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## Texas Week 4

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Howdy Y'all!

It was great to have a lot to read when I got on the computer today! So I forgot to write up a thing for what I wanted to say this week but I'll write what I can remember, and I'll try to answer your questions.

Elder Simmons cut my hair, well more buzzed it... hahaha it has grown out more though and I think it looks alright. We go to the Midland City Library to do emails, and both districts in Midland come so that's pretty fun, and then after that we go play football which I have come to like to play. Its fun playing with a bunch of missionaries!

Tomorrow is the Christmas Zone conference and it is more of a "lets not have the missionaries be homesick" kind of conference so we're doing a lot of christmas stuff I guess. (Music etc.) I don't really know what to expect.

That's great to hear that you got the lights up this year dad! We've seen a lot of lights lately and there are a bunch of cool spots with lights here. There was a house with lights going to music. I filmed it for a couple of songs while we were on the way back to the apartment. (This was when I was on splits yesterday biking) It is nice to see the different houses though. Christmas time is so nice, and we also have some Christmas music that we listen to while driving around.

Yesterday I went on splits with another Elder and he is in a bike mission so we were riding bikes the whole day. Boy was my rear sore after that and not riding for several months. Also riding in a suit is terrible and with a big backpack but it was awesome because you get to talk to so many people while doing that. The bike I was on also was breaking down as I rode it. If I peddled too fast when trying to get out of the busy roads that we had to cross to get to our area, the gears would skip and also the back rear tire was getting flat all the time because it has a leak but we just kept pumping it back up after lessons and tracting in an area, it was quite fun. We also went "Trick or Treating" where you go tracting at night. Kind of ironic how it is now Christmas time, but some houses here still have Halloween decorations up so I guess it is Decemberween! We taught a lot of people and found hopefully a couple of potential

investigators. We also witnessed a car jacking, but when we were biking by that house again we saw the car back in their yard so all is well.

While tracting yesterday we went to this one house and a lady opened up the door and her children were there. We were talking a little with her about the Gospel and then she mentioned that her Husband recently passed away and that her sister did as well. She already goes to another Church but allowed us to talk to her about our message that we have and I felt love for their family and I mentioned about Stanford. I have talked to a few investigators about that while teaching the plan of salvation. The gospel is true and when people find that out we can see the change that it brings in their lives.

I wasn't too sure if DearElder worked outside of the MTC, I got Rachel's DearElder. Also Elder Simmons made the comment that he forgot why he didnt' like being with greenies because this past week I've been getting mail quite often. He also has the habit of when I walk out of the bathroom sometimes he'll tackle me, did it about 6 times so far but I've got him back 3 times. We do some pranks but not too much.

Last week we went to Ross's. Is there a Ross's in NH? It is like a salvation army but with brand new stuff. We got some nice cleats for football for \$15, so we use those when playing. I don't know what I'll do with them when I go to Brasil though... Already past the weight limit as it is.

The Nativity exhibit happened this past week and unfortunately the members of the stake that were putting it on would boss us around like we had nothing to do. Kind of felt really lazy with that and Elder Simmons being sick this past weekend but everything worked out and we still were pretty effective. I did take a lot of pictures though so I'll email that to you guys. There were a lot of really cool Nativities!

Cool thing that I read last night was the King Fallot Discourse. I don't know if you have read it or not but it was something that Joseph Smith talked about at a funeral of this one guy. It is some pretty deep doctrine but it is amazing and really cool!

For Thanksgiving we ate Turkey, and yams. These cookies that the member made were with ritz crackers covered in choclote with frosting in the middle I think. They were really good! We also had rice, and bean caserole. No corn or mashed potatoes though :( It was still delicious. The members are really nice too. We'll be teaching them tonight, well their kids while the parents take temple prep classes. We also play games with them which is really fun.

Transfers are coming up soon, its a bit weird. I don't really know what is going to happen with them but we'll find out in a week. Also is there any way you can check on progress for visas online? I don't want to do that but one elder in my district at the MTC said that his parents did that for him. I had to fill out an online form, but yeah was

just wondering if there was any way to check up on that. Elder Yorgason is still here in Texas as well but I don't know anything about the other Elders or what the situation is.

Spanish is not really coming along for the speaking part, but I am able to understand a lot of what people say as long as I concentrate on the topic of conversation. The Mexican investigators and members though are so friendly and very cool to be around. We even got invited to Kevin (a recent convert)'s sister's husband's surprise birthday party. It was funny, like 20 members of their extended family and then 3 white missionaries, but we're pretty close to that family so I guess that is why we were invited haha

This past week has been pretty hot. Last Thursday was about 80 degrees outside and it was really hot while playing football (American) to answer your question Heather. I have only played Football (soccer) with the Flores' children a couple weeks ago in the gym but I know I'll be playing a lot of it in Brazil. Today it is about 60 degrees outside.

I've been hearing a lot of different Texan speak here, "Y'all", and "I've been fixin to ... (Leave, make a phone call, etc)" I don't think I'll be picking up any of the accent though.

We met this one family, and the one person who is actually interested is their son Daniel. After we taught him he ran up to us while we were walking to our car outside and handed Elder Simmons \$15 dollars and said we should go eat out or something. We declined the offer a couple of times and then finally Daniel said that "in our religion we believe that when you don't accept a gift you deny the blessing" and so we reluctantly took his offer. We're going to go teach him tomorrow, and we also have a dinner appointment with a family whose son just got his mission call to Mexico.

Well that's all for now I think. I hope I answered the questions that you had, and if not I'll answer more next week.

Love you,  
Love Elder Phillip Larsen

The first picture is a nativity that Brother Alcocer carved, I liked it a lot. The second one is self-explanatory. :P There were over 300 nativities there.

Next picture is another sunset on the way to Odessa for a dinner appointment with some recently reactivated members.

Next is a picture of this place covered in lights, kind of hard to take dark pictures though so it is a little blurry, but it is a cool little set up.

Next is a SpongeBob lawn decoration that was too cool to pass up a picture of.

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