

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 1998 7:48:01 PM
From: neilfam@ix.netcom.com
Subj: Just Checkin' In

Dear Family:

Sorry it's been a long time since we've been in touch. The holidays were extra busy this year for me--I have yet to send a Christmas greeting or make chocolates--and I seem to be just catching up here at the end of January. I didn't get much of a break from choirs after all the Christmas concerts, as one of my choirs (Valparaiso Singers) sang a set on a New Year's Eve concert and we took only two weeks off before beginning rehearsals to prepare for three Spring concerts. So I had to get to work right away planning and ordering new sheet music for those. At the first of November I asked our Bishop to release me from my Primary job because

all the music I was doing during the holidays plus preparing for the lessons each Sunday nearly did me in. He did--after the holiday concerts were all over--and then asked me to teach the 12 year-old Sunday School class, saying that he was doing it to "give you a break from all you've been doing."

I wasn't sure I heard him right! I'm afraid he hasn't got any idea the time it takes me to prepare for the choirs. This year I'm going to ask to be released from teaching in July--then maybe he'll get around to it by November.

Anyway, things are settling down now and I'm on to new projects. Marty got most of his traveling in before the end of the year so he can be at John's basketball games ever Tuesday and Friday night. Things are difficult at work right now with the Asian financial crisis affecting profits and some of the division's projects behind schedule. His blood pressure is up so we bought a home monitoring machine to check it and keep a log of his ongoing levels. He's getting plenty of exercise and keeps his weight down, but it's pretty hard to avoid the stresses of his work. Marty is still the Young Men's President, which means there is always a group of boys over during 49er games and for the Super Bowl last Sunday. I'm sure some of

these kids aren't allowed to watch t.v. on Sunday, but they know the game will always be on at our house and our big-screen always draws a crowd. Trouble is the big screen is not in a big room, so they're always having to crowd in on the floor. This Sunday they cleaned us out of all the cookies, crackers, chips, ice-cream, nuts, etc. that they could find, and I'm glad

that there was something in the cupboards, because I had forgotten it was super-bowl Sunday.

Last week Marty took a few of the young men to see "Amistad" for the Wednesday night activity. We had previously seen it and Marty felt like it was one of those few "R" rated movies that the boys should see for it's vivid portrayal of the tragedy of slavery. I noticed some of the boys stayed home and I'm not sure if it was because they had to study for finals or because their parents wouldn't let them see an "R" rated movie. We thought it was well done, and even though we've heard it is not entirely accurate historically, the film portrayed man's inhumanity to man very powerfully. I read in the paper that it won't be shown at the Varsity Theater at BYU because of it's rating which I think is pretty narrow-minded

of whoever is in charge of that venue. There was some brief non-sexual nudity of the slaves, but it didn't offend me at all. I was more put off by the violence in the mutiny at the very beginning. I have seen some PG-13 movies that were much more offensive!

Basketball season is well under way now, and we're enjoying John's games as well as the Stanford games where we've had season tickets for a few years.

John is doing well, averaging 25 points a game, and had a personal best of 43 points in one game. He's still trying to attract BYU's attention.

Anybody know Coach Cleveland personally? Maybe his home teacher even? Unfortunately, John IS the Pinewood team this year. The other guys don't do much offensively, so in league games we're 2 and 3 for the season.

(Two

wins, three losses.) UVSC will give him a tryout in March or April after the season is over. He refused to persue playing at Ricks. He may end up staying at home next year, playing for a junior college nearby and hoping to get bigger and stronger to play for a Division I college. Stanford has not had any losses yet so it has been a great year to have tickets! We only

have three seats, so Greg doesn't get to go unless he gets lucky because I decide not to go.

Emily is coming home the weekend of February 6 for a short visit. We're also going to meet in Reno on February 16th for the Western Division

ACDA

Convention (American Choral Director's Association) where we'll watch lots

of different kinds of choirs perform, and go to seminars on different aspects of directing choral music. We went to the national convention in San Diego last year and it was really informative. Too bad this one is in Reno--and in February! Brrrr.

Well, hope all is well. Enjoyed hearing about your trip, Ginger--sounds like you had fun. I caught one of the Regis and Kathie Lee shows that was held in New Orleans last week and wondered if you ran into them there. Sounds like you did. I watch the weather each night and think of whoever is getting the bad stuff. I don't envy Bryan and Charlotte in Portland this year. It's been pretty nasty up their way. We've had lots of rain, but not really anything too terrible yet (knock on wood.)

Take care,

Liz