

Dear Family:

I know the letter is with Betsy and Tracy, so I'm going to be all ready with our letter.

This is going to be a hectic week. Saturday, we leave for Arkansas to visit Marty's parents for a week. Friday night is our big Stake Relief Society Chorus and Art show. Thursday night is my studio recital, for my piano and voice students. Today and tomorrow I give music lessons, so that leaves Wednesday free to clean house and shop and wash and everything else that needs doing before Saturday. Both children and Marty are sick, to top it all off.

Poor Marty! He was due to give a seminar, today and tomorrow, to field service representatives from all over the world. Then, yesterday, Sunday, he got pretty sick. We think it's the flu with a bad cold. Unfortunately, he is the only one who knows his seminar, so no one could substitute for him, not even his boss. (Marty knows more than his boss, of course). Fortunately, another guy was willing to give his part of the seminar early, and switched days with him, so Marty could stay home today. Hope he's well by tomorrow.

Yesterday I sang a duet with a friend of mine. She has a gorgeous voice and I felt flattered she allowed me to sing with her. She teaches voice lessons also. (Last year when she had a baby, she dumped all her crummy piano students. Guess who ended up with most of them. Unfortunately, she kept her talented students. Can't blame here, I would have, too). Anyway, we sang a gorgeous version of "The Lord is My Shepherd" by Henry Smart. I'd never heard it before. I was sure I would catch the kids colds (or Marty's) and not be able to sing, but I didn't, and we sang beautifully, if I don't say so myself.

I'm past the morning, noon, and evening sickness, thank goodness! It's nice to be back among the living. If only I wouldn't eat so much, now.

Marty has finished our Parquet floor, and it looks really beautiful. That was a job he's glad he's finished!!! Remember our mountain? Well, Marty went underneath our house, in the crawl space, and literally chipped away at the beam that was causing the lump in our floor, until it lay flat. It was such back breaking work, he could only do a few inches at a time before coming up to stretch, that it was a few weeks before he finished that job. But now, he's proud of himself for going the extra mile to have a neat job!

We've had a couple of weeks of showers, giving us a little more rain, and delaying our garden planting. The rainfall is greater than last year, but still drought proportions, so we're on partial conservation. We got our garden in last week and it's coming up now. We've got hundreds of strawberry plants, but the bugs get over half our crop. Then the rains rotted many of them, also. I think strawberries are a losing deal for us, but the raspberries are doing fine. I can't complain, though. We've had strawberries for dinner and breakfast several times. Haven't made jam yet, though.

I received a notice today of our Provo High School ten year reunion (June 24). I guess I'll have to miss it this time, too. I'll be able to get the booklet they're printing about all us "bulldogs" though. Should be interesting.

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Greg finishes up preschool this week and is all registered for kindergarten. He went in today for screening and did very well on all the tests. He'll walk to school this year. It's down a few blocks from us.

Marty's father indicated on the phone last week that he may get baptized while we're in Arkansas. He's been going to Sunday School and has been made scout master in their small branch in Mena, Arkansas. So we're taking authorization papers so Marty can perform the baptism and confirmation. Marty's brother was planning on going the same time as us, but he's cancelled his plans, darn it. It would have been fun for the whole family to be there together.

It's raining again today, halleluia! It's been a cold, cloudy spring, (usually warm and sunny) but we sure do welcome the rain!

We saw Betsy and Tracy the night <sup>(see what we do to people?)</sup> before she had the baby, but haven't be up to see the new baby yet because of all our colds. We hope to get up there soon.

Wish we were coming to Aspen Grove this year. We're planning on next year for sure! Hope everyone else is, too.

May 24.

I was supposed to direct the Relief Society Choir in this concert on Friday, but when I became pregnant, and sick, a substitute was found to take over. Then the accompanist was unable to continue, also, so I'm back on the program, this time playing the piano. I've had to bite my tongue at times, as the new director doesn't always interpret the music as I had planned it; a lesson in humility for me, I suppose.

My lessons are finished for the day. All but one of my students are well prepared for the recital on Thursday, and I'm quite proud of them. There's nothing like a performance to stir a student to rehearse and memorize music. Next year I may have two recitals during the year. I'm holding the recital in our living room, which has a new floor and rug, but no furniture. I guess we'll move in our family room furniture and borrow a dozen folding chairs. Our living room is not too large. I hope it will hold all who come. This is the first recital my students have had...I'm a little green on procedures.

Got to go for now. A friend talked me into accompanying her to a La Voy party. That's a pajama party with a twist: You bring the money...they supply the pajamas. (They got me for \$17)

May 25

Just finished reading all the family letters. What a fun experience! It's so neat to hear from everyone all at the same time. The main thought I'm left with, though, is how come everyone else in the family has such talent in "composition" and I don't. I just go crazy because the dash mark on our typewriter is broken....that's my main punctuation!! I need to take a course in creative writing.

Also, as soon as I return from our trip, I'm going to the printers to see about getting some official "Hallmanac" letterhead, on an onionskin or similarly lightweight paper, that we could all use. That way our letters would be uniform in size and weight (excluding Sherlene's, of course). We could identify each page with our name in the upper right hand corner, to keep them in order. What do you think?

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I take that back, (+) Ginger's letter.)

That would also be easier for copying and storage purposes. Sherlene, I'm not sure I want our letterhead to be a "solemn reminder" of anything, although I appreciate your sentiments. I notice that Barry and Ginger, who started this whole thing, didn't say anything regarding a change. An almanac by dictionary definition is "A yearly calendar of days, weeks, and months, with astronomical data, weather forecasts, tables of useful information, etc." Appropriate, I think. I know! Nancy, our resident illustrator, could design us a letterhead. What do you think, Nancy? Daddy, do you know a cheap printing company? I underlined astronomical, because besides meaning stars and all that, it also means "big", and all our news is big news, right?

We're fighting a losing battle with the snails and our garden. They just love fresh pea sprouts! For you who don't know about our California snails, they're the french variety--with shells! According to local legend (which we believe), a Frenchman imported snails for eating purposes, and you know the rest. Snails are bisexual, which means they can multiply faster than rabbits, as it only takes one to reproduce. Snail bait is the hottest selling pesticide here! We planted an artichoke plant last year, which the snails seem to favor as a nesting place. Last week Marty hand picked over a hundred snails off that poor plant! Then when I bring the artichokes in to cook, out crawl earwigs. Ugh! I don't understand why the Lord made bugs. I suppose they fit somehow into the balance of nature. But there's so many of them for so few of us!

Poor Marty is still sick. He was able to put off his seminars another day. He woke up early yesterday with severe dizziness and nausea, on top of his bad cold. He was still somewhat dizzy today, but had to go to work anyway. On top of it all, he has a bad neck sprain again, which gives him a lot of pain.

Congratulations to Betsy and Tracy. I don't believe Tracy has mentioned his new hobby. Aquariums. He has a really beautiful aquarium in his living room with all sorts of beautiful fish. He seems to be quite an expert on them.

Congratulations to David and Daddy for finishing up the Press. I understand the shed is unrecognizable now. David, Marty says not to throw away his power supply. Thanks for keeping us up to date on Mega and DBT.

Congratulations to Mother on her good grades. Let's see, that's \$5.00 for every A or A-, right? That's really neat to have a mother going to college! And excelling, too! We think you should run for homecoming queen like that woman in Florida, who won by a landslide, incidentally. How's the house in Payson coming?

Congratulations to Ginger on only gaining 15 pounds. I won't tell you what I've gained. Doctor never chastizes me, never even says a word. Makes me feel guiltier, somehow. Congratulations to Barry for his beard. Congrats to Ginger when she gets him to shave it off! Congrats to Barry on his J.D.

Congratulations to Dug for his charitable service! That's a good story!

Congratulations to Daniel and Sherlene on Daniel and Laura. They're good kids. Wow, what a teacher's report!

Congratulations to me for receiving and mailing family letter in two days.

(Can't stand self-righteous people!)

Love, Marty + Liz  
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