

Dear Family,

January 2, 1995

Hope you had a joyous Christmas holiday! Here we are, in the new year already. HAPPY NEW YEAR! On Christmas day we talked w. Laura in Cuenca, Ecuador, her new area for an hour and fifteen minutes. We had a great Christmas service with Choir & carols & brief remarks by Bishop Wilkins. We re-played Pres. Hunters' Christmas message twice during the afternoon while addressing some last Christmas cards, with nice warm sunlight coming through our south windows. And Sister Mosbarger (family I hometeach) sent over the best dinner rolls to go with our meal.

I actually got some cards off this year, in addition to Sherlene's, for the first time in some years! It was good to be well & have some time to do this. Daniel helped. Christmas Eve we attended. Mom & Dad Hall's traditional Ward program & pageant, then joined Tracy & Betsy & family for the works-- great food, spontaneous harmony of musical cousins, and reading of the Christmas story, so well done by Tracy, with family enactment by older and younger. Lily chose the role of Haste, which name was tagged to her sheepskin shawl; her part came up prob. 4 or 5 times in the Luke account. Lily was there & ready each time, hurrying along with shepherds or Joseph & Mary, or whoever else was going with or making Haste. Daniel chose the role of Long-ears (my terminology, since his terminology I shall not repeat).

We had visits during the holidays from Daniel's friend, Natalie Jensen, of West Valley. Seems to be something social going on there. Just friends, I'm sure. She's off to Israel for a semester of intensive Arabic. Santa brought a CD ROM drive for the home PC, including a Groliers' Encyclopedia CD. We can look up any word or subject & have articles, pictures, maps right there. I looked up Ecuador first thing, read the article, & saw where Cuenca is on the map. The Mormon Church article is very brief, but OK. We can also play a music on the drive. We hope to get an LDS Library CD that has tons of Church books on it.

I seem to have gotten a sore foot somehow playing basketball. So I've sat out for a few days. Hope I can figure out the problem & get back to b-ball soon. The Dr. prescribed soaking my foot, alternating between hot & cold water each minute, and doing this for 10 minutes several times a day. It's a new experience, dipping my foot back & forth between hot & cold buckets before going to bed, but it does feel good afterwards.

We recommend the video Shadowlands about C.S. ("Jack") Lewis in his later years. He was tested by his own teaching that God's purpose was not necessarily our happiness (i.e., that we be contented cows), but that we learn to love, be loved, & "grow up." "Suffering," he said, "seems most often to be the motivation." Of course it was marriage, in this case to an American woman, that brought his about. We also recommend another video, "Cool Runnings" for laughs over a Jamaican bobsled team, but also some inspiration.

Sherlene started teaching fam. history in Sunday School again. I missed her class because I was substitute teaching the 13 yr olds--a great group. Sherlene just signed a BYU contract to teach Beginning Family History. Also, Laura called us early this week: she's coming home a month early, Feb. 6, to avoid having an odd number of sisters. She was quite upset when she called, having had big ambitions for her last month.

Last night, David & Karen joined us for an evening of games, which became an evening of positive conversation. Both David & Karen have some great ideas for the Church & for us as members. David's ideas go back to Doctr. & Cov. basic and would simplify, downsize, & integrate--call it Correlation II (all off the record, of course). Karen's thoughts focused on individual member freedom, responsibility & opportunity to do good, noting that Church organization is only intended to be transitory.

We've been reading in Jacob about digging & pruning & dunging the vineyard for the last time--and all the blessings promised the helpers. Happy pruning & digging & dunging to Laura, Mary, Stephen, and Robert (AND ALL THE REST OF US TOO).

All our love. Dan & Sherlene

*P.S. Dan & I really enjoyed Mom's Dad's Christmas dinner at Jell's and then eating playing games, singing with all of us there who are local at Mom's Dad's afterwards. We missed you on the coast. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!*

Jan 12, 1994

Dear Family:

Thank you all for the Christmas presents. It was fun hearing from all of you or having you drop by (for the ones in the area.) We feel very pampered.

Our Christmas party: Last year we had our dinner at the Chuck-arama, and it worked out fine. This year we scheduled the dinner for the church-arama, but they don't take reservations so it's a come and take your chances sort of deal. They said to come early and they would set up for us. When I got there the lines were outside the door. So we switched to Sill's who handled us on the spur of the moment. Afterwards we came here and opened the gifts, ate some more, and played games. We missed the out-of-towners.

Utah state started earlier than the BYU, so Mark and Michael went back to school a week or so ago. The Y started this week. Emily and Greg drove back in Emily's new car. They got a good buy on a car which only had about 10,000 miles on it and really had belonged to a little old lady. They lucked out and had quite good weather on the return trip and that is really good because we have been having some bad storms between here and California. Haven't seen them since they came back. But have Em's new phone number .

I have finally got most of the Christmas stuff cleared away. Dad and I went down to buy a new mattress, but haven't done so yet. The modern mattresses are 18 inches thick and I don't want to go over 15 inches because it will look funny on our bed. We may have to settle for a new foam sawtooth. We plan to see if there are any such critters as a 15 incher set in S.L.

Finally got my draperies yesterday. I started the order in November. They aren't quite as good a color as before, but they will be fine.

I have a new church job. I am one of the RS teachers. Dad is working on his patent. They cited some possible infringements, but they're not. He just has to convince the patent department. Dad has given me a new computer set up, and I am writing this on Word Perfect. He will install Microsoft word 6.0. as soon as I get off this machine. He has also ordered a new color printer for his own machine.

Doug and Nancy are taking a sailboating vacation. They will be gone three days. Carli and Chelsie are holding down the home front.

Liz and Marty took their family on a cruise down to Mexico during the Christmas holidays. It was the family Christmas. They said they had a really good trip.

Everyone remember to save next Thanksgiving for an H. Tracy Hall reunion. More later as our plans jell.

Gram Hall