



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

Email from Mom--Happy Thanksgiving!

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 21, 2011 at 9:47 AM

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

Cc: John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Hello, Dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

I'm listening to a Pandora radio station now, of Christmas music. I know it's before Thanksgiving, but Pandora sent an email offering it, and I had to try it out, and it's really nice. You can choose the kind of music you like (classical, country, rock, R&B, etc), and make your own radio station. Or, you choose an artist, and they give you others that are similar. So, that's the background music for my letter to you. And the guys are working on the new house in Beverly's yard, so I hear hammering from there, too. I guess the usual Monday sounds.

I talked to Sandy yesterday about the Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday. She had 38 coming when I talked to her, and that was before she invited the Hongs. I also don't know if Laura Tibbets and her boys are coming, but I would imagine so. It will be a large group. As Julia said this morning, half the ward is going to the Noels, and the other half to the Coles. Except for people like Sadie Olsen and her family, who will have just the four of them, and like Garrett and his family, who will be visiting family in MA. I know they don't celebrate many of the American holidays in Brazil, but I'm sure there are ones that are particular to Brazil that you would celebrate, aren't there? Probably your companions would be well aware of them. So even if there is no trick-or-treating, or Thanksgiving dinner, I'm guessing there are feasts for other occasions.

I talked to Shelly Scott yesterday, and she said they had received letters from you, and they really enjoyed them. She said you talked to Mike about companions. She also figured out that you stand out wherever you go in Brazil, because of your height, and because of your coloring. So it would be easy to be an example, there, I'm guessing!

Here is one thing I was going to tell you about, but forgot last week: Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Computers, passed away recently, from cancer. There was quite a bit in the news about him, and about his legacy. He had a huge effect on the world as we know it today. But one thing that was interesting to me is what his last words were. Here is from an article that was written (On October 31st):

The eulogy of Steve Jobs's by his sister, novelist Mona Simpson, was published in [The New York Times](#) over the weekend, offering a touching look into the late Apple co-founder's life and last days.

The speech, in a few deft strokes, sketches the outline of man who never stopped learning or trying to move forward. Simpson said that in the last year of his life he was still working on projects and reading about new subjects, including the paintings of Mark Rothko.

Jobs called Simpson, who delivered the speech at Jobs's Oct. 16 memorial service, on Oct. 4 asking her to come to his house and speaking "like someone whose luggage was already strapped onto the vehicle, who was already on the beginning of his journey, even as he was sorry, truly deeply sorry, to be leaving us."

Jobs faded over the day and by 2 p.m. — just hours after Apple wrapped its iPhone 4S event — could no longer be roused.

Hours before he slipped into unconsciousness, however, he did leave some enigmatic final words, which Simpson wrote in all capitals letters in her speech.

"Before embarking, he'd looked at his sister Patty, then for a long time at his children, then at his life's partner, Laurene, and then over their shoulders past them. Steve's final words were: OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW."

I wonder what he was looking at, what he was seeing. I just think it's neat, neat how people can be taught from the Spirit World. I'm imagining that's what was happening for him. So, missionary work is going on all the time, here, and beyond the veil, and through the veil.

I am still getting together with Anne Senter, and I keep forgetting to tell you "hello" from them, every time I write. So, now I'm saying it. "Hello" from the Senters!

We have piano lessons on Mondays this year, so I'll be practicing more in a bit, in preparation. One of the pieces I'm working on is Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata". I've done the first and second movements, and am beginning the third movement, that really fast one that you do so well. I think of you whenever I play it! (Or try to play it, anyway!) I've only had it for a few weeks, so it's still brand new. We'll see how it goes. Be sure to play it when you have a chance, the next time you are around a

piano for a minute or two. Also, maybe you can play a hymn or two, work on them, just to be prepared to play sometimes. Julia's working on hymns. She has been taking her turn at Mutual, apparently. Now that the McFaddens are in CA, Emily is not there to play, so the other kids have to develop their talents. Julia has been stepping up to the plate to do her part, and I'm very pleased with her, and how she is trying to do that. Heather also plays the piano in her ward, though she said it is not a calling. It's just that she is the only one who can play, so she has to.

Dad already told you about the chili cookoff. I was so surprised to win! I changed one thing in the recipe at the last minute, putting in a can of black beans instead of the kidney beans the recipe calls for. I think it was a good change. I'm quite liking black beans lately. Which reminds me, Kemper Ure did black beans to eat with rice, for her entry, and I loved it. She promised to give me the recipe, so I'll remind her today. My wining with this simple recipe sort of reminds me of the story of the new bride whose husband loved his mother's chili. So, every week, the bride would make a recipe of chili. Each week the husband would say, "That's good, but it's not the same as my Mom's chili." (I don't know why she didn't just call her Mother-in-Law to ask for the recipe, but then the story wouldn't be as good!) Anyway, week after week went by, and finally the bride was tired of trying, only to be told her chili couldn't measure up. She had run out of ideas, and out of recipes. So, finally, she opened a couple of cans of store-bought chili and heated them in a saucepan, throwing away the cans so her husband would not know. She served him dinner that night, and he took a bite, and his face lit up. "That's it!", he cried. "That's just like my mother's chili! You've done it! It tastes just like I remember from growing up!"

A couple of news items: Russell Banks is getting married in May. He just got engaged, and Claudia said he will be bringing his bride-to-be to NH on Friday to meet the family, so they will have their Thanksgiving on Friday or Saturday. She'll find out details of how he proposed when they arrive. She said she asked Paul if he minded having waiting for Thanksgiving, and he told her no, it just means he can have more food!

The other is a bit sad, and I have not yet talked to my brother to find out more, though I discovered a message on my cell phone this morning, when he tried to call last night. Anyway, apparently Savannah, who is in her last year of High School, was engaged to be married in June. She posted on FB that she is no longer engaged, and also that she is pregnant. I'm not sure what her plans are, at this point, and she may not know, herself. Yesterday I went to an LDS Family Services Advisory Board Meeting for my calling, and one of the things we discussed was how Family Services helps out birth mothers and adoptive families. I'm hoping Savannah will do what's best for the baby, which may mean giving it up for adoption. But we'll see. This saddens me, but does not surprise me, given some of her choices in the past. I know Stanford and Robin have been very concerned for her, for a long time. Savannah's

early years, before they got her, have influenced her in ways their good upbringing of her could not overcome.

Dad also told you about attending the Temple with Heather on Saturday. I liked going together, and I liked going in the morning, when I had a chance of staying awake for the session! It will be nice to be able to go with you again in a year. I know Karen Ogden went with Melanie and Mike the day after she returned from Brazil. She also went with her Mission President and his wife the day before she left, but, of course, their mission has a temple in it. It's so nice to focus on things of eternity like that.

Well, Phillip, I love you, as always. And I pray for you. When we have the missionaries to dinner here, I do it for them, and for us, but I also do it for you. I will feed other people's boys, because they can't, and other people are feeding my boy! And we're all blessed for it! What a blessing to have the gospel! The Church is true. I was thinking this morning of five years ago, when we were at Dartmouth with Stanford. Uncle Stanford and Aunt Robin had flown out to be here, and they drove back to Nashua with you and Andrew the day before Thanksgiving. Robin told me later that you and Andrew were talking in the back seat, and Andrew said something like, "All of those things we learned at church, and at home, they're all true, aren't they?" And he's right. They're all true! That makes everything worth it all, even the hard things.

Love,
Mom