

WOOD, 4510 N. 35th St., Arl. Va. 22207 (703) 243-3690 Apr. 30, '95

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Dear Family,

BW work (202) 296-5950

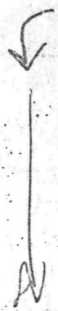
I enclose a reminder address and phone number above. I think it's a good idea from time to time to put your address and phone number on your letters. Tracy sent me a very nice note recently that took twenty days to get here. It was postmarked April 7 and arrived here on the 27th. He had the zip code as 32207.

Well, every Spring reminds me how nice it is to live here. It's easy to forget in the summer when it's so hot and muggy. Barry is outside in the rain taking inventory of his plants. He estimates that there are about 150 Rhodos and azaleas on the back hillside. Some have grown quite large. Two years ago Barry harvested about forty or fifty azaleas from a huge lot destined to be bulldozed and subdivided into eight or ten homes. Some of them were quite large and are so beautiful this year. Had Barry not dug them out they'd have been plowed under. We've had a very dry April. Today's rain is only the third I can recall this month.

Yesterday we had the second annual Wood azalea barbecue. For the second year running Barry has had to put it together himself. Last year I was at a BYU women's conference that Betsy and Sherlene participated in. This year I was at an all day Kiss Me Kate rehearsal. Opening night is on Thursday. I'm in the chorus. When I started this I thought that it wouldn't be too much of a time commitment. I was used to having R.S. Presidency meeting on Tuesday nights and since I'm no longer the President, I figured I'd just use that slot for rehearsals which the stake was holding on Tuesday nights. What I neglected to consider was that as the performance dates loom, rehearsal schedules grow longer and longer. I was at the rehearsal from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. yesterday (and I cut out early before performance review was called). Barry did a great job. I arrived home just in time to find out that Sarah had put the barbecued chicken in the oven, but had somehow jimmed the setting between bake and time bake and it hadn't turned on the heat. So, we stretched the hot dogs and hamburgers, put out a lot more drinks (thank goodness for Price Club bulk sales), and things turned out just fine. We had about twenty five or thirty people and the azaleas looked terrific. Barry gave guided tours of the hillside pointing out this wonderful azalea and that wonderful azalea. It's nice to have a husband that loves beautiful plants and even likes to take care of them.

We are doing nine performances of Kiss Me Kate. This musical has lots of chorus numbers--I'm in seven of them. Our first full run-through without stopping was yesterday. It took us three and a half hours. We've got to cut almost an hour from the show. The stake rented a few of the more elaborate costumes for Kate and Petruccio, but the rest of us had to sew our own Renaissance costumes. It's a lot of fun to wear something that has such elaborate trim and sleeve detail, but it does make one grateful for wash and wear.

193 Azaleas
INVENTORY RESULTS: 100 RHODOS EXACTLY



Re Barbecue - Actually it would have been a total flop without (a) Nathan going to the church to borrow tables, (b) Jonathon setting up the grill², & (c) Virginia swinging into high gear the minute she arrived back from rehearsal.
- Bev (2 words)

A production like this makes me aware of how much talent exists in the Church. What is equally amazing is how much volunteer talent is given so willingly to the Church. I cannot believe the hours and days that one sister has spent on costume production. I made my own costume, the bridesmaid dress for one of the gangsters (you'd need to know the plot to understand that), and several of the hats. There are about eight dance numbers and each of the dancers needs a new costume for each number. Everybody needs at least one costume for the Shakespearian sections of the plot and then we each need rehearsal clothes. The sets are incredible. The brother in charge of the set construction has worked on the sets every night for about two and a half months. Since our largest stage in the stake is so woefully inadequate they had to build a large front section onto the existing stage. We also only have about two feet of "wings" on either side of the stage. Still, this stage is better than the one in our "new" stake center. It has no wings at all and they carpeted the small stage, making it almost impossible to dance on. This is our stake's fifth musical production since we've lived here. On the average we do one every other year. On the "off" year roadshows are performed. Of course there is no orchestra pit so the orchestra has to sit off to one side. If you sit on that side of the hall all you hear is orchestra. We are fortunate in that the Stake allows sales of tickets and over the years the Blackwells (who have directed every one of these productions, bless their souls) have bought some wonderful lighting and sound equipment which have to be temporarily mounted on the walls around the stage. So, while we are hampered by stage size and conditions, at least one can hear the action.

It's been a fun and interesting experience for me. My family, however, is tired of getting their own meals four nights a week, and I'm tired of driving down route 123 four times a week. The directors have said nice things to me about my singing and stage presence so I feel appreciated for my efforts. Actually, it is really just a matter of my listening when they give instructions and paying attention to stage direction and cues. They have a fair number of teenagers involved and they just can't stop talking. I told Sister Blackwell that I was empathetic because her task was exactly like mine was when I taught first grade and was trying to keep the group on track for the task at hand. This group of "adults" is just like a bunch of noisy first graders. If everybody would just shut up we could cut rehearsal time in half!

While cleaning out a drawer this week I came across a Hallmanack letter I wrote in 1991 when Jonathan was hit head on by a car when he was riding his bike. It made me very grateful for the family letter and those who have sustained it over the years. I thought it would be impossible for me to forget the events surrounding that episode in our lives. I was so surprised to be reminded of a number of things in connection with it that I had completely forgotten. I'll try to write more faithfully. It is really nice to hear about what is happening in your families. Thanks Charlotte for keeping it going!

I should quit now, but I am reminded of some things that have happened to the kids this past month. Nathan was accepted at Ricks. BYU turned him down. I consider Nathan a good student. His ACT and SAT scores weren't particularly stellar, but he does quite well in school. Our former bishop who has been involved in the evaluation of the Church schools thinks that Ricks is a wonderful school and Barry thinks it will be a better college setting for Nathan. Bishop Holsinger said they turned down 5,000 applications at Ricks this year. I guess Barry and I should be looking carefully at schools in this area as we have quite a few more kids coming up through the college ranks. I really like the idea of my kids being around a lot of LDS kids when they are dating and thinking about marrying. Someone told me that 80% of LDS kids who go to non-LDS schools marry outside the Church. That is an alarming statistic if true. And with rampant promiscuity in high schools and colleges and the growth of drug use and AIDS, I am increasingly hopeful that my children can go to LDS universities and colleges where there is at least an increased chance that the people they meet come from good homes and have good values and have led good lives.

Warren was assistant stage manager for his school's production of Midsummer Night's Dream. I was a little skeptical about this production as I heard the drama teacher set it in a modern setting. I remarked to more than one person that it bothered me that she just couldn't leave Shakespeare alone and produce it as it was written. I was pleasantly surprised. She kept the language, but set the fairies in a black lit modern setting as punks in neon clothes on skateboards and rollerblades. It was quite clever and I know the teenagers enjoyed it more as was evident in their enthusiastic laughter and clapping. Ben Burton (with whom Nathan is going to room at Ricks) played Lysander. Ben is stage manager of Set Crew which Warren is a part of.

Jonathan spent a day at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. He has been a part of a group that for the last three years has been sponsored by various military groups to promote cooperation between races. They don't call it that, but that's its emphasis. They go around to various military schools and spend the day in group sports and activities. They have a "sponsor" with whom they are supposed to correspond, but Jonathan never does. He does seem to enjoy the activities though. Teachers at the various schools recommend the kids who participate. I would be interested to learn their motivation in choosing Jonathan, though I think it is because he is always kind in his conversation with others and has a number of friends of various cultural backgrounds. I can't imagine that they would choose to send kids who would not represent their schools well and who might get into arguments with kids from other schools.

Sarah got braces on this month. She has a double cross-bite. We anticipate that it will take two or three years to correct her teeth. Sarah also is going into intensified Algebra. This was based on two tests her teacher gave to seventh graders. She

received the highest score on the reasoning section of the test. HOORAY! She is the first counselor in her Beehive presidency.

Rose-Ellen has discovered the joy of earning money. She and Sarah received twenty dollars!!!! each for five hours of babysitting two toddlers for our neighbors. Husband and wife are both doctors. I told her that she could have both of them sit for the price of one. (Her three year old is especially fond of Rose-Ellen, but at ten I think she's a little young to be home alone with a one and three year old so late at night.) All the little kids in the ward adore Rose-Ellen. The girls are getting more and more calls from Moms in the ward to babysit. I've reminded the kids that these young student couples can't afford to pay them what parents in our neighborhood are willing to pay for a reliable babysitter. Jonathan has a regular three afternoons per week sitting job (two kids) and is paid \$5.00 per hour.

Christian and Roland have had croup this week. Their doctor prescribed the antibiotic Biaxin for them. Two bottles of a ten-day course cost me \$96. Whatever happened to good old cheap Amoxicillin? Christian had a little asthma with it. I hope this isn't a trend. Two asthmatics in one family are enough.

Our basement is proceeding towards completion bit by bit. Warren's room needs only to be painted and wall-papered and carpeted to be finished. Actually, that's mostly all that is left to do, except for a little trim work around the bottom of the walls. The bathroom doesn't have the finish plumbing installed, but the tile work is done and the rest could be completed in about a day.

Nathan got a new computer. He's paying for half of it. He wanted to get it now so he could get used to it for college. Actually he wanted to get now so he could play all these neat CD-Rom games on it. We got a dual speed CD-Rom, 90 pentium chip processor with eight Megs of memory, a built-in modem, a seventeen inch color monitor and a Cannon color bubble jet printer. I think I'll keep it here at home and let him take my Epson and its dot-matrix printer off with him to college. Now we all need to get on-line with E-mail and send the Hallmanack around that way.

Well, Happy Birthday to Barbara Hall (May 2), Warren and Jonathan Wood (May 4), H.T. (May 6), Sherlene (May 9), Alex (May 14), Chelsey (May 14) and Betsy (May 25). Who did I miss?

We're going to the Wood Reunion in Moorhead, Iowa in July and I guess we will be driving Nathan out to Ricks in August. As for the rest of the Summer? You're all invited to drop in for summertime visiting. The weather can be dreadful, but the company will be great.

All our love!

The Woods