

August 13, 1996

Dear Family,

I will be sad in some ways to see Nathan leave. We are delighted with his call to the Tucson Arizona, Spanish speaking mission, but he is very useful around here for some things. For one thing, he knows how to fix glitches on the computer. He did have a course in High School and then one at Ricks, but he also has this intuitive sense that I totally lack. While making his announcement, which I think I sent to each of you, Ellen Holsinger (a friend) and I totally crashed the computer. We couldn't even get a prompt. Last month I got talked into a computer repair contract which now seems mostly totally useless. It was a five year, \$500 policy and come to find out it only covers hardware. All my glitches seem to be in the software range of things. Nathan had to end up taking everything off and reloading everything again. Even were I able to do that, it would have taken me days to accomplish. Ah well, we are up and running again.

Another thing I will miss about Nathan is all the action that goes on around him. We had a relatively quiet year last year. Now Nathan has been back for the Summer, the door has been swinging open and closed at all hours of the day and night with friends coming and going. It's nice to have the young people of the ward coming and going. I feel much more in touch with what is going on in the Ward. I guess I'm lucky to feel that way, as I like the kids who tend to hang out here.

Nathan leaves on Labor Day for Provo and the MTC. He'll stay a day and a half at Mom and Dad's and they will take him up to the MTC. Barry may be able to also go out, but we are still investigating air fare. I'd love to come and stay for Laura's wedding, but school starts on the third and there are always a zillion forms and decisions that have to be made that first week of school. In addition, it's Roland's first day of school on the third, and it seems a little cruel to send him off on his own. It is also Rose-Ellen's first day of middle school, and Sarah's first day of high school. We'll have three kids in high school this year. Sarah said, "Think of all the chauffeuring you'll have to do this year." I replied, "Think of all the walking you're going to do this year."

Christian just turned 9 and Nathan just turned 19. Christian ordered a blue and green cake which Sarah tells me turned out really ugly. WELL! Nathan ordered a Spiderman cake (he's into things related to Spiderman) and it turned out pretty good if I do say so myself.

This Summer we have had Holsingers stay with us for three weeks (Sarah says May does not qualify as Summer); Curtis and Jeremy Woolf stayed for two weeks; the Holsingers came back for four days on their way to Addis Ababa; a client of Barry's stayed for three days; and the Ward girls stayed here during Youth Conference. Add to that numerous sleeping over friends of Rose-Ellen's and we've had quite a busy household. Now why didn't any of you make it here this Summer? You may have had to sleep outside in the playhouse with the spiders, but so what?

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This Summer I have gone to Camp with the girls from our Ward, shopped for shirts and suits and shoes for Nathan, painted a few things, and generally tried to get organized. I interrupted doing a years worth or more of filing to write a much overdue Hallmanack. The kids have gone swimming, gone to the movies, gone babysitting, gone hiking and camping, taken long bike rides, and watched all together too much TV. We are going to the beach next week for two days at the invitation of Bob Kerby and his son. Bob's wife and my good friend Phyllis died in July. Bob asked me to sing "Angels Among Us" for the funeral. He had about thirteen women speak for about five minutes each of their memories of Phyllis. It was a lovely funeral. I will very much miss Phyllis. When we get back we will go through the temple with Nathan for the first time, and pack him up, put him on a plane, and get back to real life.

Warren has been invited to spend a weekend this Fall at BYU. They are inviting thirty kids each weekend through Thanksgiving to enjoy a weekend at BYU. They don't pay air-fare however. They say in the letter that not going does not affect scholarship eligibility, but I know this is a chance for them to look over the crop of candidates. We're hoping he'll be invited in the Spring (air-fare paid) to be considered for the Hinckley scholarship. Maybe we can find a cheap fare so he can go out. MIT is sending him information after having received his SAT scores, but \$30,000 a year is mighty dear. There is a school in Southern Virginia that is recruiting LDS kids. It is owned by some members and has endorsed a commitment to LDS standards, but tuition and housing is \$19,000 a year. I guess they think there are a lot of rich Mormons. MIT doesn't look so far away from \$19,000.

Sarah is going into intensified English, Biology, Math and History, so this should keep her busy this year. In addition, she's taking a language (we hope her schedule gets fixed), and theater.

Rose-Ellen starts middle school. There's so much competition for the intensified classes that you now have to submit a portfolio of work and be recommended by your teacher to get into them. Rose-Ellen has been "identified" as gifted in English, but her real ability is in Math and they haven't "identified" her for such. So begins a new battle with the middle school. I think it's that there are just so many slots available, and they have more boys to fit into the math slots than the English slots. They should open up more to girls.

Jonathan didn't get on the track for gifted Math in sixth grade, and now is having to make up a class to get into them this year. He took Geometry this summer from the county schools. They met each day for six weeks for six hours. He got an A in the course. It cost me \$500!!!! If you fail a class and have to make it up it costs you less than the \$500. But if you want to take a class to move onto a harder track the county really makes you pay. Go figure! However, this will now allow him to graduated from High School having had Calculus. He is so mathematically able. He thinks in numbers and shapes. He has been put back this year to the regular English course which I think is entirely appropriate. He does amazing well in things scientific. I wonder where that comes from? I regret that my boys aren't around their smart uncles and aunts and cousins. There are smart kids here, but it's not the same.

Barry is out in Richland this week, attending the 30th reunion of the Richland Bombers.

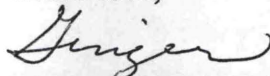
He is also helping his Mom with yardwork and other things she needs doing that are getting beyond her strength to accomplish. She is amazingly healthy for a woman in her mid-eighties. She still has the most beautifully ordered handwriting. Every letter we receive from her is handwritten. I think she ought to get a computer. She may have another twenty years to live-- might as well learn computer skills. Maybe by the time I'm eighty-five I'll know how to load a program and copy a disk????

We are sorry we were unable to attend Zina's wedding. It sounds as though it was a wonderful and happy occasion. Mom said Zina's dress was exquisite. I'm jealous that she had all those wonderful quilts as a backdrop to her reception. What a perfectly wonderful setting it must have been! Now Zina, you'll have to be a quilter. This begs the question as to what we are going to do with all these new families and the Hallmanack. Shouldn't they be now making separate family entries for us to enjoy?

We need to thank Steven and Kelly for putting up Warren for a couple of days while he was at Utah State for Engineering State week. Utah State offered Warren a scholarship and would like him to consider coming out this Fall to take a test for one of their top scholarship awards. Once again, we're supposed to supply the air fare. Maybe we're not doing this right. Maybe we need to plead poverty and see if they'll pick up the tab. I don't know whether Warren is seriously considering this option or not. It is nice to have some options, isn't it?

Our thoughts and prayers are with Betsy and Tracy at this difficult junction in their lives. We love the both of you and hope that you are able to find some direction and peace. There are so many good things that came of your union. I think you both learned and grew and were better because of your marriage. Now that you are divorcing, I hope you will continue to enjoy associations with us and with our children. God bless you and your children and may you resolve things amicably and with hope for the future.

Much love,



P.S. We loved your letter, Liz. Christmas is coming and now I want a scanner. What a great addition to letters. I decided I should at least add a watermark to my letter or something to make it look like I can now do more than type. So--here goes!

Well, at least it's a start. Now I'll have to get Nathan to show me how to put the color cartridge in so I can do color on his little Cannon Bubblejet. This is a great little printer.

