



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

A letter to my own Missionary :) 24 February 2011

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 24, 2011 at 12:27 PM

To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>, John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Hello, Phillip E, my Dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

It's amazing how quickly the week passes. I always intend to write to you throughout the week, the way your Dad does sometimes, but then I just think about things and write it all on Thursday morning.

I went to the gym this morning, and did my "Day 2" routine. I have 3 of them so far, but I have only gone over 1 and 2 with the trainer, and I don't know what to do on the 3rd day, so I'll work with her next week on that, and in the meantime I alternate between 1 and 2, with the occasional cardio-only workout (I figure it's better to do just that occasionally than nothing, if I'm a bit short on time). I'm still working on scheduling all of this in. And I'm still doing yoga on Tuesdays, until my friend, Diana, moves, which will be around the end of April. On Tuesday when I was there on the treadmill, Camille Hargreaves, our neighbor, was there, too, and used the treadmill next to me. It was nice to talk to her during the workout. She is coming for "tea" this afternoon. On Tuesday, there was also another lady, Rashina, or something like that, on the treadmill on the other side of me. Camille and I talked to her, too. I really enjoyed it. This other lady is from Bombay, India, and has been here for 24 years. She came over when she got married, and it was an arranged marriage. Her husband came in to the gym after awhile. She said they both come, but at different times because of their schedules. She looked familiar to me, and she said I looked familiar to her, but we could not figure out where we had seen each other before. Her kids attended Nashua Catholic and BG. There are some amazing and interesting people in the world!

It was so nice to get a snail mail letter from you, as well as an email last week! Heather has the letter you sent for her, and the one for Jake, and I sent him a FB message to let him know the letter had come, and Heather would deliver it on Sunday at church. Jake has been going to Heritage Park, Heather said. I don't know where he is living. You asked about Weston Cole in your letter. I think he is doing all right, but he is worrying his parents. Sandy and I went out to lunch a few weeks ago, and she had to cut the lunch short to pick up Weston at school. I guess because he is a Senior he gets to leave early, and wants a ride home rather than hanging out at school. She gives him a ride several days a week. I asked what his plans were for after High School, and Sandy indicated they are still up in the air, he doesn't really

have any firm ideas. There is a Youth Temple Trip next week, on Bradford's birthday, actually, and I doubt Weston will come. I'll let you know, though. I think it's really good you have written to him. It is good for him to hear from you, and to be encouraged in gospel things from you, when you have the time.

The new bathroom is lovely, and it's so nice to have a second bathroom! I still need to buy stuff for it, like more towels, a clock, and shower curtain, plus a shower caddy. Dad (or I) still needs to finish the cabinets outside the bathroom, so we can use them. I know most people are faster at home improvement things than we are, but we'll get it done eventually!

Next week Julia has February vacation. This year has been strange, because Nashua and Hollis and Brookline are about the only ones to have next week off. Massachusetts and Merrimack and Hudson and Litchfield have this week off. That means Seminary has been a bit of a challenge. But Sis. Lopez has been teaching the Nashua kids this week, as usual, just a much smaller class, because it's only the Nashua kids. Next week the Hudson and Litchfield kids will go to Bro. Bouhuis' house (I'm sure I'm mis-spelling his name) and have Seminary there. That way Sis. Lopez can have a week off, but none of the kids miss out on anything. I've made a little list of things Julia and I can do next week. She said the other day, "Mom, Garrett is going to UT, Sadie is going to Bermuda, and the McFaddens are going to Florida. Everyone is going somewhere except us!" I told her, "Well, we'll go to Barnes and Noble!" She said, "That works!"

Ian entered the MTC yesterday. And today Leslie has a bad cold, and is spending the day in bed! I think the excitement was too much for her. Gideon posted that he'll really miss his brother, and I told him he should write a lot. He was concerned about the price of postage, but his one aunt posted she would send him stamps, and I told him he could email, since he is family. I'll have to be sure to get you Ian's address so you can write to him occasionally, too.

One thing I need to tell you about, Phillip, is Michael Scott. Here is an email Sis. Scott sent out last week:

Dear Friends & Family,

As our support group, we wanted to let you know that Michael is coming home from Peru this weekend for a time. We have been assured that he has served honorably, and that if he chooses he will most likely return to Peru in the not too distant future. We know that this is the right thing for Michael at this time, but it will be extremely difficult, and he will need our expressions of love, as well as our prayers.

Sincerely,

Mike and Shelli

She sent this on Friday and I called her right away. We talked for nearly an hour. I wasn't able to see Michael on Sunday, because they met early with Pres. Cooprider, to release Michael, and give him a blessing and reassure him, and the family stayed in the multi-purpose room and listened as Sis. Scott gave a wonderful talk in Sacrament Meeting, then the family went home. I'll call her again. Sis. Scott said Michael was exhausted, also devastated about being home, but he knows it is the right thing for him to be home right now, to take some time out and work out some things and get better. Shelli said as far as they know they would be encouraging Michael to go back in about six months, but that would depend on what his Mission President says in a letter they would receive, and the recommendation of the Missionary Department, as well as Michael, himself. Anyway, pray for him, and love him and write to him if you can. I don't really know details, more than what I've told you, just that Michael has served honorably, as the email said, and will hopefully look forward to going back to Peru. McKayla comes back next week (can you believe it has already been 18 months?), and hopefully that will be good for Michael, to see her and to be encouraged.

There is a really good article in the March Ensign, which came the other day, called "Preparing Emotionally for Missionary Service". I thought we might be past needing it, since you are already serving, but it has some helpful suggestions, also some encouragement about the things you have already done to prepare. Do you get the Ensign right away, or do you have to wait for a bit? We can send you a copy of the article, if you like. One part says: "Learn to view personal weaknesses with proper perspective. Some conscientious missionaries have great difficulty when they feel their efforts are imperfect or less than 'the best'. They may worry excessively if they feel inadequate in mastering a language or in achieving some missionary goals. They may feel distressed when the demands of being a missionary show them weaknesses they had never encountered before. But, as the prophet Ether taught, recognizing our weaknesses can teach us humility and reliance on the Lord and success in overcoming our weaknesses (see Ether 12:27)." It goes on to say, "President Gordon B. Hinckley told of two missionaries he met as a young man on his own mission: 'One was a superstar. He was educated. He was bright. He was quick. He was a little arrogant. We had another who was a sign painter . . . with very little education, but he knew his inadequacies and he relied on the Lord. When he prayed, you knew he was talking with the Lord . . . That young man accomplished wonders while the other young man went through the motions. The power that was in the one and the absence of power in the other was so apparent.'" I have read Dad's letter to you, and I think he has given excellent advice about relying on the Lord. You're doing well! You said you have difficulties being yourself lately . . . you sound like the Phillip we know and love. But consider this, too: the Lord is blessing the people you serve with your presence and your skills and abilities and your teaching. He is also blessing you, and molding you and changing you to be even more Christlike, and using the experiences you are having, and the people you are meeting, for your growth and development. It

is not surprising you feel different! You are growing, and you *are* different! As long as you are doing your best to be who the Lord wants you to be, you are doing just fine. Dad also said in his letter the same thing I would say (only he said it better, I think!) about Rachel. Just enjoy her letters and her friendship, and send her letters when you feel inclined to do so. Don't worry about the relationship. The Lord will bless you in that, and guide you in dealing with that, when it's time.

Well, Julia made a list of things to write to you about, and one of the things we'll do is have her write a nice letter to you while she is on winter break. I'll let her tell/ask you about things. But I do know she wanted to know what song you used to try out for Concert Choir. She is thinking of "Called to Serve" because she knows it so well. She said Mrs. Santerre wants all of the kids to try out, just for the experience, so they will know what to expect, even though most of them won't be in Concert Choir. The tryouts are on the 9th of March. I suggested to Julia that she email you about it, but I don't think she has done so, which is why I'm asking you for her.

One more thing, a bit of a spiritual experience for me. I was saying my personal prayer just before bed the other night. As I knelt there, I thought of all of the things I wanted to ask for, and I thought of several blessings. Then I felt like I should say a "thank you" prayer, of only gratitude that night. So I did. I tried to be grateful in all things, and focus only on how thankful I was for things. At first some of the things were not quite right, like when you say something like, "thank you for the good sleep, if only it had been a full 8 hours I would be happy" or "thank you for this nice house, it would be even better if it could have new paint", stuff like that. But then I really focused on being grateful, without any qualifications at all. It was such a humbling and wonderful experience!

I've also written in my journal a couple of times this week, which is a really good experience, as well.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you, Phillip. I love you, and I miss you, and I'm so pleased you're serving the Lord like this!

Love,
Mom