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A letter from Dad: 20 Jan 2011

John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Wed, Jan 19, 2011 at 8:57 PM

Reply-To: john@larsen-family.us

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: joyce@larsen-family.us

Dear Phillip,

Jan 15, 2011 - Sat

I was sorry to read that you had been sick. That is never fun, but as a missionary it is even harder I think. You're stuck in your apartment with not very much to do. I was remembering my own mission. There was one stretch of time when I was in a threesome (my first city after my lovesick companion had an emergency transfer) and Elder Nielson got sick. That stuck all three of us in for several days. Fortunately, we lived in the branch meeting house, a converted home, so there was a piano available. That's when I learned "Maple Leaf Rag" and got a real liking of ragtime music.

There was one other time I got sick, but that was almost my own doing. In my second city, Toulouse, we had some Elders came over for a visit. Elder Bedingfield has been a chef before his mission and loved to cook. He made a "yummy" tuna cassarole for lunch. As you know, I'm very allergic to seafood, but it had been years since I had had any experience with tuna. I wondered if it had been my imagination so I didn't tell anyone and thought I'd just try eating it. That was a big mistake. Shortly after eating it, it all started coming back up. I was quite sick for the rest of that day. I did learn that my allergy was real though!

Your descriptions of the videos sent me to the <http://store.lds.org> website to order them, but the site is down! This happened a few weeks ago too, but on a Sunday. The whole lds.org site was down until almost midnight EST on a Sunday. I'm sure it caused great havoc and consternation among all clerks and counselors trying to do the tithing count after church. Your mom was working on her talk this morning and tried to get some information at lds.org only to find that the site was down. I'm sure that is affecting many people who were expecting to write their talks today.

I'm glad you got a good report from the dentist. I find it wonderful that members willingly share their talents and professions in helping out the missionaries. I'm sure the Lord blesses them for their charity in behalf of his full time missionaries.

I was just looking at Hobbs again at [maps.google.com](https://www.google.com/maps/@32.551416,-117.093205,15z). As a teenager we went to Carlsbad Caverns on a family vacation. That's not too far away from Hobbs! I went to wikipedia to read up on Hobbs. The elevation is 3622 feet. That's pretty high. The Salt Lake Valley is at 4200 feet. It could get pretty cold there in Hobbs. If you need to buy a coat please do so. When your visa comes in and you transfer to Brasil you can leave your coat at the TLM mission home as a donation for a needy missionary. Have you had any snow in Hobbs?

Concerning your driver's license renewal. They made some recent changes here. I was talking with Heather about this because her license comes up for renewal this year, just a few weeks away. She thinks you can renew online now. I kind of remember reading something about it, like a person will only need to show up in person once every ten years, like every other time, up to a certain age. Older people would need their eyes checked more frequently, but younger people don't. So, once we find out more information we'll let you know. It might be possible to renew online!

I talked with President Evans of the Mass Boston Mission between sessions of Stake Conference. Like many times before, President Coopridier had asked the Stake Relief Society to organize a dinner between sessions for the stake presidency and stake RS presidency. President Evans was also invited to eat with us. I took the opportunity to ask him if there were any visa waiter missionaries in the MBM. He said that there are, but that two of them just received their visas to Brazil this past week and left. They had both been here about as long as you have been in the TLM. I thought that was encouraging news to send your way. President Evans said it was wonderful having the Portugese speaking missionaries here because there is a need for them. In a somewhat joking way he suggested that you put in a request to transfer to the MBM so your language skills could be put to use.

16 Jan 2011 - Sun

Stake Conference was very good. Your Mom gave a good talk featuring you and your mission preparations at the beginning. I'll let her give more about that. I did the usual setup of all the TV and audio equipment. There were several problems to solve, but I finished the last one about 30 seconds before the meeting started. After the meeting and after I had finished all the clean up I happened to talk with Bishop Granger of the Lowell Ward for a few minutes. It turns out that he served in the Brazil North mission several years ago. He said in his case he ended up staying in the MTC for 4 months until his visa finally arrived. The travel department kept claiming that his visa would be there right away so they never sent him out to another mission. In the end it took another 2 months for it to show up.

19 Jan 2011 - Wed

Another week has gone by. Yesterday was a yucky storm day, freezing rain, sleet, and

snow. The commute was slow and long. Heather had an accident on the way in. She took the ramp from 495 onto Route 2 East. She got to the bottom of the ramp and started to merge to the left to get into the left lane. The road was very slippery and the car started to spin around. She either turned the wheel the wrong way to correct or something, but the front of her car started spinning counter clockwise. As the car turned the front bumper hit the guard rail and she ended up facing the wrong way towards on coming traffic. Fortunately there were no other cars coming at that time. She was able to get herself turned around in the right direction and drove into work. She was quite shaken up by it all, but no serious injury. She's a bit stiff today in her left shoulder where the seat belt is. The front bumper is cracked and the left headlight is pushed back. The hood is slightly bent up on the left side. The running lights are broken. I don't know if the car can pass inspection or not. If not, it isn't worth repairing if it's going to cost much. She would need to replace the car. That's unfortunate because she just put about \$800 in repairs over the last six weeks. She will take it to Hansons to see if it can even pass inspection. Her car is due next month so she will have to make some decisions soon. We often pray for safety and protection. Heather was greatly blessed this time.

I've been listening to "Preach My Gospel" mp3s again. That is such a neat book. I hope you and your companions use it often in your study.

Julia has been working for several weeks on her big science research project. It is 20% of her grade. She turned it in last Friday. Last week there were two snow days on Wed and Thu. This past Monday was MLK day and she had that off, and yesterday was another snow day. Today she got the result of her project back. She was disappointed because it was only 99% instead of 100%. She's funny. She was expressing many anxious comments during the work she did and was worried about it dropping her grade. Then she gets 99%. As she was expressing all those comments I was thinking this is how it would turn out, but I didn't say anything. She does good work and is very diligent. Finals week is coming up next week. I think it is next week. Joyce will take Julia to Grand Buffet as a reward the same way she did for you and Stanford. I'm glad she can easily do that.

We're trying to get the band started up again. They had a practice last Friday, but they waited so long to confirm the day that I had already decided to go to Garrett's play last Friday, "The Crucible". We were going to have practice this week, but Paul Merrideth has work obligations and can't come back this weekend. So, no practice again. It will start up again though, and after a few practices we'll get back in the groove.

There have been mudslides in Brazil near Sao Palo. Over 600 people have been killed. Terrible tragedies happen.

There are about 15 Relief Society sisters upstairs right now. Joyce hosted the book

group here this evening. I didn't get home until 8PM and saw all these cars lining the road. That's when I remembered what was going on. I have retreated to the basement until they all clear out.

Well, dear Phillip, I'm going to send this off. I hope things are going well for you. Keep working hard and doing your part. The Lord will bless you.

Love,

Dad

ps. Sorry, but I didn't take any pictures this week.

pps. This Sunday, Jan 23rd, will be 4 years since Stanford returned to Heavenly Father. I think of him often.

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