

Jan 16 - The Beginning of the Gulf War
Dear Family. Hallmanack, January, 1991:

This is the first letter that I have written on this new computer which David and Karen surprised us with Christmas eve. And what a surprise. Dad and I have been talking about getting an IBM or a clone of IBM so that we would be able to correlate our computer genealogy with all you IBM owners. Besides, the church has gone almost entirely into IBM for its programs.

David had told us that when I got ready to get a new computer to come and see him and he would show us what he had down at work. Meanwhile Joyce Ridge had shown me the compatible which she owns and which David Free had helped her get--he apparently sells them. When I mentioned to David that I could get this one cheaper than the regular IBM he said, "Oh, if I were you I would wait until spring and then they are sure to be cheaper. After he delivered it, he said he was afraid we would go ahead and get one before he could get this package together. It's apparently a clone and made up of parts of this and that (good stuff, though) which he had here and there, but there was a new Lazer printer, and David had put the Microsoft Windows program, plus a lot of others, plus the genealogy program, plus all Sherlene had on hers (at least that David had) and all that he had one his, genealogically. Now what will I use for an excuse?

I think Dad is getting hardening of the arteries. (Just kidding, he gets sharper every day.) But we really went wild at Christmas. He bought me a new Kitchen aid mixer, a waffle iron, --at this stage my own hardening of the arteries prevents me from remembering them all. Just a week ago he came home with a new compact disk player and a lot of disks--and let me tell you, the music is great. The trouble with the electronic age is that you just get set up, turn around, and what you have is obsolete.

I am getting a new under-drape for the living room and replacing the blinds Downstairs with new blinds. I have been worried about how I was going to go downstairs when I am older to do the laundry--even threatening to extend our house out west so I could have an upstairs laundry, and Tracy says "no sweat. We will just put one of those elevator seats on the stairs if we get so we can't maneuver the steps." Of Course.

Thank you all for the wonderful Christmas we had. Having the family Christmas party so early so the college kids could be here took the pressure off Christmas itself and I had time to enjoy the season. We even got a few cards out. Thanks again, all of you.

This last week we had a scare when Haiti had political problems. I don't know one party from another, but Tracy said he would try to get a letter out explaining what really went on. The important thing, of course, is that Tracy Huntington is safe. He had been transferred out of the mission office when the coup occurred, and was about two hours from the mission home. Tracy and Betsy said they would try to get us a letter for this Hallmanack.

I am having hard time making this computer do what I want it to do. I guess I may have to read the instruction book and try to see if I can decipher its secrets. So far if it doesn't behave I just turn the thing off and start over.

We have had snow on the ground since before Christmas, but the weather prophets still say we are low on water for the summer if we don't get more snow.

The gulf problems have grossed us all, I guess. I really wish we could settle this without bloodshed--selfishly, I think of our own grandchildren who are almost of age to go into the military forces.

The US forces in the gulf region are different this time. Usually the military forces are first made up of single young men, and then as the situation gets worse married men and then married men with children are taken. This time they have taken the national guard and it is made up of mostly married family men. If fighting breaks out, the casualties will be accentuated by disrupted and bereaved families.

Virginia, Charlotte, Karen, Elizabeth and Betsy, will you get your heads together and decide if you want to include a family reunion with our 50th Wedding anniversary? We can plan our wedding party so that the families can go to both if they so desire--suggesting the last part of August or before your schools start. I need to know so I can reserve a place and get invitations printed. Dad wants to have his friend Leo Vernon's orchestra play at it, and we need to tell him the date for certain as well.

Dan is looking for a job, and has just about abandoned the chance to stay at AT&T. Which may mean that they will have to try to sell their house if they have to move to a new area.

Bryan is doing well recovering from his knee surgery.

DJ is progressing nicely. He now goes UP and down stairs. A year ago I thought he would have to have a special low bed so he could get himself in and out of bed, but he can get onto a normal height bed. He can get up onto the toilet himself, but can't get out of and back into his clothes by himself. He is not above using the pretended need to go "potty" as an attention getter. He tries to pull himself into a standing position, and then, of course, his legs go into stress. He is talking well and learning his ABC's. Next year I think he begins to learn Braille. How much we take for granted the usual motions which our limbs make. It takes someone like DJ to make us grateful for little things. And yet, when I see some other handicapped children, I realize that by comparison DJ is fortunate. I guess we can always find someone who is worse off than we are, or that have burdens we wouldn't care to assume.

It's a good thing that it's winter or Dad would really be a frustrated scientist. He spends almost every day at the shed doing machining. I have to make him come home for lunch, and many days he doesn't.

Daniel, I had a visit from Julie Nielson (my visiting teacher) this morning, and her son's missionary President sent her missionary son into a branch which was DEAD.(Japan) Before he left he had reactivated a lot of the DEAD members and now that he is home from his mission, that Branch is led entirely by members he reactivated or converted. LOVE THEM. People have a hard time turning down someone they know loves them. I know that's not easy sometimes, but it has been my experience that when you get to know people, you can always find something in them to love. Working with small branches (or big ones) is always a problem. When you're the branch leader you see personal problems which you would never have known about if you weren't the Branch President. Remember that Christ was called the Good Shepherd. He said " My sheep know me and hear my voice," A shepherd does not "herd" his sheep before him. He leads them. Remember that he said, "Follow me." "Do as I do" "Keep my commandments." The Church seldom "trains" someone for a job. The training comes from service in the job-- and prayer.

I remember one girl I knew in Schenectady. She was very young--not more than 20, had a couple of babies and had never worked with teenagers. They called her to be the MIA President. She was in tears three fourths of the time. But she persevered and grew into the job--now she can do anything. She found her strengths. She is now an expert in genealogy, but has held almost all the jobs in the church a woman can hold, and has, besides, written two books on genealogy which are used in every genealogy library in the church as resource books. Her name is Gloria Chaston. The Lord said he would chasten those he loved. (Change Chasten to Chaston and you've got a pun) I know now that he meant by that statement that he would give them experiences to make them grow, to humble them,