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Barry & Virginia

October 14, 1993

Dear Family,

The hardest part for me about doing the Hallmanack is sitting down to this computer. If this were a typewriter, I'd be much less intimidated. For all you computer literates out there, I know this makes no sense whatsoever.

The second most difficult part about getting a letter out is finding myself in a good mood so my letter doesn't sound so down at the mouth. I've just fed the kids. The table isn't cleared, the dishes aren't done, the floor isn't swept and none of them can see that their jobs aren't done and they have all conveniently disappeared to their rooms to do their homework. Then, when I haul them out to do their jobs they moan and groan about how much homework they have and because I'm keeping them from getting it done they'll probably never finish and it will all be my fault that they don't get good grades. Sound familiar anyone?

It's been a wild two weeks around here. Rose-Ellen brought home a flu bug that five of us have come down with. It took me a full week to get over it. I hate intestinal flu. It's almost enough to get me to home school the kids so they don't bring all these bugs home. Of course, then they'd just be exposed at Church and bring it home anyway. I can tell that Christian and Roland are almost over the bug. They aren't lying quietly in bed moaning and groaning. They are fussing and fighting and wrangling away. This house isn't big enough. I need something the size of a football field so I can send them to opposite goal posts. It doesn't really matter what size the house is, does it? The kids manage to find the same small spot to occupy and the same small things to fight over in spite of all the things in this house that there are to play with.

Barry had his last oral argument for quite a while in front of the U. S. Court of Appeals today. He doesn't have anything big on his calendar for some time now, for a change, except his deposition to be taken in November for a case that will go to court next February out there in Utah.

WFML, our station in Mobile, Alabama, is keeping Barry busy and our bank account empty. On the brighter side, the Philadelphia TV station we have put a lot into is finally in the black and growing fast. I have a greater appreciation for Tracy and David and Bryan and Nancy and Karen who have all tried to get personal businesses up and running. Still, every month the advertising revenues increase (from \$3800 to \$6600 from August to September -- we're proud of the percentage gain if not the absolute number). If we can just get on the ratings charts we'll be able to increase rates and bring more into the station. I still haven't actually seen the station, though I have listened to it on the phone. On our anniversary I called the station manager and arranged to have him call Barry with some excuse about some problem or other about the station and then put him on hold. Then I had the morning DJ dedicate a song to Barry for seventeen wonderful years and seven wonderful children. I figured that the wife of the owner of the station had the right to make an on the air request and dedication. There were a couple of glitches along the way, having to do it from my phone, to the office phone, to the radio station phone in Mobile, but some helpful secretaries along the way put it all together and pulled it off for me. That's the first time I've ever made a call to a radio station, and it was kind of fun being our own and all.

I'm in my third year as Relief Society President of the Arlington Ward. I have two new counselors. My first counselor was pulled away by the Stake when her husband was called to be Ward mission leader. The second was taken into the presidency of the Young Women. I will miss them both, but have two very competent and very organized women to fill their shoes. How does a Bishop last for five years? I'm finding it increasingly difficult to keep my energy levels up. Recently we had a party in our home for all the new young couples who moved into the area for school this year. We have thirteen new young couples who are sorely needed to flesh out our programs this year. Last year we only had a couple and it was difficult to staff our committees fully. The bishop had the couples

go around and introduce their mate. Most of the young women are in various jobs supporting their husbands while they are in law, medical and graduate school. When Barry got to introducing me he said in the seventeen years we've been her I've been a professional Mormon and Mom. He's right. They keep calling me to these leadership positions and I'm really just OK at doing them. I think the Lord is having a hard time teaching me organizational skills. I only succeed because I surround myself with organized women who make me look good. My first calling in the ward was as R.S. Nursery leader when we had weekly meetings. That was a great job. Since that job I've had leadership positions and I'm increasingly envious of the Sunday teaching jobs in the ward. I'd love to teach the Merrie Miss girls. I'd even take the eleven year old boys. I did have four months as the Laurel leader. That was great.

Today Rose-Ellen had a dental appointment. Dr. Casillas, our dentist, is a member of our ward who has been called as a counselor in the singles ward in our area. In the four months since he was called to that position he has been involved in seven courts for excommunication. All of them have involved problems with immorality. In one case he says the young pregnant woman was afraid to name the father of the child as he was at BYU and had threatened to kill her if she told anyone about it. Needless to say, Bishop Terry was on the phone to a bishop in Utah and in short order a young man was excommunicated and kicked out of BYU. Dr. Casillas says that that almost every month some young seventeen year old girl comes here from Utah as a Nanny and it's all he can do not to call the parents and tell them that if they have any sense they will get their young girls home where they can keep an eye on them. One young man when brought before a court said that the only reason he came to Church was so he had a source of "clean young women" to choose from for his personal satisfaction. Ed didn't reveal any names or divulge anything particularly personal about any of the cases. He says he brought it up as he felt I was in a position to pass along to mothers and the teachers in the young men and womens programs that we need to be very specific in teaching our children about morality and to also be very specific in teaching them what is not acceptable in the eyes of the Lord and the Church.

This week Warren came home from school (9th grade) and said his History/English teachers had promised them extra credit if they saw the movie, the "Joy Luck Club." I understand it's a great book, but the movie is rated R. So, I went to the library to see if I could get the book for him to read instead. It wasn't available, but I did check out Clan of the Cave Bear which was the last book his class read. Warren is in the gifted and talented classes at school and they do a lot of reading in his classes. I'm going to have a busy year trying to keep up or ahead of his reading schedule. I was not happy with Clan of the Cave Bear which some of you may have read and some of you may have thought was a wonderful book. I'm sorry but I don't think that a fourteen year old boy is up to the discussions of menstrual cycles and sex and mating and begetting and birthing and miscarrying that are a part of the plot of this book. Now admittedly, these were not the only elements of the plot. But what do you think a fourteen year old boy will remember about the book? In light of my discussion with Ed Casillas today, I feel like it's going to be quite a challenge to give my children the knowledge they need to arm themselves for the battle, but shield them from the constant media blitz of sin and sex that is so prevalent today. I had a discussion with a woman I visit teach about job opportunities for teenagers. She has a daughter and son who worked for several years at a local movie theater. Part of the perks of the job are seeing all the movies that come into this particular five screen theater. She suggested that Nathan use her children as a reference and indicated that she thought it would be easy for him to get a job there. I'm sorry, but in light of all the problems her own children have faced, and in light of all the garbage that comes up on the movie screens these days, there is no way I'd let him apply for a job there. Well, I need to get this on the fax to Charlotte.

Happy birthday to Tracy, Charlotte, Daddy and Marty. We'd love to celebrate with you all!
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Love to all --

the Wood family

Amijer

Barry