



Happy Happenings



Fifteenth Edition

January 2000

Mom & Lynn:

Dear Family,

Lynn and I are very humble as we enter this new year. Whoever thought we'd make it? I, for one, never dreamed I'd live to see it! And yet, here I am, watching the year 2000 come all over the world through the great medium, Television. It's awesome! I'm glad I'm here! I'm also very grateful to have been born and to live in this great country. We are very blessed. I consider the new year a good time to count those blessings as I take stock of my life and resolve to make it more meaningful.

And, as I take this inventory, I find that 1999 has been the most significant year in recent times, for me.

I spent almost 25 years at home, being glad to be a mom and to be able to be with you kids as you grew up. But then, I was placed in the position of needing an education. I found out several valuable things during that very intense 3 1/2 year period. I found out what great support you kids could give--and Oh, how that helped. Heavenly Father blessed



me more than I thought possible. And I found out that I did have the ability to learn and to master a pretty hard discipline. Accounting was good to me and for me, though, and my years of working were very rewarding. I'm so sure I was guided to work for the Church! It was great!

But then, Heavenly Father blessed me even more. He sent me Lynn. And he is truly one of the very greatest blessings in my life. I struggled about working after that because I feel that a woman's place is in the home--if she has a husband to support her. I even took that part-time job to be with Lana and Loreen until they were ready to leave the nest.

After I returned to full-time employment, things began to get more and more stressful and I began to ask Heavenly Father if I should leave work.

I got LOTS of answers from Him but it took a long time to gain the courage to actually quit.

Which brings me to February 1998 when I heard Him so loud and clear that, with Lynn's concurrence, I made the announcement! It took until December before I could actually break loose and **HERE I AM!**

It would be hard to explain the difference in my life. The difference in my stress level. The difference in my health and happiness and fulfillment. The difference in my spirit! I'm SO thankful! I still have a lot to do before I can feel that I've accomplished what I thought I'd do if I quit work. A lot more Mothering, Grandmothering, genealogy, personal history, pictures, pictures, pictures. But I'm LOVING it!

On a lighter note, I never thought I'd be a sextarian either. (No, I'm not being vulgar. If a person who is 100 is a centenarian, surely I can celebrate being 60 in some fun way--and I DON'T want sextuplets!) It's sobering to be so old. As Aaron reminded me--I'm a senior citizen in my own right. I can get all the discounts--HONESTLY! But, I got my knees shot with cortisone and I can still remember all of your names and I'm happy! As long as I can feel this young, I'm good to go!

I love you all. I am SO grateful that Heavenly Father has blessed us all so much. I don't know when Jesus Christ will come again, (obviously), but my greatest prayer is that we will all be ready. I want to do only those things and think only those thoughts which will help me prepare. But I need His help. And I need your help. Let's be even closer in 2000 than before. Let's pray for each other. Let's share our joys and sorrows. Let's continue to be the GREATEST family!

These are the 10 best things to say if you are caught sleeping at your desk:

10. They told me at the blood bank that this might happen.
 9. This is just a 15-minute power nap like they raved about at the time management seminar you sent me to.
 8. Guess I left the top off the Whiteout. You probably got here just in time!
 7. I wasn't sleeping. I was meditating the mission statement and 5-year plan.
 6. I was testing my keyboard for drool resistance.
 5. I was doing a highly specific yoga exercise. Do you discriminate against people who practice yoga?
 4. Why did you interrupt me? I almost figured out a solution to our biggest problem.
 3. Sorry, I meant to buy coke with caffeine at lunch.
 2. I was caught up in the wonder of working here.
- And the #1 best thing to say if you get caught sleeping at your desk...
1. Amen.

The Sorensen Family:

Hello family! We have had a wonderful Christmas Season. We had fun Branch parties, and nice visits from some of our neighbors. It was a fun Christmas because the kids are getting to the age where the whole Christmas thing is pretty exciting. It was fun to watch their faces light up each time they saw Santa, and to look in their eyes and feel the excitement and look of wonder. Aaron has told our kids that Santa is really one of Heavenly Fathers helpers, and that seemed to help us keep things in perspective.

We feel very blessed, especially at this time of year for all that our Heavenly Father does for us. This has been another good year. We had Amberly added to our family and she was healthy and has been such a wonderful baby. We have all been healthy, for the most part. Aaron enjoys his job, and I like it because we can be together as a family more than most families can. Jaxon and Jancy are learning and growing, they usually play very well with each other, and are both good with Amberly. Our car has survived another year. We are active in our branch, Aaron as Elders Quorum President, me in the Primary presidency, and Jaxon and Jancy adding a big part to the nursery. We have enjoyed our animals. Wilbur, our pig, has been especially entertaining. We both belong to a wonderful family whom we love very much. I could go on, but to sum it up- We are very blessed.

We have enjoyed a good trip to Utah for Christmas, but are looking forward to being home and getting back on somewhat of a schedule. We thank you all for your love and support and hope we all have another good year.



The Dye Family:

Sorry it's been so long since you heard from the Dyes. Here's a little catch-up:

Jeremy got braces, two 4.0 report cards, and all of his merit badges for Eagle - now we've got to do the big project! He's taken up stamp collecting (send cool stamps), made most of the gifts he gave for Christmas, and it praying that his pond didn't crack from the 6 inch sheet of ice on it.

Anthony earned his Arrow of Light & graduated from Cub Scouts. He looks great in his new Scout uniform. He's doing great on the piano and knows more than I do.

Ondylyn was baptized & confirmed on November 6 & is happy to be a member of the Church. She's reading like crazy, growing her hair out (6 inches



past her shoulders!), and doing great at piano.

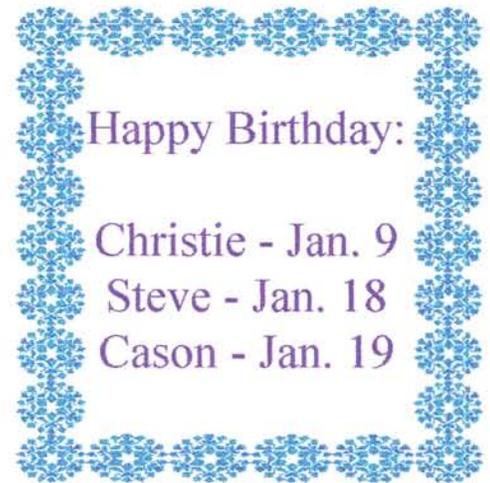
Zachary started preschool in September and now go without crying and hanging onto me. He's gaining a lot of confidence - at Jeremy's band concert the other night he walked from the center section of the auditorium where we were sitting to the side where Ondylyn was visiting with a friend ALL BY HIMSELF! It is quite a change for me to have to encourage a child to leave my side instead of feeling like I need to tie them on a leash when we go in public! Zac is the most loving person I know - he says, "I love you, Mom" about 50 times a day and loves to please others.

Greg is the ward clerk and so he's been spending many hours at the Church for tithing settlement. Combine that with a heavy work load and you have one busy, tired guy. At the Mity-Lite executive committee Christmas party the company's president & retired C.E.O. said, "The best gift I gave Brad (the new C.E.O.) when I handed the company over to him was Greg Dye." He was

embarrassed by the compliment but he was very deserving.

I'm BUSY with PTA. The latest challenge is making a dragon costume for our school mascot. Thanks to Mom, Lynn, Lisa, Greg & kids for your help! It's made with irrigation "funny pipe" ribs and lots of duct tape covered with batting & shiny blue & silver fabric. The dragon made his first appearance on December 23 during our big "1999" assembly & party. We celebrated the fulfillment of the goals for every student & staff member to earn 1999 reading points by December 17. They've done great - our school was #1 in Utah Valley (3 school districts) for number of books read from September to December. I'm having a lot of fun & trying not to stress too much!

We're enjoying the holiday season and having lots of fun making things together. We love you all very much! Have a great month!



Happy Anniversary,
Mom & Lynn
on Jan. 2!!



The Wilson Family:

Frohe Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr! We try to speak German a lot at home and we are starting to learn a few phrases and use them, so I'll probably always include one or two in the newsletter. I'm sure you can guess the translation of that one. One of my New Years resolutions is to read the Book of Mormon in German because Thomas S. Monson said that if you will read the Book of Mormon in a language, you will become fluent in it. It is my very great desire to become fluent in German so I'm going to try it. I'm sure that it will be slow going at first, with a lot of checking the dictionary and doing it side-by-side with the English one but I'm sure that it will be worth it.



We had a great vacation just before Christmas, skiing in the Alps. We weren't sure we were going to be

able to get there at first, because it snowed so much the day we left that it was hard to get to church. It was our yearly Sacrament meeting with the Germans and they don't cancel church for anything, but if it hadn't been for that I'm sure that church would have been canceled. By the time we got ready to go that afternoon the Autobahn was cleared off enough and we had no trouble getting there. It snowed the first couple of days we were there, but then the sun came out and the temperature dropped, but it was beautiful. We all took lessons except Greg. Rich took snowboarding lessons, Amy and I were in the same beginning ski class, Brianna had her own beginning ski class, and Jeff was in a class called "ski kids." They learned to ski too, but they did a lot of playing in the snow and took it quite a bit slower than the other classes. We spent the first day just getting comfortable on skis which meant walking up a small hill on skis, skiing

down about 100 feet, then doing it all again. If you have ever walked up a hill on skis, you can imagine how frustrated and tired we were after the first day. It was necessary, though, because they don't have chair lifts there at Chiemsee, only a T-bar, so you have to be able to stay on your skis all the way up the mountain. We were able to go up the T-bar the second day, and by the third day we went all the way to the top of the Germany side. From there you can go over into Austria where they do have chair lifts and much more challenging runs, but as rank beginners, we didn't do that. Greg could have, but the ticket was about twice the cost and he chose to stay with us and take pictures. The runs were good for us, long gentle runs that took about 20 minutes to get up on the T-bar and about 10 minutes to get down. We ate lunch every day at the German ski lodge. The Germans haven't heard that you should charge outrageous prices for food at ski lodges, so we got really good food at reasonable prices. I got much better at ordering food in German, too. We stayed in the Lake hotel, a hotel that Hitler had built during WWII and taken over by the Americans afterward. It was a really nice hotel and the room was big enough for the whole family, which is a feature that is hard to find in Germany, I hear. We were able to go to dinner one night in a small village near the hotel which was another adventure in figuring out what to order and ordering in German. Our friends, the Laus, a family that is over here working for Daimler-Chrysler, went with us and they all speak quite a bit of German so they helped us order something other than Bratwurst or Schnitzel. I did order for myself, though, which they encourage us to do because they know that we are trying to learn the language.

We had a very nice, peaceful Christmas, one of the most peaceful I remember for a while. I didn't try to sew anything or do anything spectacular and I think that it was a much nicer Christmas as a result. Greg hasn't really had to go back to work yet because they

do a day on, day off schedule during Christmas here and the day he was supposed to work there was a big snow storm and they sent everyone who didn't live on Patch Barracks home early.

We had another big storm here on Sunday. It was the biggest wind storm in Europe this century. About 100 people were killed when trees were blown down all over Europe. It took about 3 hours for us to get home from church, which usually take us about 20 minutes, because they had to reroute traffic on the Autobahn. There's so much traffic on the Autobahn that when there is any disruption at all you can have a huge traffic jam that is called a Stau which has a definition all it's own. Traffic can literally stop for hours and people get out of their cars and set up chairs or walk up and down the road talking to other people. We haven't had too much experience with it yet, but you can't really avoid it because there is really no rhyme or reason, like rush hour. It can happen any time.

We are really having a good time here and are becoming more comfortable all the time. We feel so blessed to be here, happy and healthy, and we pray that the new year will find all of you the same.

Love, The Wilsons

The Pierson Family:

Happy New Year everyone!! A lady in our ward shared a thought in testimony meeting today. She suggested switching the "New Year" to "Happy You Near" and then talked about how glad she was to have family and friends "Near" her. Maybe a little corny, but a good thought. We too, are glad to have family near. It was good to visit those we could this holiday. We had a wonderful Christmas - it just went by sooo quickly!!

Jenny has her driving permit, so we have done a lot of driving around (she has to have 30 hours of driving before she can get her license). Of course Jared loves this - he gets to look for trucks!

Thanks for the Christmas cards and letters! We love you all!

The Utah Burnett Family:

Cason's school had the reflections contest awards this month. Cason had submitted a photography entry. He took several pictures of things at the summit and with Kelly's help, made a collage of them. His entry was one of 5 that were chosen as winners. It was very exciting for him because he loves to get medals and trophies!

Tanner found out about his funny bone this month! He hit it on something and in a confused way, tried to explain to Kelly what he was feeling: "Mom, I hit my elbow but it feels funny in my fingers." She told him that was his funny bone and he said, "I don't want a funny bone!" Too bad we can't just get rid of things we don't need that we don't like, huh?

Thayne's in a bad 'fridge' stage! He can open the fridge now and he likes it! He opens it a hundred times a day and takes bites out of apples, opens yogurts and eats a little, gets bread, whatever there is. He thinks it's great, but it's pretty annoying to the rest of us! A while ago I was getting him some cereal for breakfast. I got too much in the bowl and went to put some back. He said, "No, don't put it back." I said, "But that's too much." So now whenever he wants a lot of something he says, "I want too much!"

Cason and Tanner got together on their own and wrote letters to Santa. They were so funny I wanted to share them with you.

Cason's list to Santa: I wish I could have a real minecher golf set and I wish you a mairy christmas and I don't no what els I want. I hope you will get me ether stuff and I wish for a medel deteckter. Later he scratched through all this and added instead: The reall thing I want is a ceade plare (cd player)!

Tanner's list (written by Cason): I want a helment and a motersicoll the

wons at toys are us, wons that I can ride and I want a cash recherster. I hope you will bring me all this stuff and I wish I could have a facke golf set and a pare of bocher... (then this word got scratched out to be replace by a drawing of binoculars. I guess that word was just too hard to spell!).

They also had another little note that said: Please eat thease coockes and drink this milk and give this carit to roodoff.

Kelly's busily working on Christmas gifts. She's been doing stained glass stuff lately and really enjoying it.

I sprained my ankle last week at basketball. Kelly thought it would have been pretty funny if it would have been broken because it would have fit in well with our luck this year. I told her if she thought that would be funny, maybe I should punch her in the nose and break it so she could fit in too! I was hobbling around for a few days and Tanner said, "Is Dad getting old?" I sure felt like it for a while!

We want to wish everyone a happy holiday season. We love you all very much and are very thankful for the good family we belong to. It's nice to have you all as good examples to help us along.

The Coons Family:

Sorry the Newsletter is a little late this month. We wanted to wait until our pictures got developed.



Happy New Year to everyone! We are doing great, especially since Todd got ten days off for Christmas. We painted the basement, worked on the car, and just enjoyed being together. We haven't been sight-seeing since Mom, Lynn and Laura left. We're waiting for someone else to come visit us so we can do some more.



Here are Grandmother's shelves before (left) and during (right) and after (below) we refinished them.



The girls are doing great. Brittney's eye has healed and we haven't had any more accidents (knock on wood!). Brittney is going to be in a ballet class instead of preschool. She is really excited about it, but she's also a little nervous. I think she'll love it!

Here is a picture of the curtains that Laura helped me sew:



I made new stockings for everyone:



The Myth of the Perfect Mother by Agnes Palmer - Redbook, Apr. '61

There is no doubt that children are not always enjoyable 24 hours a day. The eight-year-old who acts as if he is being persecuted because you ask him to take the garbage out doesn't make you feel like breaking into song.

We have our own version of "Quotable Quotes." Here are some funny ones: "Davey, Davey Crockett, King of the wild steer." "We're having a cherry (chariot) race and then we're going to have a strawberry race." "Crumbs and cheese" (for parmesan cheese). "We're Mary and Joseph and we're going to pay our taxis." "I smell a STUNK. Pee-woo!"

But the enjoyment of children is not a luxury or a by-product of parenthood. It is the very core of it. Parents often are so concerned with training and teaching and correcting and protecting children that they lose the capacity for simply marveling at them, for responding to the wondrous miracle of their growth as it unfolds. A scrubbed little girl in a party dress or a dirty little boy in a baseball uniform, a proud fourth grader with a B on his spelling test or a crestfallen one with a B on hers are not merely serious responsibilities. They are a great and glorious, if not unadulterated, delight - and finding them so will make them more so.

The girls loved Christmas. Brittney enjoyed redecorating the Living Room to look like the mall. She also had a blast wrapping about 20 presents, some of them being things we already own so we were glad to get them back. Their main (and favorite) present was dress-up clothes. Love to all! The Coons

