

Dear Family:

25 January 2000

I begin this a little earlier in the month than usual, taking advantage of the unexpected Nor'easter (blizzard) that has me, along with millions of others along the Eastern seaboard, homebound.

Other than quitting my job, starting a new one, and making a very disappointing appearance on ABC's "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" (my winnings were reduced to \$32,000 after I missed the million-dollar brain-buster: "In which U.S. state is Butte, Montana located?"), it's been quite an uneventful month. Relax. I'll find some way of filling the page.

I've now been in the employ of KPMG for 8 days and still have no idea what the K or the G stands for. I also remain relatively certain that a poll of the firm's 26,000 US employees (92,000 worldwide) wouldn't turn up more than a dozen or so who do know. Though technically a member of the travel-intensive "consumer assets team", I was hired with the understanding that other teams would borrow me on occasion. My first assignment has been one of those occasions. I've been snatched up by a team working on cash flow models for the Federal Housing Administration. So, rather than being sent off to some exotic distant location (e.g. Milwaukee), I'm still living at home, and back riding Metro into town on a daily basis. Only instead of riding to the award-winning edifice that is the World Bank, I now ride to the architectural wonder (i.e. it's a wonder that human beings could conceive of something so ugly) that is the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. I'll be there at least until the end of the month, and, the way things seem to be going, likely longer. I'm still getting used to the wacky world of government money. I conducted a sensitivity analysis revealing \$30 million of potential exposure, and was promptly informed that such an amount was considered immaterial. Anyone want it?

Crystal has spent most of her free time this month house hunting in northern Virginia. The prevailing sellers' market adds to the inherent aggravation of the task. We don't know exactly where we'll end up as a number of competing factors contribute to an optimal location for us. Our Shangri La would, among other things, allow for a manageable commute and be in a stable ward where we could meaningfully contribute in the difficult-to-staff capacities of usher and assistant bell-ringer. The ideal commuting pattern is proving difficult to judge due to its irregularity. It seems the only place I'll be driving to on a regular basis might be the airport (and the Washington area has three). So we don't really know what we're doing.

Crystal's days as the primary chorister ended abruptly this weekend when she was called to serve in the primary presidency. Hannah will miss having her mother leading singing time. While she sometimes experiences difficulty remembering to stay in her seat, she, ever trying to please her mother, sings loudly and often asks, "Mommy, you hear me singin'?" I've enjoyed witnessing all this from my post as interim primary pianist; the unofficial calling I've held for the past year and a half. Officially, I'm still the ward mission leader; a position I've occupied for the past 2½ years. As such, I was naturally pleased to read in Grandma's latest letter of Jacob's call to be a stake missionary. Few, if any, callings, when adequately magnified, afford an opportunity to render more valuable service. Appropriately and ironically, few callings are more demanding or less appreciated.

It just occurred to me that in every single paragraph, including those I begin by discussing others, I somehow wind up talking about myself. What a narcissistic pig I am. I'll now turn it over to Crystal for some less Tim-centered writing.

Ever since Lucy's birth we've had trouble getting our whole family to church. In the old days Hannah and I would ride to church with Roland and Marci a couple hours after Tim went in to his many calling-related meetings. Now there are too many of us to fit in Roland and Marci's car. We tried various things. For a while, I made the half-hour round trip to drop Tim at church, getting home in time to nurse Lucy *again*. This always made for a very frustrating morning. Tim, taking pity on me, took to walking to church for about a month. It's only a five-mile hike, so that was working very well, but when the Relief Society president found out she decided Tim was ready to be translated. We couldn't have word of that getting out so we decided it was time to take the plunge and become a two-car family. Hence, after a certain amount of research on Tim's part, we acquired a 1999 Hyundai Elantra. In honor of our new status as a family of four, we chose a station wagon. There is some question as to whether our Elantra station wagon is really any larger than our Mercury Sable sedan, but we tried to make the jump to a real family car anyway.

After having been permitted to add one paragraph to the letter, I can state with great authority that, not only is Tim a narcissist, he is also a very maddening over-the-shoulder editor. Oh, excuse me, I've been instructed that the ~~last~~ *previous* sentence would be better without the word "very". To those of you nodding your heads in agreement with the editor from you-know-where (who, by the way, is instructing me in the finer points of sentence construction even as I attempt to finish this one), I hasten to point out that given three seconds to think without someone yammering in my ear, I, a college-educated woman, after all, might be able to manage my own editing. I throw down my word-processor in disgust and leave my darling to finish this.

I've oft wondered why the prophet Joseph opted to publish the revelations in which the Lord chastens him. A lesser man might've just, oops, forgotten those. Just like a lesser man might've just deleted the preceding paragraph. Well, I think Brother Joseph and I would've gotten along just fine. Incidentally, she ignored every last one of my redacting suggestions.

Hope your family's as happy as ours.

Love, Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy