

1995 Holiday Greetings from the Helgren's

November 26, 1995

My, my my.... its seems I was just starting last year's missive a week ago and here it is, just a week before Advent, 1995. How time flies.....

Every year (it seems) I have started with "Coming at you from 40,000 feet..." but NOT so this year. With feet firmly planted on the ground at about 4200 feet (Salt Lake) I begin with the chronicling of the Helgren year.

Right from the start it was a fast paced year. I spent what seemed all of January in New Jersey (I can really chose the "garden" spots) and waved to the family on weekends. February was kind of a blur (more NJ). Did we have a February this year? Deb spent time with homeless clinic, general PT (and P/T) work. Jonas was involved in a big way with Cub Scouts. Sam tags along and dreams of the big "K" (Kindergarten).

Roaring into March (no Lamb this time) I headed south to Arizona for usual User Group Meeting (there are some benefits to this business). Jonas and Sam start the spring session of soccer (so soon, burrrrrrrr). Deb stays VERY busy with Physical Therapy, BSF, homeless clinic and full time single parenting.....

Yes, we did get a break, sort of. We headed to southern Utah to reprise our visit of last year with a trip to Arches National park (staying at Dead Horse Point again). Ol' Man Winter wasn't quite done with us though. We had snow while in Utah. We were snowed out at Great Basin National Park (we saw Lehman Caves, though. It was warm *inside*.) We experienced our first massive winter storm while securely testing the 4-wheel drive capabilities of the 'yota Van in a WILD cross state (Nevada) trek to California (not satisfied with the wimpy snow we had in Utah and at Great Basin.....)

Camping behind us (for the moment), we breezed into May and then June, trying to survive the dual trials of weekend soccer games and the every other Friday Cub Scout den meetings which, incidentally, Debbie and I (mostly Deb) hosted at Redeemer Lutheran School.

Happily, there was time for diversion...Deb and I attended the Salt Lake hosting of "A Prairie Home Companion" with Garrison Keelor and the Tabernacle Choir (we went to see Garrison!).

Running was the focus of July. My rapidly advancing years (more on that later) compelled me to run the Deseret Marathon which I had last run in 1982. I would say that 13 years vs. giving up smoking (yes, I was a smoker AND a runner in 1982) was a better than even trade. I ran my best time ever, but I was still beaten by an 80 year old.....

I was at home more starting in July since we (my partner and I) had hired an employee to share half of the travel. I can now be in town three out of four weeks and although that means I will have to give up

the perks of being at the “top of the heap” of Delta Frequent Flyers, Jonas and Sam no longer refer to me as “ol’ what’s his name”. I have joined the Frequent Father program....

Summer was rapidly disappearing when we decided to try our hand at SUMMER cross country travel. We started in beautiful Sawtooth National Recreation Area in central Idaho for a gathering of Heins (just about 57 of ‘em now, Debbie’s clan). We then made a bee-line to Minnesota where for two idyllic days it was just “us against the fish” at my grandparents cabin (the fish won...) Sam is sure heaven is a place with many lakes and streams and fish by the thousands..

Thence we drove to Chicago where we took in the Shed Aquarium, my cousin Aimee’s wedding and my Grandmother’s 85th birthday all in a long weekend. A long non-stop drive took us back to SLC where Sam entered kindergarten !!! and Jonas the third grade. I entered the land of celebrity with a day at Microsoft (Windows95 launch) getting up on stage with the likes of Jay Leno and Bill Gates. I was then off to a 4 day trip to Anchorage, AK for our company fishing, er.. quarterly meeting.

More than anything, we are feeling very blessed. We returned to the “safe” ebb and flow of school in September. Debbie continuing with a lighter schedule of work, but keeping very busy with her other commitments. Sam gains in skills as he loses teeth and learns, through obtaining the very first stitches in the Helgren household, that the playground can be a dangerous (but Fun!) place.

As Jonas grows, we marvel at how quickly he is becoming a “young man”. And, if he needs gentle reminding of his school responsibilities, we try to remember that only yesterday he was a babe in arms...

Shalom, more than anything, is what we wished for in 1995, and we were blessed with plenty. As part of the “over 40” crowd now(!), I wax, more than ever, philosophic over the passage of time, of Christmases and blessings past and of Christmases and blessing yet to come. God has been good to us and we wish God’s abundance on you and yours during this holiday season and throughout the year.