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Email from Mom, 2-6-12

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

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

Hello, my dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

Here it is, one of my favorite days of the week, when I get to email my own missionary! I love this.

We watched *Groundhog Day* on Thursday, with a fire in the fireplace, and Heather came over, as did Adam. I made chili for dinner, or rather, Julia made it. When I had asked her what we should fix for dinner, she said "groundhog", but I was fresh out, so we did chili instead :). I'm having her doing more and more of the cooking. I want her to know what she is doing in the kitchen and be able to take care of herself at college and on her mission. She did the chili, and as she opened cans to put the things into the crockpot, she said it seemed unfair that we should have won that contest back in November, when all we did was open a bunch of cans! She has had trouble with can openers sometimes, and I just bought a new one, which seems to work well. I helped her with a couple of the cans. And I teased her that starving artists are starving, not because of lack of money, but because they don't know how to open cans! She has been doing quite a bit of artwork lately, last semester for her art class, and the other day for a watercolor for Kayla Caron, who is in Seminary. Julia is an artist, for sure, and I'm teaching her so she won't starve! I think I've told you about Kayla, who is a recent convert, and is Rachel's age. She is in the Nashua 2nd Ward, and serves as the YW Secretary. She comes to Seminary because she never learned about the gospel growing up, and wants to now. I really like Kayla. I got to know her a bit when she and I were chaperoning the Youth Conference service project together last summer.

The weather here has been so spring-like, for ages. It has been really nice. A few cold days, but often unseasonably warm. People say it is not cold enough to kill the germs, so people are sick with colds and stomach bugs, but not us yet, thankfully. On Groundhog Day one of the newscasters said we will have six more weeks of winter because the groundhog saw his shadow, but that we haven't really had winter yet. I certainly don't mind it that I don't have to think about shoveling or scraping or driving in the ice and snow. I bought new boots and have not worn them, not even once. I'm sure you would think it was cold, though, compared to Brasil!

Heather and I went on outings on Saturday, to the Cozy Tea Cart, where we bought some herbal tea, and to the Woolery, a yarn shop in Wilton, which was having a Super Bowl Sale. Julia had gone in the morning for a rehearsal for *Savior of the World*, which is the Stake Play this year. She wants to be in it, but not have the total time commitment that major parts have, so this is a good fit for her. This week she will be in Nashua Sings!, and she has tried out already for Concert Choir for next year, and has made it in.

Patty and her family left on Friday morning for a Caribbean cruise until the 14th. James and Sarah had their wedding yesterday (yes, on Sunday) in FL. He and Sarah were actually married months ago. It is a little odd, actually. She is not a member of the church, but Patty told me James had kept praying and kept feeling like it was right that they were married. So, they got married, basically eloped. Sarah comes from a family of evangelical Christians, who are not thrilled she is marrying a Mormon, thought they like James, himself, just fine. They actually wanted them to live together first, which I just don't understand. If they are so devout in their own religion, why would they want their daughter to live with someone? But James would have none of that, so they were married. But Sarah's parents had their hearts set on a big wedding, which James and Sarah did not want, so they pleased the parents by having this cruise, which is fun for James and Sarah, and pleases the parents, too. So they had the actual legal wedding months ago, and a ceremony yesterday to please her parents. Julia and I are taking care of Mary, the Ogden's cat. Also, Dominique Favey is doing some days of cat care. Julia really has a gift with animals, and really enjoys them.

Wednesday is Heather's birthday, remember, and she will be 30! Can you imagine? We will celebrate probably on the 19th, because of Dad's trip to Egypt. I'm planning to go down to meet her for lunch on Wednesday. It has been very nice to not really have to worry about weather when we plan things this winter. It's nice to just . . . go.

Yesterday was a really good meeting block at church. We sure have some good youth in our ward. Sadie, Garrett, Jaret, Niah, and Gwen all bore their testimonies. And there were so many people coming up that the meeting went over by about 15 minutes, and Bro. Hann had to get up and say nobody else could come up. One thing Mike Scott Sr. said about missionary work is that all we have to do to share the gospel is to put a word in, and bring it to people's attention, and the Lord does the rest. Shelly Scott gave a "missionary minute" in Relief Society, which she is doing about once a month. This month's challenge is to hand out pass-along cards. And this month's experience is that the new member, Amanda, who is a YW who was baptized about two weeks ago, is the primary caretaker for her mother, who is dying of cancer, and has about two months to live. So we're trying to think, as a family, how we can support Amanda. She lives with her grandparents, and doesn't have much family or other support since she joined the church. So she really needs the members.

Dad said the new missionary in our ward, Elder Godfrey, was last in New Haven CT, and knew Jason and Mandy Wallace (who are now in upstate New York). What a small world it is! We will get to know Elder Godfrey a bit better when they come for dinner later this month. Yesterday I wrote our names on their calendar for the 18th, but then when I got home I found that Beverly is having a birthday party for her sister, Dori, on that day. I think it would be good to go to that. So I will reschedule the Elders for the 25th. It's interesting that when I put our names on the 18th, I did not feel entirely comfortable about the date, but did it anyway. I think it's really interesting to see how often we receive promptings about even little things like that, and I don't even recognize them sometimes, except in retrospect. But I'm learning!

Phillip, I am so glad you're doing so well on your mission! We pray for you every day, and we love you, and we miss you. The time is flying by, though, and I'm trying to enjoy every moment of your mission right along with you! I love the weekly emails, and love how I'm more aware of missionary opportunities and missionary work. I try to help out the missionaries here when I can, and make sure to greet them, and to also be welcoming at baptisms. The Church is true! What a blessing that is to have it!

Love,
Mom