

2004 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens

(www.helgren.com)

December 23, 2004

Time again to see what the Helgren's are up to in Good Ol Salt Lake City. Hope your past 12 months have been as blessed as ours.

Having to travel was something I thought would end about 12 years ago when I started my own company (so I could stop traveling) . But, the theme goes on since I flew more and more frequently than ever before. Despite this fact, Delta has failed to capitalize on my largesse and still threatens bankruptcy. It hasn't been from lack of effort in my part.

Everywhere, anytime, is the slogan I live by. And, Sam and Debbie managed to spend some time in my shoes as they headed to New Jersey with me for a week over the 4th of July. That trip included a "detour" to Debbie's brother and sister in law's VERY new digs (we helped them unpack") in Maryland where we took in the Washington, D.C. sights and watched fireworks over the Chesapeake. Then back to New York to ride the double-decked buses to see those sights with a rendezvous with Debbie's cousin, Dwayne. Highlight for Sam was the purchase of a Faux-lex (knock-off Rolex) watch from a shady guy with a briefcase full of them. Ah, the simple things.

Hot or not, we had a busy summer. Not only the New Jersey/ Maryland trip but also trips to Camp Perkins in Idaho. Jonas, Technology Director (!) this year for the camp, had reliable wheels for the trip and allowing for returns to Salt Lake, but we spent a weekend working on camp projects and also later in the summer spent a night in the "yurt" when there was no room at the inn. Jonas, now a senior at Lutheran High, is the resident techie regardless of location: Camp or school, it all the same to him. College plans? Who needs 'em? We are still waiting, and waiting....sticker shock is just around the corner...

Every boy (or man's) thoughts turn to fishing in the summer (right?). Sam and I made our (now) annual trip to Alaska and had a predictably wonderful time. Stuffed into the back of an SUV with newly purchased sleeping bags and gear, we slept, fished, fished, slept for a week. Sam hooked up "the big one" on the Kasilov river in the wee hours of the morning (lost 'em!) and we also spent a busy 45 minutes at "the pond" in Homer at 4am one morning catching our limit of Kings. It REALLY doesn't get much better than that. Sam has started his first year at Lutheran High, and although big brother could do without him, he seems nicely settled in. His passion for mountain biking may wane as he gets behind the wheel of an automobile this spring...

Last, but certainly not least in the activity area is Deb. Her role as teaching leader for BSF certainly keeps her busy. Tempted to quit the PT life for the BSF life, we are chastened by the reality of Jonas' possibly heading to college. Deb did move in to "new digs" this fall and was thrust into the 21st century by having to deal with a "paperless office" at the Orthopaedic Hospital. Although the traditional "chart"

is gone, Deb's workload hasn't decreased with all the new-fangled technology. It's still the 30 hour "20 hour week".

God has been so good that annoyances like travel, or dealing with technology seem to fade in comparison. Family has been a recurring theme. We joined up with my sisters (Holly and Mindy) and their families in Oregon this summer for a reunion of sorts (and some salmon fishing !). From there we hooked up with Debbie's brother (Jerry) and family and spent a few days in the Idaho Sawtooth Mountains. There were weddings and High School reunions. We hastily gathered in Cheyenne at Thanksgiving with the Hein clan (Deb's side) . The boys will remember it as Thanksgiving at the Outlaw Saloon (true!) but it wasn't so much outlaws as inlaws for me.....

Really, we are SO blessed! We have had health and joy all year. Todd (my brother) lived with us for about 6 months starting late last year through May of this year. He is looking at a new job and life in Idaho (Hmmm, lots about Idaho in this letter). God sweats life details for us and works out all things for good for those who love Him.

Every year I remember what it is all about: God's goodness and mercy and how thankful I am for all of you, and what God does through you all.

New Year or old, future or past we give God thanks in all things for all we have.

Safe, healthy and blessed 2005 to all.