

Dear Family,

3 March 2000

Mom told me yesterday that Dad was wondering why he hadn't received my monthly letter yet. Gee Dad. What with it being the second day of the month already, I can see why you'd be so alarmed. Doesn't a guy get a grace period? The real reason for the delay is that nothing has happened in the 38 days since my last communiqué...that is, until today, when Lucy thought it would be neat to latch on to a hot saucepan. The ensuing trip to the doctor to treat her blistering second-degree burns, I am told, was a lot of fun. Lucy, who has taken to sucking on the gauze wrapped about her hand, looks positively pathetic. I guess bowling's out for at least the next couple of weeks. She'll come through okay though. She's a big 5-month-old (literally, in the 85th percentile for weight, and 99th for length.)

Well, that about covers it. Hope everything's groovy with you.

Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy.

p.s. Oh yeah, Crystal & I celebrated my 28th birthday by attending a surprise party she threw. It was very nice. She invited some friends from my old job, some friends from church and, naturally, Coco. I think my former co-workers' respect for me manifested itself in the gifts I received from them. These gifts included a Nerf basketball hoop, episodes of "The Simpsons", and (from my old boss) the 5-inch-in-diameter sphere consisting solely of rubber bands that I had dedicated so many company hours to diligently constructing over the course of my 2 ½ years with the organization. You really should see it next time you visit. It's quite impressive really, and harder than you might think to keep the ball spherical as it grows larger and larger.

Alas, my new job doesn't afford me the opportunity for such noble pursuits. Having fulfilled my assignment at HUD, I've been moved to other messier projects that, sadly, I'm not permitted to discuss. It's too bad really. Few things are more entertaining than stories of dim-witted stuff companies do when they believe they're being clever. The first such assignment took me to Richmond for a couple of weeks. Extensive travel is part of the job description, but my compassionate boss has assigned me to some studies that should keep me local for the next couple of months or so. I'm ostensibly the right guy for these studies, but this will also allow me to spend more time "with that young wife of [mine]" (boss's words).

That young wife of mine was instrumental in explaining to various ecclesiastical leaders the realities of my unforgiving work schedule and our plans to move out of the ward. As a result, 3 weeks ago I was released from my calling as ward mission leader, and called to be the choir director. It's amazing. Suddenly, I'm actually enjoying church again. We firmly believe that the chaotic ritual of Mormon Sunday morning church preparation is really best experienced *as* a family. This is possible now that Ward Council, Welfare committee, and PEC are no longer part of my Sunday mornings. I like being with the kids, and Crystal's tremendously grateful for the invaluable assistance I provide. It's win-win.

With my release, we're fresh out of reasons to leave the ward. Consequently, we're in the process of purchasing a house (in the ward) located at 100 Hannes Street; Silver Spring, MD 20901. (Don't send money there *yet*. We don't settle until 31 March—assuming the inspection doesn't reveal anything and the loan gets approved, etc. and hopefully I didn't just jinx it.) Incidentally, we're getting the mortgage from my former employer, so (assuming no residual hard feelings about the rubber band embezzlement) the fix should be in. The house is a decent enough little brick rambler in a small cul-de-sac with a pretty good-sized yard that backs onto some woods. Needs a little work. The shutters are a hideous shade of yellow, but Mom's good enough with a paintbrush, so that shouldn't last long. The commute to Tyson's (Corner, VA) can be miserable. But it's doable. Besides, commuting from anywhere (except Tyson's) to Tyson's is lousy. Every single Washingtonian can recite the following traffic report (it describes my drive home): "Inner loop of the Beltway jammed from before the American Legion Bridge to 270, and from 355 to the Mormon Temple." We've heard that line so many times, it's become part of our subconscious. Ask Coco. She doesn't even drive that route, but I bet she could quote the line for you.

Hannah's slowly adjusting to Primary, and I can't believe how grown up she seems. She can still be very clingy when it's time to go to class. At home she frequently asks me to play her favorite primary songs on the piano so she can sing along. (My recording of them here is more for my own future reference than based on any delusion that someone may be interested.) She loves "I Am a Child of God", "Book of Mormon Stories", "When Jesus Christ Was Baptized", "Nephi's Courage" and (her favorite) "Do As I'm Doing". She and Noah do this wild circular dance and insist that I play it over and over and over....

Congratulations to Michael. Funny. I always thought curling was one of those strange things they only do in Canada. Obviously I've never been to Wisconsin. (Wisconsin; that's still in the U.S. right?) We're happy for Dave & Janelle too.
End of postscript.