

7 May, 1990

Betsy

** Hello, folks. I'm back and so is my hand, mostly.

** Happy Birthday, Sherlene. I do remember them usually, I just can't do much about them, at least not w/out sacrificing something I need to do more. I hope Nancy and Barry had pleasant birthdays on the 1st of April, too, and everybody else who's had a birthday in the last year or several. H.T. turned 20 yesterday! That's how old I was when I met his Dad! I can plainly see that he is 20, he's as serious and mature as he should be, but I just don't get it. When and HOW did this happen? Sherlene, you're turning 47 this time, right? Does that mean Mom and Dad's 50th anniversary is next year, or the one after that? And, M&D, how do you want to celebrate it?

*** Zina moved into an apartment ^{the} weekend before this last one and is working part-time in the BYU Bookstore. * I'm so proud of her. It's a good and pleasant job. We require the children to move out or to pay room and board three months after they turn 19, partly to let them know that we believe in their ability to take care of themselves, partly so that they leave home in a planned way and to avoid somewhat the feeling that they have to "escape," and for a variety of other reasons, too. My cousin Kathy says that just when they get to be a real joy, they leave, and that's true, but I think the sense of loss is temporary. Maybe if our kids went away to school, as I did, we wouldn't need to operate this way, but having the university they are most likely to attend in the same town in which they reside makes it more problematic. Any way, it's a really interesting business, this one of having kids grow up, isn't it?

** I had a new response last week ^{and going to school part-time. by a person curious about} my broken fingers, different from any I've yet had, thank goodness. I go for physical therapy thrice a week, and at any given time there are around a dozen people there in a large room with lots of different equipment, each doing his individual workout, and much conversation goes on between patients concerning their injuries and particular therapies. A Chinese fellow in his mid-twenties one of whose shoulders had been injured at the auto shop where he works (a block of steel had fallen from several feet above onto it) asked me what had happened to my hand, and I tried to explain, which was difficult because he was actually from China and not just ethnic Chinese. But we finally understood each other. I told him that I had hit an abutment and flown ^{straight} up in the air, and he wondered how high! I said that I'd been told that my feet were about [^] two feet up in the air. He said, and I quote, "Why didn't you do a flip?" I've got to admit, that one stumped me. I've learned a lot from this experience, but I hope and pray that some day someone figures out a way to stabilize broken bone w/out having to immobilize large body parts. My ^{loss} of function is more from the atrophy of immobilization than from the actual injury, and even though the "health care professionals" are very pleased with my progress, and the impairment less than expected, still I want it ALL back! I'm just a glutton.

** The children are all fine. Mary got a "Superior" on her vocal solo at the regional festival (that's the highest rank) (Liz, you would have been amazed at how fast she learned it) singing a very difficult Debussy piece. I'm determined to record her (she's so busy she's hard to catch). She also took first place in the state on her Nat'l French exam. I love to listen to her and Zina converse in French, even though I can understand little of what they say. (Which isn't their fault.) Robert is starting to feel encouraged in his French, too, and to learn it well. The power of a good example is a wonderful thing. He loves music and is starting to sing very well. He's sweet, too, and ~~the girl who was with him~~ through ~~the whole thing~~. * He's also over 6 feet tall now (but not as tall as Daniel). He's in the SCERA community theater production of Oklahoma that's now in rehearsal and scheduled to run in early June. He and Alex have been writing some little programs in Basic on the Franklin (Apple IIe). * (Dad: he vehemently denies it!) * In fact he made me cross it out! B.

** The spirit of missionary work has enriched our lives immeasurably, even though most of our experience is vicarious. My cousin Jim Wilde and his wife have been called to preside over the Hungarian Mission. They leave, or I should say begin their "tour", on the 1st of July. Of course, they've already begun trying to learn the language (extremely difficult) and making other preparations. Their son Chris is in the Netherlands Mission. How are YOU? Daniel? Too bad you haven't heard from us before now, huh? But we do think of you and remember you in our prayers.

** We were able to talk to H.T. on the phone last night for his birthday. There have been difficulties with the mail since the recent political violence (the missionaries were confined to quarters for 5 days in March) and the hijacking of an American plane -- American planes will not fly in for the foreseeable future -- and it was wonderful to talk to him.

to save space I'm marking paragraph beginnings with an * instead of an indentation

He's doing very well and is happy. He had his 3rd baptism on May 5th, and they expect to baptize another person on the 12th. For anyone who may be interested in information on Haiti, the best I have found in short (relatively speaking) form is a series of articles in the New Yorker, issues of Nov. 27th and Dec. 4th & 12th, 1989.

** Two weeks ago we had the family of one of H.T.'s MTC teachers over for an evening. They are native Haitian, and the first Haitian couple to have been married in the Temple. They joined the Church independently while each was a university student, and met within a few months of having joined. They both served missions (simultaneously) and were married 7 months after their missions ended. They are beautiful people, in every sense of the word. They have two little children ages 2½ and 1 year, and he is studying electrical engineering at BYU. They plan to return to Haiti when he finishes. Their conversions were miraculous, and I particularly loved the story she told. She's the 2nd or 3rd of 8 children, and she and her older sister were very close. One morning her older sister said "Fenice, I have had a dream! Two boys in white shirts came to our door, and they taught us the gospel." Fenice said she paid the story little attention; it was just an odd and inexplicable dream, and besides, they were very staunch Catholic and didn't need to be taught the gospel! But two weeks later, two young men in white shirts did come to their door. Their mother treated them cordially, but was sending them away when the sister came running from the back of the house and said very excitedly that these were the boys she had seen in her dream. "And Fenice," she said, "they are very important to you. You must listen to them, because in my dream, you are the one who believed them." Fenice (her husband's name is Islens Dort -- pronounced eelens door) was impatient at her sister's insistence; besides the fact that the "elders" had nothing of worth to her, she was a university student working very hard in her studies -- she simply had no time for anything extra. But she did hear her sister's lessons and found nothing objectionable in them. It was just so annoying to have her sister persist in saying that she must listen! At the end of the 2nd discussion, one of the missionaries held out a Book of Mormon to her and said, "I want you to read this book," and wouldn't be satisfied until she accepted it, which she finally did to be polite. When she had read a few pages, a voice spoke plainly to her in the room where she was, near her ear. She said, "I looked around me because I'd never heard a voice before." She said this very matter-of-factly, which to me was a total crack-up. Anyway, after she heard the voice she thought, "Well, I must find out about this!" So she read the whole book, had a sense as she read it that it was true, ~~when~~ when she prayed she had a powerful manifestation as to its truthfulness, and then when she finished the last page the same voice spoke again and said, as I neglected to say it had the first time, ~~when she prayed~~ "This is the truth!" So the next time the elders came the first thing Fenice said to them was, "When can I be baptized?" I wonder how many times that expression has been used! Islens said exactly the same thing to the elders who taught him, and I'll tell you his story the next time I write. Fenice was baptized 9 years ago, and her sister has still never joined. We asked her how her mother felt about her having joined the Church and she said that her mother had nothing against it and, having many daughters, was pleased that the missionaries taught the law of chastity. Islens said that Haitians are in general tolerant of differing beliefs.

** David and Tracy's trip to Europe was successful with Hycalog in England, not so with Shell (I think -- either that or Phillips) in the Netherlands. They had an interesting, exhausting, and at times terrifying (Tracy said the navigating as David drove nearly did him in -- not David's driving per se, but the traffic and the driving on the left side of the road adjustment). And they had not a single cent for souvenirs. But they were able to attend a stake conference in the Hyde Park chapel, whose congregation was a very satisfyingly mixed group, racially and ethnically. Chris Wilde when I last talked to Kathy about it, was teaching ^{in the Netherlands} a Chinese man a Catholic monk, a Muslim family, and someone else of yet another background (not European). Europe is becoming a melting pot! And that and the upheaval in eastern Europe are really busting things wide open for missionary work. Who would have thought it. My brother had 3 or 5 baptisms on his mission in the south of France, a high number for the time, and now the son of an acquaintance of mine recently had 20 baptisms ^{in that same mission} in the space of 2½ months. And my Dad told me last week that the city of Tacoma was just made a separate mission. So the prayers of the saints do make a difference, combined with the sacrifice of going out there, or sending our kids out. What a thrilling thing.

** It's midnight now and I'm really really tired. If I'm able to, I'll type up a few excerpts from H.T.'s letters tomorrow. Thanks for bearing with my miserable typing, which would be even worse w/out my Correctronic. Scary thought, eh? Bye for now. Betsy

We were so very glad to see Liz & Marty & kids when they were out and had great fun with them, especially when Marty beat us all at "Encore"! Love Use 'guise'.

*I suppose all conversions are.