

March 13, 1995

Dear Family:

I think the drought is definitely over. What a soggy, soggy state we are! We've had no flooding in our neighborhood (except for occasional low spots in roadways,) but nearby San Jose has been flooded and several other places in the county. More rain is expected today and this week. We are so tired of rain! The gale-strength winds made our 40 foot birch tree lean over more than it already was, and the roots are pushing up, so Marty has roped it up and lashed it to our shed to keep it from falling in the event of another storm. Hope that will hold it until we can get a tree service out to cut it down. Our power was out for ten hours on Thursday, also. It was so overcast that I had to use a flashlight to read while I stayed under covers to keep warm. Most of Los Altos homes were without power--some for a few days. The kids complained because the power was out at school and the principal made them stay, but I told them they were better off there than stuck at home with nothing to do but read with a flashlight. Makes you appreciate electricity! I sang at a funeral in the afternoon, but thankfully, the power was on at the ward building.

We're coming to visit Provo and y'all who live there on March 25th until the 31st. John and Erin have Spring Break then, and thanks to air fare wars, we'll be flying up this time. Marty didn't want to fly. He thinks a long drive is relaxing. He thinks it's jolly fun to drive for 14-15 hours and get there all tired and dizzy and take a few days to recover. Maybe it's those milkshakes at the Arctic Circle in Winnemucca that he likes so much. Maybe it's the kids in the back seat saying "How much longer?" Maybe it's that long tunnel near Elko where we all hold our breaths when we go through. Maybe it's the spectacular scenery in the northern Nevada wastelands along I-80.

My Morningstar Fireside Singers will be singing three songs at the Oakland Interstake Center while I'm gone in a big youth choir festival. I told Dagny (pronounced *Downey*.) our producer, that I would be gone March 26th, but she went ahead and scheduled the choir to sing anyway. How could she. Doesn't she know that I'm irreplaceable? I guess she's going to play the piano and our regular accompanist will direct. Several of the singers will be gone on vacation, as well, so it will be a smaller crew. They'll get by. The singers are under a lot of pressure to learn their music, so I spent two weeks preparing tapes for them. My 4-track tape recorder and keyboard have really been helpful for this kind of thing. I record the accompaniment, then the different voice parts on separate tracks. Then I can mix it down to a regular cassette making the soprano voice, for example, louder than the alto. I copied 50 tapes for the kids. I bought some self-adhesive cassette labels at the stationery store and printed up labels on my computer. Neat! Now all I need for my system is an effects processor (I've been borrowing one from a friend,) and I also have my eye on a sample sound module with all kinds of orchestral and band sounds. I could hook it up to my keyboard and have access to another 250 beautiful and exotic sounds. Expensive hobby.

Same with Greg. He's not made much money with his band, but he's getting really popular. The college kids seem to really like his music. Trouble is, every time he has a "gig" he has to rent a bunch of PA equipment to amplify the band, and has to copy and distribute a bunch of flyers to advertise. Any profits go right down the drain. In addition, the clubs charge the bands for the *privilege* of playing in their place. What a racket! After up-front club charges and rental for equipment, there's not much left over for three poor college students. I think I understand the phrase "starving musicians" better. Greg thinks things will improve as he is able to play bigger and better clubs.

Well, I've reached the end of the page and am chattering on here. Just wanted to say "Hi" to all of you. We hope Tracy has a quick recovery from his surgery, and hope Mom and Dad are feeling better from their colds and flu. Take care of yourselves. We love you.

Liz