less?"  
And suddenly, the jaws went SNAP,  
And the dentist was gone, right off the map,  
And where he went one could only guess...  
To North or South or East or West...  
He left no forwarding address.  
But what's one dentist, more or less?

We appreciate what you're doing, Liz, with these letters. I think it can do much to help us feel more in tune with each other.

Dan is in New Jersey for two days with another company course--this time on the "Human Factor," whatever that is. He just came back from a week-long course on "Engineering Accounting" in Cincinnati. Further, he's signed up for two more, back-to-back soon in improving presentations and basic communicating. Dan says he wants to get all these courses out of the way before the gardening and painting season starts. Last year the courses he signed up for were cancelled--so it's nice that he's getting some variety into his routine.

D&L are growing so fast--every time I turn around, I'm letting down hems or buying larger. Laura just got her tooth silver last week--so now both of them have braces. Daniel says the kids at school call him "metal-mouth," "train-tracks," and "brace face, but they both have taken it in stride--I'm proud of them. I figured D could take it, but girls can be so catty, so I got Laura some cute new clothes to go with them--and so far, the girls have been noticing the clothes and her new hairdo, more than the braces.

I picked up a trumpet at an estate sale last week for \$30. It cost half as much again just to buy a new mouth-piece for it. It's going to cost even more to buy earplugs for two parents I know and all the neighbors. Both D & L just picked up the trumpet and got a nice clear sound the first blast. It was disgusting after I spent a half-hour sputtering and brazzing, myself, without getting anything that sounded even remotely trumpestuous. The music shop seemed to think I got a real steal on that trumpet. I'd like to get someone to really steal it, all right. Both D&L instantly voted to give up piano and violin. No deal. Their teacher, Sis. Watkins, graduated from Julliard in vocal music. This year she's coming a half-hour early to give me lessons. Half the time, she teaches me singing, and half--she accompanies while I play my cello. It really is fun, and at today's prices, her \$7. per lesson is a real bargain, we think.

We are having a drought here. The reservoirs are VERY low. It's frightening. Every time we turn on t.v. or radio, we get more advice on how to save water. It has reached the stage where I have learned to brush my teeth in half a cup of water. This would happen just when I finally had our kids trained to flush the toilet. Now we only do it when we can't find our gas-masks. When those wild people in California were having their drought and earthquakes, I used to wonder how New York survived the plagues (just because we were going financially bankrupt); anyway, Dan and I are operating on faith and just made a big order for Burpee garden seeds. You all might do some praying for us. If we get too thirsty, you just might have some visitors.

We are very excited about our garden. We're going to grow tomatoes in a little square box on top of a concrete slab on our south side. When John Laing was here, he told us he raised a quadruple crop using the "Mitleiner" or some-such method, with cedar-wood frames, sawdust, and \$10 worth of chemicals. If any of you have some literature on that method, we would appreciate receiving it. For our traditional garden on the other side, we hired a friend to cut down our huge tree that was shading that side too much. Dan and I both felt like crying when we saw that huge carcass lying across the grass. Daniel got very philosophical and sat down on the steps and put his chin in his hands and said "Why, oh why, do you have to destroy life to create it." Yuk. I don't like that. At any rate, we have planted six or seven fruit trees in years past around the yard -- which thought salves our consciences a little.

Dan is teaching the Blazer boys and really enjoys it. From their comments to me, they do, too. He has the bishop's son and also our 1st counsellor's--and will have Daniel next year if he keeps it. I overheard him tell the bishop, he thought one of his jobs would have to go. Bishop Stone talked him into riding another month (probably figures he'll recover from year-end balancing by then--after tithing settlement).

I'm having a ball with my genealogy class. This round we have 22 students--even more than last time. They are all such a bunch of go-getters, I have to work my tail off just to keep up with them. I just have to say I have never had a church job I enjoyed more. I get such GOOD vibrations every time I do ANYTHING in genealogy. Right now I'm typing up some hand-written sheets Mom sent from Oman Tracy on the Tracy line. If you will each send me a family group sheet for your family (I have some old ones--but they're way out of date)--I'll type them up for you proper. Mom says if I'll send her originals of our 4 gen. sheets, she'll have them printed (not xeroxed) and distribute them to all the family. Send them to Liz with your March letter, and I'll get them typed in time for our April deadline. WE ALL LOVE YOU. I can't believe I really did it! I typed the WHOLE thing! On ONE page! Sherlene and Trumpeters

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Editors note: If at all possible, use a typewriter. (I transcribed Tracy and Charlotte's letters this time.) If you don't have a typewriter, then I will type your letters for you. Try and keep your letter to a half or three quarters of a page--that way I can get all the letters on two legal sheets, using both sides. If all had written this time, more pages would have been required. Postage and copying is much less with just two sheets. However, long letters will not be rejected. We love to hear from you!