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Email from Mom, 7 Nov 2011

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

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

Hello, Dear Elder Phillip Larsen!

First, to answer your questions: my Portuguese is coming along, though slowly. I don't work on it every single day, and sometimes my brain just won't take in any more. I try to listen to each lesson several times. Right now the lessons have to do with telling time and doing the numbers. Karen Ogden said it really helped her when she would read it as well as listen, so she could picture the word, too. I think it might be time for me to do that, as well. I have *The Everything Learning Brazilian Portuguese Book*, which has a bunch of written things. I'm sure Lucy could help with that, too. I need to call her. I haven't talked to her since I saw her at the grocery store, but I will plan on doing it soon. For some reason phone calls are hard for me. But I will do it!

For Beverly, I really think you need to write to her. Really. I think you could tell her about the lady you saw who looked just like her, maybe be a bit newsy about stuff you see and an experience you think she would like to hear about, and bear your testimony about the gospel, maybe about how much Heavenly Father loves us, the things that would really uplift and encourage her at this time. I'm thinking she knows already about our testimonies of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith, so you could focus on the Plan of Salvation instead, especially the part about an afterlife. Pray before writing the letter, and the words will come. Oh, and also include stuff about growing up near her, maybe a memory or two and express appreciation and love to her. The time is growing short to do that in this life, so please do make it a priority. You don't even need to say anything about working in her yard, unless you want to say one sentence. But I already sent her that bit you said in an email to us about how you wondered what she meant about what she wrote in your book, and how you wished you had done better work in her yard. So, just focus on the positive things, and let her know you're thinking about her. I need to call her, too. I meant to visit her, but I have a bit of a cold, which is no problem for going places, like to church. I just be careful to wash my hands a lot, and to not sneeze on anybody. But her immune system is shot so I can't visit her now and risk making her sick, but I could call.

Which talk did you read by Elder Bednar, about praying with real intent? And which temple will the wife of your one investigator go to? Which is the closest? I liked the

font you used for "Happy Halloween"! And I liked hearing about your companion! It sounds like you are a good match with your companions. You've gotten along well with all of them, haven't you? I think they are lucky to have you for a companion. Well, blessed, is a better word to describe it than lucky.

Dad showed you pictures of the storm aftermath. It seems Nashua was pretty much at the center of it all. So we got it worse than, say, Keene. Hudson got it pretty badly, too. Sis. Lopez still does not have internet or landline phone, and she had a big tree fall on her car, which dented the roof. But, she said it is the "poopy car, not the Seminary car, so we were blessed!". She is very fun. I'm so glad Julia has her for a Seminary teacher. We were without landline phone, cell phone, or power for a day. Then the landline came back. The newspaper said that in Wilton even the police and fire stations were without communication, and they had to rely on ham radios. And they posted a sign on 101A that if you have an emergency to go to the fire department, because nobody could call 911. There was a telephone pole with streetlight on it that had fallen across the road on Sagamore, completely blocking traffic. Everybody had to make a detour for a few days or so, until they replaced it. Several areas, like the end of Cherokee by the Deiberts, and Harris Road, were down to one lane because of branches and wires blocking things. But now people have piles by the road, ready to be picked up, and wires are back and fixed, and life is back to normal. We had Trick-or-Treating last night, and it was weird to have it on November 6th, but it worked out. We had 42 kids. Heather enjoyed opening the door for the kids. We had a fire in the fireplace, and candles lit, and Julia read, and Heather and I knitted and talked and had herbal tea and cake. It was very cozy. Dad went to hometeach the Carls. They had about 15 kids at their house. I need to get Julia some candy, because she was bemoaning the lack of loot for herself. But, she had nobody to Trick-or-Treat with, and had only sort of thought of a costume. She wished she was a twin, so she could trick-or-treat with someone. Or wished for younger siblings whom she could take out. Oh, well, someone has to be the youngest!

Harry, the big furry cat of the Ogdens, died on Thursday. He had gotten sick, Patty said the vet said it was from fleas that had bitten him so much he lost blood. They thought he was getting better, but then he took a turn for the worse and quit eating and quit drinking. They finally had to put him down, and afterwards, the vet looked at his body closely, looked in his mouth and at his eyes, and they were all yellow, from liver damage. So it was something he could not have recovered from, sadly. Patty said Stephen cried and cried. And she said Harry is buried in the back yard. She said there is a tree for each cat, pretty much. It is sad, but that is the sad thing about pet ownership, that you someday have to say goodbye.

On Thursday night I went to Stake Council, and there was a missionary report at the start, from Logan Yarmo. He gave a really good report. He has a strong testimony,

very spiritual, and had a lot of neat experiences on his mission (which was the Colorado Denver North, I think). One thing he said is that his mission leader challenged them all to read the Book of Mormon quickly, and mark in red (so they must have started with new copies or something) the words of Christ or references to Christ. Logan said it really increased his testimony of both the Book of Mormon, and of Christ. And every page had red on it. The Book of Mormon truly is another witness of Christ.

Dad told you we had missionaries to dinner on Saturday. I always love having them over. Especially now, it feels like, since I can't feed my own son, I can feed someone else's, and someone in Brazil is feeding my son. So it all works out. We had Hawaiian Haystacks, which is a girls camp favorite, and the Elders liked it, too. I also made a Halloween cake, just in a 9x13 pan, but it was a fun and festive dessert. Elder Jones gave a wonderful spiritual thought about listening to the Spirit, and a missionary experience his Dad had in the past couple of months. Bradford was there, too. He has been coming on Saturdays for about three weeks. It is nice. He plans to get together with Amy anyway, after she is finished teaching piano lessons at 7pm, so he comes a few hours earlier to do laundry (which means I need to be sure Heather and I are finished with laundry before he comes). I'm glad to see him each week, and a couple of times we've had a nice dinner. Also, about the missionaries, the Nashua 2nd Ward Elders are Spanish-speaking. We had them to dinner for General Conference, along with the Nashua 1st Ward Elders, so we got to know them a little bit. Also, I was at Patty's house last week when she fed them, so it was nice to visit with them again. Anyway, one of the Elders, Elder Campos, is from Peru, and actually had to learn English in the MTC for his mission. He still struggles with it, much the same way you struggled with Portuguese when you first got to Brazil. I'm not sure how long Elder Campos has been out. Anyway, he is improving a lot, but still has a hard time. He got a new companion last week, who is from New Zealand. And he told Elder Jones he could not understand his companion! The accent was too strong for him, I guess. Maybe he'll learn English with a New Zealand accent!

Rachel's birthday was on Wednesday. I posted greetings to her on Facebook, with the promise of a cake and candle race. So, probably at Thanksgiving weekend we'll do that. I have a few little things for presents for her, too. We haven't seen her for a few weeks. I like not having to do all of the driving when we were bringing her back and forth, but I miss seeing her. It's strange to not have her around this time of year.

Well, it looks like I beat you this time to emails! We're already planning your Christmas box, and will be mailing it, hopefully this week. I'll go back through your emails to see what things you have requested (I've been keeping a running list, but will go through them again to be sure). Is there anything else you can think of that you need/want? How about socks? I won't try to mail you shoes, but was just wondering if you have gotten any new ones, or if the ones you brought are still usable? Oh, and

one more question: have you taken any of the anti-malaria medicine? Or do you not need to yet? How do you know when you should take it?

The Church is true, and we are so blessed to have the gospel. And what a wonderful experience that you get to have, to teach the people of Brazil! Continue to be open to spiritual experiences, daily. And continue to love and savor each day! I love you, Phillip.

Love,
Mom