

Neil Hallmanac  
July 1, 1990

Dear Family:

Today is Greg's birthday--18 years old today. How can I have an eighteen year old son. I thought I was still 18. We gave Greg a set of compact scriptures and we forgave a current debt he had. When John heard we were giving Greg the scriptures, he said, "Gee, Dad. Can I have some scriptures for my birthday, too?" (You had to be there to hear his tone of voice. I remember him saying something similar when we took him to hear a choral concert at Christmas one year--"Can we do this again on my birthday?" Actually, lest you think John is a total spiritual washout, he has been quite faithful reading the scriptures each night.)

We had a great time in Hawaii. The weather was beautiful and the kids stayed healthy. Marty signed the family up for some high adventure activities. Marty, Greg, and Emily rode bicycles 38 miles down Haleakala, a dormant volcano, from over 10,000 feet to sea level! They left our condo at 3:00 a.m. so they could get up to the summit to watch a spectacular sunrise before the descent. It was below freezing on top with 50 mile an hour winds, but once they were on the way down, the sun came out, the wind stopped and they had a spectacular ride. Video available to watch when you visit. The following day we went out on the ocean to parasail. (Actually, everyone but me went parasailing--I'm not one for "high adventure." I went along for the boat ride!) Marty spent a morning scuba diving and one day he took three of the kids snorkeling with an expedition to Molokini, a mostly submerged volcano. Erin and I stayed home to read. Marty and John saw a white-tipped reef shark, which gets bigger every time he tells about it. We ate lots of pineapple and papaya and generally had a nice time. The only drawback is that we had our vacation so soon after school was out, and with the whole summer ahead of us, we don't have a lot to look forward to. Won't somebody come visit us?

I picked Emily up at the airport this afternoon. She had a great time at the BYU Young Musician's Summerfest last week. We sent her up a few days early to spend the weekend with Mom and Dad, and, unfortunately, she got sick with a sore throat and fever and spent Saturday and Sunday in bed. Mom called the doctor and got Emily started on antibiotics. She felt well enough to start the camp as scheduled. She stayed up late every night, met lots of new kids, was able to see her cousin Heather Neil, who was visiting her grandparents in Orem, and may have even learned a few things about music. Emily has a summer job at Pinewood, playing the piano for the musical plays the elementary school performs for summer school. It should be a good experience for her, and it is only five hours a day. She needs the cash. Eating out is her favorite sport.

Erin was much offended that I didn't include a blurb about her in last month's letter when I talked about everyone else, so I promised to really brag about her this month. She is getting contacts lenses this month--has saved to pay for half the expense. Actually, she tried soft lenses, and one of them was torn after only two days --so she's going to try hard, gas-permeable contacts now. They're harder to get used

to, but they sure are easier to handle and don't have to be replaced as often. Erin's main activities this summer are learning how to type and sew. She promised to spend a half hour on the computer typing tutor each day if she didn't have to go to summer school for typing. You would not recognize Erin. She has grown so much this year! The doctor says she'll be tall like her Mom. She is quite concerned about going to girls camp--afraid she might meet up with some bugs and bears. "Not to worry," I tell her. Our stake has a wonderful girls camp program. They try to get me to go every year, but I always manage to avoid that experience. I don't like bugs and bears either--and I think I'm allergic to large swarms of the teenage girl species.

John tried out for a new soccer team this week. This league is much more competitive and John will learn better skills. The coach runs a soccer clinic at a nearby boys boarding school and wants the team to board for a week to have some intense soccer training. The nice thing is that he's going to let the team go to the clinic free of charge! They'll start practice every day starting in August. (I knew that once I quit teaching private lessons, something would come up to fill my time. Looks like I'll be spending some time in the car--the school he'll practice at is too far away for bicycling.) My dreams of an all-musical family are fading fast. John's skills seem to lie elsewhere. Actually, he likes to sing and act. He and two other friends sang and danced to a song from the musical Big River called "We Are the Boys" (the boys being Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer and friend,) for the talent-variety show at school. He was most disappointed that he didn't get the end-of-year Drama Award for his grade. He thought he had the award all sewn up with his performance of Robin Hood earlier this Spring.

I hope I don't bore you all with so much news of our kids. Besides being a letter, this is about the only family journal we have, so I want to include most of their activities. I'll try not to brag too much--but how can I not brag about such great kids!

I understand there is a new Book of Mormon program where instead of sending the books directly to a missionary, one can send money for books to a certain Church office with a picture and testimony which will be translated into the language requested, and books will be prepared and sent to a missionary that is requested. Tracy and Sherlene, do you know about this? If you know this is the case, we would be happy to send books to Daniel and H. T. Let us know which language and mission.

Marty was in Europe for twelve days this month. While he was gone Greg's car burst a water hose--not surprising. Things around here know when the boss is away. Marty had an intestinal bug this week and was home sick with a fever for three days. He can't remember when he's been so sick--he lost ten pounds, but he's feeling better now.

Hope y'all have a nice summer. Set up the hammock and kick back once in a while. Have some milk and cookies while you're at it.

Love,

Liz, Marty and the Crew

P.S. David, We'd love to hear from you every few years or so.