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I would have to say that despite our frequent worries about providing sufficient educational materials and opportunities for the kids, they all seem to be thriving. All of them, from Alex (6, 1st grade) on up are able to take their turn in family devotional reading aloud from the Book of Mormon, and they can read all the words, with proper emphasis and understanding. Elizabeth, who was a couple of months too young to start kindergarten this year, is experimenting excitedly with numbers and learning about sums, and is starting to figure out certain words on the cereal box, etc. I wonder how many kids have learned to read from the Cheerios box?

On Wednesday, January 4, Betsy was the guest speaker at the Orem Rotary Club. (Our crazy doctor, Roger Lewis, is the program chairman and called her Monday-- she had a day and a half to prepare.) But no matter, she took the opportunity to appeal to this group of movers, shakers, and (in the words of Ken Kartchner) "joiners" for an end to compulsory public education. Her talk was very well received, and she felt like she had planted some good attitudes for the CAUSE. For a complete transcript of this program, send \$1.00 and a S.A.S.E. to "Let My Children Go," in care of this station.

We've had chicken pox for what seems like ages now. Why couldn't the kids all come down with it at once? (The oldest three had it several years ago). Elizabeth had it first, then a week later Susanna, another week later Alex and Robert, and finally, two weeks after that (this week), Anthony and (?) Spencer. It seems like each succeeding case was worse, at least up to Robert, who suffered miserably, despite our efforts to isolate the sick ones to minimize the exposure. We have hopes, though, that Spencer might get away with a mild case: for two days now he's had just one Pock on his tummy. H.T. says Spencer doesn't have chicken pox, just "chicken pock". (As Anthony was lying miserably on his bed surrounded by his favorite toys, he picked up a chicken from a farm set and said "this is a chicken pock and it goes 'cock-a-doodle-doo'".)

I had my worst case of the flu ever last week and spent seven straight days in bed. I literally couldn't stay up for more than an hour or two. Despite the aches and pains and cough (which still persists), the sleep was heavenly. When I went back to work, though, I felt like Rip van Winkle. The Friday before I took sick, Duane Horton and his research assistant, Dan Tayson, had made an exciting breakthrough in the the technology for molding precise tiny shapes of sintered diamond-- a problem we have been wrestling with intensively for six months, and when I came back they had made what seemed like six more month's headway. We will soon be able to provide polycrystalline diamond grit, thermally stable, with precise shapes (cubes, tetrahedra -- you name it) with uniformity tolerances unheard of in conventional natural or synthetic grits. We're even talking about molding our logo into the larger pieces. The customers who have tried samples are begging us for production quantities.

I have lots of confidence in a solid future for Megadiamond. Our grit sales picked up unexpectedly last month, and we learned from one of our customers, Juan Madeira, that G.E. has begun raising prices, meaning at last, perhaps, an end to their price war. They must be convinced we're here to stay. David's drilling products are also really beginning to take off, and he just placed a nifty full-page color ad in "Oil and Gas Journal" which shows a wide variety of intriguing products unavailable from anyone else. We even showed a profit this year, for the first time in many years, although I understand different accounting procedures could have easily swung the balance the other way.

(Juan Madeira is one of our smaller customers, with a diamond plating operation in Palmdale, California. One of his products is the diamond saw used for cutting the space-shuttle tiles. He visited us this week and took Dad, Gary Peterson, and me to lunch, announcing that he had been baptized into the Church the previous evening by a friend and customer of his in Salt Lake. He had been investigating the Church for several years as a result of this business contact, and has been doing his hiring out of B.Y.U.)

Well, the sun shone most of this week, and most of the filthy snow has finally melted, leaving the ground everywhere a sort of grey color, but the grass will soon be greening and Spring springing, and all I can say is Mooray! Just please don't let it get too warm too fast, cause there's a heck of a lot of snow has to come off those mountains.

Love,

Tracy Jr.

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