

Dear Family,

2 April 2000

For the first time in our lives, we're in debt. We bought the house Friday, and even though a mortgage is purportedly the "good" kind of debt, I still feel a little awkward and uneasy having such a substantial liability on my personal balance sheet. We haven't moved in yet, so please mail all housewarming gifts to our old (current) address: 10307 Folk St; Silver Spring, MD 20902. We'll probably be in by the beginning of May. So if you're a slow shopper (and if you didn't take proper care of our last letter) the new address is 100 Hannes Street; Silver Spring, MD 20901. Incidentally, the pronunciation of the street is the subject of some debate. While "Haynes" makes sense to me, Dad is convinced it should be "Hannis" (accentuating a short 'a' in the first syllable), and our real estate agent (who is a complete and utter moron, given that she was trying to sell us a house on this particular street) actually leans toward "Heinous". If you have a vote, you may mail your entries to either of the above addresses. The poll tax is a mere \$25.00.

We spent nearly all of yesterday painting. In the living room—now (in our opinion) a very tasteful shade of yellow—we finished everything but the ceiling, baseboard, window trim and crown molding (i.e. the hard parts). We've also begun in the dining room, where, inspired by a White House set in "The West Wing" (our favorite TV show) we are putting different shades of green above and below the chair rail. Crystal, inspired by Martha Stewart (or some similarly insufferable gas bag), is texturing the above-the-chair-rail segment by implementing what's called a "ragging" technique. It actually looks pretty cool.

Unfortunately, our self-absorbed efforts in the new house (where we don't yet have cable) caused us to miss most of the first two sessions of this "historic" General Conference. I love our church. Everything—including a meaningless (in the grand order of things) change of venue—is "historic". You want historic? How about dumping the intermediate hymn, and bringing in the Rockettes to kick to the sweet strains of "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Now that'd be historic. But, as I mentioned, we didn't see a lot, so maybe I just missed it. I did make it to the Priesthood session; where I enjoyed listening to President Faust relate all the Grandfather Grant stories Dad used to tell at bedtime. We are successfully resisting the temptation to defile the Sabbath by not returning to the house today. (Hopefully, typing this letter will provide ample distraction until Conference begins at noon.) We forgot to leave a note at the house though, so we hope that when the 3 Nephites drop by to finish the job, thus rewarding our faithfulness, they don't accidentally match up the greens in the dining room. (Note to those offended by this paragraph: "Sorry.")

Re-reading the last couple of paragraphs, it occurred to me how monumentally bored I get listening to other people drone on about everything they've done/are doing/plan to do in their houses. Obviously other people just aren't as interesting as us. I also concede that it's pretty arrogant of me to claim an understanding of "the grand order of things". Oh well. I'm not taking it out.

My ringer-laden ward basketball team went down in round two of the regionals. The 10 am start proved to be a bit early for our best ball-handlers. (We nearly forfeited.) I think enough of our players had been baptized at one time or another for the team to be technically "legal" (i.e. have three church-members on the court at all times), but I'm really not sure. All I know is I've never actually seen any of these guys at church. But they're really fun to play with, and even pass me the ball sometimes. The whole situation would really irritate me . . . if I played for one of the *other* wards in the stake that lost to us by 35 points every week.

I'm starting to become jealous of the increasing number of family members associated with the University of Wisconsin. Let's see. My Alma Mater: Football team suffers embarrassing blowout loss in prestigious "Sani-Flush Toilet Bowl". Basketball team, despite having its best season since my freshman year (see: Bradley, Shawn), only makes the NIT. Wisconsin: Football team wins the Rose Bowl. Basketball team advances to the Final Four. Incidentally, though I lapped the field in last year's office pool—collecting a couple hundred tax free (I'm told) dollars—I'm giving a little of it back this year. The competition is a little stiffer this year, now that I'm working exclusively with people from this hemisphere.

The cherry blossoms are about gone. An unseasonably warm March coaxed them out slightly earlier than usual. Actually, they seem to bloom earlier each year. The Smithsonian blames this on global warming. Whatever. Personally, I blame the National Rifle Association. No reason, really. I simply choose to blame all of society's ills on the NRA. It's just easier that way. This year we attempted to "beat the crowds" by getting downtown at 6:45 last Saturday morning. No dice. We still wound up having to park way the heck up Independence Ave, a good mile from the Tidal Basin. I don't know why we even try anymore. Lucy didn't seem overly impressed. And Hannah gets excited by any two trees within reasonable proximity of one another. (She refers to this phenomenon as "eleven." Get it? It took me a while.) Incidentally, she also loves pointing out football goalposts; the sight of which inspires her to gleefully cheer, "Look! An H for me!" (She used to say "H for Hannah," but I guess she figures we've all caught on to what she means by now.)

We're excited to have Crystal's dad, Karel (his wife) and Tawny (her daughter) visiting. (They're good painters.) Brenna (Tawny's sister) is to arrive tomorrow, and I'm sure next month's letter will describe in painstaking detail all our exciting adventures. Stay tuned. But Hannah and Lucy are fortunate to have two sets of maternal grandparents. And while the scheduled visit of Crystal's mom and Pat (her husband) at the end of this month is allegedly to see Lucy for the first time, they ought to be pleasantly surprised by the variety of exciting projects awaiting them at 100 Hannes Street.