

The Night Before Christmas 1993

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Dear Jim and Shirley

I just bought a new update on my Word Perfect software program and am trying it out on you to see if it is any good, OK?

By now you must be pretty much at home in the Buckeye State.. I personally, have had only limited connections to Ohio in my lifetime, but a number of my progenitors did! Let me give you a little family history about my grandfather in regards to Horse-Drawn Street Cars.

Before street cars were electrified, the cars were pulled by horses along wooden rails that were capped with a thin strip of steel,

This enterprise, which spread from city to city beginning in the 1850's was a major operation. The Vanderbilt family wealth was generated, initially from their horsecar holdings.

Following are some statistics concerning horse-powered street car lines in the year 1880.

Number of Horsecar railways.....	415
No. of cars.....	18,000
No. of horses.....	100,000
Hay consumption.....	150,000 tons
Grain consumption.....	11,000,000 bushels
Miles of track.....	3,000
Passengers carried.....	1,212,400,000
Employees.....	35,000
Investment.....	\$150,000,000.00

Some mules were employed on the railways. They had their advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage was the mules stubbornness. It would just lie down and refuse to work or it would head for the "car barns" where there was food and shelter. On the positive side a mule could be toilet trained. Horses could not be trained in this respect. consequently, their accumulated excrements were knee deep in some areas of New York City. This was the era of the long skirt and you can well imagine Madam's problems in "keeping her skirt clean".

My grandfather, Henry Charles Hall was the first man to drive the street railway car when it was introduced in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1882. Cedar Rapids employed mules in their operation.

My grandfather, of whom I speak, was born in LaFayette, Allen County, Ohio on October 11, 1858. My great grandfather whose name was also Henry Charles Hall owned a store in LaFayette. Unfortunately, he died on October 20, 1858 leaving five children including my grandfather. Worse still, my great grand fathers's wife, Elizabeth Staley died two years later. The orphaned children were sent to live with relatives. The youngest, my grandfather, was sent to live with his grandfather, William Hall. My grandfather, Henry, obtained his majority at age twenty-one and upon obtaining his inheritance bought a team and wagon and headed west.

Great grandfather's will was probated and gave an interesting account of over one hundred people who owed him money. Most of the delinquent accounts were obligations of his relatives.

My father and mother, while engaged in genealogical research in 1949, made a trip to the store's location only to find that it had been torn down one day before they arrived at the site.

Grandfather continued west, buying junk along the way and selling it at a higher price the farther west he went. My wife Ida-Rose blames my grandfather for handing down junk genes to

me. It's true, I look for steel first in junk yards before buying new to build my high pressure machines. I'll bet that you didn't know that railway axles make excellent high-strength tie-bars for presses. I've bought thousands of pounds of ductile iron steel from a Canadian company that went bankrupt. I probably have 100 tons of steel rusting away in the open air in front of my machine shop. My neighbors don't mind my junk yard because it is completely surrounded by an opaque fence and they can't see what is in there.

Returning to my narrative, my grandfather reached Mount Vernon, Iowa after a trip of about 500 miles.. While there, he met Mary Ann Woodcox and, after a short courtship, married. A rumor in the family indicates that Mary Ann's parents did not appreciate the sterling qualities of my grandfather. Consequently, he had to steal his bride with the help of a ladder to a second story window. After they had married, they moved westward to Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he sold the rest of his junk, his mules, and his wagon. They purchased a home on Second Avenue (also called Eagle Street). I have not been able to locate this home on the old-time maps.

My father, Howard Hall, and my uncle Sam were born there. This is also the place where my grandfather drove the first mule-drawn railroad carriages in that city. After several years, however, Horace Greely's admonition, "Go West, young man, Go West" got in his blood and he headed for Pocatello, Idaho where he went through all of the ranks in railroading from Call Boy (the Call Boy woke up the engine crews) to Engineer. My father, Howard Hall, continued in the same line of work, beginning at age eleven, until he joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (nicknamed by others as "Mormons"). As an aside, My mother's maiden name was Florence Tracy. When I was born, they named me Howard Tracy Hall to distinguish me from my father. Over time they just called me Tracy. My father's life and his posterity were dramatically changed after he joined this church. But that's a story yet to be written. Thanks for listening.

I (Tracy) have been an amateur musician all my life and have a "MIDI" setup integrated with my upgraded MacIntosh IICI computer. I have three hard disks and 8 megabytes of Ram which is moderately powerful. One just cannot keep up with the upgrades on this electronic stuff. I started out in 1986 with an Apple IIe which cost \$4,000.00 and have probably spent at least 25,000 smakeroots since then to keep up with the Jones'. At this point in time, I have one computer at the farm in Payson, Utah which is 20 miles south of here. Ida-Rose has two computers at our Provo Home: a DOS clone for her genealogy research as well as a Macintosh for other uses.

On my music set-up, I have the extended typewriter keyboard located at hip level just in front of my swivel chair. My piano keyboard is conveniently located six inches up and six inches forward of the typing keyboard.

The electronic piano keyboard is capable of polytimbre; that is to say, it could play a saxophone simultaneously with a violin, if you really wanted to. Actually, you could compose a piece for a thirty two instrument orchestra.

As far as I know, I was the first person in "Happy Valley" (a loving title for the Provo-Orem area in Utah county) to have a Midi/Computer setup. My first Midi software that was capable of handling this computer and music stuff consisted of two items: Professional Composer (for composing) and Sequencing. The sequencing software enables you to sit down at the piano keyboard and play a composition out of your head or from a musical score. The computer will take it all in and play it back to you or print it out including such nuances as crescendos and decrescendos.

However at this point, I have not run across any software that will print out the words, notes and other musical features of any song that I might sing. Perhaps prospective musical programmers might approach this problem by developing a program that will record and print the notes of whistlers.

My original software cost \$1,000.00 and subsequent upgrades have cost at least that much more. Its a good thing that Ida-Rose knows how to make money in the stock market so that I can have money for my toys.

I already told you that I was an amateur musician. I taught myself on the piano mostly during my senior year in high school and on into college where I organized a dance band called the

Hi-Hatters. I also studied music theory on my own which I found to be extremely interesting.

We played numerous gigs around the Ogden and Weber county areas when dancing was still a popular social event. As a matter of fact, I earned about half my money to go to Weber College by playing in the band and earned the rest as a Janitor at the school.

Now that I was a professor at Brigham Young University, it was possible to attend any class for free. So I decided that it was time to take some composition courses. I became the envy of my classmates and the professor because they had to write their music out by hand. Additionally, the students had to line up their instrument playing friends to perform the works that they had created.

My fancy equipment took care of all of that for me.

You might be interested in the names of some of my compositions.

How about "Tetrad" and "Tetrode". Can't you see those electrons doing loop the loops. More seriously there were "Thoughts", "Go To Sleep my Baby", "Rainbo", "Chimes", "Brocade", and "Highway 1986". The latter was designed to test the ability of the worlds best piano players. It would really be too tough for any of them but my computer could easily handle it.

I believe that exercise is a virtue that we need to make a part of our lives to maintain good health. One can do it by walking, jogging, swimming, exercising at a gym and so forth. But I also believe in maximizing effort. I do it by farming. Our farm grows larger trees from tree seedlings obtained from such firms as Weyerhouser. At this point in time, we grow mostly evergreens. Swimming is definitely out. I can't see myself growing trees while swimming. At the farm, I lift 5 gallon pots containing trees all day long sometimes. Then there is dirt ditch irrigation. That one really builds muscles. Muscle work at the farm does not interfere with thinking about building newer types of high pressure machines or new ways of making or improving diamonds and other things. Talk about maximizing ones life? This is it! Wouldn't you like to come and help me?

Speaking of the farm, we had a burglary at the farm house thanksgiving day, November 23rd. Incidentally, you can quite easily find the farm house. It is located at 1166 South 4250 West in Payson, Utah. If one leaves the I-15 Thruway at exit 252 and heads east toward the mountains you will immediately encounter a sign which points south and says HALL'S TREES. Go south for about one quarter of a mile and you will encounter another identical sign slightly to the south of the white-frame farm house.

I left our Provo home the morning of November 24th to check things out at the farm. I went in the house, went to my farm study, sat down at my desk and reached to pick up the telephone. It wasn't there. Puzzled, and bewildered, I wondered if I had previously taken the phone into the bedroom and plugged it in the bedroom phone jack. But that couldn't be because the rotary dial phone which had always been in that room was plugged into that jack.

It is hard to explain how queer and mystified I felt. I went to the kitchen phone which was where it belonged and called Ida-Rose in Provo. She said, "you better look around".

So, I went in the living room. The TV and the VCR were gone. I immediately called the Utah County sheriff and called a Payson lock smith to change the locks on the doors because there was no evidence of forceful entry. While waiting for the Sheriff and the locksmith to arrive I decided to fix some lunch. I opened a can of beans and poured them in a bowl, then walked over to the microwave to put the dish of beans in the oven. You guessed it, the microwave was gone. The sheriff, who was a woman, and the locksmith arrived at approximately the same time. The locksmith changed the locks. The Sheriff questioned me and the farm house tenants (we have two basement apartments). Nothing pertaining to the burglary shed any light on the perpetrators. We think we know who did it, but you cannot arrest anyone on those grounds.

A few days later I returned to the farm to make some needed repairs to the house. I had made quite a mess of things on the living room floor and went to the utility closet to get the

vacuum cleaner. Yep, the vacuum cleaner was gone. We had another vacuum cleaner called the Dirt Devil. Its the small red one with the extra long cord. We kept it in the bedroom. Its the same

old story, that vacuum had vanished.

We kept a cash drawer for tree sales inside a drawer in my study. It contained about \$100.00 in bills in addition to some quarters, dimes and nickels. That's the last thing that I thought of checking. The bills, the quarters, and the dimes were gone; but they left the nickels.

You don't miss things until you go to get them. So still later, I found my Makita, cordless, battery powered electric drill was gone. As of now, a month has gone by and, who knows, something else will turn up missing.

Our loss was somewhere around \$1,000.00. Nowadays this kind of a loss is not worth the trouble to undertake an extensive investigation to catch the burglars.

This experience was eerie. We felt violated. We felt the presence of evil. Who were these dreadful people? What previous crimes had they committed? Were these people capable of murder?

From tracks in the snow, we know that more than one person was involved and that the getaway vehicle was a truck that had two rear wheels.

There remains one last puzzle. These burglars seemed to be only interested in collecting things to set up housekeeping. They didn't take my computer equipment nor our Office Printing Calculator.

I want to tell you now about our non-vacation. We flew via Delta Airlines to San Jose, California to visit our daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Marty Neil and their children. The main attraction for the visit was the two performances of a 65 voice choir that Liz directs. Six of our seven children took voice and musical instruction while growing up. Some of them have enjoyed carrying it into their adult lives and sang or played with small instrumental groups, etc., but the real professional is Liz. She has a great singing voice, is extremely adept at the piano, and also enjoys playing the guitar. Additionally, she composes music.

Upon disembarking from the plane at the airport, Ida-Rose's leg began to hurt. When we arrived at Liz's home it was obvious that her right leg was larger than her left leg. This was rather scary so Liz took us to a private emergency clinic.

Would you believe it, they would not admit her. The reason: she did not have her Social Security card with her! I showed them my card, but that was not acceptable. We went to another clinic that turned out to be an affiliate of the first clinic. They loosened up a little and decided to take her. emergency clinics invariably use interns and doctors of lesser experience to take care of patients. The doctor was nice, but diagnosed her problem as an inflammation of the leg.

The next day, Liz contacted a friend physician concerning Ida-Rose's problem who referred her to a Dr. Richard Gilman. This man seemed very competent and diagnosed I-R's problem as Deep Vein Thrombosis. He immediately put her on a Heparin drip to thin her blood. Further examination found considerable clotting in her leg and some in her lung. Warfarin pills were given to her in addition to the Heparin the last three days of her stay.

It was very worrisome to be away from home at such a time. Ida-Rose spent the entire seven days of our contemplated vacation in the El Camino Hospital in Mountain View.

While Ida-Rose was in the hospital, I was staying with Liz and her family. At one point, I felt that I should get some exercise so I decided to do a half hour walk around the area of Liz & Marty's home. I walked for half an hour and promptly got lost. I now knew that I was facing a problem. My blood pressure is controlled by the daily intake of 25 milligrams of hydrochlorothiazide every morning. This substance is a diuretic.

People on this drug must watch the time so as not to be away too long from certain facilities. I began to get anxious. There were no mountains around to give one a sense of east, west, south, and north as there is in Provo. As time passed, frustration set in and I randomly searched the roads in this affluent area. I just couldn't go up to one of these fine homes, where a Mercedes Benz was parked in the driveway and ask certain questions.

I began looking for a wooded area but found nothing appropriate. I had now been walking one and one half hours.

Then I saw a very modest house with an old Toyota pickup in the driveway. I hurried to the door and knocked. A Spanish lady and her child answered the door. I told her that I had got lost while out walking and needed the use of a telephone to call my daughter who lived somewhere in the area. Her English was somewhat broken as was her understanding, but with patience, I got my message across and she let me use her phone. Fortunately, I knew Liz's telephone number. I called it and gave her the address of the Spanish ladies house. Liz rescued me within five minutes.

I think you will know what happened next.

After Ida-Rose's release, we spent one night at Liz's and boarded the plane for Salt Lake City the next day at 1:00 p.m. We had prearranged for an internist to be responsible for her care on arrival in Provo. The warfarin seems to be doing its job all right at this point. She can only stand on her feet for about one hour before having to rest in bed.

We had never had any contact with any one who had this problem before but they voluntarily came out of the woodwork when they learned of her problem. The doctor in Provo probed her on what she had been doing recently where she might have been sitting down for long periods of time or had gone on a long trip in an automobile.

Well, what Ida-Rose had been doing was following her long-time interest in genealogy. At the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake she was working ten hour days at the microfilm readers. She was checking out six films at a time and putting them in the reader one by one without taking any breaks. She should have been taking a walking break between every film.

Dear friend, Jim Cheney, pay attention to this when you're at the library.

Love,

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We Wish You A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!