

7 Jan. 1995

Dear Family,

In keeping with some 1995 resolutions, I am writing a Hallmanack letter for the month of January. I'm able to do so because we have a very bright 18 year old who can fix computers doing unexplainable, unimaginable, irresponsible, totally annoying things. Regrettably, it is not one of my own children who can do this deed. This young man is attending a local university because BYU turned him down because his ACT scores weren't high enough. (He doesn't test well, he says.) Good grief! He has two jobs in the public sector as well as his own consulting/repair business, as well as going to school full-time. I think BYU should move to personal recommendation or interviews. The way the system now stands a lot of kids who are brilliant and talented in a less-than-mainstream way are being overlooked. He works for \$15 per hour and in an hour and a half fixed my computer (replaced the battery, figured out the right configurations that were not listed in my books (why don't they put these items of major importance for purposes of setup and running the computer in bold type on the inside of the cover?), figured out why my printer was ejecting the second page of each document unprinted, put two programs on my hard drive, and found the lost pages of genealogy on Barry's computer that two other persons had determined were irretrievably lost when I formatted the hard disk which I thought meant a 3.5 inch diskette. That was money well spent. What will we do when he goes on a mission? This kid can sit down and rattle off all these codes at lightening speed. I can't even find the page number in the book that relates to the problem I seem to be having at the time.

I have a large well of discontent in my soul right now. I'm frustrated by not being able to solve even some of the minor problems that cause major interruptions with things running smoothly around here. Both of my children had school projects (Latin and English) which related to video-taped enactments of stories they had read in their classes. I have learned how (in a very basic way) to run the video camera. But I spent three hours last night trying to get the 8 mm tape from the camera to a video tape that could be played on the television. I'm sure it's a simple basic procedure, but all the technical gobbledegook in the manual and all the dozens of various options I tried never meshed and in the end I had to write a note to the teacher explaining my stupidity and send the tape with my children hoping they can find another student or parent with more sense than I have. Then this morning on a news show they showed all the latest technical advances in electronics that everybody will have in their homes in the next year or two and I want to crawl back into the 18th century knowing that I too will just have to have a camera that works digitally, where you can review all the shots you've just taken instantly, can be thrown up onto your TV screen and printed (even onto little stickers) instantly, or put up on your computer screen for instant inclusion in your latest Hallmanack. All of this will be available in Best Buy within six months for about \$1300 for camera and printer. It's only in the last year that I have started to feel old. Feeling old has nothing to do with the state of your body, I've decided. It has everything to do with whether or not

you can transfer 8 mm movie tape to VCR tapes. It's time for me to go to school again. Why can't my kids teach me these things. You'd think they'd be getting all of this in their school training.

On the other hand, I can still sweep up sawdust, and sand and paint and even cut a board or two where I have to. I can change a washer on a faucet. Barry also knows I'm very good at demolition, having taken up some of the floor in the current master bath, weeks before I should and leaving a horrible mess to deal with. I think I'll send all my kids to technical school. Who needs to learn how to think? We all need to learn how to DO. The basement is proceeding if not on schedule at least as fast as the bank account can cope. It will be so nice to have some finished space down there. The plumbing and heating and framing are roughed in and the electrician comes on Monday. Then the insulation and drywall go up and real change will be noticeable and my real work will begin. We still have most of the old tile to take up (Jonathan has been great at demolition) and will have all the painting and finish work to do. I hope it will all be finished in three months. Initially, I thought we would get it done in three weeks. Reality has descended and I give it three months. Let us all hope that it doesn't expand to a three year job.

My three and a half year job in the Relief Society has ended and I am teaching in the Primary. I will be teaching what used to be the Valiant age group and doing the bimonthly activities for the girls. I am getting reacquainted with how much I have neglected around the home and appreciate anew how much Barry has done around here the last three and a half years!

The quote of the week belongs to Roland (as it usually does). I bought some wart-remover pads as he has a wart on one of his fingers that has been there for quite some time. I put the little pad on and topped it off with a bandaid. He examined it closely in the car while we were driving Sarah to piano lessons. He asked, "Mom, how long is this going to take anyway?" When I explained that it might be as long as a week or more he said, "Well, I think I'm going to let my wart live." Long live warts!

Nathan got employee of the month for the third month in a row. His boss told me they are going to have to change it to the "Nathan Wood Employee of the Month Award." He wrote a wonderful letter of recommendation to go in Nathan's BYU application. Now if they would just look at his grades and recommendations and throw out his ACT he'd have no troubles. He's taken it twice and the two scores were only a point apart. I'm not inclined to have him take it again. We'll see how it goes.

Thank you all for your wonderful cards and gifts. Betsy, we have had such fun with SET, though I do think it is partly responsible for me feeling so inept at some things. The anatomy book makes us feel relieved we are not doctors who have to know all these things. The music CD's and throws and checks and kind words do so much to make us feel warm and loved and appreciated!

Love, Ginger