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Email from Mom, 30 January 2011

Joyce Larsen <linenlady9@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 30, 2012 at 9:48 AM

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

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

Hello, my Dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

I think it's interesting that it used to be that the first names of missionaries was almost a secret, and a ward member would only find out if he/she saw it on the missionary's scriptures or something. Now, we even have the whole name of the missionary on our ward's site on lds.org, so any member could find it out easily. I guess it used to be thought that these young men would not be taken seriously as missionaries unless they were only known as "Elder" somebody. You still are Elder Larsen, but at least those who have friended you on FB know your first name as well. Just an interesting thought to begin my letter :).

Dad told you a little about the Seminary broadcast that we saw last night. I thought it was very interesting. They showed a group of kids in Peru who leave their homes at 4:30 am and ride in a canoe down the river to get to Seminary, which starts at 6am. Amazing that they take an hour and a half every morning to get there! They will be blessed, and are being blessed spiritually for their sacrifice. Not that people who sacrifice less are not also being blessed. It's interesting how each person sacrifices something, and is blessed. And not all are equal. But all are blessed. They said in the broadcast that the first Seminary was held across the street from Granite High School, which I already knew. Well, guess where I graduated . . . Granite High School! I went to 9th and 10th grade at Stuttgart American High School, then we moved to UT, and I went to 11th and 12th grade at Granite High School (Granite High Farmers, red and blue were our colors!). I went to Release Time Seminary, which means that I had, I think, seven classes through the day, and one of them was either a Study Hall or Release Time (because we were released from the school to be able to go across the street for Seminary). I only did early morning things a few times when the had a special fireside (or morningside?), which was always good, but always seemed SOOOOO early to me! Now that I get up daily at 5:25, a 6am class every day does not seem quite so overwhelming. And what a blessing it is! Jeana Lopez-Carrasco said today that she was so proud of all of her Seminary students who came last night to the broadcast. And Sis. Noel commented on how "tight" our Seminary kids are. I guess the Hollis-Brookline kids don't have quite the same bond or something. I think Sis. Lopez' class is special, and I think it has a lot to do with her. Maybe the Hollis-Brookline kids are just tired or something!

Heather and I went to the Temple on Saturday morning, then ate lunch in the cafeteria (complete with Temple cookies!), then went to a yarn shop about 15 minutes away from the Temple. It was a nice day for us, and nice to spend time together, especially when we got very lost on the way home! But the sun was shining, and we weren't rushed. I am looking forward to going to the Temple with you, too, when you get back. I ended up standing in the prayer circle even though Dad didn't go to the Temple with us. They needed an extra sister, and no one else was volunteering, so I did it. Then Heather and I spent some time in the Celestial Room, and we whispered about some scriptures, too. There is one, 2 Nephi 10:2, which I showed her. I didn't remember the reference, but I did remember it was in one of the Nephi's, and it was on a left-hand page, where the chapter begins just before. (This is why I prefer to read scriptures in a book and not electronically!) We talked a little about Bradford, whose name I put in the Temple each time I go (I actually put all of you kids, but I'm thinking especially of how he needs a testimony.) Cheryl Potter showed us this scripture one day in the Sunday School class she taught, and let us know to not worry about our kids who may stray from the Gospel, but to just love them, and pray for them, and do our best. I also remember one time when Bro. Henkel talked about his brother-in-law, who came back to the church after 40 years. I remember being overwhelmed, on the one hand, that it would take so long, and impatient to have Bradford be active RIGHT NOW! On the other hand, it gives me hope, to know we just have to be patient, and love him. And one day he will return.

I went Visiting Teaching on Thursday morning, and I'll go again this afternoon for an hour or so. It's a challenge to go with Jenn, because of the logistics of working with her twins. But last week Casey had time off, so we were able to visit the two sisters (Kendall Hood, and Stephanie Roth) at their homes. Other times, we all meet at Jenn's house. Or I go alone sometimes. But it works.

Our weather has been very strange this winter, with many spring-like days throughout January. I'm not sure if we'll get a real winter (with snow and ice and such), and though it's fun to have snow, it does not hurt my feelings at all to not have to shovel or scrape or have things cancelled or drive on icy roads! When I saw that Seminary Broadcast and the kids in Peru in their canoes, my first thought was, "What do they do in the winter, when it's all icy?", then I quickly realized, "Wait, this is not New England, but Peru!"

Ok, here is my final thought for today. Well, not my final thought (I'm sure I'll have many thoughts today!), but you know what I mean! This is from Leslie's email to Ian, that I received this morning. I sent it to Heather, for her new calling, also I'm thinking of sending it to my RS Presidency, as we prepare lessons for the upcoming Ward Conferences. Here is what she wrote:

"We had a combined Priesthood/Relief Society meeting today (5th Sunday). The Bishop taught about teaching. He said that President McKay, who was a teacher before he became a General Authority, said there were 4 things good teachers need to to to prepare to teach. 1. Know the objective. 2. Know what is to be taught. 3. Prepare visual aids. 4. Organize the lesson. Jacob Floyd commented that one of his Institute teachers serves on the church curriculum committee. One of his big frustrations is teacher who think they need to teach everything in the lesson. They're supposed to pick and choose based upon the promptings of the Spirit. The Bishop also said we should search, ponder, and pray as we are preparing to teach."

Well, Phillip, dear Elder Larsen, I love you very much. I'm so thrilled you are serving a mission, and feel the Spirit on a regular basis! (I hope you're writing down your spiritual experiences.) The Church is true, and we are so blessed to have the Restored Gospel on the Earth today, and to be instruments in the hands of the Lord in bringing it to people. Here is another scripture for you: 1 Nephi 13:37. This is you!

Love,
Mom