

Happy Happenings

February 2007



Twenty-eighth Edition

The Coons Family:

January was a busy month for us. We've had snow on the ground the whole month, so we stayed inside as much as possible. My big project was re-wallpapering the kitchen and hall (mostly by myself), including painting trim and lots of other finishing touches. I also did some flower arrangements. Brittney and Hannah started their ballet class and are enjoying it. We are teaching Brittney to read with a great book called "Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons." It is so fun and exciting to see your own child learn to read!! Aubrey is sleeping through the night and is still a perfect baby in every possible way. Todd's scout group made three beautiful wood trains to give to charity. We are looking forward to his parents' visit on February 15th. My roommate from Ricks, Kristie (Palfreyman) Hansen (some of you know her) and her husband and three girls moved from Kansas to Long Island. They spent a couple of days with us. The girls got along great and it was fun to see them again. Our girls love to play "Pretend." We own a restaurant (and have a very faithful customer, Todd), a shoe store, a make-up store, and just about everything else you can think of. They are a lot of fun.

The Sorensen's:

We had a good Christmas. The kids were so fun and we had a good visit from Mom and Lynn. The kids are all doing well. Jaxon and Jancy went to the dentist for the first time and were good. Jaxon learned how to blow bubbles with his bubblegum. He is getting so big and is such a good boy. Jancy bit the bullet this month and quit sucking her thumb. She was bribed a little from her dad because she has been wanting a new bike to ride around in the shop with Jaxon. So, Aaron told her he would get her a new bike if she'd stop sucking her thumb. She decided it was worth it and we had a prayer. And she hasn't sucked it ever since. She had two or three hard days but was so strong it was very amazing. Now she gets to ride her bike with Jaxon. Amberly is still just a sweet girl. She loves her "fuzzys" and she likes the kitties and riding horses with dad. She plays well with Jaxon and Jancy



Amberly in the dog house



Jancy riding a horse

and is a sweetheart. Aaron is getting ready for the cows to start calving which will start about Feb. 10. He has a guy working for him that works okay, but isn't a real gem. Hopefully he'll work out. I finally decided to really try and figure out what was wrong with my back and after doctor visits and x-rays and physical therapy and an MRI, I finally found out I have a "bulging disk" in my lower back. It is good to finally know what the cause of the pain is and hopefully, with therapy, I will be able to not have so much pain. Thanks to everyone for your fasting and prayers.



Jaxon on "Grandma" with glitter on her bum

Hi, everyone from the Wilsons's!

We have been in Germany now for almost a year and a half. Everyone's Deutsche has improved except for Dad's. Unfortunately, Dad is the only one that asks directions because everyone else is too shy. Leslie and the kids had a couple of weeks off school for Christmas but there are so many other things going on that it wasn't the quiet peaceful time that we had envisioned. We were able to go to Strasbourg, France, for a day and down to Neuschwanstein castle for a couple of days over the break. When we were in France we stopped at a nice little French café and everyone got pizza except for Dad who got cordon bleu. It is strange to see how many things change here when you cross a border. France is very nice but you had to be very careful because they all have dogs and they never clean up after them. Walking down the sidewalks is like walking through a minefield. Germany on the other hand is squeaky clean. The Neuschwanstein Castle is not far from here. It is at the foot of the Alps between Germany and Austria. It is the castle they modeled the one in the Disney trademark after. We went down there the night before we went to the castle and stayed in an old house with a herd of dairy cows. The people have just made their upstairs into four rooms for guests but you are really in their house. They fix you breakfast in the morning and if you want it you can have milk fresh from the cow. It is a good thing that we decided not to go skiing this year because there are very few resorts in Europe that actually have snow this year. Here in Stuttgart it has only snowed once this whole winter. From what we pick up on CNN it looks like all the snow this year went to Arkansas and Texas. We will now attempt to catch you up on what is going on with each of us:

Greg- I am rolling along with my job. I am currently working on consolidating about 12 European Command Directives into one. Yes, that is just as exciting as it sounds! I should really love this job because unlike my last job I am not always deploying to the field and briefing ornery Generals. I guess although I used to complain about going out in the woods and sweating or freezing to death and never getting any sleep, I guess deep down I really miss it. U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) is a joint command so we have Army, Navy and Air Force guys in the same office. It is very interesting comparing notes on what life is like in the different services. Don't go into the Navy unless you really love the water for six months at a time! The week before the Army-Navy football game the place becomes an absolute mad house with bets and practical jokes. Army could lose, and usually does lose every game they play all year, but if they can beat Navy it is considered a great year, the same is true for Navy. I am the second counselor in the bishopric so I stay busy. The ward here is small but we have some really good folks. Our ward speaks English but all of the rest of the stake is German. It makes coordination for the building and stake activities very interesting. Everything we get from the Stake is in German so we end up doing a lot of translating. I like Europe a lot but I miss being able to hunt and fish etc. I would love to trade places with Aaron and live in wide wonderful Wyoming for a while.

Leslie- I am working this year as a special Ed aid at school. I am really learning a lot about education that I would never be able to learn in a university setting. Last year when I was teaching, I thought that the special Ed program was a cop out for a lot of the kids but I am really learning what a processing disorder is all about. I really think that it will help me in my future as a teacher. I am still planning to try to finish my education in the next few years but it might not be as fast as I had thought I could do it. We are really enjoying Europe and seeing things that I have always wanted to see. We have been to several places in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France. We plan to go to the Netherlands when Mom and Dad come in the spring, as well as some of the cool places that we have already seen in Germany. Greg is dying to go to the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Berlin, and Russia. We'll see about that! I am still teaching early-morning seminary and really loving it. We have a really good group of kids who are very supportive of me and participate well in class. Every Friday we have breakfast and scripture mastery games or scripture chase. Everyone really likes that and it is a good break at the end of the week. I expect a lot from the kids. They have a weekly reading assignment and have had a couple of quizzes. They are going to have a mid-term test over The Gospels, too. They are pretty good sports about it and do really well. We are really close to the missionaries here. They are at our house at least once a week and we worked with them to teach a couple that live here on Kelley. They both got baptized and it is really rewarding to see the changes that are happening in their lives. They come over for their new member discussions now. We had two sets of missionaries over for thanksgiving and Christmas and our missionaries for New Years Eve and New Years day. They really feel like members of the family and bring a special spirit to our home. We sometimes feel maxed-out by our service commitments with Greg's bishopric responsibilities and Cub Scout assistant den leader, our missionary work and my seminary calling, but we love each activity and are holding on.

Rich- I have been very busy this year. I ran on the cross-country team last fall. We won the region championship for the first time in quite a few years. I have lots of tough classes in school but I am doing pretty well. I have lots of good friends at school, we like to get together and go out to dinner downtown and go to the pool hall. I'm getting excited about soccer starting this spring and I'll probably see you all this summer. I miss all of you very much! I turned 17 and still don't drive since the legal driving age here is 18. Jason is four and he already has two years more driving experience than I do.

Amy- I have also been very busy this year. I am the Freshman Class President and also the National Junior Honor Society secretary. I have also been working at Taco Bell. I'm saving the money for a plane ticket to Tennessee this summer. I'm going to play soccer in the spring and that will be fun. I miss all of you and am looking forward to seeing you.

Brianna- Hi! We had a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. For the reflections contest I did a person flying, a fish walking, and a bird swimming under the title of 'Wouldn't it be strange if...' My German has improved, but it is far from perfect. I am in chorus. It is fun. We just did our first concert about a month ago. I can't wait to see you!

Jeff- I am busy with school and Cub Scouts. I earned my Bob Cat Badge and my music belt-loop. We are getting ready for the pinewood derby in March, and we have our Blue and Gold Banquet next month. Christopher who was my best friend moved a couple of months ago but a kid named Houston moved is so now I am friends with him.

Mom and Lynn:

January has brought a whole new buzz of activity to our house. I have a new, exciting calling! For years I have taught the Gospel Doctrine Class in Sunday School. At the time of the divorce I was teaching the Laurels. When the Bishop called me in to release me I just *knew* it was because I had a big "D" on my forehead, that I was somehow unclean or unworthy, and that I would *never* be allowed to hold a calling in the Church again. To my surprise, he called me to teach the Gospel Doctrine Class and assured me that I **was** worthy and that it was the calling the Lord wanted me to have. So, all through my college years, I taught Gospel Doctrine. The "D" was minimized, even though it might not have disappeared all together. The Spirit sure had to help me lots because sometimes, especially during the Old Testament, I couldn't even get around to reading the assigned scripture. 1981-1985

When the girls and I moved to Bountiful, I had the same fear. The new ward leaders wouldn't know me. They wouldn't know the circumstances surrounding the divorce. The big "D" was back. But lo, after only a few weeks I was asked to substitute in the Gospel Doctrine class and soon received the call again! 1985-1987

Then Lynn and I married and we moved into our present ward. It took two months before I got the call to teach Gospel Doctrine. I taught from 1987-1989. Then a break! I was called to be the Mother Education teacher in Relief Society from 1990 -1994. Then for 3 months I was a counselor in a *strange* Relief Society Presidency. Then called as Relief Society teacher again from 1994-1996.

In January 1997 they realigned our ward boundaries and at first I didn't have a calling. I panicked! I prayed. I worried. Each Sunday I heard people sustained to all the

"good" callings. Little did I know they were saving the best till last. I was called to be the Young Single Adult leader which meant I had the best (or the worst or the busiest) of both worlds. I taught them Gospel Doctrine on Sunday and did activities etc., with them the rest of the time. I held that calling until Dec. 1999.

Then another lull. Was I really free to ask to be called to be an usher on Temple Square? It would be a real change and our friends were coaxing us to join them. BUT it would mean that I couldn't really hold a ward calling. (Or would it?) On February 13, 2000, I received a calling to teach the Gospel Doctrine class. By now I was wondering if I would ever get it right. I was released when we were all up in the air over Lynn's cancer treatment.

So— a big history lesson just to tell you that I have a **totally new** calling! Lynn was released from the High Priest Group Leadership and we are the Ward Family History Consultants. I'm very excited and I'm learning so much. Of course I wanted to do family history when I quit work, but I never dreamed there was so much to it! So much to learn. So much of the Spirit that attends the work. And I'm not even doing my family names. YET. I will!

Otherwise, things are as usual. We continue to have a pretty ideal life. Lynn suffers some real pain and inconvenience as a result of his treatment. But he still says it's minimal compared to the alternatives.

We love you all and pray for you a lot. We're beginning to plan a trip to Germany. Hope it happens. Remember us in your prayers. We need to begin planning for Lynn's retirement and must really simplify our lives before that can happen!

P.S. I think I've told most of you about the *very* impressive magazine article Lynn brought home a couple of years ago. It's entitled, "Trapped in the *CULT* of the Next Thing". It resonated with me! I'm a charter member! I don't even get through one crisis or hurdle before I begin to plan for the next one! I probably don't ever enjoy things like I should because I'm busy planning—thinking about the next meal or the next activity. One quote that may be more true at Christmastime than we'd like to admit is: "Most of us spend more time with advertisements than with Scripture." The article points out that *thankfulness* is an act of subversion against the Cult of the Next Thing. "Enough"—what's that? Well, here's another gem of wisdom (for those who are ready—and I'm not sure that's me):

Is Your Life All About Stuff?

Right from the time we are young we are given **stuff**. As we grow up, we want even more **stuff**. We continually ask our parents for money, so we can buy **stuff**. Then when we are of age, we get a job to buy **stuff**. We purchase a house in which we put our **stuff**. Needless to say, we must buy a car to haul our **stuff** around. Because we soon acquire too much **stuff**, our house becomes too small. So we get a bigger house. Now we don't have enough **stuff** for the big house, so we buy more **stuff**. We need a new car because we have worn out our old car carrying this **stuff** around. And on it goes. But, we never get all the **stuff** we want. (All this **stuff** about **stuff** is funny. Or is it? Is it dismaying? It shows how our addiction to working supports our addiction to getting more and more **stuff**, much of which we definitely don't need.)



Some Christmas favorites at the Dyes':

Greg - puzzles and tools (surprised?)

Laura - a new answering machine and a camera (the point and click kind)

Jeremy - the camera of his dreams with a super-duper zoom lens

Anthony - a new scooter

Ondylyn - clothes and a porcelain doll

Zachary - a motorcycle, a remote control car, and tons of books

The Dye Family:

Greg took some time off work so we could do some visiting. We spent a couple of days in Lewiston and New Year's Eve at Mom's. It was fun to be with family for the holidays.

Laura is over Activity Days in Primary. On January 6, she did a 'Meet your teacher' breakfast and activity. It was a lot of fun and relieved a lot of the anxiety the kids had about all the New Year changes.

Greg's been the interim General Manager at Mity Lite since he got back from Arkansas because the CFO went to Arkansas to work out things there. Greg's looking forward to having Brad back next week so he can catch up on all the things he's had to let go during the last five months.

Jeremy and Laura are taking a ceramic painting class on Tuesday nights. We started the first week of January. Jeremy has painted a really cool grizzly bear and a hen/chick. Laura has done a Valentine basket and is working on a St. Patrick's Day decoration. (Are you surprised at our choices?)

The kids had a four-day weekend the second week of January and we decided to go up to the cabin in Scofield. The roads are closed and we had to snowmobile up to the cabin. We learned the hard way not to ride behind Grandpa Roy; Jeremy, Anthony, and the cooler took a bad spill. We didn't have running water and it took almost a whole day to heat the cabin, but we had lots of fun playing games, sledding, and snowmobiling.

Jeremy went on a Klondike camp out to Mapledale. He says it was warm until about 11:30. Anthony earned his green belt in Karate even though he spent the day before testing puking his guts out. Ondylyn and Zachary earned enough money for scooters; they have fun zooming all over the place.

We're doing MATH DAY again this year at the elementary school. We decided to focus on problem solving skills. Leslie gave us a lot of great material - thanks, Les! Greg is taking a bunch of puzzles for the kids to experience. (He has about 600 puzzles now.) We're also doing a section on foreign coins so the students can learn to identify the coins and figure out their values. We just decided to do the coin section about two weeks ago - it's been a fast and furious hobby. We've bought about 1000 coins and identified them in the last two weeks! Each student at school will get to keep a coin and we have three binders full of really cool coins to keep. It's been a lot of fun.

Sorry this is so long! I guess it's like the long drink after a trip through the desert - it's been about a year since we've sent in anything. We'll try to do better this year!

Christmas Gifts for 2001 Reunion:

Tiffany--Zachary

Heather--Jeffrey

Katelyn--Jancy

Christie--Thayne

Jared--Ondylyn

Jenny--Tiffany

Cory--Jeremy

Richard--Katelyn

Amy--Burnett Baby

Brianna--Heather

Jeffrey--Cason

Jeremy--Aubrey

Anthony--Cory

Ondylyn--Amberly

Zachary--Tanner

Cason--Jared

Tanner--Jaxon

Thayne--Jenny

Burnett Baby--Amy

Brittney--Christie

Hannah--Brianna

Aubrey--Anthony

Jaxon--Richard

Jancy--Hannah

Amberly -- Brittney

LAWSON AND KELLY

We had a fun Christmas break and were sad when it was over. I took off work the week between Christmas and New Years and we had a good time together as a family. Usually when we're all together for that long we start to get on each others nerves a little! But this time was really enjoyable. The kids got different types of sleds for Christmas and we've been sledding a few times. We had fun at Dad's (Grandpa Burnett) getting pulled around on the car hood! We were there with Piersons and Dyes. I had my camcorder and got some pretty good wipe-outs!

We still haven't had any offers on our old house. We have people call here and there, but nothing serious yet. We're still spending time here and there fixing things up to hopefully make it sell better. Since our finances are so tight, Kelly and I agreed not to get each other anything for Christmas, but Kelly gave me a nice surprise and got me a Dremel with her own money. I've wanted one for a long time so it was sure nice!

Cason's school had their science fair this week. Cason built a hot air balloon out of tissue paper. The theory was to use a blow dryer to fill it with hot air and have it float for a short time. He had fun doing it, but I think the only thing that really held it up was the blowing air from the blow dryer! Cason's having fun with basketball. His team usually wins; even though technically they don't keep score!

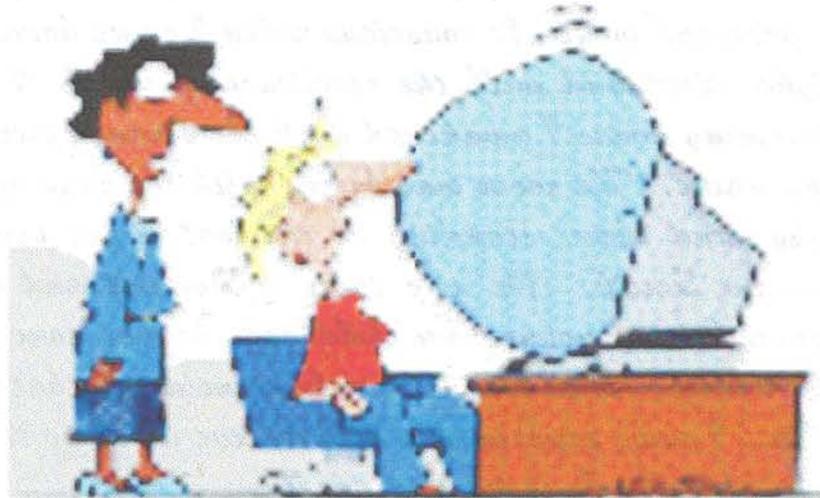
Tanner continues to do well in school. He gets "Super Student" award frequently. Tanner's picture is on the wall at school for being scholar of the month for January. Way to go, Tanner! Tanner's primary teacher from last year sure misses him. He used to fall asleep on her lap during singing time! Not sure if that has anything to do with why she liked him so much!

Thayne still says he's going to stop sucking his thumb and give his blanket to the new baby when he/she arrives, but I think he's too attached! He is in a roller skate phase right now! We have some little skates that fit him and he wears those a majority of his awake time! He clomps all around the house

and even goes out in the snow in them if we're not watching close enough! Thayne graduated from nursery to primary the beginning of this year. Being sick one week and having stake conference another week, he's only been to primary twice so far. He told Kelly he liked it one morning at church, but later that day when the kids were writing in their journals, Kelly asked Thayne if he liked Primary and he said "No, being a Sunbeam takes too long!"

Kelly's really enjoying her Young Women's calling. The Bishop paid her a very nice compliment. He told her as long as he's been in the ward he hasn't known of a young women's president to do so much for helping the inactive girls and just the whole program in general.

We're all anxiously awaiting the next addition to our family. Kelly's due on March 27 and she decided not to find out what it was. In general the boys say they'd like to have a sister and Kelly and I think that would be nice... but either way! Kelly's a little nervous for the labor and delivery part of it all. I'm a little nervous about going through the losing sleep time again! I used to deal ok with losing sleep, but it seems I'm getting more and more dependent on my sleep and when I lose it, I really notice it!



It's the latest innovation in office safety. When your computer crashes, an airbag is activated so you don't bang your head on the computer in frustration.

Grandmother wrote this about her maternal grandfather, Wallace Garner Smith, who died September 6, 1926:

I can't explain it but...

My grandfather had been very ill for several weeks. He was not suffering a great deal but lay most of the time in a coma, rousing only occasionally with a sign of recognition as one or another of us bent over to smooth a pillow or merely to look more closely at those features so dear to us and so soon to be with us no more.

I was a girl of nineteen and I could not remember the time when Grandpa Smith had not lived with us, another father, adding to our childhood joys the thrill of willow whistles, whittled toys and stories of Indians fighting and the Civil War. He was loved devotedly by all his grandchildren.

I was teaching in a country school about fifty miles away and having gone home for a weekend, had remained ten days. But at the end of that time the doctor told us that, although Grandpa might die any time he also might live several months. After consideration my elders decided it would be better for me to go back to my teaching.

On the morning of my departure I kissed the well-loved brow and stroked back the silky, silver hair. I waited several minutes but Grandpa made no sign. I ventured to speak to him softly, but still he did not rouse and I had to go without saying goodbye. My father comforted me, saying that perhaps Grandpa would be conscious when I came home at the weekend.

That night, tired and with the resilience of youth, I soon fell asleep. In the early morning hours I awakened with the strange feeling that someone had spoken my name. The room was bright with the rays of the moon low in the western sky; and there, standing at the foot of my bed and smiling at me, was Grandpa Smith. He was there a moment and then, raising his hand in a gesture I had known from childhood, he was gone.

Was it a dream? And was it merely coincidence that Grandpa did die that night? No. I can't explain it, but I believe he came to say "goodbye" to one whom he loved and who loved him dearly.