

March 15, 1989 - Basking Ridge, NJ 07920 - (201) 766-9771

Hi!

It was fun to get the Hallmaniac yesterday. It took an hour to get it away from Daniel--a tug-of-war erupts each time it arrives. We got misty-eyed reading Uncle Wendell's and Aunt Merrill's letters--thanks for including them, Mom. I got kind of choked up reading about Virginia's singing at the funeral. Virginia is such a light and example. Thanks for all your letters--you are each a strength and joy.

Here in New Jersey, Chilean fruit (including Dan's favorite Granny Smiths) is being removed from all the stores because of this cyanide scare. We have been thinking of how this might affect the poor Chilean farmers and feeling glad that Uncle Wendell and Aunt Merrill are there sharing our spiritual bounty.

We feel very blessed that Dan's surgery went well--he endured a lot trying to avoid it. His agony was great last month--we both lost a lot of sleep and finally fasted two days, hoping for a miraculous healing. However, our neighbor and Stake Pres., Stephen Wood felt impressed in his blessing to indicate surgery and finding the right doctor. We truly felt that blessing, not only in finding a renowned surgeon--but also one who holds the Priesthood. The miracle was getting through to him. His hours at his Park Ave. office were booked for six weeks, and his staff was well trained in warding off beggars like me. However, Pres. Frank Miller found out who his bishop was and by calling him, I was able to use his name as an office referral. Within a day, Dr. Patrick O'Leary (St. Patrick, to be sure) was in touch and we had an appointment. I have been getting all kinds of snubs from the local editor about listing our Mormon meeting schedule, so it was nice to be able to use some positive influence for a change.

I am more at peace about being released from Young Women. Dan has been home from work a month now and has needed constant care. In the last two weeks I have driven him to four different spine surgeons for opinions and many tests. Needless to say it was enough to keep up with the laundry, never mind hold down that kind of Church activity. And Dan will be home for a month's recovery. It has been painful for Dan, but in some ways it has been fun to go through this together and have so much time with each other. Dan was so patient, sweet and appreciative through all this--sometimes it takes a crisis to remind us how much we love each other and how precious time together is.

Driving into the City is an experience in itself. I told Mom I'll some day tell my descendants that was the bravest thing I ever did. I thought I was getting to be quite experienced as an eastern driver--but New York City is an experience in OUTER DARKNESS! No rules, except "survival of the quickest." Cabbies beat each other out trying to tank you down. He who hesitates is dead...or stuck waiting. We are fortunate that our trusty Nissan Stanza Wagon has a front passenger seat which lies down--so I could transport Dan--but I'm sure he prayed harder about my driving than about his surgery. But by the time I had driven in and back six times (4 hr. round trip) I felt like a pro.

Dan was at the New York Hospital for Special Surgery on the East River at 70th Street and York. A nice Hospital--the staff was great--much different than others in the City. We also felt our prayers were answered in terms of his three roommates and the nurses, cleaning people, and other attending doctors. We gave out a dozen Books of Mormon and felt some of the contacts were meant to be. One of his roommates has now

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invited the missionaries to visit and teach. By the way, we are enclosing the Book of Mormon inserts we put in each. Maybe it will save you some time if you can copy it (white out the name) and add your own photo. We put a real photo over the photo space and have now almost finished giving out 3 cases, two in English and one, Spanish. I think it's much easier to share the gospel from your own home base than as an official missionary because you can do it meeting people in natural situations of mutual need, rather than as some sort of imposing emissary.

Dan was in surgery 1 hr. and 40 minutes. I was upstairs waiting in the Solarium and had in mind that I would continue my fast and pray for him and Dr. O'Leary the whole time; but one by one, as if on appointment, members of the staff kept coming into the room and just started talking to me, inevitably asking questions about my Church. They really seemed interested, too! Afterwards it seemed too good to be true, and I have wondered if it wasn't a deliberate, kind ruse to keep me from worrying too much. For sure it was the best way to make the time fly. Dr. O'Leary called up when it was finished and seemed elated with the results. He said Dan would be out of recovery from general anesthesia in two hours, but he didn't actually come up to his room for 6 hours! I wasn't supposed to enter the recovery room, but a couple of times I cheated, just to make sure he was still alive. After four hours, he tried to open his eyes--but just couldn't. And he was so nauseous! What a hangover! I got home that night at 11:30, then left again at 5:30 a.m. to miss the rush hour traffic and stay with him. Right away Dan felt so much better with the pressure off his nerves. Surgery was Thursday (admitted Wed.) and he was able to come home Sunday. Monday he was already trying to walk up and down stairs. I took a nap Tuesday, and when I woke up I caught him sitting at the computer, running off more Book of Mormon inserts. He is a HORRIBLE patient right now--he was much more sensible when he was in agony--but it's nice to see him not hurting and, in fact, singing all around the house.

Dan just got word from his new division head that he is officially on board. Between divisions he was given the option to accept a year's full pay and quit the Company (they are still cutting by thousands and have had a hiring freeze). At such times Dan talks about going back to school and becoming a high school math teacher (just one of many thoughts, he adds) which sends me into spasms--but he decided to accept the offer to come on board with this new AT&T division which, fortunately, is still only a ten mile commute in the other direction.

AT&T benefits sure are a blessing now. We don't have the surgery bill yet, but the MRI test alone cost \$800, and each day in the hospital was \$400 just for the bed and LOUSY food! We ended up getting opinions for 4 different surgeons before O'Leary (the Company will cover three), and we spent an entire week just getting tests at various locations.

We feel so grateful to the Lord for successful surgery and such a marvelous doctor. Dan still has some numb feelings in his toes and legs and some lower back and ankle pain; but we feel confident his nerves will heal and feeling return. It is such a relief to be rid of that sciatic pain down his entire leg.

Before the surgery, we got the most wonderful phone call from Bro. Doman in Westchester Ward. Remember the Villanueva family from White Plains who painted our home there and later rented a room from us? Santos and Marily, his daughter, had joined the Church after we introduced them to the missionaries (no small feat, since we had communication problems and we invited them several times to dinner and cottage

meetings with "no shows" or "very lates," possibly more a syndrome of being Peruvian than not understanding.) But, anyway, once they heard the message, they knew it was true.

After we moved, we did not hear from them--I felt sad when we did not even hear from them at Christmas, but they work so hard and such long hours trying to get ahead so they can bring family from Peru. We had also loaned them some money and I think they were shy about not being able to pay it back. Anyway, before we left I asked Brother Doman, who speaks Spanish, to keep in touch with the family--and he kept his promise. He had lost our number, but finally let us know that they had just held a baptismal service for two cousins of Marily whom we had fellowshipped before we left and who had attended some cottage meetings in our home. He said 15 family members attended the baptism, 13 OF WHOM WILL PROBABLY JOIN!! He said Santos was finally able to bring his wife and three other daughters from Peru and they are taking the lessons and will most certainly join. Also, Marily is engaged to a fine young man who is investigating the Church, and another cousin is going to be baptized next week. Dan and I sometimes wonder if all our efforts are wasted--but one phone call like that makes it all worthwhile. I was on such a high, I couldn't sleep all night. Sent them a letter fussing because they didn't invite us to the baptism. They are the sweetest, most humble, good people you could ever meet--pure Indian blood of Peru, among Lehi's promised seed for sure. We were so impressed with how Santos and Sergio worked on our home--so clean living, hard-working and loving to each other.

Rev. Don Pepper has kept in close touch through Dan's surgery and put us on his Presbyterian prayer roll. Says those sisters have as much faith as anybody, and he can't wait to see his way clear for baptism and taking them all on a bus trip to the Wash. D.C. Visitor's Center. He is going to April Conference in Salt Lake and hopes to do some interviews there and looks to Spring for the big jump. Will it ever make waves in this heavily-Presbyterian community! He is a good cook and brought us over a delicious meal at a harried time before the surgery. Our home teacher, Stan Layton, also came several times to visit and came with (former) Bishop Frazee to give Dan a blessing just before the surgery. We also had a fireside here that night with Jan Nussbaum giving us some tips for using the Church PAF genealogy program. Dan has been inputting genealogy on the computer these past couple of days, and it is nice to have him here lying by me on the floor to put me back in gear every time this machine starts printing when I hit the wrong key or tries to squawk or bite. I really don't like computers, but they seem to be a necessary evil in this day and age.

We love and miss you. Thanks for all the prayers. We feel very grateful and blessed. It has been nice to know our children would choose to do the right things while I was so preoccupied with Dan. They got rides to Seminary and their basketball and other youth activities and just kept going. Members here were great, sharing their prayers and concern and filling Dan's room with flowers, cards, balloons, and cookies.

Sunday night after I got Dan settled at home, I went to Laura's YW "New Beginnings" program. One of the parents leaned over to me while Laura was spotlighting some of the new Beehives and said, "I love to watch your daughter. There is something about her so refreshing and delightful." I had to agree. Out of space.

Love, Sherlene

P.S. Both Laura and Daniel's basketball teams won in the state, but they lost the regionals - they both played some REAL ball! Laura is also in the "Charlie Brown" musical at Ridge High - we have tickets for this Friday - she has been one busy girl - but she loves it. A girl at school invited Daniel to join her dance group - they take lessons Sat nights and learn such ancient arts as the Cha-cha and Polka.

SIX DAYS IN NEW YORK CITY!!!!

Reading about Mom and Dad's trip to China was so interesting, I decided I really ought to share my experiences in the foreign country I visited recently.

When we lived in White Plains, we could drive there in about 30 minutes, but in 13 years probably didn't make it in more than once a year. We did see some Broadway shows, "Fantastics," "Death Trap," some opera: "Madame Butterfly," "Amahl," one open air concert in Central Park and a trip to Chinatown and some museums. But my general attitude was that this was not a place I cared to be.

The first time I went in by myself, I took a discount coupon sent me by a major leather goods distributor in response to a thank you I wrote for their full-page TIMES ad saying why he refused to do business on Sunday. I needed a new purse and decided it was worth a trip into Sodom and Gomorrah. What a day. It was hard not to stare at all the homosexual men in the store buying ladies' purses. Quite an eyeful as these men with their high heels, manicured fingernails, and styled hair posed with various purses in front of full-length mirrors. Women and men handed out lewd photos on street corners, even in more "prestigious" areas of town, inviting passersby upstairs for low adventure. Bag ladies and homeless people were everywhere. Druggies begged for money you knew would not go for food. I felt scared and dirty and could not wait to get home and take a shower and wash off the contamination of just being on the streets. When I did go into the city, I made it a point to take the train and a cab--no sane person would try to drive in Manhattan!

Dan has not driven for five weeks with his back pain, so I got to join the insane drivers while trying to take him to that first visit with Dr. O'Leary. We left at 6 a.m. and still got caught in stop-go traffic. Took 45 min. just to get through the Lincoln Tunnel--but still barely made it to his 8:15 appointment. I dropped Dan off and was fortunate to find a parking place not far from his Park Avenue office. It was a sleety, miserable day and I was sliding my way up the alley when a beggar approached me with a plea for \$5. to buy gas so he could drive his wife and crying children back to CT (they, of course were stuck five blocks away). I was debating whether I would get mugged if I stopped and opened my purse when another woman crossed over and told me he was notorious for a new story every day on that corner and walked me to the corner. But I thought about that man often that day, wondering if King Benjamin's wife would have opened her purse. I will never get used to the beggars. I try to give them something. They even walk up to you in stalled traffic at Lincoln Tunnel, holding their cups to your car window. Daniel gave away his entire paycheck the first time he went into the City. It is hard to see these crying people--and some of them are dangerous. There were 2,000 murders in New York City just last year!

Dan was in such pain, he had to lie down on the floor while we did the office paperwork. We filled out so many forms preparing for his surgery--and I still have to fill out all the insurance forms for refund. But it was a relief to meet Dr. O'Leary and have the Spirit confirm we had finally found the right one, after visiting four other spine surgeons. He confirmed that surgery was urgent, inasmuch as the disk herniation was damaging Dan's nerves and scheduled him for the same week.

Driving through New York may not be pleasant, but no one would ever call it boring! Mom, you can get a Big Mac there! Right in the middle of the city are the new "joint" restaurants where you can get a Mac and Nathan's malt under the same roof and there

are some other interesting joint restaurant combinations. The best pretzels in the world can be purchased at every corner for \$1.25 (\$1.00 if you start to walk away). I took Laura in one day to visit Dan, but it was just after surgery and he was very tired, so we left him to rest and went shopping. I wanted to window shop the fancy places, but Laura wanted to find bargains. Asking around, we found out there's no "cheap" part of town--there are pockets of great and small all over the city and you just take your chances. We walked clear down to Fifth Avenue and saw Tiffany's and the Trump (marble) Tower and such, but also found some little closet shops which sold trash and trinkets for small cash. Laura loved looking at the fashions and store-wares, but the real show was all the people in the streets. One hundred languages and nationalities. I think eccentric people all over the world go to New York so they won't be eccentric anymore. I guess that's why we were there! Contrasted with the beggars were the ever-so-rich being helped out of limos, parading in furs and diamonds or walking their manicured poodles.

We had to take a detour down Broadway getting to the Lincoln Tunnel and got caught in that traffic on a Saturday night. Even the busses and cabs bringing patrons to shows halted while hundreds of pedestrians swarmed through the streets, taking absolutely no stock of traffic signals. These people have no fear. They defy you to run them over. Anything on wheels watched an hour-long fashion show as straight and gay couples waltzed through the streets. Believe it or not, a few showed up for "Cats" or "Les Miserables" in horse and carriage--it certainly got through better than my Nissan. Since it was after dark, I didn't take Laura down 42nd Street, but later I took Daniel down it in daylight, grateful that the weather dismissed the lace-gartered whores I saw heralding passers-by one warm evening as I tried to find the Lincoln Tunnel entrance (the vandals turn around the street signs which do exist, making it almost impossible to figure out where to go).

Times Square and 42nd Street must be two of the filthiest places in the world. Laura is quite unimpressed by things that shock her mother (she thinks growing up in Provo left me terribly sheltered), but even she got a little rattled in New York. All the way home, she kept mumbling "This is such a wicked place." "Oh, this is a wicked city." I think the D&C predicts a total immersion for the place--it will probably take several dunkings to cover all the skyscrapers and also wash the filth. Neon signs garishly advertised open perversion. Billboards rose from graffitied walls sponsoring all the Madison Avenue deceptions, including the state lottery. Most gripping to me were the haunted and grim expressions on the faces of people in the area. Even the air was filthy. I had to keep my window-wash spraying every five minutes so I could see through the soot on the windshield. Still, I was so busy dodging taxis, I couldn't do too much gaping.

One night I got lost, taking the wrong exit coming home. I was so tired I wasn't thinking straight anyway. After three hours' driving in wrong directions, I had car trouble and spent another hour in a shop where the attendants really were very helpful. Every toll phone along the way had been broken and it was such a relief for both of us when I could finally call Dan and the children and let them know I was still alive, if hopelessly lost. It was the night before his surgery and ^{NOT} did add to his calm. I have talked with people who lived in the City and who loved it and scoffed at the notion it is a scary place. Even in New York there is Zion. The New York Mormon Visitor's Center stands squarely near Lincoln Center and seems very much at home. Dr. O'Leary seems to thrive in that atmosphere of variety and expertise. Good people took time to share careful shopping and parking tips along the way, and I

rolled down my window and asked directions of persons from many cultures on many shady streets and did not get mugged. Parking near the hospital only cost \$20 for 4 hrs. (!)

I did not get arrested once. I just don't look as suspicious or guilty as Dad.

Daniel, who thinks Basking Ridge is the most boring town we could have found to live kept saying, "I love New York." He just finished reading the Book of Mormon and he still said that. They will probably call him on a mission to Sandy, Utah.

Love, Sherlene

Amazing--space left. Let's see if Dan wants to add a P.S.

Dan speaking: (Hmmm... Only page 6? I guess I have some responsibility since I nagged Sherlene to try entering this using the computer and WordPerfect. It apparently grew on her in the process. She had typed it first on the Selectric, and the typed version was just 4 pages.)

I feel very blessed with my back surgery and improvement. I'm still staying down quite a bit, hurting some in the lower back and right ankle, and limping around when I'm up. But I feel steady & noticeable improvement.

Sherlene has taken excellent care of me & everything else for the past month or so since the lower back problem spread to my entire right leg. She has worked the role of both parents, nurse, and triple chauffeur, as well as running the household.

It took me some time to believe that all that hip and calf and ankle pain and floppy, numb right foot was due to something way up in my back, namely a leaking out of the lumbar disc material, now hardened and pressing on the spine. If I had realized what was probably going on a year ago and then became so bad in June, I would never have gone to a chiropractor. But the highly rated orthopedist didn't give me any real insight or direction, just "bedrest." I gradually got better after the July family reunion, but then it came back even worse.

When the sciatica started, Sherlene went activist, declared she was taking me to a "real doctor," and ordered in a Priesthood blessing on the way. The Dr. recommended MRI (Magnetic Resonant Imaging), and that really showed what was going on. Once we got the lead on our NYC Irish Mormon spine surgeon, she was just as decisive in making that happen.

Thank you for your prayers and calls and caring. I have felt a real surge of comfort and assurance.

Love, Dan