

24 February 1989

Dear Tracy and Ida Rose,

We are really slow in getting around to writing Christmas Cards and notes. Now, little by little we hope to do a bit of catching up on our correspondence.

This year, like so many previous years, we had set the goal of getting Christmas Greetings mailed on time. But this year, like many other years, we would have had to scurry to mail cards by the week before Christmas. The builder who started the addition to our house on October 17th, was pretty much on schedule. And thanks to a very mild fall and winter, this was in the painting and trim stages by November 18th and the carpets were scheduled to be laid the week of December 15th. So right after Thanksgiving we would work diligently at getting Christmas Cards in the mail.

Hal's annual physical examination on November 18 put another dimension into our year ends activities. The doctor discovered what he thought was either an aneurism in the aorta or a tumor in the area behind the stomach. So immediately following an ultra sound test, which ruled out the aneurism, an appointment was made with an Oncologist. Blood tests, X-rays, bone marrow and bone sample tests, CAT Scans of the chest and abdomen, followed in sequence. Everything looked OK except there was a rather large tumor behind the stomach, very likely a Lymphoma, and the next logical step was exploratory surgery to get the tissue samples needed to determine the correct treatment.

The first date at the hospital, December 12, had to be rescheduled to December 22, since Hal came down with a cold. Christmas day in the hospital could have been more pleasant. On that day Hal ended up in the Intensive Care Unit with what turned out to be a partially collapsed lung and a touch of pneumonia. But Jean was able to bring him home on December 30th, the year ended well, and we look optimistically at the future.

The tumor was a Lymphoma, which is not the type to be removed surgically, but responds well to Chemotherapy. Three treatments have been completed (1/12, 2/3 & 2/24). So far, Hal has not been ill following the treatments. The combination of chemicals goes by the acronym of CHOP (Cyclophosphamide, Doxorubicin, Vincristine, Prednisone). Some of the common trade names for these drugs are (Cytosan, Adriamycin, Oncovin, Deltason or Meticorten or Orasone). Hal is actually getting (Cytosan, Adriamycin, Vincristin, and Decadron).

Hal is feeling quite good, gaining back some of the weight he lost in the hospital, and (with the developing 'Yeul Brenner look') is trying to take good care of Jean who is still working in the clinic at Parson's Child and Family Center in Albany.

Hal had two Priesthood Blessings, one before the tests and one before surgery. Though the stay in the hospital was not exactly pleasant we felt at peace all of the time. The love, concern, and support shown by our children, family members, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances was touching. We feel really blessed.

The year 1988 has been both interesting and pleasant since it included reunions and visits with friends and relatives.

In February, Jean flew to Florida for a weeks visit with her two brothers and their families.

In May, Jean, Stephen, and Hal flew to Utah for 3 weeks visiting and fishing. Rebecca and James joined us on the Memorial Day week end so we were all together for the Garbe Family Reunion, which this year was held in Ephraim, and for the celebration of the 65th Wedding Anniversary of Hal's parents.

Jim has an apartment in the Stockade Area of downtown Schenecady (219 Green Street, Apt #4, the same building where Wayne and Helen Wiscomb lived about 1949-1950) but he drove to Boston so he and Rebecca could fly together on the trip to Utah. Rebecca still works at Lotus Development Corporation in the Boston area but commutes each day from Merrimac, New Hampshire. Steve is living at home and is trying to work school in with a full time job and managers training program with the McDonald Corporation.

Hal made a second trip to Utah (Sept. 27-Oct. 18) for some more visiting and fishing. He had a great time but try as he will he is not able to catch more fish than either his mother (now 87) nor his dad (now 89). They are remarkable people, we really love them.

The visit with you when we had lunch in Provo was a special treat. We were sorry that time did not allow us to come to your home to spend some more time with you. We are really looking forward to when we can see you again. This afternoon we are going to an open house at Brereton's for Don and Ernestine, who were married on February 14th. She looks like just the right kind of wife for Don. He is serving on a temple mission in the Washington DC temple and has a shedule of 3 weeks at the temple and 1 week in Schenectady each month. She just completed a mission there and I trust will now have an extended call. We presume you read about Bruce Belnaps call as the director of the Washington Temple Visitors Center.

You may have noted in the local paper or in the BYU news that Cliff S. Barton (who used to be in the Albany-Hudson District Presidency, and was the Albany Branch President for a few years) died on January 4th this year. Hal's brother who teaches at the Y sent us the obituary. I believe Cliff had retired; he was 69.

We mentioned our building project which was nearing completion as Christmas approached. In October of 1987, when the awning which covered our back patio was still up, we had a surprise early snow fall which demolished the canvas, and did some damage to the pipe frame supports for the awning. For years we had been toying with the idea of adding to the back of our house, so this forced us to make a decision as to whether to repair and replace--or to go ahead with the addition. After considerable thought (which took all summer) we have now a 12 X 23 room instead of the concrete patio area. The addition also has an extended roof on the north side to cover a 12 X 4 entrance porch deck. We are really enjoying this change in our house and now wonder why we did not do it years ago.

We send our love and best wishes to you for a happy and healthy new year. We also add our testimonial for having regular physical examinations at least yearly.

*Hi - didn't hear from you and pray that all is well with you. We don't know if we'll be out this year esp til July, as Hal has treatments til then! Boy! are they expensive. Regards to all - Hal - Jean.*

Two more interviews: A retired couple from Cochabamba. These inter-views are so choice!

Back from our walk... So far, Santiago looks and feels just the same. Of course we didn't walk as far as the new subway system and other new construction farther downtown. We bought a few things at a nearby supermercado and have already enjoyed some real bread (marraquetas) and delicious Chilean fruit (best in the world!) Just now Pres. and Sis. Schmidt, Santiago North Mission, stopped by to greet us. They are excellent people. Answering a question on the political situation, Pres. Schmidt informed us that one of our stake presidents is a personal friend of Augusto Pinochet, the president of Chile. Some people in the U.S. have been very critical of Pres. Pinochet, but it seems to me that he has provided a period of stability in Chile, with a minimum of repression, and has avoided serious pitfalls by ~~so~~ steering Chile clear of leftist influences. Consider the example of Argentina. The U.S. itself must be blamed in part for much of the anti-Yankee feeling in Latin America, because of certain attitudes and policies, but unfortunately some countries, to emphasize their independence and snub the U.S. have turned to the "East." As a result, much of Argentina's equipment for generating power was obtained from Russia and Czechoslovakia. Now the country is experiencing a terrible crisis. Power plant breakdowns throughout the country have left vast areas without electricity. Factories are paralyzed, food is spoiling for lack of refrigeration, and water is scarce (with pumps not working and also because of a prolonged drought). Our hearts bleed for our dear friends in Buenos Aires, Rosario, and just about everywhere <sup>in</sup> Argentina.

Speaking of water, we are back to boiling it again, but so far I've only remembered once not to brush my teeth with tap water. I'd better get with it! Last time, my State Department physical exam at the end of our four years here turned up three types of parasites (worms, ugh!) plus amoebas.

1-26-89. Two Chilean missionaries have already arrived, 2 days early and 1 day early. Both are from Arica, far in the north--a 3-day bus ride in stifling heat, a good part of ~~1/2~~ the way through the Atacama Desert, where it never rains. This afternoon I went to the airport early to get my computer out of the aduana (customs) where it has been impounded. I'll be able to get it out without paying "los derechos" (duty/taxes) but... "mañana." Our Bolivians arrived late and without six of their number, who had visa problems. I still don't know this building ~~very~~ well (with its many church offices), but with the help of three church employees, each of us at one corner of the wheelchair, we managed to get Elder Marcos Eguino up a back way where there are fewer stairs. I admired and loved him at first sight. His body is so crippled, but here he was, so handsome and fine, wanting to serve his Savior on a mission. He looks very Bolivian, so at the start of our interview my mouth dropped wide open when he said he'd like to speak English. After a few words, he began to look 100% American to me, so perfect was his pronunciation. ~~Imagine~~ Imagine, learning such faultless English in a U.S. hospital, confined to beds and, later, wheel chairs. Amazing! When he returned to Bolivia, <sup>(after 4 years)</sup> he found that his parents had met the missionaries and joined the Church. After careful study and prayer, he joined too. He has paid his way in life teaching English at home and has studied accounting. He can program in Applesoft and has used various software programs ~~for~~ for accounting. As a result of ~~the~~ polio, his right hand is very small and shriveled, but his left is normal. He can type O.K. Both legs are very short and crippled. His humble testimony to me was so sincere and spiritual I couldn't keep tears from my eyes. What a great young man! If I ever complain about anything--especially about my lot in life--give me a swift kick where I deserve it!

Well, I'm less than half-way through my interviews, so I'd better get back to it. There's only time for 5 minutes each, but they have such fascinating things to tell--about how they joined the church, etc., that I'm averaging about 20 minutes each. We feel so blessed we can only stand it! Miss you! Love you!  
Ever-loving M... ..