



John Larsen <theclaw56@gmail.com>

Happy Presidents' Day! Email from Mom, 20 February 2012

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

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

Hello, my Dear Elder Phillip Larsen,

Happy Monday! Happy P-Day! I feel like I've partying all weekend, and now I get to recover. Well, not really, but that's how it feels. I went to Craft and Chat on Saturday morning, which was fun, but it took about an hour to drive there. Then there was a birthday party for Dori, Beverly's sister, at Beverly's little cottage in Amherst in the afternoon. I had scheduled the missionaries to come to dinner on Saturday night, but I rescheduled them for this coming Saturday, because I thought it was important to go to see Beverly and help her celebrate Dori's birthday. Beverly is looking good, all things considered. But she keeps losing weight, and she still has a diagnosis of terminal cancer. She said that five months ago she was told she had 3-6 months to live. Now she was given a new diagnosis of 3-6 months. So, she's hanging in there for now. I asked her what I could bring for the party, and she said ginger ale or fruit juice. So I brought both, and it was a good thing I did, because everybody else brought (and drank) wine. However, the company was good, and the food was good, and it was a nice gathering. I'll need to be sure to visit with Beverly every week or so, for as long as I can.

Yesterday we had Ward Conferences, the first of the year. There were three of them, so the Stake Presidency split up, also the Auxiliary Presidencies split up. I went to Littleton. I didn't end up teaching after, because of a misunderstanding, but I did give a spiritual thought. As usual, once I finally have things figured out, about what to say, I'll be finished, I'm sure. It went all right, but I didn't feel it was my best. But I will have other chances. I have already been invited to speak for the Relief Society Birthday Party in Lowell on the 15th of March, so I guess there's a chance to speak/teach right there. In Littleton, they had all of the missionaries serving from their ward on the back of the program, the way we do in our ward. In our ward, you are currently the only one, but will shortly be joined by Amy Taylor. In Littleton, there are 11 full-time missionaries, with four more with callings in hand! Pres. Hangen's son will be serving in Russia, leaving in June. And one of the upcoming missionaries will be serving in Brazil, but I don't know which mission, or remember which person, either.

On Thursday I had the chance to give service at the Bishop's Storehouse. It was really a good experience. My counselor, Reta Brown, decided at the last minute to go

with me, so we drove down together. I drove to her house to pick her up, then she drove us down to the Storehouse. There were about six full-time missionaries there, serving for the afternoon. They said they go there every Thursday, and some of them on Saturdays, too. It was really nice to visit with them. I helped fill a couple of food orders while I was there. That means I would push a large grocery cart, and I had a clipboard in hand with the food order on it, and would tell the other person (both times it was Reta Brown, but usually it is the person coming to pick up the food order), and she would get the things as I would read them off. Then we would sign the food order, and off the people would go with the food. Other things we did were to take giant boxes of peanuts (the kind you eat, not packing peanuts), and measure them out into 2-pound bags, so they could be given out to people who came in for their orders. Then we took boxes with 40 rolls of toilet paper, and put ten rolls into each bag and packed them back again. And we ate lunch that had been prepared by a lady who comes each week to help out, and I washed dishes, and swept the floor. I talked to the missionaries about their experiences in Worcester, which is where the Storehouse is, and mentally compared them to your experiences. Very different missions. They have problems with people setting up appointments, then not being there when the Elders go to the appointment. Do you have that problem very often? Then we drove home, with one of the food orders in Reta's van, because it was for a person in her ward, whom she visit teaches. I helped her deliver the order to the person, then I drove home. We only volunteered for four hours, but the whole thing pretty much filled up the day. It was tiring, but it was good.

What kinds of things do you do for service projects? I know some missions have regular service things, like working in a Soup Kitchen, or in the Bishop's Storehouse. Do you have to come up with different things every week? Do you have a certain number of service hours to do, or how does it work?

I just read this morning one of the Conference talks from the October 2011 Conference, called *The Opportunity of a Lifetime*, about full-time missionary service. I'm sure you heard it when it was given, and have maybe read it since? But I thought it was really good. I never heard it because it was in the Priesthood Session, but I liked how it talks about the blessings you receive from serving a mission. I will send you a copy of this talk, too, in the box, which will go out in a day or two (I know I keep saying that, but sending out mail is this week's priority for me). Here is one part that I thought was really neat: "Long before leaving our earthly home to serve a full-time mission, we left heavenly parents to fulfill our mortal mission. We have a Father in Heaven, who knows us--our strengths and weaknesses, our abilities and potential. He knows which mission president and companions and which members and investigators we need in order to become the missionary, the husband and father, and the priesthood holder we are capable of becoming.

Prophets, seers, and revelators assign missionaries under the direction and influence of the Holy Ghost. Inspired mission presidents direct transfers every six

weeks and quickly learn that the Lord knows exactly where He wants each missionary to serve."

There is more, so I'll send you the whole talk. Did we send you the Conference issue? Maybe you have it already. If so, it's on page 50.

Anyway, I liked how it reinforces the teaching about how inspired the Mission President is when he does the transfers, as well as how inspired the General Authorities are when the calls are made.

Well, today I'll do home things, and also go to Heather's apartment to help her with cleaning a bit. I've been to several homes recently that inspire me on what I want to do for ours, and I hope I can keep the inspiration and motivation going, and not become discouraged!

I love your emails, Phillip, and I love hearing your testimony. The church is true, and is led by inspired leaders, and we are blessed to have the gift of the Holy Ghost to guide us daily in our lives. I love you! I miss you, but I know you're exactly where you are supposed to be right now. Keep on keeping on!

Love,
Mom