

White Plains, NY 10605

February 4, 1985

Happy Valentines!

Dear Family,

Happy birthday to David and Mom this month! (Any others?--I'm awful at keeping track of birthdays I didn't memorize while growing up). It looks like we'll get Mom here for Valentine's Day, too, when she comes to help with Virginia's new baby. We took Hamblin's two kids this past weekend when they went to the Elders' Quorum Temple Trip, and they've offered to take ours when we want to go. I'm trying to talk Dan into a romantic stay at the Marriott, going to the temple, and just dropping over to Woods' on Mom's birthday to make sure she gets her birthday spansks and maybe take her to dinner. Hamblins surely have been wonderful friends as well as blessings.

Well, Dad, we have a new baby in the family, and of course we expect full stock for him. He might need a nose-job later on or braces on his teeth or some such--and he definitely wants to go to college. I think we told you Laura was allergic to the two kittens we got for her last birthday. So we held our breath when the Figueroas offered us their 3-yr.-old Chinese Chow-Chow. He looks like a lion with his long, beautiful mane (about Laura's color). He doesn't have a flat face like most Chows--he's simply gorgeous and could be a show-dog, but we just want him for a nice, family pet. Laura brushes him each morning and that keeps the shedding down, and so far she hasn't had any trouble breathing. She begged and pleaded and prayed for that dog. You know how I've never liked dogs. Empathized with Dad exactly about their being germy, mangy, and pesty. But this dog thinks he's a cat. He washes himself thoroughly with his tongue every day. He never piddles in the house, doesn't climb on furniture, chew things, or topple things (he's even avoided my houseplants that look like trees)! He jumps up to Laura when she comes home, but he doesn't jump on anyone else and doesn't lick your face and waits patiently while you eat (he's not repented of begging, though, for whatever scraps you decide he can digest--one thing, he has a sensitive digestive tract and can't eat bones and some housefood). A bag of Purina dry food lasts him a couple of months--it's not at all expensive (just wait 'til our next vet trip). I met the Figueroas when they started coming to my Gospel Doctrine class. We were at her baptism, and now he has decided to join. They have a little two-yr.-old boy who was in my nursery, and they were concerned because their boy was abusing the dog (throwing things at him, etc.), plus they have to move and can't find an apartment that will take a dog.

They named him "Teddy Bear" when he was a fluffy baby and when he got larger, she called him "Theodore." As a conservative Republican, I can hardly stand to call even a dog "Teddy," but Theodore sounds so formal--I guess "Teddy will stick. That's what he's used to, and he's had enough other adjustments to make around here. Obviously the Figueroas NEVER raised their voices. If anyone raises his voice when Teddy's around, he comes over, puts his nose between and growls you down. It can be very humbling (not that I've ever needed it!).

He's a blueblood with such a pedigree, I'm tempted to send in a temple-entry, as he'll beat all of us to the Celestial Kingdom. Also, he's no lamb when it comes to protection. When he bares his fangs and growls, people back off. Daniel tried to tease him when he first came, and he taught Daniel respect in all of 30 seconds (without hurting him). But they're great friends now. Now when Laura has late babysitting jobs, we can leave the front door open, go to bed, and let Teddy watch for her. Doesn't budge from the door (or the top of the stairs when we're all here).

Nancy Collier, pres. of New Outlooks Associates, came here to lunch a couple of weeks ago to finalize our agreement that I take five of her patients (she's still recruiting them in White Plains). I think I told you I will teach creative arts to the homebound and get \$25 a visit and do five in a day. Nice pin money, interesting, worthwhile work, and best of all, when my former boss called to offer me any of several possible jobs with my former company, I could tell him I was already employed. If I had taken that job, though, I could have made double my former salary and traveled a lot and been quite the career-woman. I also would

have had to sell my soul to him, work 24 hours a day, and would have been driven dead within five years. I could have been his office manager, sec. again (also managing personnel), or taken a career path in international conferences--which would have taken me to Tokyo, London, Brussels, and all over the U.S. It made me feel good that he wanted me back, especially since when I quit to stay home with the kids last summer, he told me I was too "mother-oriented" to ever make it in a career. Seems he wants this mother back.

The frigid weather here took its toils! Our water-pipes in the kitchen froze. I praised the pioneers as I Halled water from our wood stove in the liv. rm. through the diningrm. into the kitchen sink to do dishes. When the dishwasher started working again, did I ever ^{also} sing praises to modern convenience. I must have done dishes most of the time the first twelve years of our marriage. Someone (surely not I) left the cold water faucet in the kitchen open, and the pipe thawed while I was typing in the study. When I got up to answer the phone, I heard water splashing as it cascaded from the sink, over the open door of the dishwasher and onto 2" of ice-water on the floor. Lovely sight. I got to throw down the towels I had just laundered and folded onto the floor I of course had just mopped. Since the kitchen sink wouldn't drain (frozen, too), I had to wring the towels into buckets which I emptied into the nearest toilet. While pouring the first bucket, the toilet ~~sink~~ ^{lid} fell down, so I got to also mop up my face and the bathroom. A half hour later I had finished the job and turned on the dishwasher to drain off the water inskde. In no time at all, the sink was gurgling gladsomes that the dishwasher also drains into that same frozen sink pipe and, therefore, naturally, water was backing up into the sink and onto the floor, again. The joys of homemaking do well up at times.

Speaking of homemaking, when I come out to give that talk, Mom, I can have housing and free meals on campus as long as the Conference lasts (Wed. night March 27 through Saturday, March 30). I didn't sign up for the housing, but I didn't realize Woods' and Birneys would be at your place (wonderful--can't wait to all be together)! Anyway, shall I call them and take the campus housing as long as I can? Also, I did sign up for them to pick me up at the airport--so that should save you a trip. They're also giving me free tickets to some concerts and plays on campus each night--but I only signed up in case something isn't planned at home. I got the program last week. I definitely feel like the least of the least speaking. I'm speaking Friday, March 29 at 1:00-1:50--just when everyone has lunch-lag! There are six talks scheduled my hour--and I have this sinking feeling no one will sign up for mine--I looked at the other topics, and I wouldn't have signed up for my topic--nor the speaker, for that matter. But I do hope enough sign up, they don't drop me. I'm so thrilled with the conference program and activities and the chance to go to General Conf., and see you guzes, too.

We're supposed to join the Scouts on a skiing trip in Vermont this weekend. It's for scouting families that have never skied before. I'd rather stay home and keep my feet warm by the wood stove, but am trying to be a good sport about this. Thursday we're supposed to bring all our gear (we're renting our boots and skis) to the Church for a "dry run" lecture. Then we're staying at a lodge and taking lessons Friday and Saturday and will get back late Sat. night (about 10:30 pm). It should be a lot of fun (if being cold and wet and miserable is fun!). It just started snowing again and Laura says the news said we would get 11"! As I said, I think I feel a fever coming on. Laura did have one of 101 today--but seems to feel OK.

By the way, Dad, we took the "Power of Attorney" form to the bank, ^{today} signed, had it notarized, and Dan took it back to work, copied it, and mailed it. So you should get it in time, we hope.

Love,

Sherlene

Sherlene and Family
(gone to the D-D-G!)