

2008 Christmas Greetings from the Helgrens (www.helgren.com)

December 14, 2008

If the operative phrase in 2008 was **Change**, we Helgren's would qualify that with "lack of". In many ways, pulling out the letters from years past (or reading them on our web site) would simply re-iterate the age old adage: The more things change, the more they stay the same. But, rather than attribute this to a boring, uninteresting lifestyle (although you **could**), this is really just a reflection of the goodness of God and how faithful he is.

Jonas continues his education at ITT Technical College where he is closing in on a Bachelors of Science Degree (September of 2009 if all goes well). He continues to work more than full time for Mediaport (www.mediaport.com). He is once again looking forward to the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January. This will be his second CES but not his second trip to Vegas. He just drove down there last week to spend a **day** with good friend Nick, in from Virginia on an Air Force assignment. Gas at \$1.45/ gallon means **freedom!** Two business trips to France earned him Medallion status with Delta (just like Dad) but did not lead to mastery of the language. When he isn't working, studying or taking trips to outlandish places inside and outside the U.S., he is waging Gears of War on a 40" HDTV in the basement with gaming friend Jeb.

Sam, is attending the University of Utah and is fully engaged in campus life. He has joined the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity which keeps him socially engaged (as though **that** was ever a problem for him). He lives on campus, rooming with a Korean student and enjoys having several friends in nearby dorms. An encounter with the campus Parking Services/Salt Lake City Parking enforcement folks taught him how to carefully read parking notices to the tune of several hundred dollars and a trip across the valley to retrieve an impounded car. So he IS learning something! Sam brought his Korean roommate who brought two Korean friends to Thanksgiving dinner. This is one of the few T-Day meals I can remember that began with picture taking and explaining what was on the table. Quite an experience! Sam's penury has not led (yet) to a job, but either he'll have to win the lottery or get a job in order to sustain his preferred campus lifestyle. Since there IS no lottery in Utah I should probably start sending him the classifieds.

I would like to introduce you to Doctor Debbie Helgren, DPT. Well, she doesn't **exactly** go by the name of "Doctor", but she did finish the work and received the sheepskin that confirms the degree. She wouldn't let me put Dr. and Mr. Peter Helgren on the return address (bummer). She continues to work part time at the Orthopaedic Clinic as a Physical Therapist. She gets her greatest joy as a teaching leader in Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), matching wits with her hapless teaching leader husband (and always winning).

BSF is Pete's life, too, although he continues to make a living doing consulting work in New Jersey and Alaska. God has faithfully provided patient customers and enough freedom in scheduling travel so as not to conflict with BSF commitments. It doesn't get better than that!

For the first time in years, Pete and Sam neither fished at Lake Powell nor got in a fishing trip to Alaska. However, once they get out of therapy, they will begin fishing again in 2009 (if only to justify owning the boat currently gathering dust in the next door neighbor's garage).

Again this year we had the opportunity to get "off the grid" at Debbie's brother cabin near Donnally, Idaho. We gathered there after a reunion of Heins in Billings, Montana in July and then again in October to repair some of the ravages of winter weather by replacing several logs (bottom ones, or course) in the cabin.

After the letter was posted last year, we Helgren's gathered in SLC to celebrate Christmas together. It was a joyous time! In early spring, we learned that my niece Maddie Helgren (Todd's daughter) had cancer, which was in remission by this fall. Again it reminds us of how precious life is and how important it is to let those we love know it!

God has made no secret of his love for us! May this season of Hope and Grace offset the worldly burdens of economic hardship and strife. May you, with us, learn to trust in Him and enjoy the blessings He has given us in His Son.