

The Hallmanac June 1981

May 23, 1981

Dear Children: I have just returned from visiting Virginia, who had Jonathan Wesley on Warren Tracy's birthday, May 4, 1981. He had a jaundice problem and was kept an extra week in the hospital. They replace the blood at 20 and he got up to 18, but then started going down again. When he had maintained a 12 or less for a day they released him. Poor Virginia. It was a help, I think to have me there when she had to chase into the hospital every day; and--wouldn't you know--their car developed a short and wouldn't go until Barry finally fixed it. Virginia is like her Grandmother Langford--she gets a lot accomplished. While I was up visiting Sherlene she made a quilted cover for one chair and cut the quilt peices for the other chairs. Their kitchen was a joy to work in since they have remodeled it. The only rooms they need to finish are the bathroom, and the living room and they will have redecorated the whole thing. I am glad they are getting it done so they can enjoy the fruits of their labor before their family gets too large to live there and they have to move.

That baby is unbelievable. He cried so little I was worried at first, although he seemed so alert, looking around with wide eyes and taking everything in. By the time I got back from Sherlene he had become polluted with the world and had learned the way to get attention in this world is to be the squeaking wheel. Too bad. He had a real shrill cry that does get him instant attention. Just kidding. He is still a good baby--cries seldom and is beginning to put on weight. I'll let Virginia fill you in on the rest.

At Sherlene's we tackled Laura's room. I thought in a day I could get that room ready to paint. We found the paint on the window trim so crazed that it had to be stripped. After three days, Dan had the ceiling scraped and spackled and spent the morning he took me into the airport sanding. When he gets that painted, I think Sherlene can do the rest without too much of a problem. She got a cute early american wedgewood blue print paper for the walls. They had stripped the old paper off and the walls were too rough for a good paint job but fine for papering so we decided to go that way. Sherlene will have a big job finishing the stripping of the window sills and painting the wood work, but I can hardly wait to see it when they get Laura's white french provincial furniture back in it. Dan plans to sand and varnish the floor, too. Sherlene and Dan have a large, well planned home, but the amount of work to be done is almost overwhelming. All Dan's backbreaking work on the outside is already beginning to show signs of weathering. But they have done the dining and living room and they have put a nice wall paper on the Hall going upstairs which is very nice. It's coming. Hope they get to enjoy the finished product before they decide to sell or transfer. Reminds me of Schenectady. I kept telling Tracy that floor needed to be sanded and varnished, but he didn't agree until we decided to sell and move West. All of a sudden the floor needed doing and we did all that work only to let someone else enjoy the work of our labors. It should have been a "Little" second hand for them.

Senility is setting in. I can't even recognize when I transpose the I and E in words like Believe? Beleive? No i-e

It's a good thing I got home when I did. Dad has forgotten how to use the washing machine, I guess. If I had stayed a day or two more he would have had to relearn as all his shirts and underwear were dirty.

Bless his heart for taking care of Dad while I was gone. There are many men who would not have attempted that. He's a good guy. I love him very much and think I will keep him for a while longer.

Thank you all for your Mother's day gifts and calls. I was an interesting experience to get calls and gifts away from home. Virginia is making an interesting gift for us which is quite a project. She may have told you about it, -but if she hasn't I will let her. I don't think I ever did anything like that for anyone but myself in my whole life. Thank you all again. It's nice to be loved and remembered.

When I got home your Daddy had bought me a coming home present--said he remembered it had been a while since he had bought me perfume. Plus bath powder and bath lotion--all matching fragrance. Nice. Love Ya. MOTHER

NEIL FAMILY, June 11, 1981

Dear Family:

I'm sorry if I scared you all off with my letter limitations last month. Didn't get too many letters this month--hope that wasn't the reason!

We've had a nice month. John Patrick is over his wheezing and he's back on milk--haven't seen any adverse effect yet. He still isn't walking, sigh; my back sure hurts!

Wish you all could be here to share our boysenberries. We've had so many this year. I've made three batches of jam (one turned out to be syrup) and have given away quarts and quarts. Our raspberries are tasteless this year for some reason. Anyone out there know how to make raspberries flavorful and sweet? (Besides adding lots of sugar after they're picked!)

We held a party for 20 of our friends on Memorial Day. We had chicken and ham, homemade orange rolls, cut-up fruit with Mom's delicious fruit dip, and home-made chocolate eclairs for dessert--yum! It sure was a lot of work, but we had fun. Fortunately, Marty had the day off and was able to help clean up the patio and keep the kids out of my way. It sure is hard to keep a house clean with little kiddies running all over the place!

Marty gets released from his Stake Mission at the end of this month. He's already been called to be the Young Adult Sunday School teacher. He was going to say he wouldn't accept a call until the Bishopric got me some help in my calling--he would be the Beehive assistant--but he couldn't pass up this opportunity. Besides, he knew the scout master was moving away and didn't want to "risk it." Marty decided he didn't want to sit back and get fat while he wife exercised her way to thinness, so he goes out jogging on the days I don't (Tuesday and Thursday) and then plays basketball Saturday mornings. Marty is currently very frustrated over the slow progress of the product he is supposed to introduce to the public this year. The lab keeps postponing introduction and just informed Marty that the specifications for the instrument have to be changed, messing up his planned promotions.

I thought running was supposed to be a cure for all ills, and am disappointed that my allergies haven't been cured. They've been really bad this season. Marty's sister-in-law just told me that I should be taking a B-complex vitamin tablet that has pantothenic acid in it. She said that her hay fever was better the very day she started taking the vitamins. Not so for me. But I'll give it a few more weeks try.

Greg just finished up Little League, thank goodness. It's not too much fun taking a bunch of little kids to a hot, dusty field (no bleachers, of course) to watch baseball. Greg really enjoyed the baseball, though, and was getting pretty good at the end of the season. The coach gave him a special trophy for the "best catch". Quoting from Marty's journal: "Greg was playing left field when the other team's "big gun" hit a high fly. Greg had backed way up and the ball was short so he started running full speed. With his glove outstretched, he caught the ball about a foot off the ground. Greg's momentum made him do a forward roll but he hung on. People were talking about that catch for the whole next inning."

I have to brag about Emily. We just received her SRA Standardized Test scores, which show that she did better than 99% of the first graders nationally. The test is a judge of how the student rates with other first graders on first grade skills, and how well the teachers taught those skills. I feel like taking her scores to that kindergarten teacher who urged me to keep Emily in kindergarten another year because of her young age and the fact that "she wouldn't be able to be at the top of her class."

Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) just introduced a new flight to Salt Lake City from San Francisco with incredible rates from June 15 to July 15. (\$104 round trip, adult, \$52 round trip child) so I will be flying up with the children on June 30 and Marty will come up July 3. We'll all stay until July 8. Our whole family will be travelling for the approximate price of one ticket on United. Western Airlines, not to be outdone, has also lowered their rates out of San Jose. We're looking forward to seeing all of you there in Utah.

Love,

Liz, Marty and kiddoes

Andrew, himself, is a joy. We had a bad week after he came back from a weekend with his aunt. He gets indulged and then comes back angry at us (because she has moved him so much, he isn't secure that we will take him back) and we have to start at square one again in terms of family relationships and obedience, etc. But now he is settling back into a secure pattern and he is just such a terrific kid. Bright, active, curious, assertive--wanting to be helpful and pleasant, and so capable and independent. He had never had a bike, and he was thrilled when we brought out Laura's old red trike. He had to reach for the pedals and took so many spills trying to learn how to make it work. His aunt told me she didn't want him to get on bikes of any kind for fear he would get hurt. So I just prayed he wouldn't get killed and let him keep trying. He would fall and come up smiling and try again. In two days he had that trike mastered. He's that way with everything. Never gives up. I'm sending Liz a picture of Andrew and our family which you can pass around--not enough for all--maybe later.

LIZ--I can't write a letter on two-thirds page. But I'll try. We had a wonderful visit here with Virginia and Warren and Nathan before Jonathan was born. Then we went to Arlington to take them back and visit the temple--then went to visit Dan's sister Joan (and Roy--a prof at the U. of Va.) and their large family--she had a baby boy the day after Virginia did. Then we got a motel and spent two days at Williamsburg. What a terrific place. So educational and fun. The East is so beautiful in spring with all the dogwoods--you should have seen the Wash. temple grounds--Paradise on earth! Then Mom came and spent five days here--got us started on Laura's bedroom--scraping down all six coats from those big old colonial moldings. YUK! No one in this world can work like Mom. We are still recovering from trying to keep up with her. It was such a shot in the arm to have her here--she came when Andy was gone with his aunt and I wasn't sure we would get him back--just a gift from Heaven itself to have her here then for practical advice and moral support.

We went to the ward auction yesterday and bid and won on a "Fabulous Three day pass for 4 people to Disneyworld and River Country Florida good for all rides." We paid \$155--a good deal for that much. We invite all of you to come join us this year for our family vacation--since Mom and Dad won't be here next year. We've been to Utah four times--your turn to come East. Forget condominiums. We'll rent a yacht and take advantage of all that food and free babysitting they offer. After we've stayed off-shore three days in Florida, we can all go to some exotic island, enjoying swimming, table-tennis days, and moonlight dancing nights. If you can't come East, we'll understand--as long as you understand if we don't come West for awhile. We can get a honeymoon cruise to Bermuda for the cost of a Utah trip. But it would be nice to take family on our honeymoon (hee, hee!) NOW I'M SERIOUS!!! How about August--when it gets really nasty even in Florida--but we could always go on innertubes through the River Country and cool off. Beats cooking within the walls of your own home. Actually, we should save our Florida trip for winter and just take the cruise in August. Well, enough on that. Liz, I'll take 1/3 more page so you come out even. Since we didn't write last time.

Our ward auction was really a blast. Made over \$7,000. All kinds of services were auctioned--like one family offered a gourmet Mexican meal for six--another, breakfast in bed on a morning of choice--etc., etc. We got all kinds of local merchants to donate stuff--they got the publicity. Dan was excited because he got all the standard works of the Church on tape--in Spanish. Now he can work on his pronunciation--he's been reading Spanish scriptures all year. I got the most adorable painting for the Bathroom--showed an old-fashioned white tub just like ours, filled with kids and a dog and a cat. That ought to get me busy finishing up that bathroom. (Yes, Mom, AFTER Laura's room!). While I was upstairs at the silent auction (people write their number, bidding on smaller items--you should see the action the final three minutes!), Dan bid on a portrait for me. Marva Jex, a really special friend in our ward does the best portraits--I thought that was sweet surprise from Dan. We also came home with loads of old church books, a huge=birdhouse, birdbath, and an afghan. It was a fun fund-raiser. Of course, as usual, Dan got to do all the bookwork. Bishop Stone told us if we made over \$6,000, we could send up white smoke from the church. But it was a sultry day, and noone felt like building a fire. There's my one-third page. How do you Utahns feel about the MX miss. business? Did you see Bill Buckley's column on it? We love and miss all of you and are trying to dream up a way to come West, anyway, for Mom and Dad's mission farewell. Thanks for your letters.

Love, Dan Sherlene, Daniel and Laura O B

*Will send photo later about ANDY
where DAN lost them!*

27 May 1981 - 3804 N. 18th St.
9:30 p.m. Arlington, VA 22207

Dear Halls, All,

Last month my wife was about the only true Hall to write a letter in this thing; most of the contributions to the Hallmanack were authored by the in-laws. THEREFORE this month I'm taking up the outlaw burden.

We are down at Maxfields babysitting. They have a daughter (Marissa) Nathan's age, and a son (Blake) Warren's age, and just had a new baby boy early this morning. Norm is a dental student who will be moving to the Salt Lake Valley in another month or so, much to our regret. I home teach the Maxfields and Norm home teaches me. So Norm is visiting Wendy at the hospital, while Virginia and I ride heard on the kids. We had loaned them our typewriter for the typing of Norm's thesis, so this works out fine to do the Hallmanack, as well as Jonathan's belated birth announcement.

BY THE WAY, his name isn't Christian any more. Virginia decided she didn't like it all that much, what with the possibility of confusion with Christine, etc. And then there were those wincies we got from our Jewish friends when we disclosed the name. SO we borrowed an old Wood name or two (they haven't been exhausted like the Hall/Langford inventory) and came up with JONATHAN WESLEY WOOD. The Wesley is for my great-grandfather John Wesley Wood, except we're not telling my grandmother that because he left the family (8 kids) when my grandfather was two, and she thinks John Wesley was a scoundrel. But then she never met him. My theory is that his wife may have been a bit much to take. After all, divorce ran in her family; her father was married and divorced at least three times that we know of (and it probably would have been four had he not died before Elizabeth Carradine, who married him for his money in his dotage and then made off with his money by pretending that she didn't know where his children were). Her only brother was divorced four times, which was a lot for the 1800's. Anyway, John Wesley's great-grandfather, 3rd great-grandfather and 5th great were all named Jonathan (with John's intervening, preceding and succeeding). How's this for filling the Hallmanack with Woods?

We were delighted to have Mom Hall help with the urchins and the house while Virginia was in the hospital and recuperating at home. What an industrious, unnosy and sensible mother-in-law! She will be glad to know that since she left (1) it hasn't rained, and (2) the car has worked fine. Jonathan is growing fat (but not too sassy) on Virginia's peerless nursing. He has found out about crying, but still is the best baby we have ever seen. The crying is instantly stopped with dinner or a pacifier. The other children have adjusted well. Warren just had one insecure, sleepless night, and Nathan is proud to tell people "I have a new BA-by. His name is JO-tha-non." It's a good thing we didn't have a girl, because Nathan hasn't learned about the feminine pronoun yet. Everyone is "he" and their things are "his."

I am fast running out of space. Liz, should we make a contribution for extra Xeroxing? Unless Betsy goes over her 2/3 page limit, we can't keep up on their kids. (How can you describe Robert in only one line?) And if Tracy can't expand, how will we get any philosophy? And should there not be an exemption for months when you have a baby?

Virginia is working on Jonathan's birth announcement, which you may get before the Hallmanack. One thing that won't be on the birth announcement is Virginia's most impressive baby gift, a rocking chair sent by a client of mine in Illinois. She has always wanted a rocking chair with arms for nursing purposes, and would have gotten it from me on this round had we not donated all our liquid assets (and most of my mother's) to the cause of helping Darryl and Bonnie Lee buy the house next door. Darryl is a BYU law school grad, and has a good income, but they lacked the \$\$\$ for a down payment, which we are lending them. They have two daughters, and will move in in mid-June. Then Virginia will be able to get away to the store without packing all the kids along. The next house down the street will be on the market soon; anyone interested?

My job is still the same, long hours and few rewards. At least working on an application for Channel 13 in Salt Lake has been fun. There are 7 other applicants, among them Skaggs, John Price (Utah's biggest developer) and Roger Boyer/Kem Gardner -- probably the most formidable applicant since they filed for West Valley City, which may be declared more worthy of its first TV station than Salt Lake is of its fifth. What I didn't know until today is that West Valley City, with 68,000 people, is the third largest city in Utah, just behind Provo and ahead of Ogden. Grrrr. Love, Barry & Virginia (over the limit). *Barry, Virginia, Nathan, Warren & Jonathan*

Dear Family,

May 31, 1981 White Plains

We have good news. We found out from Bro. Perry (Dir. of our Ch. Soc. Serv.) that Andrew's great-aunt finally agreed to give Bro. Perry the name of her attorney and his phone number so Bob Brittin (a Church member and the Soc. Serv. attorney here) can contact him and begin steps to get legal rights to adoption placement with the Social Services. I thought they already had that power and was, to say the least, very upset when I learned only recently that my actual status was that of free babysitter. Dan and I had decided we wanted to only take clear adoption cases at this time because I'm 38 and most agencies won't place for adoption past age 40. So, we think Bro. Perry was sincere in THINKING this would turn into adoption, but as time went on I became less secure that his aunt would ever sign any papers and finally Bro. Perry wrote her a letter saying that if he was going to take this case any longer (he's been in 4 LDS families just this year)--she would have to sign over some legal rights to the agency for placement. She has played the avoidance game since then--and they got worried she would move away and figure she didn't have to make any commitments if she couldn't be found. But they finally got hold of her and things seem to be finally moving. It has all been very wrenching, but as Bishop Stone is fond of saying, "There is purpose in pain." There are times when I could do with a little less purpose in my life.