

Happy Happenings!

November 2008

102nd Edition

The Sorensens:

Things in Wyoming are going pretty good. The kids all started school. Dixon is in preschool Mon., Tues., and Wed. We don't go every day because I don't like to drive him all the time, but he really likes it when he does go. Broox is in First grade and seems to be doing pretty well. He doesn't love school, and would rather just stay home, but he does well while he is there. Jancy is in Fifth grade. She had a big class last year so it is split this year. She does really well in school, and has a friend that is a member of the church. Jaxon is in Seventh grade. Last year they started a new thing in the Middle school to try. All of his core classes are gender based—all boys. I wasn't too sure about it at first, but have really come to like it. He is doing very well in school. He is going to play basketball this year, we hope he enjoys it.



Aaron got offered a job at the Carney Ranch managing the farm part of the place. At first we didn't even think much of it, but as time went on and he thought about it more he has decided if we can work a few things out he would really like to go back to being a farmer. It has been a hard choice because he makes pretty good money now, and has the opportunity to make quite a bit in the future, but he doesn't like having to work Sundays, and the guys he has to work with are pretty foul, and he has to work lots of weekends. We'll have to see how things turn out.

The kids and I went to Utah for conference weekend. It was nice to not have to go the church and try to keep all of the kids quiet. We went to Annette's on Saturday and Mom and Lynn's on Sunday.

Aaron and the kids have had the chance to go hunting quite a bit in the last month. In September he took Jaxon, Broox, and Dixon, and the horses up by Dubois. They rode in and camped overnight, looked around, and came home that night. Then He and Jaxon went up to a different spot hunting Elk. The weather was still really warm so they didn't see very many elk. One time they heard an elk bugle, so they started sneaking through the trees to find it. They found a good place behind a tree to wait, and heard something coming towards them. It was a huge Grizzly bear. Aaron said he was scared to death. I asked Jaxon how big it was, and he said about as big as our van. I didn't believe him but Aaron said it was huge. Because of the way the wind was blowing the bear has no idea that they were there, but when it caught wind of them Aaron said it started snorting, and growling, and finally ran off in the trees. They slept with their guns pretty close that night. Then Last week Jaxon was able to shoot a nice 3 point deer on opening morning, and Aaron shot a nice 4x5 a couple of days later (4 points on one side 5 on the other). Then His brother Jason, and one of his friends came and they found two more nice 4 point deer. Aaron and Jaxon plan to go back to hunt elk next week. I don't really get into it, but the boys seem to enjoy it.

Not much else is going on. We plan on coming for Thanksgiving, so we will see any of you who make it.





This article was printed in the *Daily Herald* on Sunday, 07 September 2008!!

Family reunion results in generous toy donation to Oakridge School

The students at Oakridge School in Springville will have a host of new tools to learn with this year, thanks to a local family reunion.

More than \$200 worth of toys were donated over the summer to the school for severely disabled children. Richard Kay, principal of the school, said the toys came courtesy of the Burnett family, which does a service project every year in association with the family reunion. The family had money left over from their initial project this year cleaning a park, so they decided to help the school.

"They got a list of what we'd like for our students, and they went shopping," Kay said.

Lisa Pierson said she and her family decided to donate toys to the school because she has a disabled son and she knows people who have disabled children attending the school.

"We're just aware of them and the needs they have," she said.

Pierson said her family has been doing different service projects every year for more than a decade. Humanitarian kits and blankets have been made some years, and she said the children in the family love to participate and know it is always part of the reunion.

"It helps them to be aware of different needs in the community and around the world," she said.

Jason Shelley, a speech and language pathologist for Nebo School District who works with Oakridge, said the donations make a big difference to the school. The 15 to 20 different toys donated are not just play items, they are learning tools, he said.

Shelley said teachers at the school will use the toys to help the students communicate, as 90 percent of the children are non-verbal. When the Burnett family asked to help, Shelley

compiled a list of toys that help facilitate communication, toys he called "cause and effect." Most of the toys have some sort of action required, such as shaking or pressing a button. It is hard for many of the students to understand cause and effect, including using communication to get what they want.

"The toys are a means to an end," he said. "They're a teaching tool."

The school uses the toys to demonstrate to the children what the actions can make the toy do. Pictures are also taken of the toys so that students can learn that pointing to a picture can help them ask for a toy.

"What's fun is when you demonstrate to a student how something works and then you hand-over-hand teach them and then they do it on their own," he said.

Some favorite toys for the students are "Tickle Me Elmo" dolls, bubbles and microphones with speakers attached. Many of the school's toys had been getting old and worn, but Shelley said community members often do not know what they can do to help such a specialized school.

"This is one of the first few times that this has just been dropped in our laps," he said. "It's a real treat."

Here is a picture of Lisa, Riley and Zach:





The Whites.

Hello family. Greetings from the White House. AND, Tanner Burnett too! We're all just going along, doing the best we can. Which usually is pretty good.

Tanner has sure adjusted well to living with two old Grandparents. He's a cute boy and brings sunshine into our dull lives. He's doing well in school and has a pretty cushy job playing with the neighbor's yellow lab puppy. For that he gets money! Go figure.

Lynn and I sure did enjoy our trip to Arizona. There's nothing like going to Arizona in October. (Unless it would be November—or December—or anytime it's cold and freezing in Utah.)

We loved seeing sweet little Aubrey accept her Baptismal Covenants with such sincerity. I'm sure that she was ready for that sacred ordinance and certainly did feel the



Holy Ghost. I know I did! Being in the Coons home was *so much fun*. We loved seeing all the remodeling and decorating that's going on. Soon it will truly be *their* house! More than that though, we loved feeling their spirits! Loreen, Brittney, Hannah and I got downright silly on a couple of shopping excursions. (Remember girls, red is not the only color in my house and I don't ever want to isolate grandchildren in a cage—no matter how funny it may have seemed at the time.) Reading scriptures with the Coons is amazing. Everyone takes their turn. Including Aubrey who's a regular little scripture reader. That'll be good because she got her own set for her baptism. AND Caleb, who is sounding out even the hardest of scripture words! Way to go guys! Todd is so much fun. He's a

mixture of teasing and good advice. Piano music sweetens the air as four Coons practice for 45 minutes a day (with no fussing). I am amazed at the talent and at the progress that's being made. Healthy meals. Innovative cook. Everyone taking their turn at the chores cheerfully (or going out to clean up dog poop. That usually cures whining.) So—Thank you, Thank you. Especially to Brittney who, once again, gave up her room so we could be so comfortable.

Then on to the Burnett mansion! I had been whining about how sad I was that I had lost my favorite house in the whole world. (That would be the one on East Glade where they lived for 18 years. They bought it from the Church while I was working in the building department. I found out about it before they were really ready to

announce it) Actually, I had hoped they'd leave that house to me



someday. (How does that work?) Well, Larry assured me I wouldn't be sad very long when I saw the new house. And, boy was he right! The new home is *amazing!* I love it! Not only is it huge (and they have a guest room) but it's done so tastefully. Part of it is the way the house is constructed and the colors the former owners used. But a lot is the furniture, the placement of the furniture and the decorations. Now, that's where Tiffany the decorator comes in. I'm told that she and Larry spent hours and





Whites, Cont.: hours shopping and placing things. Believe me, it shows. You can also tell that a lot of care has been taken to organize and place things just right. That Jill is a wonder. It was so fun to be in their home and have those 3 gorgeous girls call me Grandma! (What else?) What I mean is that I love them and appreciate them a lot. John too—well, not gorgeous, but loved.

Now, I *will not* be jealous, or envious. I admit that I came home and looked at my tiny kitchen and postage stamp sized rooms and started moaning and mumbling. But not for long. I'm just happy for the Burnetts. At this time in our lives we're busy trying to keep our income from disappearing and we're really glad that we own the little condo we live in.

AND, we're busy beautifying it and it looks good! Loreen and Lana didn't want me to fancy up the basement too much. Sorry but with Laura's and Lisa's help we made it a dad-gum show place. But—never fear! The grandkids can still play! I didn't throw away the toys. There's actually still floor space for trains and cars and puzzles. We can set up tables for games. We hope that all of you like it as well as we do cause it's wonderful! It's really a dream come true. We focused all our attention upstairs until we started our missions and I'm glad we did. But my desire, especially the last year and a half has been to do the basement. So—even with the financial world crashing down—we did it! (Greg W says we did it for the economy. Just us—being patriotic again.)

Well, we love you all. You're in our thoughts and prayers. We know you have problems. We're sorry—wish we could take all the pain. But I don't think that's the plan.

The Piersons:

Hello family! Not much going on at the Pierson's, although we sure stay busy! We enjoy watching these babies grow (literally - Ethan is 23 pounds at 5 months!!). Riley talks so grown-up, and he is such a good helper. His favorite is reading books and playing with his toys, and he is going to be a dragon for Halloween. He loved going on the deer hunt with his dad - Dave did get one! Dave's work is winding down for the season, but with the weather so nice, he is still busy.

Jenny went on a trip to Florida and really enjoyed the sites. It was during those hurricanes, but she just missed two of them. We were glad of that - and it made her trip more interesting!

Jared loves the MTC and has fit in there well. He is even more talkative and out-going than before - if that's possible!! He loves talking to people wherever we are, and no matter how much it embarrasses me! The other night we were sitting on the couch. I guess I looked tired because he looked over at me, waved his fingers in front of my face, and said in a soft, soothing voice, "I'm going to hypnotize you. I will count to three, snap my fingers, and you will be under my spell." What a guy!

Cory is doing well - we love getting his letters!! He has two baptisms set for Nov. 15, two on Nov. 29, they are teaching some other people - and transfers are next week!! We'll see if he gets to stay or moves on!! He loves his area, and says the fall leaves are beautiful. If anyone wants me to e-mail his letters - let me know! It is fun to read about his experiences and spiritual growth.

Steve and I have been updating our storage, making sure we have food and supplies. We got a ton (97 cases) of pressed wood blocks that are supposed to burn hotter, cleaner, and longer than wood. We will be glad to have it in an emergency! Steve is busy with work and his BYU calling. Steve, Jared, and I go to the track when Steve gets home from work. Jared walks 6 or 7 laps with me while Steve runs, then Steve jogs with Jared. He thinks he is pretty cool, and amazingly jogs about a mile and a half. He seems to enjoy it, and it is great exercise for us all!

We love you all! Happy Fall!!

Happy Happenings!



Coons Family:

August, September and October have been busy months at the Coons house. The Kids all started school and are doing well.

Brittney has been working hard on her Young Women's goals and doing lots of babysitting. We painted her room. She chose the colors and did a great job. Brittney had a mole removed from her back. I had to take her to Phoenix Children's Hospital and they put her under! It was a big deal! Here is a picture of Brittney painting Grandma's nails BLUE!



We finished painting Hannah's room. It's light pink and lime green. It's so cute that everyone likes to hang out in it. Hannah is doing awesome in Soccer. We love going to her games every Saturday.

Aubrey got baptized!! The AZ Burnetts, Gma and Gpa White, Gma and Gpa Coons and Tracy's family came. The baptism was really special and we enjoyed having everyone here. Thanks for coming! Here is a picture of Aubrey's baptism (right) and Aubrey and Grandpa (left). Aubrey and Caleb are sharing a room now and we painted it, too.



Caleb is reading really well and learning the rules in Kindergarten. His preschool teacher let the boys bring their light sabers and play Star Wars at recess. Things aren't the same in Kindergarten! But he is doing great. Caleb started limping on Oct. 11 and was in pain.

He kept limping all week so we took him to the Doc. on Oct. 20. They did an x-ray and found out that he has Perthes, which is a condition where there is a loss of blood supply to the head of the femur so the bone degenerates. We took him to an orthopaedic today (Nov. 3) and got the low-down. The Doc. said his case is not severe and he is so young that the bone will likely heal and be okay. In the meantime, Caleb is supposed to stay off it as much as possible. No more soccer, running, jumping, PE, recess or much walking. The Doc. would like him to be on crutches but realizes that is hard for a 6-year-old. We will take him to Physical Therapy and take him swimming to help with range-of-motion. We will see the Doc. in 6 weeks and then we'll see how he is progressing. Hopefully the bone will re-grow correctly. The Doc. said we'll have to limit his activity for at least 6 months, possibly more. Thanks to all who joined us in fasting for Caleb. Todd and our Home Teachers gave him a great blessing. We are grateful for many things - that it isn't worse, that we have Caleb, that we have the gospel and the priesthood and family support, and that we have insurance. The body is an amazing thing!

Todd's knee was hurting so he ended up having knee surgery. The doctor shaved off part of his meniscus where it had torn. Here is a picture (left). Todd is in Physical Therapy and is doing really well!

The Kids had a great time Trick-or-treating. The houses in our neighborhood are spread out so people give out tons of candy since there aren't many trick-or-treaters. Here is a picture of the loot. We have a year's supply for the whole family!

So you can see that we have had a little bit too much excitement at our house lately! We sure love you all and hope you have a great Thanksgiving!





The Wilson Family:

Dear Family, We in the Wilson household have chewed our nails down to where they are continuously bleeding waiting for the big day to arrive. Yes, in just about two weeks Amy will be home. When she left it seemed like so long until we saw her again but the time sure has flown by. We have been blessed in more ways than we can count while she has been out. We sure hope to see everyone when she gives her talk on the 23rd of November. That will be a very hectic week because Jeff will also be doing Bye-Bye Birdie that week.

These past few months my life has been dominated by the ROTC Ranger Challenge competition. The way it works is you have to take cadets and form them into 11 man teams, nine guys and two girls, you then teach them a bunch of military skills and all the Universities in the region get together and have a big competition. We competed against seven other Universities from the northwest. This year I was coach of the two BYU-I Ranger Challenge teams. The thing that made it very difficult is we decided to open it up to all students on campus whether they were already Army cadets or not. The student newspaper (The Scroll) did a big article on it being BYU-I's only inter-collegiate competition and we had lots of folks show up and decide they wanted to participate. That left me with the task of taking a bunch of kids with no idea of anything military and in five weeks honing them into well-oiled physically fit killing machines. I had to teach them how to read maps and find points in the woods, tear apart and work with the M16 rifle (picture at right), build bridges with ropes, and lots of other good stuff. It was a big challenge and in the end we didn't win the competition but we sure had a great weekend at the University of Montana.

This semester I am teaching the sophomore and senior cadets. In addition to that I also teach two sections of Military Fitness for the Exercise Science Department. These are all non-cadets who just sign up to take a class to get in shape the army way. I make them learn basic drill and ceremony and treat them like soldiers. Most of them were not in great shape when we started. On one of our first days I had several of them at a time running over to the garbage can and throwing up. I had them drink some water and come right back. They are all in much better shape now and most of them are planning to take the class again next semester. I have to keep reminding myself that I am retired from the Army now, sometimes I forget. -- Greg



We have had some big things happening in our lives in the past few months. We have owned our house in Boise since 1995, and since 1997 it has been rented for all but a couple of months. We tried to sell it back then but the market was really bad. It was a hard decision at the time to rent it and it took a lot of prayer and fasting and humbling ourselves enough to get the answer that we should. It really went well for us for 11 years and we never dreamed that we wouldn't be able to rent it again. When our renters moved out our property manager told us that it needed a lot of work to get it ready to rent again and we decided to save money by doing a lot of the work ourselves. This was while Greg was still in Washington so we took Mom and Dad and Tanner with us and went over to Boise and were going to just knock out all the painting in one weekend. That was overly optimistic as it turned out because all the rooms but two had wallpaper on them and the other two didn't because I had taken it down when we lived there. Some of the wallpaper had been painted over and I am sure that if we had left it up to the management company, they would have left it like it was and painted over the remaining paper. I was determined to do it right though, so we rented a steamer and spent the rest of that weekend taking off wallpaper in the bedroom and bathroom downstairs and a bedroom upstairs. That still left one bedroom upstairs and the kitchen (we decided to leave the living room because it was paintable wallpaper. In the end it took four different trips over there to do the work but we did it right. Then we started to pray that we would get renters. We had raised the price a little from where it had been for the last 8 years and nobody called. So we dropped it back down to that level and still, nobody called. We decided to drop the price \$150 more and hope that would do the trick because we were getting to the point where we wouldn't be able to make the house payment. All this time we were praying, fasting and going to the temple and, just like before we got an answer completely





Wilson's Cont.:

different than we were expecting and that was that we should sell it. I had always answered questions about selling by saying, "no, we would never be able to in this market." But that was what we were feeling so we decided to do it. Boise has been hit especially hard and the housing market over there is really bad, but it was only on the market for 6 days when we got our offer. We are selling it pretty cheaply, but this has truly been an answer to prayer.

I am still the enrichment counselor in the Relief Society and that keeps me really busy, along with going to the gym. We had a really good garden this summer and I really enjoyed the work and the produce. We had really a lot of raspberries and we also got a respectable crop of beets, lettuce, beans, tomatoes and peppers. The strange thing was that our poorest crop was the zucchini. I left my door unlocked at church, but no one filled it with zucchini. I did a lot of canning, mostly fruit and jam, dried apples and gathered things to put in our new root cellar. It has been really rewarding.

Brianna is doing really well at school. She lives 4 1/2 blocks down the hill and we see her every Saturday when she comes to do her laundry, but other than that not much. She does a lot of stuff with her roommates and seems to be enjoying her classes. She will move home for the winter semester since she will not be going to school. BYU has a three-track system so that they can accommodate more students and her track is summer-fall.

Jeff is really busy right now. He has a job at Wendy's and he works 3 or 4 nights a week. He also has rehearsal for the musical and he is taking a tap dancing class with some of his friends. He is hoping it will come in handy for next year's musical. He will be inducted into the National Honor Society this week and he is also on the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board.

Most of you know how Amy is doing since I forward most of her emails, but she is doing great. She is a trainer now and her companion, Sister Searle, is from Shelley, Idaho, which is not far from here. She has had 4 baptisms recently and Frau Koch will be baptized Nov. 22. We are really excited for her to come home and hang out with us for a couple of months before she goes back to BYU. She has asked me to register for her this week, so it's back to the real world for her.

Rich is doing well, he says he just works and comes home. He is now a 1st Lieutenant and has been in for more than two years so he just got a nice raise. That means that he eats out most nights but he says he is going to start cooking again. He is the XO of his battery and is in charge of the training for his platoon, which is a really big responsibility since they are training to go to Afghanistan in May. He is raring to go and doesn't want to sit on the sidelines while everyone else is fighting, but it worries his parents a lot. He is planning on coming home for a visit on December 19, so we will have the whole family here. We are already planning the family picture.

Well, this is very long but we didn't get the last one in on time so there was more to say. We look forward to seeing all of you, either at Thanksgiving or Heather's wedding. Greg and Jeff won't be able to come because of School, but Brianna and I are planning to come.

