

May 4, 1978

Dear Family:

I was just about to sit down and do some sewing, as both Erin and Emily are asleep and Greg is over at a friend's, when I remembered the Hallmanac was one day overdue. So here goes.

Marty has recently returned from a three week trip to Europe where he presented service seminars to HP employees in eight different countries. He came home saying he wouldn't go again if he could help it. It really wore him out. He would give a seminar all day, then travel the next, give another seminar, etc. He had Sundays free to go to church and sight-see. He came home pretty exhausted, and tired of eating in restaurants every night. The first thing he ate when he came home was a big bowl of cold cereal and milk. He was sick of eating so much meat. Nice to know my peanut butter sandwiches are appreciated!

I think Marty will be ready for summer vacation from Seminary! It can be pretty greuling (grooling, grueling, growling--pick one) to work all day, come home and eat supper, and study for seminary the next morning. He often loses sleep thinking about his lesson, too. The kids said they really missed him while he was gone, which made him feel good. (his seminary students, I mean.)

Greg and Emily prepared "presents" for Marty's homecoming. Greg learned a new piano piece and Emily learned to write her name. Erin even grew her first two teeth! What did I do? I cleaned the house and got out the peanut butter, of course.

Greg is really excited to be learning music. He plays the piano nearly every day without reminders. I teach him a new piece when he's learned the old, and I try to keep it on a very informal level, which seems best for Greg. We don't sit down at the same time every week and have a "lesson". He reacts negatively (that means he gets mad) when I help him too much, so I teach him a new concept and we go through a song together once, then he works it out for himself until it's ready for a "star". Whoever invented those "stars" was a genius. Most kids will do anything for a star!

While Marty was gone I started a quilt for our bed. It's made with blue kind size sheets and I appliqued a likeness of the "LDS Spa" that we lived in by the beach in New Jersey. It turned out really clever. Unfortunately, I decided to quilt it instead of tie it, and it is still taking up much of the space in our living room. I should have finished it before Marty returned, as I don't seem to have as much free time, now. These projects seem to take much longer now that there's another child in the house. I'm afraid the house won't get really deep cleaned for another year! Right now I'm trying to sew a dress for our ward talent show tomorrow night. I get to sing "Summertime" from Porgy & Bess.

Our piano tuner was here again last week insulting our piano. He's a really strange guy, quite humorless, and always finding ways of complementing himself (like, "Piano technicians learn their trade in a few years, but becoming a really fine tuner is a lifetime pursuit.") He's just joined the church, (his kids have been members for years), so I would feel guilty about getting a new tuner, but I almost dread his visits. He found out that I have perfect pitch, and deems me to be a "special spirit" and my piano unworthy of me. Anyway, last week Marty was home when he came and I saw my opportunity to duck out, but he caught Marty's ear and tried to convince him. When I came back Mr. Scott was still here, and he managed to get in a few jibes like ("In all conscience, if I didn't have a family to support, I wouldn't even work on these pianos"). Well, the point of all this being, that we did start to thinking we needed a nicer piano, so went shopping for a Yamaha baby grand, and got all excited about them. They are really well made pianos and sound nice, but cost about \$1,000 a foot (six foot grand=\$6,000) and the price is going up all the time due to the state of our paper dollars abroad. Anyway, I chickened out and told Marty we really couldn't afford it, but it was a nice thought, while it lasted. Someday.....

You'd think we'd see Betsy and Tracy often because we live so close, but such is not the case. Our Sunday meeting schedules are just the opposite so visits have to be on other days which makes it more difficult to get together. Anyway, we went up last week and had a nice visit with them. Greg and Emily go crazy with all those kids to play with; they just love it. Last time as we were coming home Emily said "I just don't believe it. I have so many cousins!" Wait till Aspen Grove!

All the kids in the neighborhood are out riding their bicycles in the lovely weather, so we gave Greg his birthday present early, and now he's riding his "two wheeler" with them. He's not allowed in the streets yet, though. Today I helped Greg's teacher take the kids over to DeAnza College to see a play. Do you know what the noise level is in a concert hall seating 3,000 kindergarten through third graders? Whew!

Congratulations Sherlene and Dan on your civic efforts. I think there might be hope for California yet. I suppose you've all heard of our famous "Jarvis Gann" initiative on the June ballot. It will roll property taxes back to the 1975 level and limit tax assessments in the future. If it passes it will tell government once and for all that there is a limit to their spending! There is also a no smoking initiative which would halt smoking in public places or limit it at least to specially designated areas, and we've signed a petition for an initiative which would not allow homosexuals to be hired as teachers. (Of course, there is currently legislation being debated which would make "discrimination against homosexuals illegal"(in hiring and firing employees). Hooray for San Jose citizens...

Neil
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The doggone San Jose city council spent a whole evening debating whether or not to allow a "Gay Recognition Day" as an officially designated "day" and voted "yes." Well, next day so many irate citizens called in to protest, that the council had to change its mind. So much for that!! Our Cupertino Mayor has been so beseiged by special interest groups demanding their specially designated "day" that he's declared a "Nothing Week" when we're all going to celebrate absolutely "nothing!" This guy's o.k. He's always using humor to bring things back into perspective.

I think the urgings of President Kimball for us all to become interested and involved in public affairs is really bringing a lot of decent people out into the open. I hope we will be taken seriously. We've been silent too long. The thing that bothers me though, and we Mormons are just as guilty of it, is the feeling we're getting that "government" has to tell us what is right and what is wrong. We're getting too bogged down in "laws". It's getting so we can't make a move without asking permission from the "government". Betsy and Tracy know a family in their ward who were "willed" five children from an LDS family in Saratoga. The mother and father were both killed in an auto accident in Nevada as they were returning from Utah. The Harwoods already had three children and are expecting another, and instantly became five children larger. Anyway, they're having an awful time trying to add on to their home. They want to add another story to their present home, but their neighbors have lobbied against it and Palo Alto denied their request. (I think their neighbors probably want them to move away with all their kids). Anyway, it must be so frustrating for them. I think we should vote for legislators who say they'll do nothing when they get to Washington! Too many do gooders around!

Well would you listen to me! I'll get down now.

I sure enjoyed reading all your letters. Keep up the good work. I've got to walk Greg over to Primary now. See y'all later.