

July 16, 1995

Dear Family:

It's been a real humdinger of a month! We returned July 6th from a event-filled two-week tour of the Czech Republic and Slovakia with Erin and her performing group "Morningstar." Marty and I were "chaperones." Not very effective ones, I'm afraid. We were appalled by the rude and immature behavior of some of the kids on tour. Five of the boys were arrested and hauled off to the police station for smashing the windshield of a luxury car by a 16-story water balloon drop. They got off easy, each having to pay the police only \$20. It turned out to be a company car, and the insurance company would cover the damage. We were glad we weren't in Singapore! The kids seemed to have a good time, though Marty and I were exhausted by their antics. Prague is a beautiful city, and is flourishing under the new non-communist regime. We visited Wenceslas Square where 500,000 people assembled and peacefully demanded a new government in 1989. They call it the "Velvet Revolution" because it was soft and non-violent. Prague was not bombed as much as other European cities, and most of the old buildings are still standing--many beautiful cathedrals, castles, and gorgeous old buildings with fancy facades and cupolas. We visited the famous St. Charles Bridge where the kids watched a puppet show and somehow got roped into singing "Walk Along Beside Me"--which turned into some kind of Christian rock song with one guy accompanying with guitar and another with his tambourine, and the congregated people clapping along. I directed a portion of the performing tour which is a religious vocal fireside. We performed it in Helsinki and Vienna, on the first two days of our tour, when we were completely jet-lagged. In Vienna, we had spent half the day on a walking tour of the city in a driving, cold rain, (no one brought umbrellas!) and then had to go to the chapel and sing (in our matching blue T-shirts because our dresses weren't out of customs!) We were awful. The Viennese Saints were very forgiving, fortunately, but I was still quite embarrassed. Bad idea to perform so early on a tour! We gave a better performance in Prague at the mission home there. There are a lot of missionaries in the Czech Republic, and they have a beautiful new mission home right downtown.

The kids also did a singing and dancing revue kind of show five or six times which went quite well. We had to cancel a couple of performances in Bratislava, Slovakia, because our costume boxes were tied up in customs. That was unfortunate, because the people at the music school that hosted us were so kind. We gave a small sampling of our performance in tee shirts and shorts at their school, and their musical theater students sang for us as well (mostly American Broadway songs!) The people there are so glad to be out from under communist rule, but life is very difficult for them trying to adjust to a capitalist system.

John was on a scout trip to southern Utah when we left for Europe, and he returned while we were all gone. He stayed at a friend's home for one night until Emily and Greg came home from BYU. Greg had flown up to BYU to take an exam and help Emily drive her car home. I was unsettled having all

the family coming and going from different corners of the world, but everything worked out fine. While the scouts were in Utah, John's scoutmaster made a point of stopping at the Hole-in-the-Rock monument that has been erected in memory of those scouts who died there. John told us about it and was surprised to learn that his own grandfather had dedicated the monument, and that his uncles had been involved in the accident.

We're glad to be home. Greg and Emily are both home this summer. Greg has a job at Nordstrom selling shoes. He makes pretty good money when he works, but the work has not been steady all summer. He was off for a couple of weeks between sales. Now he's working again through August 7th at least. Emily and Erin are doing their regular summer jobs teaching and assisting in music at Pinewood. Emily is directing a first grade play this year, as well. John is reviewing Algebra I at summer school so he can go into Algebra II in the fall (he took Geometry this last year) and spends his free time (when he's not playing basketball) counting his money. John invested \$550 of his lawn-mowing earnings last year and has doubled his money so far. He has a custodial account (with us as custodians, cause he's too young to have his own account) at Charles Schwab. He logs onto America OnLine every afternoon to look up his "portfolio" and cackles as he watches his money grow. Anybody need any stock tips? He's been doing so well that Marty now lets him manage his funds that have been in trust from the MegaDiamond stock. I'm happy because he's reading more--even if it is "Smart Money", "Kiplinger's, and the" Wall Street Journal."

Erin is planning for BYU in the fall. She passed the AP English test with a 5 (highest grade you can get) and the AP Calculus test with a 4. Those added to her previous AP History and English Skills tests give her 32 credits as she enters college. She just received her roommate assignment--a girl from Afton, Wyoming. Erin will be living at John Hall, in Helaman Halls.

Marty is in Colorado Springs this week. He'll be travelling quite a bit this fall, leaving just me and John at home. Could be lonely. Think I'll look into taking some classes.

Emily's missionary friend, Jim, returned from Chile while she was still at BYU. She went down to Las Vegas for his homecoming talk and stayed with his aunt there. She saw him the following week up in Utah when he came up for a friend's wedding. Things are fine between them and they're going to take things slowly. We're expecting pretty big phone bills this summer.

Well, hope you're all enjoying your summer. Glad that Daddy's biopsy turned out negative, and hope he's feeling better. I guess all the missionaries are home now. We should expect a wave of weddings now! We're looking forward to seeing all of you at Thanksgiving time.

Love, Liz