

enjoy but I have had to adjust to keeping all these things going at once. John is in the Young Men's Presidency which is wonderful. He has not done anything but missionary work for so many years, it's been good for him to see what actually goes on at the church on Wednesday nights (even though it's frightening at times!) There is a severe shortage of pianists in this ward so Johnny ("John" to everyone but us) plays for Priesthood and, since I lost our choir accompanist after Christmas, also accompanies the choir. It's amazing what kids can do when there is no one else to do it!

Last year was so frantic. We spent the first few months in job searching, then preparing our house for sale (which sold in one week after two months of painting, landscaping, finishing bedroom, recarpeting, cleaning, etc.). John and I flew here for four days in late July to find a house. We were fortunate that our house closed in Utah in time to get into our house here right away. August was kind of crazy. John taught right up until the weekend we left. He gave the graduation speech Friday evening. We left the next day. It was so nice to have our house here empty and waiting for us! and it didn't take long to feel "right at home!"

*what is
sarah's major
humanities* My thesis deadline was July but when it became obvious I was not going to make it with everything else that was going on, I got an extension and brought it to Fargo to finish. This is one reason that I did not get Christmas letters out. Another reason was I thought I would be smart and put addresses on diskette instead of folder of old envelopes, torn off addresses, etc. Well, I was smart, alright. So smart I lost the box of diskettes in the move. Back-up? Of course, not. (I never lose diskettes!) Well, I shouldn't mention that also in that box was my diskette with my thesis on it. Back-up? Of course, (do you think I'm stupid!) Unfortunately, the back-up was in the same box. Not to worry, however! My sister had a copy on her hard drive and to make a long story short, we all went back to Utah for Thanksgiving, I defended my thesis, and passed orals. I had a few revisions which I finally finished the week after Christmas and sent them in one day before my deadline--Jan. 14 (just in time to watch war break out).

I was planning to send out letters as soon as that was done. It's funny, though. I have had a rough two weeks trying to get anything done. With nothing urgent pressing me and no frantic pace, I am finding it difficult to do anything. For over five years, I have had one deadline after another set for me and I got used to living under pressure. Now, I have to learn to set my own deadlines, I guess. Nevertheless, it is a great feeling to be through. I am sending resumes to the three Universities here in case they need a part-time teacher. In the meantime, I am enjoying just being home. I have even started cooking and baking again! Rachel and I have had a great time baking all sorts of goodies together. (We're all ballooning, too, so I guess the baking spree will have to be tempered.)

So, that's what the Halls have been up to lately. Hope you all had a nice holiday and are enjoying your winter. We're also praying for those in the gulf and their families here at home. We're looking forward to the new year. Maybe we'll see some of you! If you're ever in Fargo, North Dakota...okay, okay, forget it. (Come on, give me a break--President and Mrs. Reagan was here a few weeks ago, for a 20 minute layover at Hector International. It made the front page, though they were here and gone before anyone saw them!)

Thanks for the "consin" letters - what an undertaking - I'll add several new addresses to my file (I hope I don't lose it again!) We miss Provo - but not much. It's wonderful here. We love it!

Love, Sarah & all