

411 Lindenwood Dr.
Fargo, ND 58103
29 January 1991

Dear Friends and Family, *Uncle Tracy + Aunt Ida-Rose -*

I am starting a new tradition this year--Valentine greetings! Not as meaningful as Christmas letters, I suppose, but the next best thing! Last year was an eventful one for us and I am sorry I did not get this done in December. We did enjoy hearing from all of you, however, and hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. I seems like so long ago at this point!

We are now in Fargo, North Dakota which may come as a shock to some of you. The shock, of course, is that people actually live in North Dakota. Yes, the temperatures reached -40 to -60 degrees over the holidays but to my surprise, it didn't stop anyone! The moment school was out kids came out of all corners to sled on the hill just across the street from our house. Our children figured if that's what the "natives" do then why not join them! So, they spent most of the vacation sledding and ice skating in spite of the bitter cold and are none the worse for wear. The weather has become milder in January--hovering around 0 degrees most of the time.

You may be wondering why we are here. John finally got tired of the job market in Utah and sent out resumes all over the country. He got a job at Moorhead State University in Moorhead, Minnesota which is just across the river. He loves his new job and we love living here. We bought a house right next to a large park on the river. Right outside our front door we enjoy the bike trails and huge open space for football in fall and sledding hills in winter. We often see people cross-country skiing through the park and occasionally see a snow-mobile zip up and down the river. It's ideal for us--we're in a quiet neighborhood with lots of open space yet we are only 5 minutes from church and 3 minutes from downtown (library, piano lessons, dance, choir, etc.), 2 blocks from the Elementary and 3 minutes from the Jr. High.

The three boys, John, Ammon, and Jared enjoy the schools here which are much more challenging than the ones in Utah (they have homework here!) John keeps busy with piano and drum practicing and doing things with friends. He started giving piano lessons this year which he thinks is far better than a paper route. Ammon misses the money from his Deseret News route and, since there is no available route here, has started a store. He buys gum and candy on sale and sells it to kids at school. He loves the bookkeeping and spends hours keeping track of every penny spent, earned, and keeping inventory. He also takes piano lessons, plays drums in school bands, but his real love is sports. Jared also loves sports and is excited about learning to ice skate so he can play hockey. He also sings in a local boy's choir.

I am teaching Rachel at home this year so I have the three little ones still at home. Rachel spends the morning doing her school work while Joseph and Aaron play. Joseph is addicted to Uno and plays it at every opportunity with anyone he can talk into playing. If no one will play he plays by himself picking up first one hand, then another and gets all excited when he wins! Aaron spends most of his time crawling into the oven, on top of the table, onto the book shelves, pulling cans out of cupboards, etc.

Church keeps us much busier here than in Utah. I am the Ward Music Chair, the choir director, Primary teacher, and Visiting teacher, all of which I

*What are Traci's
Spanish?*

*How old is
John?
14 yrs*

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