**Chapter 43 - EXCERPS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN TO JEFF WHILE ON HIS MISSION.**

**Jeff left for his mission to Mexico City in March 1997**

**Jan. 1997**

I was in the Stake Relief Society Presidency and had been asked by Pres. Larkin to speak in Stake Conference. The following is what I wrote: I had cleaned house & done laundry in the morning besides talking with Shellie & Sandi. They had both called. David & Shauna came over in the afternoon. I hadn't had much time to prepare for my talk that I was to give at the Saturday night session of Conference. I really felt the help of the Lord with regards to that talk. I felt inspired when I put it together, it went together easier than most any other talk I have given. I didn't worry very much about it, and that is a surprise since speaking in Stake Conference is such a responsibility, and the Lord really blessed me when I gave the talk. Boy, I don't think I could give a talk if I didn't know the Lord would help me, and he always does.

This morning I cleaned your room (Jeff) It was hard because just being in your room, and looking at your clothing, pictures and all your things sure made me homesick for you. I'd cry for a few minutes and then go on.

Scott said he was listening to your tapes and Christophersons Dream came on, it reminded him of you playing it and was missing you. I think it's so neat that you & Scott have such a good relationship. In fact, all of your sisters & brothers love you and respect you. Shellie asked me yesterday for your address so she could write to you.

**February 9, 1997**

Dear Elder Jeffrey C. Browning,

I will start this letter by telling you a little of our vacation week. We had a wonderful week in Island Park. The snow was so deep that when we drove into the lodge area we could not see the condominiums and drove around looking for Uncle Rich's. We finally had to go to the office and get directions. We had driven right past it twice. It was about 1 PM on Saturday February the 1st when we got there. We did go for a ride on the snowmobiles and went over to the sight of a cabin that had blown up the previous Sunday. The cabin had just been completed about 3 months ago. It was owned by a Dr. and his family. They had left the cabin about 8 PM and it blew up about 9 PM. It is thought that there may have been a propane leak in the furnace, but whatever the cause, it left nothing except a hole in the ground and pieces strung all over the area. It did some damage to surrounding cabins also.

David and Shauna also came up and joined us Sunday evening and stayed until Wednesday afternoon. During the week we went into Yellowstone Park, where we saw bison, elk, Canadian geese and swan. At one stop at Junction, birds, I know them as Camp Robbers, ate nuts and cookies right out of our hand. It was fun and we couldn't help thinking how you would have enjoyed being there with us. Mom and I talked about doing this again when you come home. Every day we went out on the snowmobiles and just had a great time.

When we got home Friday evening, we sure enjoyed your letter you had sent. Then your letter came to me on Saturday and I sure appreciated it. You will never know the joy that such a letter can give until you have a son of your own, that is as neat as my son!

Just after I started this letter, Nicky came. We sure enjoyed having her here with us. She showed us the pictures of your hair cut, and let us read your letters. She is a very special girl and we sure enjoyed having her come. She had dinner with us and visited for a while before she had to leave to drive back to Snow College.

**February 23, 1997**

A typical Sunday

Mike, Becky, little David, Taylor, David, Shauna, Scott & Mishelle all came over for dinner and spent the rest of the day. It was sure fun having them here. Mom fixed a nice dinner as normal, then we set around and visited for a while. We ended up playing pass word for the last little while they were here. We sure enjoyed having them all here. Right now mom is talking to Shellie on the phone. Sandi was going to come out yesterday, but JaNae wanted her to go shopping with her to find a dress for the Jr. Prom. She will probably come out next week end.

Work is keeping us very busy and then last week I spent a day in bed sick. I guess some kind of flu. Mom also took off part of one day sick. However you know your Mom and even while she was home sick, she still did some house work and washing.

Mom and I went to a dance at Weber last Saturday evening and really had a good time. Other than that, we just seem to keep busy with work and church.

**March 9, 1997**

Sandi, Chelci, Terry, Mike, Becky, David, Taylor, David, Shauna, Scott, Mishelle and Grandma Porter all came over for dinner and to visit. You were really missed by all of us, the comment was made several times that it seemed odd that you were not here with us. At Chad’s farewell David said, "Were is Jeff? I wouldn't think Jeff would miss this!" He then remembered where you were and felt a little embarrassed. We sure enjoyed having all of them here. Sandi had forgotten my Birthday and hadn't sent me a card, so she left me a letter on my pillow before she left this evening. It is really touching and special. She is sure a special daughter and is trying so hard to do what is right. We have such a neat family and are so happy with all of you.

David and Shauna flew to Connecticut last week end for a interview for P.A. school. There were 750 qualified applicants that applied and 96 were interviewed for 35 positions. Well David was accepted and they will probably be going back there for school the first of May for two years. We were excited to hear of his interview and offer, but sad to realize they will be gone for two years. That will be two of our sons that will be away for two years.

We talked to Shellie this morning by phone. She is busy with the Young Woman program. They have had a lot of sickness this year, so that has really worn on her. They have also had a lot of car and truck mechanical problems. She really needs our prayers and love. Maybe you could drop her a short line, and I know it would really cheer her. Her address is 1361 S. Cholla Place, Chandler Arizona 85248. Dad finished his first house on Friday. He took me to see it and it is beautiful. He sure did a good job (as always).

**March 25, 1997**

I am so proud of you. Everyone thinks so highly of you. You have helped so many with their testimonies because of your testimony, and I know that will be the case also in Mexico City. We convert through the spirit, and by bearing our testimonies. You felt that when you were asked to bear your testimony so often there in the MTC, huh?

Guess what? David just called us. He & Shauna went to Idaho this morning for him to interview up there. He said it went really well. He doesn't know if he will be accepted or not until at least the end of this week, but they are leaning toward going there if he is accepted.

**March 30, 1997**

Today is the day we celebrate Easter or the Resurrection of Our Lord And Savior Jesus Christ. It is a beautiful spring day here. The weather is warm and the sky is clear.

We are busy here as normal. Mom did have Friday off for Spring Break, so last week was a short week for her. She also gets Monday off, isn't she lucky? We went out with our friends last night and sure enjoyed it. They are some good friends, Maggie and Mom has known each other all their lives and Eleanor and Pat sense grade school. Not many friendships go back that far. This past week Mark finished up his Eagle Scout award. Not any too soon though, he finished his Eagle Project Saturday and Saturday was his 18th Birthday. That is cutting it right to the end. Uncle Irven and Aunt Sandy has been out looking at houses the past couple of weeks, but haven't found any thing yet. (They moved in with us Aug. 1, 1996 and moved out May 30, 1997.) Next weekend all our family are going to meet at Mike and Becky's, so we are excited about that. David has been accepted at Idaho State and they are about 90% decided to accept it. We are hoping that is where they go, but we are a little selfish.

**April 6, 1997**

We went down to Mike & Becky's yesterday afternoon right after the afternoon session of conference. When Mike talked to David, he told him that we were going down to spend the night and invited them to come too. They decided they could do that. David had called Scott to tell him he wouldn't be going to the Priesthood session of conference with him as they were going to Mike's. I think Scott felt left out so when Mike called Scott to tell him what time we were eating on Sunday, Scott said "I understand that David & Shauna are coming down tonight". Mike said "Yes, would you like to come too? Scott said "sure" - so we had a family sleep over down there. It was great. Mike tried to get ahold of Sandi, but she was at her friend, Julie's. She brought Julie and her daughter with her and Chelci. JaNae had to work again so couldn't go.

Dad was excited to go to the Priesthood session of conference with his sons (all except you this time). Becky, Shauna, Michele & I visited and played with the lagos with David & Taylor. When the guys returned, we played Clue & another fun game. We went onto Daylight Savings time again - so we lost an hour. We went to bed at l:00 a.m. but actually it was 2:00.

We sure enjoyed conference. Dad took notes since he is to give a talk on it in two weeks - so I'll tell you who spoke and what they spoke about.

**April 13, 1997**

We are doing well and busy as normal. In High Council this morning we held a Disciplinary Council, However, this was on a reinstatement. In fact this person was one that was excommunicated on the first Disciplinary Council I set on, when I was called to the High Council. It was great to see the change in this Brothers Life and attitude. His wife and family has stuck it out with him and it was a great experience to see someone return to our Heavenly Father. I was so impressed with his wife's complete forgiveness of his failings and her support to him. I am sure that is one of the reasons he was able to go through this experience and return. I also had to give a Priesthood lesson in the Kimball Ward to the combined Melchizedek Priesthood. The assignment came through the Stake Presidency with the subject being "How to Boaster Your Family In These Trouble Times." It was a challenge but went fairly well.

**April 20, 1997**

Dad & I went to the Weber State University dance again last night with Georgia & Rick. We had a really good time. The band was great and it's wonderful dancing with your dad and my sweetheart. He's a neat guy.

Dad is still on his diet, but eating a little fruit now and a few other things. Hope it will keep getting better. Don't know if he should ever add sugar back thought, but not sure if he will be that strong if he can add it back and it won't hurt him.

**April 27, 1997**

We enjoyed going out to dinner for Grandma Porters Birthday on the 22nd. David, Shauna, Scott, Mishelle, Aunt Georgia, Aunt Deanna, Mom and I took Grandma to dinner at the Home Town Buffet. Grandma is now 81 years old. She is in pretty good health, at least for her age. Yesterday she fell and broke a rib, but is doing ok. We do worry about her living alone, so tomorrow Mom is going to order her an emergency calling devise that if she should need someone, she can just push it and it will just ring three people. If none of them answer, it will ring 911 and give the location for emergency help. She doesn't feel she needs it, but we will feel better with her having it. Uncle Irven and Aunt Sandy have found them a home in Clearfield that they are sure they will buy. They may be moving into it in two or three weeks. Mark is excited about it. He only has five more weeks of school and he will graduate.

**May 19, 1997**

Mike and Becky went to Montana this last weekend and we tended David and Taylor. They are sure cute kids. I went down to pick them up Saturday morning as Martha had tended them on Friday and Friday night at their home. I took them to the park, played games, read stories, etc. It was fun. Irven & Sandy tended them Saturday night while we went to Nicky's pageant. Dad and I are going out to Chelci's ball game tonight.

**May 26, 1997**

It has been a great weekend. Shelly, Roy, Garrett, Quint and Kevis came up on Thursday evening. Mom & I therefore took Friday off. Well I just about did, I went over to Grandma Porter's and converted her lawn sprinkler system over to culinary water. At 3 PM Mom, Shellie, Roy , the boys and I went out to Antelope Island. It was windy and cold so we didn't stay our there very long. Mom and I then tended the boys while Roy and Shelly went out for the evening. They don't do that very often because it costs them too much to get a baby tender.

On Saturday we received a letter from our favorite Missionary and sure enjoyed it and the pictures that came with it. I got quite a laugh with you with your arms full of puppies and two birds on your shoulders. That was quite normal.

Also on Saturday, Mike and his family came up, they stopped and got Chelci on the way and Scott & Mishelle came over. Although it rained most of the weekend, we still enjoyed it. We took all the family and went bowling. With the gutter guards, the kids had a lot of fun. We then went over to the Layton park and took supper. As I said on Sunday after meetings we went down to Mike's. Shelly and her family stayed down to Mike's and left there this morning for home. Mom called Shellie on Monday to make sure they got home safely and she said they stayed up until 3 a.m. talking with Mike & Becky and had a wonderful time. They talked the next morning so didn't leave until noon as they enjoyed each other so much.

In your last letter you asked how we were doing. "Busy" but well. I am doing ok with my health, although I have lost a lot of weight. I weigh 159 lb now but seem to be staying at that weight. Work is going steady. John and I just finished installing siding on a shed and installed facier and soffit on one of Dwayne's rentals.

(This is Mom - Dad had to leave for work and I have to also, but I'll try to finish this so I can get it off in the mail)

You asked about dad's health. It is much better since he left the mall. Even Dr. Bennett has mentioned that. He is still on the diet and can't seem to get off it, although he does eat more fruit and drinks whey. He likes it and it doesn't seem to bother him. I'm glad he can drink something else besides water.

We aren’t planning to move anymore - at least not for quite awhile. I hope not until you are married or at least off to college. It won't work for us to move in with Grandma Porter as she won't let us get rid of anything. I didn't feel good about it anyway - as I would pray I had a bad feeling about it. I am excited to stay in our beautiful home and relax a little. I wasn't anxious to build or move or anything - just stay and relax. Grandma Porter thought we should also. Dad does worry that we should do something to get better prepared for the future, but I didn't want him to build after he has worked all day at his job and work on Saturdays. His health can't take that anymore, and I want him for along time. I'm not ready to have him die and leave me - so I'm pretty protective of him. He still keeps plenty busy as my mom & Uncle Bob and others always need him to do something for them. Oh well. He does enjoy helping others. He also does enjoy relaxing some and I think he will be able to soon as Uncle Irven and Aunt Sandy and their family just moved out this week. I told dad I feel like a little kid with a new toy. It seems so good to have more room and be able to keep my house like I like to. They were a wonderful family and I enjoyed them in many ways - but it will be better that they have their own home. It is a beautiful home and just in Clearfield - so not far away.

**June 29, 1997**

This week has been a busy one for dad, especially. The stake presidency asked him to do a presentation at stake priesthood leadership meeting this morning on the Family History Program. They didn't just want a talk, they wanted a presentation. They asked him about a week and a half ago. He has put in about 30 hours on it, and has really stressed. When dad told Mike what he was asked to do, Mike volunteered to help him. Mike just bought a special camera which takes pictures for presentations - slide, video, etc. The camera cost him $300. but is regularly over $500. He came up last Tuesday evening. I tended the children (Becky was working) while they went all over taking the pictures. Then dad wrote the scrip the next few evenings and he and I went down to Mike's Saturday morning. Mike had plans for the dad so he asked us to be there early (6 a.m.) - so we left here at 4:30 a.m. Dad had been frantically working on it Friday night and went to Sis. Mckreaken's home at 10 p.m. for her to give him some information he needed. He came home at midnight and typed it up on the computer and got to bed at 2 a.m. Of course I drove down to Mike's, but dad wasn't sleeping, he was still making corrections to his script. He has really stressed over it and was about to chuck it and just do a talk because everything was going wrong and wasn't working out. I told him that Satan was working on him because it would be a big help for our stake to have this presentation so Satan was trying to stop him. I'm glad he kept going with it because it turned out really great. Dad & Mike worked on it yesterday from 6 a.m. until about 11:00 a.m. We were supposed to be through by 10:00 as Becky was taking Mike somewhere as a surprise for his father's day gift. I guess they were meeting others. We were concerned about the time, but Mike said "it's ok, we'll make it". Dad was sure grateful for Mike's help - he couldn't have done it without him. Dad said he needed a month and a half, but he only had a week and a half, but they got it done, thank goodness. Dad said Satan was still at work this morning. Dad met John (who takes care of the video's for the stake - runs them, etc.) He couldn't be there this morning so he had dad come up last night to show him what to do and make sure it would work well. Dad said when Pres. Winegar turned it over to him for the presentation, the video recorder wouldn't work. Dad said it was working last night and all they did was push it out of the way and turn it off. This morning Dad pushed it back and turned it on and the picture was going horizontally, etc. He asked someone in the audience to help him and they tried and couldn't get it to work either, so Pres. Winegar excused the men to go to their departments and said "We want you to see this so we will have you come back in at 8:15, and hopefully we'll get it working by then. Thank goodness they were able to get it working. Dad said he about had a heart attack when he turned it on and it wouldn't work - after all he had gone through to make it.

Last Monday evening we had a neighborhood party in our yard to say "goodbye" to Candace. She has sure been a good neighbor. I think I told you that she wanted to sell her home and move to Bountiful because that's where both hers and Bill's family live and she has friends in Salt Lake where she goes to the single ward, and she works in Bountiful. She was really sad when she said "Goodbye" to me however, and kept hugging me and crying and saying she had loved it here and would sure miss us and all the wonderful neighbors. We will miss her too. She has been great.

Did I tell you that Sandy is getting married to Terry on the 26th of July. They just want a small wedding since it is their 2nd - so they are only inviting Dad & I, Terry's mom and both Sandi's girls and Terry's sons and their families. They are having the wedding at his one son's home in Salt Lake and the son's bishop is marrying them.

JaNae is in the Miss Grantsville pageant next Thursday night so Dad & I will go out to it. Nicky is helping her some with it - at least giving her some pointers.

**Saturday July 5, 1997**

I decided if I am to get your letter off this week I had better get started today. Mom is still asleep because we were up late last night. It has been busy and fun the past couple of days so I will tell you what’s been going on. Thursday evening Mom, Scott, Mishelle, Anna, Nicky and I went out to Grantsville to watch the Miss Grantsville Beauty Pageant. JaNae participated in it. Although she didn't place in it she did very well and it was fun to be with her. Mike, Becky, little David and Taylor were here when we got home. They came out so Mom and I could tend the kids tomorrow evening while they went to "The Stadium Of Fire" Friday evening. With yesterday being the July 4th, we had breakfast of biscuits and grave. David, Scott and Mishelle also came over for breakfast. Shauna had just got home from work so she stayed home and slept. We had a fun morning being together, they all left about noon. At 6 PM we took the kids to see Layton's Parade, then over to the Park where they played on the toys for a while. We then went to the Concert and ended the with watching the Fireworks, they were great. After getting the children to bed Mom and I watched a show on video before going to bed. Today being Saturday we will relax a little. Mike and Becky will be here before to long to get the kids. Mom is going to go with Sandi and the girls to pick out dresses for Sandi's wedding. I guess we have told you that Terry and Sandi are getting married the 26th of this month. They are not having a very big wedding with just their children and parents there. I am going to go out to Terry's this afternoon to help him set a door and install a cabinet top. Tomorrow all the family will get together at Terry's for dinner, so tomorrow will be a busy day also.

**July 13, 1997**

Yesterday you told about the man who came to your door looking for a neighbor and when he saw your badge started asking you questions about why you are there and about the church. Tears were running down dad's and my face as we read about how our special son was able to change this man's heart by answering his questions, explaining the gospel - backed up by scripture and bearing your testimony. We're so proud of you. And when he called you friend and gave you a firm handshake. I'll bet you were sad in a way to be transferred and not to able to teach this man. I'm sure he will be sad also. I hope the missionaries that teach him will have the spirit like you do and be able to finish what you planted. I hope Dad & I can go on a mission also someday. The experiences you are having are so great and do bring such joy when you bring souls unto Christ.

Guess what Dad & I did for our date this week? We went to "Fiddler On The Roof" at the ampha theater at the Layton Park. We went Friday night, but got rained out so they told everyone to save our ticket stubs and come another night. We went last night as the weather was good. Dennis Ferrin directed it and also did the set design - so you know it was great.

Yesterday, dad and I sure enjoyed being together. We were both busy, but we were together - so it was great. We slept in until 7:00 a.m., then dad fixed breakfast while I started cleaning the house. After breakfast, dad started working at the computer on his letters to get out to the members of our stake who are fulfilling temple assignments on July the 17th. He finally got all the reports from the wards on who are going from their ward - so he could compile it and then get letters out to all of them. I think we explained to you before about how the Ogden Temple has changed from doing assignments various times during the year from various wards and stake - to just having two stake temple days a year and on those days we are to have 95 men & women in the morning and 95 in the afternoon. They do sealings, baptisms & confirmations, initiatory and endowments - all in the same day. Dad & I went last time and it was great. We really felt the spirit and enjoyed doing it all. It's a great experience. We had so many comments about how everyone loved it.

Anyway, back to what we did on Saturday - dad spent all day doing that, except for when he needed to get stake letterhead paper and envelopes from the stake and I went with him. I had papers to take to all of the ward relief society presidents - so he drove while I ran them in to these presidents, we then went to the stake house to get his paper & envelopes and then went grocery shopping together. It was great. He is so neat. He kept telling me how pretty I was and how he enjoyed being with me. A woman always likes to hear those things, and, of course, I love being with him and told him so. We came back and got something to eat, then he went back to the computer and I went back to cleaning house and doing laundry. I did have time to finish getting my pictures organized in the spare bedroom.

I don't know if I told you or not, but you have inspired me to have family pictures up all throughout the house. Remember I had each of the married families represented in Dad & my bedroom on the different walls. Well, after Irven & Sandy moved, I decided to extend that - so in the computer room I have the daughter's pictures and their families. I got white frames for Sandi and her family and got more mauve frames for Shellie and her family. I have all of their family pictures on the walls plus I took apart my photo albums and the pictures I had in the large picture frames which hold multiple pictures of various sizes in - and I bought more of those frames which hold various sized pictures and have one for each family. In the spare bedroom (next to the computer room) are the son’s pictures. Mike & his family are on one wall, they have blue frames. David & Shauna on another, they have brown frames. Scott & Michelle on another with gold frames and you on the 4th wall. When you get married, I'll get a different colored frame for you - probably green (if I can find them. - I'll probably start looking and get them before then) It looks neat. I decorated with something they made or gave me. In Dad's & my bedroom are all the family pictures - since we started having family pictures taken. I love my family and love to be able to see all the pictures of them on our walls. I think you will like them too - I'm sure you will, since you love pictures so much. All of us wish you had left the family pictures & others on the wall in front of your bed. We have left the others there. At this point we think we will still be in this house when you return. I hope so. I really love this house, and it would be nice for you to return to the home you left from.

Uncle Roy & Aunt Linda are up - so Uncle Bob decided we should all get together so he invited Uncle Irven & Aunt Bernice, Aunt Wilma & Uncle Lee & their families, Uncle Rich & Aunt Lois & their family, Aunt Margaret's daughters - Cheryl & Terry & their families and all of us and our families. Only Sandi, Scott & Michelle are coming from our family, but that's OK as we were all together last weekend. David & Shauna are on vacation in Montana. We had a great time visiting with family members and the weather was great - it was a beautiful day.

**July 22, 1997**

I am sorry that I am so late getting this letter written. Sunday started with preparing a talk, attending a Ward Correlation meeting at 9 A.M., attending the Chapel Park Ward at 11 A.M. and giving my talk, although I only had 5 or 6 minutes to talk, then we had dinner at 1 P.M.. Mom had invited Nicky and Anna over to eat with us. Mike, Becky, David and Taylor came up just to visit. At 4 P.M. I had a priesthood ordination to conduct. David came over in the evening and with all the company, we never got to bed until after mid-night. It was great though.

Last Friday morning Uncle Bob, Uncle Roy, David, Scott and I went fishing. We went up to Woodland where we camped at the Camper World located there. We fished most of that day catching about 8 nice fish. Saturday morning we went up to the Uinta's and tried there. We caught a few small ones and let them lose. Finally quit shortly after noon and came home. We had a good time being together anyway.

Monday evening I was late getting home from work, which wasn't good for Mom had invited our new neighbors over for supper. They bought Candices's home. Their last name is Beare and his name is Bobby, but I don't remember her's. They are a young couple, expecting their first baby in two weeks. They are not members of the Church, so we have some work there to do.

This evening we tried to drive down to a wholesale place where Nicky's father said we could buy Sandi and Terry some canning equipment for their wedding gift. I left work at 3 P.M., coming home and taking a quick shower. Picked Mom up at

4 P.M. from work and started for 11660 S. State. We hit the Salt Lake traffic and at 5 P.M., at which time the place closes, due to traffic we were at 7200 South State. We stopped and ate at Denny's then came home. We are not sure what to do now about the gift.

Other that busy as you see, we are doing ok. I had to have a root canal done on one of my front teeth last week, but that is ok now. I had some spots froze on my face the same afternoon, that the Dr. felt needed to be removed for fear that they could turn to skin cancer. Mom is well and after we got back from our wild goose chase, went over to see Grandma Porter. Grandma just returned from a trip up to Alaska to see Uncle Terry's family today.

**July 27, 1997**

We've had a busy week, as usual, but a great week. I only worked Monday & Tuesday because they were moving Data Processing out into the new building - so there wouldn't be power in our building and they told us we had the day off. We also had the 24th & 25th off (holiday). Sandi was moving the first part of the week. We couldn't go out to help her as neither dad nor I felt we could take Monday or Tuesday off - dad has had to take several days off - fishing trip, when he was down with his back etc. So David is off work now - laid off because the center is closing. (He's getting paid severance pay - & it will pay up until the time he needs to start school at ISU in Pocatello - so he's glad) Anyway, I mentioned to him that Sandi could use some help, so he went out Monday & they got most of it done. She had to stay at Terry's house on Tuesday as they had people coming, so Wednesday I went out and finished helping her move and then clean her apartment. I left shortly after 8:00 a.m. and didn't get home until after 7:00 - so I was tired, but glad I could help her and I enjoyed visiting & being with her.

On Thursday I had planned to go down to Grandma Porter's and watch the parade on TV with her, and watch for Nicky's float and then help Grandma with housework, weeding, etc., but dad needed me to do some typing for him, so I turned on the TV in our bedroom and tried to listen to when Taylorsville's float would come.

Friday morning, I quickly did a hit & miss job of cleaning house and doing laundry so I could go down to Grandma Porter's to do some weeding and straighten her house. She is leaving on a cruise with Uncle Kim & Aunt Jeanenne on Sunday. I took dad's lunch to him and saw the house he is just completing. It is really nice (of course - dad wouldn't do anything but the best). Friday afternoon I spent getting games ready, prizes wrapped, baking & cooking to get ready for the shower I gave Kristy on Saturday morning and the potato salad I made to take to Sandi's wedding Saturday afternoon.

We left about 4:00 p.m. to go to Becky's parents where they had invited us to come to a barbecue before going to the sesquicentennial celebration at cougar stadium. They had given Mike & Becky 2 extra tickets two months ago and said they could invite who they wanted. They invited us. It was so fantastic. The First Presidency were there and, of course, they honored them. They had youth, in white pants and either pink, blue, or yellow tee shirts, run in carrying a huge garland. There were two groups of them, one on each side of a large pathway from one entrance of the stadium to a huge platform in the middle of the stadium. Then the tabernacle choir started singing "We Thank Thee Oh God For A Prophet" and Pres. Hinckley holding on to two young children's hands walked along the pathway. On the huge screen, it showed his great grandfather, and told about how he lost his wife and one child with cholera and buried them along the plains. Of course, everyone was on their feet, singing and applauding. It was so powerful, so electrifying. I am so thankful for this great man - our prophet. They reenacted the restoration, the pioneers crossing the plains and the trials they had, they had the BYU Folk Dancers dance native dances from most of the countries of the world. They had 4 platforms (one facing each of the bleachers in the stadium) The groups would perform on one platform and then run to the next, and they kept doing that until each group had performed on each platform. They were in the original costumes. It was great. At the end, they had all of the missionaries from the MTC run in singing "Called to Serve" and carrying flags from the countries they were going to. They were 10 deep all around the stadium. Everyone immediately stood and started singing with them and applauding. It was so incredible. I sure thought of you. Mike leaned over and said "Just think, if we had all the missionaries who are serving throughout the world, they would almost fill this entire stadium." (The stadium holds 65 thousand.)

We stayed the night at Mike & Becky's, and the next morning, Mike left at 5:00 a.m. to go up to our place where he met David and they went golfing. We brought Becky & the children up when we came at 7:30. I quickly finished getting things ready for Kristy's shower while dad made breakfast. Becky took Taylor and went over early with me to Georgia's where we had the shower. It was fun and turned out good. Kristy got a lot of nice things. Robert was there and helped me put the food on the plates. He seems really nice and he and Kristy are sure in love.

Since Shauna & Michelle went to the shower also, David & Scott were at our home with Dad, Mike & little David. Dad helped Mike make a bed for his truck so they can pack items underneath it and put a mattress on top of it, for when they go camping, etc.. David, little David & Scott watched a John Wayne video. We all went over to get a Big Ben hamburger & shake for lunch and took it to Layton park to eat. Dad & I got ready & left to go to Sandi's wedding & left the rest of the family playing cards. Scott & Michelle left to go home as she had cleaning & laundry to do while Scott studied for a Priesthood lesson.

The Wedding was great. The only thing better would be a "Temple Wedding" and I'll still hope & pray for that. Terry's sons & their wives are great. They are really active in the church & neat couples - they would fit in with our family. They each have a little girl and are expecting another child shortly. Terry's mother is really special too. We had a good visit with her. The Bishop gave them some good advice. Troy, Terry's one son cooked steak and chicken breasts, and we had salads and Sandi's good rolls, and then wedding cake. The weather was great. Chelci sand two songs for them. JaNae seemed really happy & both girls looked really pretty - and Sandi surely did. We took lots of pictures - so we'll get them developed and send you some. Sandi & Terry were really happy. I think they will have a happy life together. With remodeling his duplex and adding a bedroom & bathroom for Chelci in the basement, they have really gotten to know each other. He says she is really a "worker" (we already knew that) and he really appreciates her.

We got home around 10:30 and Mike, Becky & the children and David & Shauna were still here just finishing watching the end of a video. We brought Chelci home with us and she went to stay with David & Shauna for a couple of days, and then Scott & Michelle and the rest of the week with us - while Sandi & Terry are on their honeymoon to Montana. JaNae is down at Shellie's. She flew down this morning. She will stay there a week. Chelci just got back from there. She stayed two weeks & had a great time.

Today (Sunday) David, Shauna & Chelci and Scott & Michelle came for dinner at 2:00. They stayed until about 7:00. We watched part of the sesquicentennial celebration that was videotaped and shown on TV. We played "Seven's", "Hearts" & "Rummy" for a while, then relaxed while I read your last 3 letters to them. Dad & I were really tired so we laid down for a nap and slept until 9:30. Dad is still asleep for the night, but I woke and decided to finish your letter so I can get it off tomorrow. I started it this morning before church.

We got a letter from Larry & Tammy Braithwaite a week ago Saturday, telling us that they had apostatized from the church. I wasn't going to tell you while you were on your mission, but David thought we should. It was really sad for Dad & I as we read this 3 page typewritten letter which they sent to their close friends & family telling us how they have spent the last four years and $10,000 researching the church and they have found it to be false. That our leaders have deceived us and they don't want to be in a church which isn't true. They went to their Bishop & he sent them to their stake president. They asked to have their names removed from the records of the church. Since they sent their documentation & a letter to each of their children telling of this, and they wouldn't consent to give up this documentation to the Stake Presidency - as they want to give it to others, and they don't believe the prophet to be a true prophet - they were excommunicated. (They apostatized). Some of the things they state in their letter - Meadow Mountain Massacre, etc., come from anti-Mormon literature - so we think they got ahold of some of that and since their testimony wasn't strong as they had decided they didn't want to go to church and hold positions, they were going the way of the world - Satan could get control of them. It has really been hard for Dad & I to have this happen. We have written them a letter back and bore our testimonies to them. Hope it will do some good, but guess they have their agency. I think of you out there working hard and converting people, and here they are leaving the church after 36 years where they have been temple workers, Larry has served in a bishopric twice & Tammy has been a Relief Society President. It is so sad. It goes to show that we have to be so careful and always stay close to the Lord by going to church, keeping his commandments, prayer, study of the scriptures, etc. to keep our testimonies alive and growing. In the letter they say that some of their children understand and some do not. I am sure that the ones who are active do not, and I am sure it is so hard for them.

**August 3, 1997**

Both Mom and I worked long hours last week, trying to get things done so we can take a vacation next week. We are excited to be going on vacation next week. We will go to Mike and Becky's tomorrow evening and leave from there Tuesday morning. David, Shauna, Sandi, Chelci and (hopefully) JaNae will meet us Tuesday morning at Mike's. From there we will go to Cedar City and up the canyon from there to Navajo Lake. Scott & Mishelle will come down on Wednesday evening and Shellie and Roy will also come Wednesday evening. We will just have our family together (just missing YOU) until Friday afternoon when we will go back to lodge for the Bushnell Family reunion. We're excited but will miss you.

Yesterday Mike, Becky & the children, Scott & Mishelle and Mom & I went to Nicky's where her Father showed us his garden and shelter. We had a lot of fun and found it very interesting. We bought some sanitation supplies and a water purifier. After Glen showed us around, we had a barbecue and enjoyed visiting. It was fun to be with Nicky. She is sure a special girl and a sweetheart. When we got home, Sandi and Terry came to get Chelci, as they returned from their Honeymoon. They had a great time as they went up to Montana and Canada.

As you see I didn't get this letter finished yesterday. Uncle Irven and Aunt Sandy invited us over for dinner, then we played games and visited after.

We are not sure if Mom told you the bad news we got a couple of weeks ago or not. I feel you would like to know, so will explain. Larry and Tammy sent us a letter informing us that they have been excommunicated from the Church for Apostasy. They claim that they have found information that the Church Leaders have kept hidden from the members and can no longer feel good about belonging to the Church. What information they indicated to in their letter is things I have known about for years. Some of it I also recognize as coming from anti-mormon literature. Their letter did not really surprise me, but was very sad. I have written them in reply to their letter, but do not know if it will help or not. I believe the real problem comes from pride and trying to justify ones actions. I have seen this coming for a long time, but thought Tammy was stronger than that. Very, very sad.

**August 19, 1997 Letter to Jeff from Dad**

Last week was a busy week, just trying to catch up with taking a week off work to go on our vacation. The vacation was wonderful so it was worth it. Also last Friday Mom and I took off work so we could attend Kristy's wedding. It was at the Salt Lake Temple and Hartman Rector Jr. performed the sealing. It was just wonderful to be there and hear the counsel that he gave. Both Mom and I had tears, with thinking of what Larry and Tammy have given up. The news of their excommunication has really been hard to take. I called them last night and tried to talk to them, but Larry wouldn't let me defend or give rebuttal to anything he told us. It was just like trying to talk to a Jehovah Witness, they won't argue but gust change to subject when you do not agree with them. I was on the phone with him for 1 ½ hours, and got nowhere. Anyway the wedding was beautiful and pictures were after. We then went to the Bridal Breakfast at the Della Fontana on Fourth East. In the evening we went to the reception and enjoyed visiting with family and friends. Sandi, Terry, JaNae and Chelci came to the reception. Sandi is sure happy now. Besides work last week, we also tried to help Scott and Mishelle move out of Uncle Verle and Aunt Beth's home. On Saturday we helped David and Shauna move out of their place, ready to go to Pocatello. They drove up to Pocatello on Monday, with Shauna's parents going up with them to help. Scott and Mishelle are staying with us this week and will move into David and Shauna's old apartment on Saturday. Mom and I will be flying down to Shellie and Roy's on Friday for Garrett's Baptism on Saturday. Garrett asked Mom to speak on baptism and me to speak on the Gift of The Holy Ghost. The way this week is going my talk will probably be prepared like it was on Sunday, I had to speak in the Fiddler Creek Ward and had given it some thought but really didn't write it until Sunday morning and then I completely changed it when I gave it.

We got your tape for Nicky and Mom is taking it to her tomorrow evening. Actually Nicky is meeting Mom at the Church Office Building and Nicky will go with Mom and our Ward Relief Society on a Church Flower Garden tour. That will give them some time together anyway.

We are all well and hope that the same goes for you. We want you to know how pleased with the work you are doing and the fine son you are. You are in our prayers and thoughts constantly.

We sure love you.

Jeff hadn’t dated for quite a while after his mission since it was really hard on him that his girl-friend, Nicki, had found someone else just shortly before Jeff came home from his mission, and in fact, she got married three days after he got home. Jeff had met Nickie at Scott & Mishelle’s wedding reception as Nicki is a friend to Mishelle’s sister, and Nicki’s and Mishelle’s parents were good friends. Nicki had asked Mishelle’s sister, who that cute guy standing next to Scott was. She told her he was Scott’s brother. Nicki said she would like to go out with him. They were introduced and started dating. They had a lot in common; for one thing, they both loved music. Nicki was a beautiful girl and very talented. She used her piano talent in beauty pageants and she usually won. She was Taylorsville’s Queen also. They both loved having fun and doing fun things. When Jeff was ready to go on his mission, he thought he should break up with Nicki so he could concentrate fully on his mission, but when he prayed about it, he felt that Heavenly Father told him that Nicki was to be his wife and he shouldn’t break up with her. He was called to the Mexico City Mission. Nicki said she wanted to wait for him and she wrote him faithfully until two or three months before Jeff was to come home. Nicki would come to our home every other week and have dinner with us and play games or visit. I remember one of the last times she came, she didn’t want to go home and it was getting late. Nickie lived in Taylorsville, which was close to an hour’s drive away, so we encouraged her to go since it was so late. I am sure she was engaged at that time and wanted to tell us, but it was too hard for her. Nicki’s parents and family loved Jeff, and at Nicki’s bridal shower, her mom was crying. When Nicki said “Can’t you be happy for me?” Her mom answered “Not when I know you are marrying the wrong man”. Nicki’s younger brother and sister loved Jeff too and he loved Nicki and all her family. Nicki’s parents and siblings came to the airport, to meet Jeff, when he came home from his mission, they came to his home coming talk in our Sacrament meeting, and they had him come to their home and tell them about his mission for Family Home Evening. They invited Jeff to Nicki’s wedding and they really wanted him to come. Jeff took Anna, Trent’s girlfriend to the reception. Trent was still on his mission, and Anna was also a good friend of Jeff’s. When Jeff saw Nicki walk in front of the big glass windows in her wedding gown, he couldn’t handle it and told Anna “We’re going home.” We didn’t blame Jeff for doing this, as it was too hard on him. Because of this, Jeff didn’t date for quite a while. He went to Weber University and lived at home with us. We encouraged him to live at home so he could save money, and we loved having him home with us. Jeff also worked and saved his money. The Honor Society, of which Jeff was on, went on a trip to NaPal and Jeff went with them and had a great time. They hiked the mountains going to small villages where they built school houses.

Finally, Jeff starting dating a cute girl named Gail Fairbourn. They had been casual friends in High School. I think he met her again at the Singles Ward.

****Ken and I had put in our papers to go on our mission and we put the start date as February 1st. Ken had mentioned to Jeff, a while before, that if he wanted to get married, he better do it before we went on our mission as we would be gone for two years**. Jeff told us that he and Gail wanted to get married** and Ken asked When? Jeff said the 20th of February. Because our Bishop got pneumonia and hadn’t been able to get our papers to the stake presidency, we were able to change the date, on our papers, from February 1st to March 1st. We are sure that the Lord had a hand in that. Jeff had brought Gail to our home so we could meet her and we were very impressed with her, but Ken wanted to meet with her separately, so they set a date and when he came back, he was very impressed with her and said Jeff had made a wise decision to marry Gail.

**Jeff and Gail were married in the Salt Lake Temple on the 20th of February, 2003**. We were in the temple with all our children and their spouses. Sandi and Terry had gone through project temple and were married previously in the temple, so **that was the happiest day of my life**. I thought we had it made, our sons had gone on missions and now all our children had been married in the temple. I felt so blessed and so happy. Our children are wonderful and they have wonderful spouses. I am so thankful for a close and loving family. BUT, more trials and heartaches were to follow.