

Christmas, 1997

Dear Friends and Family:

This year has gone leaping by, and I guess that's a good omen. Much better, I suppose, than having time drag along. Tracy's been writing our Christmas letters, so I guess it's my turn.

Every year as we receive your most welcome news and greetings, we read them and place them in some gadget which was a Relief Society home-making project years and years ago. It resembles one of those containers you put fireplace logs in except it is smaller and a somewhat more decorative. On top is a big red bow. Over the years it has been sat on, bent, bumped, etc., but we smooth out the bumps and still use it. At the end of the Christmas season, we put the container and its contents in a top cupboard in Tracy's study, and then get it down again when the time comes to start addressing cards the following year. If your name is not in our address book, it's certain to show up among last year's Christmas cards.

What usually happens is that we end up re-reading last year's cards. It's wonderful! It brings back so many memories of pleasant associations. It also usually brings a tear to our eyes as we realize that someone who signed the card last Christmas has passed on to a better place during the past year. The re-reading also renews our memories of what has been going on in your lives.

On the whole, however, the members of our generation are living longer and maintaining better health to a more advanced age than our parents' generation. And much, much longer than our grandparents' generation. And for that we are very thankful as we read each new card when it arrives. I guess when you start getting just one or two Christmas cards each year you are close to going over the hill. My father lived to be ninety-five years old and outlived almost all of his friends. At his funeral there were in attendance only a few people outside of his family.

So--should you live a shorter life so you can have a big funeral? (Just joking!)

Tracy keeps busy with the tree farm in Payson, Utah, and science. The farm is now producing trees big enough to sell as landscape trees (people with new homes often want to look as if they've been in the house for a long time.) The neuro-surgeon who operated on his back a year or so ago would definitely not approve of the lifting he does on the farm. He is still designing high-pressure, high-temperature apparatus. (Things can always be improved, I guess.) His health has been good all year. Now that's something!

I keep busy but don't accomplish anything. Sound familiar? Six of our grandchildren are now married, and we have a great-grandson, and a great-granddaughter. Of course they are wonderful! 'Nuf said!

We wish you the very best of the Christmas season, and may the Lord bless you and keep you strong and well. And may our faith in him increase each day as we constantly realize our dependence upon his love.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Ida Rose & Tracy*