

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 1998 10:38:35 AM
From: neilfam@ix.netcom.com
Subj: Just Catchin' Up

Hi Family:

Thought I'd like to write you all a little letter, since I haven't been in touch lately. I've enjoyed Sherlene's letters and hearing from Nancy today. Glad to hear that you're on the mend from your back surgery, Nancy. Sounds like it was sorely needed (no pun intended.)

Congratulations to all of you who received your college degrees or advanced degrees this Spring.

We're all doing fine down here in soggy California. We're normally well out of rainy season by now, but are continuing with wet weather still. It has had it's benefits, though. I have never seen California wildflowers so plentiful and varied. It's been really beautiful--reminds me of Europe. Course, now we're all sneezing and wheezing more than normal, also.

Erin has returned home from BYU, but Emily opted to stay in Provo this year. She was on tour with BYU Singers to Northern California after the semester was over, and we were able to hear them sing in Oakland last week.

She came home with us that night and did her laundry and made arrangements

for me to ship some summer clothing to her, and then I drove her back over to Fremont the next morning to meet the choir for the rest of the tour.

She's back in Provo now, planning a three-week European tour with a friend

which starts next Monday. When she returns from that she'll help with the Summer Musicfest at BYU and then be needing a job for the rest of the summer. She'll be co-directing the Women's chorus again in the Fall, mentoring a new graduate student, who will then take over in the Winter Semester.

Erin has taken a job with Lindentree in Los Altos, a children's bookstore.

She's gets to check out the books at night to read which will be a help to her when it comes to taking her Children's Literature classes for her elementary education major. (She's has a dual major--music ed and elem. ed.) Her Lindentree job is flexible enough to allow her to teach music and drama at Pinewood Summer School in July and August. This will be her

seventh year at Pinewood. She's attending the Stanford 1st Ward this summer.

Greg has already been laid off from his first Silicon Valley Job-- something bound to happen sooner or later to anyone who works here--it just happened to Greg sooner. The company was struggling financially and had to lay off some people. They had hired Greg permanently only a week earlier. Up to that time he had been working for them through a temp agency. He got a new job two days later with another small computer firm called Sonic Systems, and so far, even though the pay is the same, it looks like it will be a better job--at least he comes home happier at night. Then, the next week he received a call from his former boss who wanted him back! He hopes to move out of our home and into an apartment with a friend in the next few months.

Housing is at a premium here these days--apartment rents are skyrocketing and houses are selling within just a few days, often for more than the listing price and with multiple bids. It's crazy. Greg will be lucky to find a place that he can afford.

John will graduate from high school June 4th. He's decided to go to Canada College, a community college up the peninsula about twenty minutes. They have a really good basketball coach and team. From there he hopes to get bigger, stronger, and more experienced, and maybe move on to Division 1 college after he comes back from his mission. He had been recruited by a few coaches from Division II schools, but he didn't want to go to any of them full-time, so opted for the community college route. So we get to have him home for another year. Course, he's been informed that he'll be doing his own laundry, just as if he was away at college. (Maybe then

he'll stop using two new towels a day.) He had been accepted at BYU, but would have had to try to walk onto the basketball team, and he decided not to take the chance that he wouldn't be able to play. John made the All-League Basketball Team, and last night went to a banquet in Palo Alto where he was given All-Mid-Peninsula honors along with other basketball standouts. His high school gave him the team MVP award as well.

I've kept busy going to games (basketball and volleyball, which is just ending) and directing the Valparaiso Singers. We gave a concert last week at the San Francisco Stake Center, and this Saturday we'll have our season-ending concert in Ben Lomond, up in the Santa Cruz Mountains. We've learned some challenging pieces this year and have really had a great time together. I'll be sad when Judith comes back in July and takes over conducting again. (I have directed for Judith this year while she was on a mission to Argentina, and will go back to singing soprano when she returns.)

Marty just returned from a week-long trip to China and Korea. From Korea he brought me a Coach leather ladies' attache case which I had admired in a shopping center once. He paid \$80 for it in Korea and it retails here for \$425! He's still pretty jet-lagged and not sleeping well, which means I don't sleep well either. The Asian financial crisis has really hurt his division's business, and he is under a lot of stress at work. The tree-farm idea is looking more and more attractive to him, Daddy.

Marty is taking lots of trips to Ft. Collins, Colorado these days where both of his parents are in a nursing home recovering from strokes. His father is unable to walk and has balance problems, and his mother is partially blind and has lost her short-term memory. We're having to sell the house we had purchased for them in Ft. Collins since they most likely will not be able to be self-sufficient again. Our hope is for them to be able to go into an assisted living apartment, or a smaller home-care facility.

It never fails that something around the house breaks down while Marty is gone. This trip we were blessed with two little episodes. I kept smelling wet wood in the vicinity of our master bathroom, but couldn't discover a

leak in any of the appliances. We have a Jacuzzi tub, and I was worried that it was leaking from underneath. After about three days of that mystery, I realized that I faintly heard water running in the vicinity of our outside-closeted hot water heater, and found that the hot water pipe leading from the heater had sprung a leak and was pouring water all over

the floor and out the door onto the ground. Gratefully, it's an outside closet! \$125 to fix pipe. The very day I found the leak, I heard banging noises in the ceiling above our master bedroom and figured that we had caught a critter in one of the traps Marty had set a couple of weeks ago. We suspected that we had rats, squirrels, or raccoons nesting in our ceiling, as we had heard noises from above. I had warned Marty that I wasn't about to go and check those traps while he was gone, so I called a pest-control guy who came and found that we did indeed have rats and had caught a big one (16 inches head to tail end). Roof rats are a big problem in the area, apparently, but we've never had a problem before. The pest control guy had to fumigate the attic for fleas that they carry, (and to hopefully drive any other rats out) and then he had to patch the three holes in the roof that the critters had made to gain access to our attic. \$300. Good thing Marty got a discount on that leather case, huh?!

Well, hope all is going well in your homes. Sorry we can't make it to Michael's wedding next week. Emily informs us that Mary is engaged now! Congratulations and best wishes to all!

Love,

Liz