

Xmas letter 1984

Version 2

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PROVO, UTAH 84604  
30 DECEMBER 1984

Also sent To

Bp Hansen  
Jim + Maria Hall  
Dick + M.L. Thurston  
Alton + Louise Wenzel  
Stoil + Helen Barton  
Barbara Bahlberg  
Walt Fowler  
Eva Barnes  
Dorothy + Bruce Davis  
Tom + Lola Spencer  
Gene + Joyce  
x Don + Sherlene

~~HAL & JEAN GARBE  
2009 REGENT ST.  
SCHENECTADY, NY 12309~~

DEAR HAL, JEAN & FAMILY

x Virginia + Barry  
Loni + Mandy Brummer  
✓ Nancy + Doug  
✓ Charlotte + Bryan  
✓ Dig + Marty  
✓ David + Karen  
✓ Tracy + Betsy

Thanks for your Christmas card and letter. We're sorry that we are so late with ours. At any rate we wish you the very best of things for 1985.

In reviewing our year for 1984, the most exciting event was the Payson flood which covered three quarters of our farm with water to a maximum depth of six feet at the bottom. It all started on Mother's day, Sunday, May 13th. I was not feeling well and had stayed in bed all day rather than going to church. About 6:00 p.m., we received a call from one of our renters (we have two apartments in the basement of the farm house) who asked, "do you know that water has surrounded your house and is running over the back lawn"? Well, this was certainly a surprise!

I immediately called our son Tracy, Jr., who lives in Orem, to come and go to the farm with me to investigate the situation. It takes about one-half hour to drive from our home in Provo to our farm in Payson. At the farm, we watched the water rise for about four hours after which it began to recede. At midnight, we set an alarm clock for 6:00 a.m. and went to bed. At this point in time the house was still out of danger. But our concerned tenants, two recently married couples, decided to go stay with their folks for the night.

We were awakened a little before the alarm went off by a telephone call from Ida-Rose who was concerned about what might be happening. So we got up to see. To our unbelief, a course of water about 100 feet wide was going down the south side of the farm and water was flowing through the window of the south basement apartment. Two irrigation ditches on the east of the house were overflowing. So were the Payson high water runoff ditch and the Strawberry Hiline Canal which border us on the south. Our "well-house" which contains the pumps and controls for supplying culinary water to the farm house adjoins the Strawberry Canal. Flood water not only surrounded the well house but was battering away at its sides and foundation in an a terrible way. I have seen floods on TV, but being in one is entirely different. The roar and power of the moving torrent is frightening indeed. I tried to wade through the water to get to the well house but found it impossible.

We turned our attention to stopping the flow of water through the window well. We blocked this by building a dike made of stepping stones that we had on hand and by shoveling dirt around the window well. Next, we started to build a dike made of boards, dirt, metal flashing, chicken wire, and anything else that looked serviceable. At first, the dirt washed away as fast as we could shovel it into the stream. But with effort we slowly gained on it. This dike was built about twenty five feet south of the house and was connected to a concrete basement that is destined to be part of a solar heating system someday. Fortunately the local Bishop soon showed up with a voluntary crew. I ordered a couple of truck loads of sand and the sherrif who happened around dropped off about a hundred sandbags. I alerted some of my colleagues at Megadiamond of our predicament and they sent a crew. One man from Mega, Chris Reed, is an assistant sheriff and search & Rescue man. His four wheel drive vehicle is equipped with lots of electronic gear and he also carries a portable TV camera. He got some shots of the entire area. By now it was about 9:00 a.m., it was raining, and lots of onlookers were coming into the area including members of the press.

Now the water was rushing accross the I-15 freeway at the bottom (west side) of our farm. Emergency crews had arrived to control the traffic. The water was about two feet deep on the throughway. Some cars stalled and all traffic went through the water at a snail's pace.

The flood continued for six days before subsiding. It brought all kinds of debris onto the farmland: tree limbs, fence posts, logs, automobile tires, metal sheeting, corrugated culverts, bottles, tin cans, sticks, boulders, rocks, old shoes, etc. The well house took such a beating that I thought it would break up and float away. The stream of water battering away at it was four feet deep and very swift. But the well house held its position. Later on, when it was dry enough to check it out, I found that logs, tree branches and boulders had been forced under the foundation and into the interior. Flood waters had also drained into the 6 inch diameter, 210 foot deep well casing. I pumped the well continuously for about a week but the water still remained muddy.

Incidentally, our renters had to find other accommodations not only because of the well, but because the septic tank system was flooded out. Later, I purchased pumps to keep water out of the basement and thus averted further damage.

The fine mud particles in the flood waters contained considerable red iron oxide ( $Fe_2O_3$ ). This material stuck to the floors and walls like paint and was very difficult to remove.

On the 12th of June, before the land and house had a chance to dry out, the flood came again with a vengeance. It lasted about a week and wrought the same kind of damage a second time. But this time it wiped out the county road located between the Strawberry Hilline Canal and the Payson high-water run-off ditch. This isolated three families including a turf business. The only way that they could get out was to cut through the I-15 freeway fence and go directly onto the freeway from the turf farm. UDOT, the Utah Department of Transportation didn't like this. It is illegal. But it had to be done. For awhile, I made a temporary foot bridge from the south edge of our farm to the north edge of an adjoining farm. This made it possible for the farmer to park his vehicles on the east road in front of our house and walk to them via the foot bridge.

Our farm land sustained more damage than any of the other farms, although one other farmhouse sustained more damage than ours. At the start of the first flood, a county worker with a 150 horse power backhoe who was attempting to control a flood that was completely out of hand decided he could divert the water across our place and save a half dozen other farms from getting flooded. Once the channel was established, that's where most of the water went. In the two floods, the water ran continuously across our land for two weeks.

By late August, we had the well cleaned out and the water purity OK'd by the State. Ida-Rose and I also had the mud cleaned away from the sidewalks around the house and the basement apartments put in order including the laying of new floor tile in the south apartment. New renters moved in about September 1st.

Now I could turn my attention to the land. By now it was covered with weeds about four feet high. Many tough, young willow trees had also sprung up. I hired a young man from our neighborhood to help me go through the weeds to pick up the debris. We used my 25 horse power Kubota tractor that has a small front end loader. We stacked the burnable material in a large pile and burned it. We also hauled off a lot of unburnable trash to the city dump. Much trash and sticks still need to be removed. Our farm was mostly heavy clay. As of now there are about five of the thirty acres covered with rocks. This is bad. But about five acres at the bottom of the farm is covered with sand. This is good; especially when I can get it mixed in with the heavy clay. But all of the land is now very uneven and must be leveled.

This done, I attacked the weeds. I used a 4 foot disk (that's all my tractor will pull). I spent most of September at this. It probably didn't do a whole lot of good. Several billion weeds will come up again in the spring.

Farm work is heavy work and I enjoy it. But lifting and placing sandbags in the spring and early summer and then removing them in the fall plus doing other heavy work caught up with me. On October 30th I entered Utah Valley Hospital and was operated on for a "large, direct, complex" hernia.

I'm recovering well but cannot get back to heavy farm work until May and I've got to work up to it gradually. Coincidentally, our son-in-law, Douglas Mecham (husband of our youngest, Nancy), was in the hospital at the same time to have his gall-bladder removed.

On November 29th, Ida-Rose and I boarded the Amtrak train at Provo to visit our daughter, Elizabeth (and family) for Thanksgiving. The day we arrived she was ill. She saw a doctor and was informed that she had to have gall-bladder surgery. The operation was postponed to the morning after Thanksgiving. Tuesday, I flew home and Ida-Rose stayed behind for ten days to take care of her four children, etc. until Liz recuperated.

On October 1st, I finally went back to work (half time) at Megadiamond after a three years absence. Eighteen months of this time was taken up by our mission in Zimbabwe and South Africa. I also work some at BYU (They have provided me with a nice office and small laboratory). Then there is my "SHED" on Columbia Lane where I still "fool around" with inventions and stuff.

After returning from our mission our Church work has been light. Ida-Rose and I sang in the ward choir, were members of the "activity committee", and taught the "family relations" course to the Young Marrieds.

That's all changed now -- at least for Ida-Rose. She became the Ward's Relief Society President on August 26th! For me, the family relations course is over, I don't think I'm still on the Activities Committee, but I do sing in the choir.

Well, we have done other things this year besides fighting floods. Last winter got so drab and dreary that we decided to go to Liz's in San Jose where the climate was better. We drove our new Mercury Topaz for that trip (Jan 28-Feb 5).

We attended Ida-Rose's 43rd Ogden High School reunion June 30th. It was fun, but the other people looked so old.

Ida-Rose, who is bugged by some allergies, entered an experimental program under Dr. Dennis Remington. It cost \$600.00 and didn't do any good. The program tried to desensitize you by placing drops of allergenic chemicals under your tongue and holding them there for a specified period of time before spitting them out. I think that sometimes you swallowed them. Since the program was experimental, our health insurance wouldn't pay for it.

Ida-Rose, who is very good at many things, including "brick paving", paved about \$750.00 worth of red brick into an empty space on the north side of our carport here on 1711 N. Lambert Ln. I helped her a little.

On the 11th of September we decided that we had had enough of this flood business so we drove our Topaz to Yosemite, a place where we had never been. The massive rock and the massive trees were, indeed, a sight to see. Too bad the waterfalls were dried up. Although it was a long ways away, Ida-Rose wanted to go see Liz, so we drove to San Jose for a one night stand. We arrived home on the 15th after visiting briefly with Charlotte and her family who now live in Delta, Utah. The night of the 14th (on our way home) we stayed at the Stockman's Hotel in Elko, Nevada. That's a highly over rated, crummy place. Don't stay there.

In March (I'm certainly jumping around), we went to the "Tool Show" in Los Angeles and stayed at the Rosemead Motel "6" (where we always stay) and, as usual, spent a wad at Stewart's Orchid place for more orchids for Ida-Rose's greenhouse.

On March 31st we went to the travel show at the Salt Palace where we saw films of some lovely Zimbabwe scenery. Made us home sick.

As you have probably guessed, we also bought some computer equipment this year.

Near the first of the year, we were invited to join a fireside group made up of ward members, about 12 couples in number. This group attends the Shakespear festival held each year in Cedar City. So this year, we went with them. The festival is held at the College of Southern Utah, located in Cedar City. Every thing about the festival is very authentic, including the playhouse that they have built for the productions. We enjoyed the plays very much.

The College is extremely nice and just the right size for a congenial atmosphere. It would be a good place to have your children spend their first two years and, perhaps, four years if CSU happens to have a full curriculum in the field of their choice.

We stayed in a rented condominium at Brianhead Ski Resort. We had lots of food and had a great time playing games, talking and admiring the area's beautiful scenery.

At Christmas time Ida-Rose put on her annual Christmas extravaganza for the family. Tracy, David, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Nancy were here with their families. Sherlene, living in White Plains, New York and Virginia, living in Arlington, Virginia were not able to come. However, Sherlene and her family had visited us earlier in August and Liz and Marty visited us in May. Charlotte and Bryan moved from Springerville, Arizona to Delta, Utah about 20 months ago, and since Delta is only about 90 miles from Provo, we see them and their children quite often. Tracy and Nancy live in Orem and David lives in our own Sharon East Stake (PV-4th Ward) so we see these three families frequently.

Getting back to Christmas, we had an upstairs and a downstairs tree. Our trees this year were the best we have ever had. And they were attractively decorated with crocheted snowflakes, and other objects made by our black friends in zimbabwe. The cousins had a great time playing in the snow and getting better acquainted with each other. The adults had a lot of fun too.

Turning to another subject, Ida-Rose nominated me for "Plumber of the Year" for 1984. I replaced three "frost free" outside faucets at our home. The old faucets were in their 30th year and really worn out. I also installed a new faucet in the kitchen sink. At Ida-Rose's little house in Payson (346N.-100W.), I installed new bathtub faucets, a new sink faucet, repaired the basin taps and installed a new shutoff valve. At the farmhouse, I installed three new kitchen sink faucets, two new basin faucets and repaired two leaky toilets.

We've had moths living in our house this year. After 18 months in Africa, I think I can tell whether a bug is African or American and I'm sure that this one is African. It's about half an inch long, is brownish in color, and is shaped like a folded paper airplane. It lands on the wall with it's head down and its body pointing slightly away in a definite African stance. There is some circumstantial evidence to substantiate this. We found the moths flying out of some seed beads bought in Zimbabwe. The seeds that the natives string together to make a necklace are very unusual and primitively beautiful. We also found the larvae in our clothing. Later, we found them in our Corn Flakes, Wheaties and other foods. "Great balls of fire," I thought, "Have I innocently brought a terrible pest to America that has no natural enemies here?" "Perhaps it will devastate our grain crops." "On the other hand, natives have been making seed necklaces for centuries and many tourists must have brought some of these trinkets to the United States before.

Not too take any chances, though, I purchased the largest electronic bug killer that I could find and hung it in our hallway over the stairs. It attracts flying insects with a powerful ultraviolet light and zaps them with 4500 volts as they pass between some electrodes on the way to the light. These moths have a habit of landing on the walls a little after sundown and again a little before sunrise. So we have been stalking them with a fly swatter during these periods. At first, we were mashing about 14 per 24 hour period and the bug killer, which gives an electrifying sight and sound show when it gets one, was electrocuting a similar number. This business went on for months. Our sort of gold colored walls in the hall are now splotched all over with brownish bug juice. But we think the battle has been won. The moth population decreased very slowly until now we have none! Perhaps I have become an unknown hero just like the little dutch boy who put his finger in the dike and saved his country from disaster. As one final precaution, I pressure cooked the beads to kill any eggs, larvae, or moths that might have been inside.

We are grateful for Jesus Christ, our saviour, and for our many blessings. And we are grateful for friends like you. May you have good health and happiness throughout 1985!

P.S. We have 29 grandkids.  
Come and see us when  
you can

We send our love,  
Tracy and Ida-Rose