

Dear Family:

March 3, 1991

So far, this year has been one of trials. On Friday, February 1st Charlotte went with me to Bend, Oregon on a construction management assignment. Charlotte went along to make sure that I could make the 380 mile round trip drive. You may recall that I had orthoscopic knee surgery in January. My knee was still pretty weak and it was my first day back to work.

We took our station wagon because my work car was in the auto body shop for repairs. My work car was hit from behind in December when the roads were very icy. No one was hurt in that accident. While going over the mountain pass, the temperature light went on. I pulled over at the first good spot to get off the road. After pulling over, smoke started pouring out from under the hood. I popped the hood and found a carburetor fire. We were unable to put the fire out and the burning gas fumes spread rapidly. A snow plow pulled up and radioed for help. The highway department was in the area, but the fire was too big for them to put out. They quickly shut down the highway in both directions.

We had visions of a large explosion like the ones you see on TV and moved way back. There were no explosions, just the occasional popping of tires when they finally burned through. Gasoline fumes explode, but the gas only burns. We had filled the tank at a gas station about 60 miles previous. The gas tank was one of the last things to burn. The gas intake looked like a flame thrower. Everyone stood back and watched the car burn for about two and a half hours. We watched helplessly from a distance as it was totally consumed. The glass in every window melted. The fire department showed up while the gas tank was raging.

We lost our car, all of my tools, our camera, various personal items and our lunch. The by-standers were very nice to us and we didn't have any trouble getting a ride into Bend. Once in Bend, we rented a car and I finished the project review. It was late enough that we had to spend the night. Charlotte made phone calls to get our kids taken care of for the night. We took a Greyhound bus back to Portland in the morning.

Charlotte got well acquainted with the problems of being a one car family. She can't drop me off at work and have the car for part of the day. Without a car I don't work. We learned very quickly that our family does not function well with only one car. We received \$2500 for the car from our insurance company after three weeks of many calls to the claim officers. Only \$200 in my business tools were covered. They did pay for our camera, one pair of glasses and a few other personal items.

We bought a 1989 Ford station wagon from a used car dealer. At the conclusion of our negotiations, we paid 75% of their initial ask price. Charlotte's glad to have wheels again!

I placed an ad in the newspaper to hire an engineer. I received a number of resumes and have interviewed a couple of people. Most of the applicants are older than myself. Several are men who want to come out of retirement. I think one man (about 58 years old and still employed) would work out well. I took him with me on an inspection a week ago Friday. He is interested, but initially he would be taking a pay cut. He also understands the initial expense of buying his own tools. I took another man out on an inspection last Tuesday. I should know in a matter of days about their decisions. For the short term, hiring a new employee will necessitate getting a small business loan. We will probably have to use our house as collateral to secure it.

We had a very nice baptism for Hyrum yesterday. He was baptized on his eighth birthday. We were pleased that Grandma and Grandpa Hall were able to come.

Charlotte writing now. I took the children out of school so they could go with me to pick up Grandma and Grandpa Hall at the airport. It was fun to watch the planes come in. The children jumped up and down when they saw their grandparents come around the corner. It has been wonderful to have Mom and Dad here with us. Dad recounted his baptism when he gave his talk at Hyrum's baptism. He was baptized on his 8th birthday (although church records show he was baptized on the following Sunday.) It was during the depression and he and his father walked to the bishop's house and then the three crossed a barb wire fence and down to a creek where he was baptized.

Another eight year old boy named Spencer Robert Scott was baptized also. It was noted in one talk that they both carried names of latter day prophets and interesting that they both have the same middle name. The differences were also very apparent. Spencer was tall with a foot ball player build. Hyrum is short and slight(probably takes after his great grandfather Hall). Hyrum was so excited that he was as silly as could be. He couldn't hold still and kept pulling funny faces. Mom says that he reminds her a lot of David when he was a boy! After Hyrum was baptized he came up out of the water and he exclaimed, "Boy, that sure felt good!"

Sherlene and Dan sent some money and gifts for us with Mom and Dad. We used the money to help pay for dinner at the Sizzler after the baptism. That was really sweet of you to think of us! We had a wonderful time and it made us feel like you were part of it all! We were sorry to hear of the death of Dan's father. Whenever I saw your father Dan, he would cheerfully greet me, always calling me by name. Our love goes to you and your family.

Dad here. Sarah is doing very well in school. She has also had an enjoyable season of basketball. Having a good season means being on a winning team. Sixth grade girls basketball has lots of parental support. Our elementary school sponsored three YMCA teams in the district. They have their last game this Saturday.

Now Sarah wants to play softball. We went to the park three weeks ago when the weather was nice to practice. Hyrum, Hannah, Willis and a neighbor girl went with us. Willis played on the play ground equipment the whole time. Yesterday Sarah had softball tryouts. All of the girls were rated for throwing, catching, in-field and batting. Each girl was tested twice. Sarah started out slow, but did well in the second round. It was surprising to see some of the girls with heavy hitting ability. The team she wants to be a member of won their division last year and did well in regionals. Hyrum will be playing "hardball" in the second grader's league. In the second grade everyone plays. There are no tryouts for the second graders. Hannah didn't show interest so we did not sign her up for softball. I want to support our kids in all they want to do.

Hannah sure enjoys reading. She seems to always have a book in her hand. We have found that she has a habit of skipping over many of the hard words. Her violin is coming along well. She is still taking piano. She also has a talent with drawing and sketching pictures. Her younger brothers are often found drawing their own pictures with Hannah's encouragement. Hannah seems to gravitate toward the arts more so than any of the other children.

Willis attends "Play School" three times a week for half a day. He is looking forward to kindergarten next fall. I think Charlotte will be glad for him too. "I'm bored mom." He plays well by himself and with others. Willis is a very independent child. "I want to do it myself." His enthusiasm is deafening and overwhelming. Willis does not have a quiet voice.

Sunday mornings play havoc on our family because church starts at 9:00 a.m. I attend meetings every Sunday morning from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and (we) Charlotte has to set up chairs before church starts. The custodian hasn't set up chairs since the church announced that members should take more responsibility for their building. I think Charlotte is handling the stress of being Primary President about as well as anyone. Her stress level will be higher than normal this month because she has sharing time. Charlotte has a fairly responsible group of teachers. Except for the teachers who call in sick at the last minute, many of them get their own substitutes. At least most of them call. It is better than finding out at church. The Primary organization has been stable for the past two months except in Webelows which is still vacant.

Charlotte also serves as co-chairman for the Palisades school room-parent organization. She was very happy to see Valentines Day come and go. Valentines Day was the last official school party she has to coordinate for the class rooms this year. Now if there was only some way she could get out of chauffeuring kids everywhere. Like any mother wearing multiple hats, Charlotte would like to devote more time to her family.

That's all for now! Love, Bryan, Charlotte & Kids.