

Sun. February 19, 1984
cont'd. Sat. March 10, 1984
Tracy Jr.

Dear Family,

With any luck, I'll get February's letter finished in time for the March Hallmanack. Spencer is now 18 months old and I took him into the Primary nursery for the first time. He'd slept through Sacrament Meeting and Sunday School (a rare occurrence) and was still a little groggy when I took him in. Here's a kid who never cares if we're gone and who plays lots of time happily by himself, but as soon as he sensed I might be leaving him in this group, he started to cry. So I sat with him until lunch time and then sneaked out while he was preoccupied with a sandwich, but not long thereafter I had to rescue him. It's nice to have the nursery "free" us during our meetings, but I asked myself as I sat there with him and watched the nursery staff diligently trying to involve and interest these kids in various stories and activities: "what on earth are we doing pushing them into a group of their peers at this age-- aren't they better off being with their parents or older siblings?" (Betsy says I'm full of Hooy). You can see my heretical ideas about public education are tainting my views of Church education.

One of the things I've been quite concerned with since being called to be Elders' quorum president is that we reach less than half of the active bretheren during Priesthood meeting, because so many are teaching in the Aaronic Priesthood and Primary. (Mind you, I'm glad there are men teaching in the Primary. I think Primary should be taught by fathers, grandfathers, and and grandmothers. The young mothers should all be in Relief Society, if they want to be). If we took the meaning of "Quorum" literally, we would cancel our meeting, because, when we consider also the missing inactives, we're always far short of a majority. I'm sure the answer to leadership in the Priesthood lies outside of any general meeting --in individual visits and interviews. The same goes for raising our kids. Too often I deal with them as a group --too seldom as individuals.

A couple of weeks ago was Scout Sunday, and our High Council advisor to the scouts introduced his talk with the following story:

It seems a good brother was given the contract for painting a chapel. He did the interior first, and in the last room he saw he would be about half a gallon short. Rather than buy a new gallon and waste half, he decided to dilute the latex paint 50/50 with water, and it looked so nice he decided to try the same dilution on the exterior, which would incidentally greatly increase his profit. He was almost done with the exterior when a thunderstorm arose and washed all the paint off the building. Suddenly there was a thunderclap, and an angry voice called from the cloud: 'REPAINT AND THIN NO MORE!' Well, our speaker failed to connect the story with scouting, but our little genius Mary saw it. As he went on to talk about how this wonderful program was inseparable from, indeed, it was an essential part of the Aaronic Priesthood, she leaned over and whispered to Zina: "Yeah, the Priesthood is the paint, and Scouting is the water!" Sure don't know where those kids get their contrary, persnickety notions!

Huntington Tracy, in spite of the obvious lack of parental guidance or encouragement, has recently shown a renewed interest in scouting advancement and is attending a Stake merit badge powow at the moment: Last night he wrote the following letter to our congressman as partial fulfillment of requirements toward his citizenship in the nation merit badge. Here's the text of his letter, which was printed out in a nice format, with double spacing between his sentence/paragraphs:

Congressman Howard Nielson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

634 N. 550 E.
Orem, Utah
March 9, 1984

Dear Sir:

There is a national clearing house for stolen cars but not for missing children.

There are many children's bodies found each month that can not be identified because of this. A stolen car can be found anywhere in the U.S.

Children kidnapped and taken to another state are very unlikely to be found because no one is looking for them there. Children are more important than cars.

A government's most important duty is to protect the people it represents. And we're more worried about protecting cars.

Disgusting.

It's fine to have a clearing house for stolen cars, but PEOPLE COME FIRST.

So I suggest Congress establish a clearing house for missing children.

Good luck.

Sincerely yours,
Huntington Tracy Hall
age 13

p.s. I am writing this letter to fulfill a requirement for the Citizenship in the Nation merit badge, but I do feel strongly about this issue.

Although his mother suggested the subject of the letter, he composed the entire thing (on the word processor of course) without help, sometime between 10:30 last night and midnight). All we suggested was adding two words for clarification and the p.s. The kid sometimes just amazes me. Recently Betsy & I were noticing an intriguing looking model of a "viriod" in C.&E. News, which consisted of a regular polyhedral shape (dodecahedron?) with ten spherules of RNA located neatly inside it, and he came up and explained all about how the RNA segments take over the reproductive processes of the invaded cell. I'm going to have to spend more time with him in order to keep up my education.

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 Hooray! 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.