

Mom - I've sent a copy to everyone already.

The NEIL FAMILY NEWS

March 17, 1991

Dear Family:

Now that I've taken a class on how to use my Microsoft "Works" program, I have to show off what I've learned. I'll sure be glad when the class is over this week. The homework projects have been very time consuming. (I'd forgotten how much *fun* homework is--and quizzes and tests, also.)

I've really enjoyed my songwriting class, though. I've had to write six different songs, from kid songs to country songs. My country song was a real loser, but what can you expect from a kid raised on the classics. My life has just been too easy to write that weepin' and wailin' kind of music. (I spent a cultural-shocking week listening to country music radio to get in the mood.) But my other songs were pretty good, and the instructor has been very encouraging. I would like to write a songbook for children. After teaching children's music for so many years, I think I have a pretty good idea of the kind of music that appeals to kids. The market for kids' songs is strong right now, too.

I spoke in Sacrament Meeting this month on the subject of finding your own spiritual voice. I was inspired by an article in the last *BYU Today*, entitled "The Ophelia Syndrome." The article encouraged students to take control of their own education and find their own intellectual "voice" and I adapted the ideas to gaining a personal testimony, adding some thoughts of my own, as well. I used Dad's illustration of *faith* about the geologist Dr. Lamont, in Botswana, who found diamonds in the Kalahari desert by thinking about how the termite ants must have brought up samples of kimberlite soil from deep in the earth. Great story, Daddy.

Marty has been travelling a lot these last six weeks or so. He has been gone for two or three days each week, and for one entire week in March. Fortunately, United has a special free ticket promotion going on right now, and the extra trips Marty has taken have earned him lots of free tickets, which we hope to use when we go to Provo for Mom and Dad's fiftieth wedding anniversary in September.

Marty was asked to speak at a Regional Young Adult Fireside in March, and gave an excellent talk on service. He is the favorite high council speaker of the young adult ward, according to their bishop. He started off his talk by saying, "Liz and I were recently reading an article in Time magazine about sleep deprivation, which showed that most adults are not getting enough sleep these days, and the effects are showing up in increased accidents at work and on the highways, and in decreased productivity. Liz said to me, 'Isn't it wonderful that the Church has, even in this problem, found a way to help us cope?' 'How's that?' I asked. 'High Council Sunday,' she replied." Marty fabricated this whole thing (shades of Paul Dunn) but it got a good laugh.

As usual, the kids have a gazillion activities going. **Emily** spent Friday and Saturday

on her feet at a 24 hour dance-a-thon to raise funds for her tour of the Soviet Union in June. She was a pretty tired camper! Emily played a solo in Sacrament Meeting today and accompanied me last week when I sang in Church. Marty and I tried to get away to Monterey for four days this weekend, but because Emily was unable to babysit because of the dance-a-thon, we were able to be gone only Thursday and Friday. Oh well. We'll take anything we can get. Erin's youth orchestra performed last week and did well. She's the principal violinist for the 2nd violin section. Still hates it--orchestra, that is. She did enjoy performing in her class musical "Irene." We made chocolate valentine lollipops and hard cancy lollipops to seel during Valentines week at school to earn money for her eighth grade trip to Washington D.C. in April. John just finished YMCA basketball, averaging 17.5 points a game, usually playing only half a game. (There are ten boys on his team, and each is required to play at least half a game.) John figured his average himself (no dumb jock here). He is now involved in spring soccer. Hearing John play trombone with his elementary school band brings tears to our eyes. (You can interpret that any way you like.) Greg is getting along fine at BYU, especially since he changed roommates at semester break. He is pretty tired of the dorms, though--food and late nights. Greg seems to still be growing. He's as tall as Marty now, possibly taller. He sees a lot of his cousin Laura, who claims that Greg is a lot like her brother Daniel.

Our Stake Presidency was recently changed, and to make those callings, Apostle Russell M. Ballard came to our Stake Conference. He gave some excellent talks, and at the end of his speech on Sunday morning, using the powers of his apostleship, he called upon the weather patterns to change and declared that the drought we have had for nearly five years would end soon. His pronunciation was so strong it caused all of us to sit up and take note. The following week we started getting rain, and have since had rain almost every week, sometimes for days at a time. Last week our television meteriologist declared that the drought was over, that the weather patterns we have had for the last four years were changing. Amazing!

We're doing well here, and hope all is well with you. We hear that Dan has accepted a job at BYU. Congratulations, Dan. We hope that will go well for you. We'll pray that you will be able to sell the house soon, Sherlene.

We'll be going to Provo at the end of this week to spend our Spring Break. Marty and the kids will do some skiing--Greg's looking forward to skipping classes and joining them on the slopes. We hope to see all you Utah folks then.

Love,

Liz, Marty and Family