

2002 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens

(www.helgren.com)

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Long overdue on this holiday missive. I am not going to wait. It is mid-November and time to write.

The hardest news is about mom. She passed away on June 22nd from the affects of a 50-year smoking habit. We had 10 difficult, grace-filled days in the MICU at the University of Utah Medical Center. I will miss that incredible, indomitable spirit. We thought she'd live forever on sheer will alone. With my dad and mom gone now, I guess it is time to grow up (am I ready?).

The fact that I am writing this on an airplane tells you how little things have changed in my business world. Not satisfied with losing money on two businesses, I have participated in the startup of 2 more. Although these two new entities are just extensions to our current businesses, they could represent an exciting future (if we survive this recession). The business world is a bit up in the air. However, on the personal level, things couldn't be better. I am starting my third year as a Bible Study Fellowship children's leader (I thought I wouldn't make through ONE year, let alone three). Studying God's Word with young people is a great privilege. You should really try it. Honest.

Deb is also a BSF leader (6 years!). Although she hasn't had to respond to the "higher calling" of being a children's leader, she continues to grow in God's Word as well. Work for her hasn't been radically different. She is still at the University of Utah Sports Medicine clinic as a Physical Therapist. She enjoys a regular half time schedule (seems the other half is spent doing paperwork). There are changes afoot at the clinic as well with a new clinic in the works. We hope that Deb (the sole breadwinner on some paydays) keeps doing the PT thing.

Jonas is a sophomore in High School. Salt Lake Lutheran High, to be exact. He takes the UTA bus to school most mornings when I am out of town. Jonas will be driving, come spring, so we'll have a bit more flexibility and a LOT more insurance expense to look forward to. He is the local computer guru and if he spent half the amount of time and effort in studying as he does fixing computers for the faculty and students, we would have a Rhodes Scholar on our hands. Perhaps he will be the next Bill Gates... We completed renovating the basement last year and fortunately do not have to heat it due to the amount of computer equipment in Jonas' bedroom...The only crack in his computer armor is that he continues to pursue piano as a diversion and was very involved in hand-bell choir last year.

Sam is quite the all-round guy. He has managed to avoid the genetic defect his father and his brother have (a weakness for technology) but has a bad case of "fishing bug". A year ago, just after the WTC events, we spent a few days chasing salmon ("pinks" or "humpys") near Ketchikan without much luck. However, Sam landed his first King Salmon in Seward, Alaska in June along with a very nice silver (Dad was skunked). I think we'll be heading to Alaska every summer from now on. At least until Sam moves there...We have been to Strawberry reservoir, Lake Powell, and Pineview reservoir here in Utah. We had a great time at Flaming Gorge reservoir last (2001) summer. Caught a few native salmon (kokanee). Fishing isn't everything to Sam. It's the ONLY thing.

Since the last letter (in 2000!) we have been on several “excursions”. Of course we always try to get to my Grandmother’s vacation cabin in Minnesota in the summer (usually make it). We had a Hein Family reunion up in Spokane, Washington last summer. As mentioned above, we went to Flaming Gorge reservoir last summer as well and spent four days with Holly, Jeff and kids in a houseboat (pretty cool, actually). We went to Disney World (and Universal Studios, obviously) this October. We have “inherited” a boat (for the mere swap of a six pack with my father-in-law) which has put us on Lake Powell in the spring the past two years (oldest functioning boat on the lake...). Oh, there was that little thing that came to town called the 2002 Winter Olympics. Go to our website at www.helgren.com for THAT whole story. In fact, check out the web site to see pictures and get more details on EVERYTHING Helgren. We try to keep it current. We....have been blessed.

And such we wish for you. As years advance and more of our friends and family become memories, we find comfort in a God who does not change and One whose birth we celebrate. May you all be comforted and find Peace in Him throughout the coming year.