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A letter from Dad: 12 Dec 2011

John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Sun, Dec 11, 2011 at 10:38 PM

Reply-To: john@larsen-family.us

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

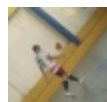
Cc: Joyce Larsen <joyce@larsen-family.us>

FACEBOOK FRIEND REQUESTS:

**Vinicius Kayan** wants to be friends with you on Facebook.

SMK

85 friends · 1 photo · 1 Wall post

**Lucas Saldanha** wants to be friends with you on Facebook.

243 friends · 29 photos · 42 Wall posts · 2 groups

Hello Dear Phillip,

Well, I made it home from Egypt without problems. I'm sitting in the Family History Center at church right now. I'm working on the last new FHC computer. This is the one that I zorked before going to Egypt. I stopped the OEM setup process in an early step and after that it wouldn't boot anymore. Dell sent to my home a replacement hard drive so that I could swap it for the original. I tried that today, but the new hard drive does something bad to the machine so that it doesn't find any SATA devices (hard drives and CD drives). So, I put the original back in and at least it gets detected. Fortunately, while I was in Egypt the Family History Department in SLC sent us two Windows 7 update DVDs. It looks like that is going to work. I'm reinstalling everything from that DVD. It hasn't completed yet, so I don't know if it will work.

So, enough of that mumbo jumbo. I remember when you received your visa and then flew down to Brazil. I felt sorry for how long the trip was going to take you knowing that there were long hours sitting in airports. Well, I have now been on the receiving end of such an arrangement. My body clock is all messed up, probably much more than yours was when you went to Brazil. Egypt is 7 hours ahead of Nashua. The trip back was hard. The day started out at 6:30 AM because we were on site for that day. Then we went back to the hotel. I had to leave at midnight for the airport. Bogdan

and John Maher ended up staying another three days. In fact, as I glance at the clock now, they are probably just about ready to land at Logan. My 3:00 AM flight to Frankfurt got me there about 6:00 AM Frankfurt time. I then waited in the airport until my 12:00 noon flight. I tried sleeping on some benches, but that didn't work very well. I was very thirsty. At first I planned to just wait for my flight to get anything, but I got really thirsty. I ended up buying a .75 liter bottle of water from a kiosk in the airport for \$6. I've never spent so much for water in my life! I valued every single drop.

The flight back took longer because of strong head winds. It was almost 4:30 PM by the time the taxi dropped me off at TCC. I had to take a cab to TCC because I had ridden to the airport with John Maher figuring we'd be coming back together. My car was left at TCC. I got there and ended up talking with people and reported on all the problems and adventures until about 5:30. I then drove home. By that time I had been up for about 44 hours with only a couple hours of terrible sleep on the plane.

It felt so good to be back in the United States where lane markers on the road really mean something. I showered, dressed, and headed up to band rehearsal at Merrimack Middle School. After that I went home, ate dinner finally, and then went to bed close to 11:00 PM. I had been up over 48 hours. I slept until 12:30 PM the next day, Friday.

The annual TCC company party was Friday at 3:00 PM. We got there about 3:30 PM. It was a nice party, but held in a different location this year. Scupper Jacks closed in February this year so a new location was required. It was held at the Paparazzi in Concord. The room was too small for the number of people so there wasn't much moving around talking to people. The food was good. I was still somewhat blasted from the travel. I did not win the 42 inch LED TV, but I did win Amazon's latest "Kindle Fire", their color tablet eReader. Now I own a Nook and a Kindle. (As I write this I haven't actually received the Kindle. I'll get that at work on Monday.) I read up on the specs. It's not an iPad, but it does play video, browse the web, does email, is an eReader, plays audio files, etc. It will be interesting to see how I like it. The party ran longer than previous years and I missed the dress rehearsal for Saturday's concert.

I'm struggling to get my sleep cycle back. I've been told by more than one person to allow a day per timezone to get back to normal. So I should expect it to take about a week. Friday night was hard. I got about 90 minutes of sleep and woke up around 1:00 AM. I didn't get back to sleep until around 5:00 AM. I tossed and turned. Then I slept until 9:00 AM. Saturday night I woke up after 3 hours at 3:20 AM and ended up reading for over an hour and then tossing and turning. I finally got to sleep because I woke up with the alarm at 7:30 AM to get ready for church. It's just going to be tough going for a few days.

Our daily routine in Egypt was about the same each day with some variation in start

and end times. They don't eat lunch where we were working, so we also didn't eat lunch. We just worked straight through. They drink lots of coffee and tea, and there is a lot of smoking going on. The room where we were working was in between two office areas and the smoke would float back and forth. After several days exposure to all that smoke, plus the exhaust fumes during our hour long commutes and the increasing smog everyday started accumulating in my body to the point where I was feeling sick. Plus I developed diarrhea around Tuesday, which is just starting to clear up.

Near the end of our time there they once again asked what we would like to drink. It was mentioned that I don't drink coffee or tea. Colonel Kamal asked why I don't drink coffee or tea. I said it is against my religion. He looked somewhat puzzled and asked what religion that was. I said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints... the Mormon Church." He said he had never heard of it before and also hadn't ever heard of a religion that forbade drinking of coffee or tea. He said that religion would never work in Egypt. It was good for a laugh. However, it made me ponder the situation of Heavenly Father's children in that part of the world and why we are all born where we are. Someday we will understand with perfect clarity, as Elder Quentin L Cook said in October Conference.

(This Windows 7 Installation is taking a very very long time....)

This has been a very busy weekend. The annual Nativity Pageant was Saturday and Sunday. Joyce and Rachel went to that after the MCA Concert. I ended up going home to change and never did make it to the pageant. I've seen it every year for 23 years. Bradford came over and I just stayed home. On Saturday I got the tree down from the attic and set it up including lights.

Sunday was regular church meetings. In the evening is the annual candle light ceremony sponsored by Compassionate Friends. This will be our third time going to that. We will stand up and raise our candles when Stanford's picture is shown. It is an emotional evening for me.... We're back from the candle lighting service. I scanned the picture from the program. This was taken a previous year from the altar of the church looking back towards the front doors. This year we were on the left about half way back. Rachel went again with us this year and then we dropped her off at her dorm afterwards.

Well... it is getting late here. I'm feeling kind of tired and that is a good thing. Maybe I'll sleep longer tonight. I'll be waking up around 5:45 AM to go to the gym. That will certainly get my body headed in the right direction.

I love you. I'm thankful you have this opportunity to serve a full time mission. It is a rare thing actually if you think about it. Only 52,000 full time missionaries right now

out of 7 billion people. How awesome is that!

Love,

Dad

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John R Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

<http://larsen-family.us>



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