

# 2006 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens

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For something as simple as a yearly letter, this undertaking is extraordinarily difficult. Waiting for just the right time and the right words, and beginning to think about it around Thanksgiving, I still end up just days before (or after!) Christmas writing it all down. This particular missive was begun on a ferry in Southeast Alaska, a good indication of what the year has been like.

As those of you who are Bible readers know, our God is a creative and surprising Person. But, “unexpected” is not in my translation of the Bible. He has laid the plans. Our adventure is living out those plans (in surprising ways!). Here are the 2006 adventures of the Helgrens:

Jonas, eldest son of the clan, continues his education at ITT technical college. With a little luck, he’ll reach the midpoint of his college days with an Associates Degree in Computer Science this June. If he manages to stave off the siren call of job and high income for another two years, he’ll complete his bachelor’s degree in June of 2009. He plays in an indoor soccer league with games at all hours of the night. When he isn’t running a ball around, he runs a little consulting business (VERY little) and hauls home way more hardware than Deb or I can fathom. 6 servers, 2 terabytes of storage and a constantly rising electric bill are clear indications that “Jonas is in the house”!

Sam, a junior at Salt Lake Lutheran High, is nurturing more of the Thespian side this year, appearing in “Looking Glass”. Perhaps it’s the ‘ol greasepaint that his father enjoyed in his youth or perhaps the fact that with only 25 students in his class, everyone can be a star. Sam continues to read voraciously while waiting for the latest Anime` episode to download. With a job at the “Paradise Café and Bakery”, he brings home some needed spending money as well as tasty treats that add more inches to Pete’s ever expanding waistline. This was the first year in a while that Sam and Dad did not go fishing in Alaska. That leaves more for us, next year!

Debbie continues to work at the Orthopaedic Clinic about 20 hours a week. That leaves time for her to continue in her REAL calling, Teaching Leader for the Salt Lake Evening Woman’s Bible Study Fellowship group. Although some days when our busy lives would like to make Bible Study a nuisance, we are blessed, and Deb is blessed, by how God stretches us to know him through His Word. Very cool stuff!

For Pete, it has been a tough, interesting year. The business that was started in concert with some past business contacts in 2002 has foundered. Income basically stopped in May and I finally left the company in October, as much to find something that actually generated income (a good thing!) as well as to get out from under some fairly stressful internal management struggles. Although I think I earned more back in 1985, I couldn’t be more blessed. God has taken such good care of us, more than meeting our financial needs and abundantly meeting our spiritual needs. We have never been in better hands than these.....

Although probably qualifying for food stamps on an income basis, we have not had to curtail our activities. We made the annual trek to Lake Powell where the Stripers managed to elude us once again.

We had several visits from Mom and Dad Hein and, speaking of Heins, we had an awesome 4 days off the grid in the Idaho Mountains at Debbie's brothers recently acquired cabin. Who NEED's electricity?! Hot water?! Actually, for a "rustic" cabin it was quite comfortable.

Unbelievably, Deb and I passed the 25 year milestone this year. I can hardly believe that a quarter century has passed! We "relived" our first year anniversary by heading to the Caribbean and St. Vincent for a visit in October. We had a wonderful time. We visited Kingstown, showing the boys our old cottage by the sea and visiting a greatly enlarged "Physio" department at Kingstown General Hospital. They have a new Peace Corps director who shows great enthusiasm for the program and, I think, may have enticed the boys to investigate the Peace Corps in the future.

What an adventure! We continue to trust in Him who has given us all and taken care of us in good and bad times.

May He bless you this season and throughout the year!