

HALLMANACK, Betsy & Tracy
634 N 550 E, Orem, UT 84057

2 May, 1981

Dear Fumbly,

It is hard to believe that I (Betsy) am actually doing this, but we have a new typewriter ribbon and Tracy has done more than his sa- aha! my first mistake!- make that share of the Hall family correspondence the past few months. I have enjoyed this new baby immensely, partly because he is SO SWEET (a very easy baby) but also because I know there aren't very many more new babies in store for me (just only 3 or 4 -- I'm making the joke so that you won't have to!). I never imagined that I'd be contemplating the end of my child-bearing years at my tender age (another joke, folks) but what is most surprizing to me is how really painful it is to think of actually never holding again your very own new baby. And to have such really mixed emotions. I am really at the end of my rope and sometimes think I NEVER want to see another diaper, let alone a messy one, in my life. And when I contemplate Anthony entering Cub Scouts the same year that Hunt. Tracy (don't you think that "Tres" would be a good way to refer to him in writing since it means "3" in Spanish?) goes on his mission it makes my head spin (and my stomach turn). This is Tres's last month in Cubs and my relief at having a year off from Cubs before Robert goes in is only tempered by my dread of BOY SCOUTS. CAN I KEEP THIS UP FOR TWENTY YEARS? I believe Tracy (Jr.) has reached the point where he is content, not to say overwhelmed, with the present size of our family. At the very least I am CERTAIN that he will never ever again say "Oh, come on, you won't get pregnant." Ask anybody, I have been so crabby and wiped out these past weeks -- until I get that sweet baby in my arms and gurgle and goo with him and marvel at his auburn hair (I'm PRAYING it stays that color) and see the other children dote on him, and wonder how I can think of ending such complete bliss. My patriarchal blessing speaks of a "blessing that you cannot hold" and suddenly that takes on a new dimension!

The weather has been unseasonably warm and Tracy is up on the roof right now working on the air conditioner. Consequently there is water POURING down the window behind me right now. It is a little overcast right ^{now} outside so it gives the illusion of a terrific rainstorm. (I said "right now" in every one of the last three sentences!) (You noticed that, you say?)

All the children are fine at this time. Alex has an appointment on Monday to check on his asthma therapy. Physically it seems to have helped him but his medications keep him emotionally hyper most of the time and we wonder how much longer we can take it. It is hard on him too. Elizabeth loves to sing and does "I am a child of God" all the way through in her inimitable fashion (garbling some things hilariously) -- we still aren't sure where she learned it since she is still in the nursery. Susanna is so eager for school to start-- with her in it -- that I don't know how I'll contain her till fall. Thank goodness the other children will be home to occupy her somewhat for the summer. She has almost taught herself to read; knows many words and all the sounds. December is a DUMB MONTH to have a baby -- so many later complications. In California she might have started school this year and I think it might have been better for her. They had a "Young Fives" kindergarten in Palo Alto from which a child could either go into first grade or into a regular kindergarten class. That would have been ideal for Susanna. There are signs of improvement in our school district here for which I'm very thankful. Did you know that students in the Provo district average 14 points higher on the national tests than the students in our district (Alpine) by the time they leave high school? But we are getting a new principal here at Sharon Elementary who has a terrific reputation. In fact the parents at his former school petitioned for him to stay there. But we need him desperately.

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Robert has had a teacher this year who has been very good for him, and I am grateful. School has been just what he needed. He has a sense of humor that always surprizes me. Right now he is at that stage where he loves MAGIC and does those dumb tricks all the time. That and Knock-knock jokes. I'd like to strangle the guy who invented those. Mary is still taking piano and Scottish dancing lessons and doing quite well at them. She is very active socially and thinks that the Miss America contest and cheer-leading and princesses are the most wonderful things in the world but is extremely embarrassed if we tease her about it. (2nd mistake -- well, OK, 31st.) Zina can start quite a row when she says, "Oh, Mary, you are so romantic!" As for Zina, she is disconcertingly unromantic. But very emotional all the same at this horrid stage between child and adolescence. She was the last 4th grader still up in the all-school spelling bee and REALLY WANTS TO WIN IT next year. She is taking violin lessons. Tres has surprized us with his motivation in Cub Scouts, with hardly any parental support (maybe there's a lesson for us there?). He is bored in school, however, except when he gets to work on the computer. He does his assignments, however, except occasionally falling behind in social studies.

I could have said ten times as much about each one of them, but thought that much would be boring enough. We have a wonderful bishop and consequently I have been released as Gospel Doctrine teacher -- I found Old Testament to be a killer to teach. I was so surprized at how much some people resist learning it. Ah me. A member of the bishopric is coming over to see us today, however. He's in charge of Primary, I think. I am searching my mind for what ELSE he might be in charge of too. Almost anything else would do. Well....

The fact is we love you all and
sure look forward to getting the Hallmanack each
month. Thanks, Liz.

Much love from Betsy and Tracy and the gang