

To our relatives, and friends near and far in the USA, Africa, Japan, China, and Europe GREETINGS!

We hope that you are in good health and enjoying life in every aspect.

Ida-Rose and I are among those Senior Citizens who are beginning to experience the degenerating consequences of increasing age. So far we are quite vigorous and getting along quite well with the help of the medical profession and modern medicines.

We had a very wet, cold spring and a long, hot dry summer. Usually, rain will begin to fall around Labor Day—but not this year. Temperatures have been extremely high for this time of year and temperatures are ranging from 50 to 70 degrees. At the date of this writing (December 12th) the temperature is 55 degrees. We did have small amounts of rain on two days in late November. We are cognizant of the weather because of our Tree Farm located in Payson, Utah which is located 20 miles South of Provo. We have a three acre field of about 1,000 trees now seven years old and put them on the market for the first time this Christmas Season.

Forty Years ago, the Eyring Science Center was completed on the Brigham Young University campus. It had all of the latest innovations at the time of its construction in 1953 (Two years before Tracy came to BYU from General Electric). At that time it housed chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy.

Now, that building is being renovated to house physics, geology and astronomy.

Chemistry and Biochemistry now move to a new building of their own with all the very latest of everything this department could wish for. It is named the Benson building, for a former LDS Church president. It comprises 200,000 square feet of floor space and is estimated to have cost 50 million dollars. Although retired, I have been given office space in this beautiful edifice which overlooks Utah Valley and its ring of lovely mountains. Traditionally one quarter of the student body enroll for at least one course in chemistry.

Speaking of our 27,000 member student body, we do have some problems. One arises from the fact that many thousands of LDS students want to attend the BYU. Incidentally, non-LDS students who meet BYU standards of moral behavior are also eligible to apply for admittance. SAT tests and high school grade point average are the principle determinants of who is admitted. Presently, a student's high school grade point average must be around 3.8 to be accepted.

Administrators are searching for additional indicators to fine-tune the system. BYU students are subsidized to the extent of two thirds of the actual cost per student by the faithful tithers of the Church which is another reason students want to attend. A major private University such as the BYU costs a tremendous amount of money. The Church also supports higher education at Rick's college in Rexburg, Idaho and The Church College of Hawaii on Oahu.

Tracy is still inventing in the field of High Pressure-High Temperature and diamond technology and has recently filed for an apparatus patent.

However, the Patent and Trademark Office is a mess. Five thousand patent applications arrive at the patent office every single day. There is no way that an adequate number of capable, responsible examiners can be found. So the name of the game is to get you out of the system. The examiner will reject your application on the first office action by saying something like this: "Your application A in view of B taken with C is obvious in light of prior art cited herein." The examiner's cited art will probably not apply at all but he has caused you trouble and expense knowing that an expensive appeal will cause you to give up.

Our daughter Nancy's husband, Douglas Mechem, is an employee of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District and was recently transferred to the heavy equipment division. About one month ago he was driving a heavy truck loaded with gravel down a steep grade. As he braked to slow down his brakes failed. When his speed hit 50 miles per hour, Doug decided that his only chance of surviving was to "bail out." He is alive but has very extensive injuries that are not yet resolved.

Our State of Utah is doing very well. Unemployment is the lowest in the nation at 3.2%, the state treasury has a surplus of \$600 million dollars, and Californians are pouring into the state at the rate of 30,000 persons per year.

Ida-Rose has now been growing Orchids and giving them away for over 20 years. This is the season of blooming and at this time the orchid greenhouse looks and smells like heaven.

And, speaking of heaven, we wish blessings for you from this source at this Christmas Time.

Additionally, your friendship is a cherished commodity in our household.

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