

The Life Story of Jeffrey Lynn Head



A pictorial-verbal history of a Texas cowboy at heart, a patriotic American constitutionalist by upbringing and choice, a Christian through the light of Christ, and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



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Title Page

Written by Jeff Head

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1.0 Introduction

This is my life's story.

I am writing this for my dear wife, and love of my life, Gail, for our five children and their spouses, and our current 13 grandchildren (and what I expect will be several more), so that they might know about my life and experiences, and that they may learn from them how to be happy, no matter what experiences come their way, and how to turn to God and let Him map their course and path through life.

I do it also so that my children and grandchildren, and great grandchildren will have some idea about their heritage through me to a group of extraordinary people who gave me life and those who gave them life...my parents and grandparents.

At the same time, I want to ensure that my descendants know that life is not always easy. My father taught me a long time ago that if you think that any family or person is "perfect" and that everything seems to be going perfectly for them when it is difficult for yourself, then one of two things is occurring:

1) You are simply feeling sorry for yourself and you need to stop, look around, and count the unbelievable number of blessings you have...even if you do have troubles.

Or, the second thing is simply this...

2) You do not know the other family or people as well as you think you do.

Everyone has difficulties. It is a part of life...and in the end, the hardships are blessing because they help mold us and act to knock off the rough spots and, if we will be humble and look for the good...those hardships teach us so much and make us better people. It is the way of life.

I will try and make this somewhat multi-media and include pictures wherever I can so that the reader gets a better feel and sense of some of the things I talk about and things that I experienced throughout my life, and saw in the lives of others around and near to me.

2.0 My Birth and parents' families (1925 to 1956 and my birth)

I was born on June 19, 1956, at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Since my parents were good Southern Baptists, I was born at Baylor Hospital, a Baptist Hospital in Dallas, Texas. We lived at 3933 Van Ness Lane in Dallas when I was born. It was my parent's second house in Dallas, the first being just up the street on Van Ness at the corner.



Baylor Hospital

My mom was Georgia Mae Spacil, and my dad Albert Lee Head Jr., both born in 1925 during the great depression. Albert Lee Head and Jewel Ollie Darden, and Albert Spacil and Albina Machu were my grandparents.

My Dad's family had roots deep in the United States, both sides back to Colonial days and the 1600s in America.



My Grandparents holding my Dad as a baby



My Dad (Left) and his parents (middle) and his sister, my Aunt Judy in Alabama

My Granddad Head served in the US Navy in World War I. He was a baseball player (catcher) in the depression for a minor league team of the New York Yankees. Both of them then taught High School in Goodwater, AL.



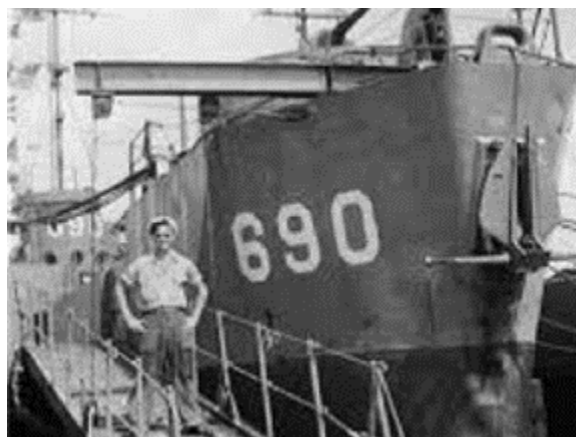
My Dad, with his parents at his High School Graduation

My father served in the US Navy in World War II. He was an officer aboard an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) and his ship landed US Marines on Islands in the Pacific. He joined in 1942 when he was 17.



My Dad with his parents after enlisting in the US Navy ROTC Program in 1942

The Navy sent him into ROTC at Auburn University in Alabama, and then later, at Rice University in Houston, Texas. In late 1943, he finished his ROTC training and was shipped off to war in the Pacific.



Albert Lee Head by LCI (L)-690 that he served on as an Officer

When he got home in 1946, it wasn't long before he got together with the girl he had hoped would wait, Georgia Mae Spacil. They were married in 1948. Now a few words about my mother and her family.

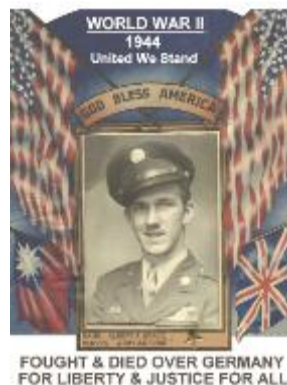


My Mom's parents, Albina Machu and Albert Spacil in Houston in the 1940s



My Mom, Georgia on the left, and her mother on the right in the 1930s.

My grandfather Spacil served in the US Army in World War I. They had five daughters and a son. Their son, my Uncle Albert, served in World War II in the Army Air Corps. He was the lower ball turret gunner on a B-17. His aircraft was shot down on its second to last mission and he was killed. His body was not recovered until 1947.



My Uncle Albert Spacil who was killed in World War II, married a few weeks before leaving.

When the war broke out, my Mom later told us she couldn't stand for the boys to go away to war without

someone being there for them...so she told several of them she would wait. When they came home, she told us that when my Dad showed in his US Navy dress white uniform, she said to herself, "that's the man for me." They married in 1948 in Houston, TX, and remained so for the rest of their lives until they passed in 2004 and 2012.



Lee and Georgia Head after they were married

After being married, my Dad got his master's degree in engineering and took a job with Ling Tempco Vought (LTV) in Dallas, Texas. LTV was an aircraft company that specialized in building aircraft for the US Navy. My Dad started working there in 1949, and he would work for them for fifty years. He became a professional engineer and a lead dynamics engineer and was a primary engineer on several very successful US Navy aircraft.



US Navy F-8E Crusader built by LTV

3.0 My early Years and growing up in Dallas and then on the Ranch 1956-1969

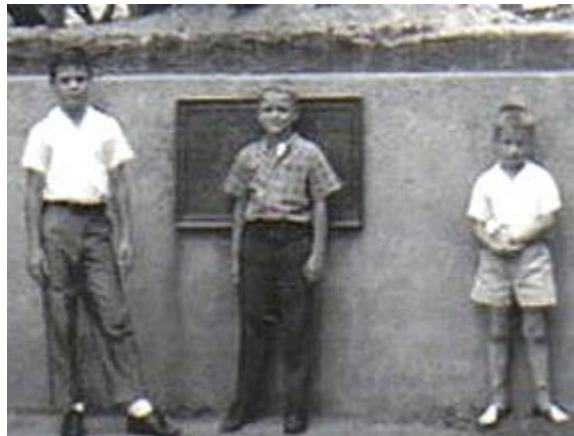
Back to my growing up.

I had really curly red hair...and for the first few years my Mom apparently loved to let it grow a little long and keep it curly.



Here I am about three or four years old with curly red hair

Anyhow, my parents had Albert Lee Head III in 1952, Gregory Alan Head in 1955, myself in 1956, and Paul Neal Head, the last of four sons, in 1959, all in Dallas. We visited Alabama each year for Dad's parents.



My brother Lee (left) me (middle), and my brother Greg (right) in Alabama in the 1960s

We also visited Central Texas a couple of times a year to visit with my Mom's parents, Granny and Papa Spacil.



Visiting Granny and Papa, I am the second on the left. My Dad and Papa are in the middle

We had a lot of great times on those trips and got to know our cousins. Ultimately, when I was seven years old, in the early 1960s, we moved to 4455 Myerwood Lane in North Dallas. But my parents had a long held dream of getting a ranch and raising their sons in the country.



My Dad (left), then me, a friend, my Mom, and then Lee Head at Myerwood Lane in Dallas.

In 1966, they realized that goal and bought 87 acres on a hill top, above a running Creek (called Clear Creek) in Denton County, Texas, 20 miles northwest of Denton, Texas. My Dad had a 60-mile commute to work in Dallas.



My parents on their land in Denton County, west of Sanger, Texas.



The Head home after being completed in 1967



The Head barn, near the house, out by the Farm to Market Road, FM455

Out in back of the house the hill side dropped steeply for 80-100 feet to the bottom land and Clear Creek. All along the hill and into the bottom land it was forested. Lots of country and miles of land for four boys to work in, camp, hunt, and grow up between chores. Which was exactly what Lee and Georgia wanted for their boys.



My brother Paul (right) and I near the woods on the side of the hill

My dad got us used to working on the place. It was a big part of why he moved us out there. During the spring,

summer, and fall, after we did our chores (like picking up rocks off of the top of the hill around the house), we would also work with neighbors in the area to help do the work needed on the farms and ranches in the area.

On our place, we had a lot of land to clear of brush and rocks. My dad would have us plant Live Oak trees all along the drive up to the house. The hill was covered with about a foot deep of top soil and broken rock, but then alternating layers of lime stone and clay.

My Dad would have us dig down (whether for trees or corner posts for the fence, through the second layer of lime stone). We would then “bell” the hole out. For trees, this allowed the roots to be in moist clay...and it was moist down those three feet no matter how hot or dry the summer. For corner posts, we used concrete and those posts were never going to come out of the hole!



Trees and fencing we worked many years to get in...with a typical Texas Thunderstorm in the distance.

We also had a lot of grass to mow and then sometimes bale for hay. We got to where we would haul hay a lot for other farmers and ranchers. My two older brothers started off doing the harder work and they would have me along to help. From when I was 11 years old, I would drive the hay truck in the field as they would walk along and stack them on the back of the truck. I first got a penny a bale for that...and then later two cents.

We started off with an old pickup my Dad had purchased for ranch work, and then later Greg and I purchased a larger flat-bed truck with what was called a “head-ache rack.” That was a flat portion built over the top of the cab which you could stack hay on. We started our own business called, “Head’s Hay Hauling,” HHH.

As I got older, I would help stack and we would use my younger brother to drive. But Greg and I did a LOT of hay hauling together and ultimately bought a device to pick the bales and drop them on the truck, and then an elevator to move hay into the hay lofts. We would take one third of the money for the truck and equipment and one third for each of us.

We saved a lot of money each summer and ultimately it helped us buy our own cars, and particularly to fund our missions for our church which I will talk more about in a few minutes.

By then for normal hay hauling we were getting 15 cents per bale, so each of us got a nickel and the truck did too. But with the bigger truck we could also not only haul more, but go longer distances.

We had numerous jobs that were several miles from the field to the barn which were paying us 30 cents per bale. We could haul 1200 or more bales a day, so on a good day with those long-distance hauls, we would each make \$120 to \$150 dollars. Pretty good money for young teenagers willing to work hard.

And it was hard work...and hot during the Texas summers.

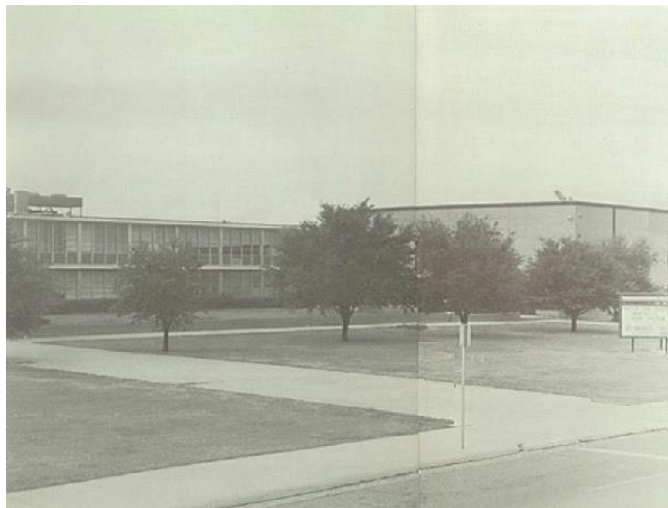
We rigged lights up to the truck and would even haul at night when it was too hot to work in the day.

4.0 Teen Years, Graduation from High School 1970-1975

We lived in the Sanger School District. But back then, the state of Texas would allow you to attend a different school district if you would pay the taxes. Sanger was a very small town and my Dad had us go through Junior High School there. I remember once in the 8th grade when two boys had beat up my younger brother. I waited for them the next day at lunch and confronted them. The two were together and were a year younger than I. I asked them if they had hit my brother. One of them, a boy named Johnny said, "What of it." It made me angry and I immediately hit him in the mouth, bloodying his lip. The other boy said he had not had anything to do with it and so I told them to not pick on younger kids, and especially not my brother two against one. Much later, I would have more dealing with Johnny. Later in life, he became the Justice of the Peace and I once had to go before him for a traffic ticket. It was humbling to me, but to his credit, he did not hold that youthful discretion against me.

I did well in school and when I got in 10th grade, like my older brothers, Dad transferred us to Denton High School which was much larger and had much better math and science. He wanted us to get the best education, and in particular to be able to become Engineers.

So, I went to Sanger elementary School and then Sanger Jr. High school until 1971, and then, when going into the 1th grade, I transferred to Denton High School, in Denton, Texas, 25 miles away.



Denton High School in the 1970s

We took the school bus to school in Sanger, but Dad had bought us an old pickup truck to drive for work (as I said above) and then we used it to drive into Denton Texas when we started high school in Denton.

All of us, except Paul, played football. It was a big thing in Texas and I played from the 7th grade through the 11th grade. I played quarterback. But in the 10th grade I got hurt, injuring my knee which also had a condition called Osgood-Schlatter. I re-injured it in the 11th grade, during the spring workouts when I was competing for the starting QB role. Once I had injured it twice I stopped playing.



Football was a big deal in Denton Texas on Friday nights

Both Greg and Lee went on to play college football. Greg for Brigham Young University and Lee at the University of Texas at Arlington. Greg played for four years at BYU on scholarship under the legendary coach, Lavell Edwards. Greg played there the same years Jim McMahan played, who would go on to be a quarterback in the NFL and lead the Bears to a super bowl victory. But Greg injured his knee his senior year and it ended up keeping him from any hopes himself of playing in the NFL.

Although my football days were over, I did well enough in school and really enjoyed the math and sciences.

I got a scholarship offer to Texas Tech University...but I ended up not taking it because I had my sites on another school at the time.

In order to understand why, I need to tell the story of our family being introduced to, and then joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What many people call the Mormon Church.

5.0 Joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1970

I had been raised as a southern Baptist, and had given my life to Jesus Christ when I was about 10 years old. Back then we attended the 1st Baptist Church in Dallas, then the 1st Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, and finally, when we were finally moved out to Sanger, we joined the 1st Baptist Church in Sanger.

As we got older, and as various denominations, including the southern Baptists began to liberalize their doctrine, my parents became more and more dissatisfied. For example, as I was growing up, the Baptists universally taught and stuck by Christ's teaching in the Bible that a person had to be baptized into the Church. One of the reasons the Baptists were called "Baptists" was because this was a central, required tenant of their faith. As they began to teach that it was not really required, folks like my mom and dad had trouble with that.

They also had other questions...like what happens to so many people in the world, many of whom are good people...but who live in places like Africa, or Asia, or the jungles of the Amazon who live their whole lives and never hear about Christ. We were taught that unless they accepted Christ in this life, they would burn in hell for eternity. My parents, and as I grew older...me too...had difficulty believing this.

Then during the summer of 1970, my brother Greg and I were in the barn working and welding when a spark jumped out into the high grass and started a fire. We fought it as best as we could, but could not stop it because the wind was blowing and it got down into the forest. We, our neighbors, and volunteer fire departments from six or seven local communities fought that large fire for five or six days.

One day as were fighting it across the creek (Clear creek) a local rancher whom we had heard of but never met, was with a group of his ranch hands fighting the fire. His name was John Porter. He saw my Dad ourselves (Dad's four sons) fighting the fire and my Mom bringing us water. He asked my parents if he could come over and meet them.

They said yes. His wife, Margaret Porter came with him a few nights later and spent the evening with my parents. They got to talking religion. They were members of the LDS faith (Latter-day Saints). They answered many of my parents' questions to the point that my mom and dad agreed to go to a group meeting, or "Cottage Meeting" to hear more. While there, they met two young men who were serving a mission for the Church for two years, teaching other people about what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believed.

About a week later, I came into the house from the field and saw these two men (they were about 20 or 21 years old) in the living room talking to my parents. My dad asked if I wanted to stay and listen...and so I did.

To make a long story short, we were taught that Jesus Christ and God in Heaven, His Father, had appeared to a young man in the Spring of 1830 and revealed that they were going to restore the original Church of Jesus Christ to the earth with 12 apostles, a prophet, and modern revelation to set aright the doctrine of Christ as He had taught it while on earth. This included showing this young man, Joseph Smith, scriptures that had been written in ancient America by a group of people who had come to the Americas 600 years before Christ from Jerusalem.

When Christ rose from the dead in Jerusalem, He then went and taught these people in America too, as one of the lost parts of the House of Israel. Joseph Smith who only had a grade school education, was given a gift to translate the book, and it became what is known as the Book of Mormon, another Witness of Jesus Christ. At the

end of that Book, in the book of Moroni, Chapter 10, there is a promise that anyone who reads it, and is serious about it and wants to know if it is true, can ask God, the eternal Father in the name of Christ if it is true, and that He would reveal the truth to them by the power of the Holy Ghost, but only if they ask in faith, nothing wavering. I listened to these young men. I read in the Book of Mormon and the Bible. I attended their church meetings.



The original LDS Chapel in Denton Texas, off Malone Street

They also taught us about the work for all of those people who live on earth and never hear about Jesus Christ.

They too are loved children of God too...just as we are. God has not left them to burn in hell or any such thing. Here is what He has done for them.

When Christ died, before He was resurrected, the Bible teaches that he went to the spirits in Prison. He taught them there and set up His work. That teaching is going on to this day, by the billions. When those people accept the gospel there, they can also accept proxy work that has been done for them here...like baptisms...because it is true that all who wish to enter into Heaven with Christ and the Father must be baptized, just as He taught. It is why the church build temples. We go there, we find the names and information of ancestors and those who died, and we do work for them in their name. Like Baptisms for the dead. Peter taught about this doctrine in the Bible too, when speaking to some Pharisees who did not believe in the resurrection and said, "why then baptize ye for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?"

This doctrine has been lost to modern Christendom, and it needed to be restored, because the greatest part of missionary work is going on in the after-life, and that work depends on the temple work done here so those people can accept their baptism that are done through the power of Christ and His priesthood here on this earth in their behalf. During the coming Millennium, that will be one of the major works that is done for those thousand years. It is a glorious, and true doctrine that shows God in Heaven's and Christ's love for all of His children, wherever, whenever they have lived.

Well, I then took all of this to God and went out in the forests near our home...and I asked God if all of this were true. He revealed the truth to me through the power of the Holy Ghost.

It was not a vision, or an apparition...it was a sure knowledge that came to me in such a way that I could not deny it. It filled my heart with the knowledge in such a way that I knew it was from God. I have known ever since and cannot deny the truth of it...that the Book of Mormon is true, that it goes hand in hand with the Bible to witness for Jesus Christ.

It was a sure feeling in my hearth that came on me, filled me with warmth, and simply gave me the knowledge that it was indeed true. That the young man, Joseph Smith, despite his youth and whatever failings, was called of

God to help restore the Church of Jesus Christ to the earth. That he was a modern prophet. Once I knew this, I joined the Church with my dad on September 19, 1970.

That is how I became a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As a result, I found a group of people who became very good friends for life, particularly Trey Martino.

Trey played the guitar very well and taught me to play too...which provided me with a talent and outlet that I used for most of my life. Through High School, and then through life, Trey has been a personal friend who has meant so much to me, and then later, after our missions and schooling and weddings, he and his wife have been dear friends of ours.

6.0 Back to Teen Years, Graduation, and a Mission 1970-1977

This event impacted my life like no other. Ever since, my life has flowed forward from that point and the decisions have been based on that singular experience.

I received my Patriarchal Blessing in 1973. It is a blessing where a man called to be a Patriarch receives revelation about your lineage in the house of Israel and then pronounces a blessing. I am from the tribe of Ephraim, one of the two tribes that were given to Joseph of old for his two sons. I was blessed to serve a mission, to be strong in the church, to be sought after for advice and counsel both at church and in my professional life. To marry for time and eternity and to have a good family. To always have friends in time of need. As you will see, all of these blessings have been true throughout my life as I have been true to God.

Like any other young man in High school, I grew and became interested in young ladies and dating them. I went steady with a young woman my Jr. and Sr. year at High School. Her name was Lisa Ford and she was a member of the Church of Christ, and a very good girl. We became somewhat serious, but we sat down and knew that our different faiths would be an issue. Her father was a preacher and did not even think a "Mormon," was a Christian. She knew better, because she knew me, but she did not want a split between us. So we called it off.

While in High School, from time to time I would visit eastern Oklahoma. A member of our Ward, Hoyt Wilson, had some land there and an old cabin in the hills northeast of Atoka. Our group of Young Men on occasion would camp up there and Brother Wilson let me use it. Sometimes I would go up and camp out in his cabin and play the guitar. I got to know some people living back in there and every now and then would walk to their cabins and we would all play guitar. We had a good time doing so. I was not great with the guitar, but they helped me learn a few more things and it was a good experience for me.

Also, in Young Men's at Church, we had a lot of fun scouting. I remember many scouting campouts to southern Oklahoma. Myself and Trey Martino did a lot of hiking, and would sit up late at night and talk about life, girls, our goals in life, and even the stars and constellations and what it must be like to be able to ultimately arrive at the Kingdom of God and be able to know all about creating plants, stars, and universes.

We had one "super activity." Our Scouting Explorer post took a year to study wilderness survival and then took a two week trip to central Utah, to Monroe and Marysvale Peaks.

We camped up there in the wilderness and could only take our clothing and what we could fit into one of those large match boxes. Although it was in late May after we got out of school that year, it was still cold up at 8,000 feet. It was also beautiful, and it was a great time.

I remember gathering roots and edible plants. We caught small brook trout and ate them too.

On one of the days I climbed down a cliff to set a couple of snares in a meadow there below, and found I could not climb back up. I tried to hike around, but ended up having to hike the eight miles down the mountain and into Monroe, Utah. I then hitch-hiked around the mountain and went to the adults in Koosharem who had brought us and they took me back to the trail head to get back to our camp. As I hiked up, I happened upon and killed a porcupine with a large rock.

While walking two or three of those porcupine quills had stuck in me. About an hour later I met the other boys

who were coming down to report me missing. Boy was I glad to see them.

Trey had to help get those quills out of me because I could not reach them. We went back to camp after I told my tail, and we ate that porcupine. I have to say that it was the toughest meat I had ever tasted.

We split it into eights and the large back legs, which looked sort of like big drum sticks were the prize everyone wanted. We drew straws and I got a part of one of the front quarters, with one of the small front legs. It was tough, but edible.

The guys who got half of each back leg thought they had the best...and it was more meat...but it was like chewing on a boot! LOL! They could just sort of chew on it and get some juices out of it.



Monroe Peak from near Koosharem, and then up high on the mountain, a mile or so from our camp.

Eight of us went up there and we camped in groups of two. Trey and I camped together and we selected a place between a large rock and a large pine tree. We hand dug out room next to and a little under the rock for our fire (which would heat the rock and provide more warmth at night), and then built a leant to over it.

It was a great experience for a bunch of teenage boys and we learned to appreciate what we had.

We were very hungry at the end of it all and glad to be done and back in town where we could eat normal food. We went to a café in Koosharem Utah and got hamburgers and scones!

I graduated from Denton High School in June of 1974 and immediately went to work driving truck for a Honey Company moving their Bees and equipment from southern California to South Dakota. A member of our congregation, Harvey Thompson and his family, owned that business and I enjoyed working with them...and I enjoyed driving their trucks across country from East Texas to California, and then up to South Dakota where ranchers paid them each year for their Bees to pollinate...and then they also made money from the honey the bees produced.

While there they let me use a small motorcycle for personal use. I would drive into town to get personal items, to see a movie perhaps, and to get out and about when I was at their farm.

But mostly I did chores around the place, and by far the most that I did was going out driving hundreds and hundreds of hives all over South Dakota.

I did this all summer and then came home and prepared for college.

This is where my decision not to take the scholarship offer from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas comes into play, and is one way my experience in joining the Church changed things.

Instead, I wanted to attend BYU in Provo, Utah, which is a four-year University owned by the Church.

While there I began studying general studies thinking I wanted to either be a meteorologist or a Forest Ranger. My Dad wanted me to study engineering, like he had, and he knew I was good at the math and sciences the engineering study would require. But I was stubborn and though I took those math and science classes to prepare in case I wanted to go that way, I was looking forward to one of the others.

While there I met another girl, and started going out very steadily with her. Her name was Linda Park. She knew I intended to serve a mission. We became fairly serious, talking about marriage after my mission.

It had become a big goal of mine for me to go serve for two years like the young men who had taught me about the Church had done. Linda indicated she would wait for me. So, I went home for the summer to prepare for my mission in April.

In May I received a letter with my mission call from the First Presidency of the Church to go to Southern Germany for two years.

7.0 My Mission to Germany 1975-1977

I left home for the mission field on June 21st, 1975, two days after my 19th birthday. It was the first time I had ever flown on an airplane, as I flew from Dallas to Salt Lake City.

I spent a week in Salt Lake at the Mission Home there, and then went to Provo and what they called the Language Training Mission (LTM) back then for three months. My companion there was a young man named Richard Johnson, and we got along very well. The LTM was what they called a total submersion school that taught us German and the basics of teaching the gospel. Once there...we could only speak our language.



Here I am studying German and the discussions at the LTM

I worked hard. My Texas accent was an issue...but when I left the LTM three months later, I thought I had learned German pretty well. Hehehe...little did I know!

I could not have been more mistaken. I got to Germany and learned soon that an intellectual understanding of speaking and actually speaking so you could be understood were two different things.

As LDS missionaries, you work in sets of two. You have a companion you stick with all of the time. It is best for safety, for not getting into trouble, and for effective teaching. I would listen to my companion speak and could understand him. When I tried to say similar things...the people looked at me like I was speaking gibberish.

Elder Michael Black was my first companion. He only had about six months left, but was a good man. He told me it was okay, that I would learn the nuance of flowing the words together...but it was frustrating and it took months. But slowly...it started to come together.

On top of this, most Germans speak pretty good English so I could communicate with them when I had to.

On my mission, mostly we rode bicycles everywhere...sometimes riding well over fifty miles per day.



My and my companions bicycles, parked outside an apartment.

It took me six months before the people finally began understanding what I was trying to share with them

I started in Karlsruhe, on the French German border with Elder Black for three months, and then with Elder David Dutson for three months. They were both my senior companions and they taught me a lot. After about four months there, was my Dad had to come to Europe on business and he got permission to visit me.



My Dad visiting me on my mission in Karlsruhe

In late February of 1975, I was transferred to Stuttgart, Feuerbach to work with Elder John Clanton. I stayed there for six months and had two other companions, Elder Phillip Duncan and then Elder Gary Nalder.

We had some GREAT experiences.

On one occasion, Elder Duncan and I were following up on a referral in an area of the city when I saw an old man, who could barely walk, come out of a building and struggle to walk up the street. I had the over-powering feeling that we should bless him. I looked at Elder Duncan and asked him what he was feeling and he said that he felt the same. We ran down the street to catch up with the man as he turned the corner. I could see in my mind's eye reaching him, asking him if he believed in Jesus Christ, and if he wanted us to bless him. He was going to say yes and then we would heal him.

When we turned that corner...he was gone. There was not a door for a few hundred feet and we simply do not know what happened to him. We both believed the Lord was testing our faith, knowing that we would do it, and having one of his messengers give us the opportunity to show it.

In August of 1976, I was then called to be a Zone Leader of what was called the Rhine Zone. It was on the eastern side of our mission along the Rhine River and the Black Forest. I was really excited because it meant I was being sent back to Karlsruhe. That was special.

I had been on my mission for a little over a year at this point and was loving it. Most Germans at this point could not even tell I was an American and I had been very blessed to learn and speak the language. We had had a change in Mission Presidents and the new President, President Myers, called me as a Zone Leader and also stressed the Elder's using their talents. I got permission to use the guitar, and we used it to teach children (both American and German) folk songs...Mormon Folk songs in particular.

I knew quite a few Elders by then. There in Karlsruhe when we would get together in our District and Zone meetings, we loved to sing the Hymns of Zion. We would do it in meetings and sometimes in church.



Myself (on left) and four Elders singing in a sacrament meeting

I was working with Elder Dan Bastian and we hit off in a big way...loving working hard together. After a couple of months, I was called to work with the "Amis." What that meant was working with the American Servicemen. I worked another two months in Karlsruhe with elders John Smith and Chris Ware.

Back then it was the height of the Cold War and the United States still had almost two hundred thousand soldiers in Germany. Many of them had their families with them and had entire little American neighborhoods on their bases. Our mission had about ¼ of the missionaries teaching American servicemen about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was really interesting to go into those areas...and most bases gave us passes to do so.

One really special experience was teaching a young woman, Vicki Johnson, who was an American teacher there. She felt the church was true, but remained reluctant to get baptized and we could not understand why. So, we fasted and prayed for God to help us...and He did...in just the same manner He had revealed the truth of the Book of Mormon to me. He revealed to us a sure knowledge of what the issue was. I will respect her privacy and not say it here in this book...but the next time we met, we told her and she was shocked that we knew. She

wanted to know who told us...how on earth we had found out about it. We told her that Heavenly Father did revealed it to us and we all cried. She joined the church.

Germany is a GREAT country, but many of their services and living conditions were like being back in the 1950s at home. When you walked on base...you walked right back into the 1970s in what was like little parts of America. We were blessed to teach many service men and their families and had significant success. In particular, one group of four friends and their families all took the discussions and three of them were baptized. The last, a Brother Miller, was going to wait until he got back to the US to get baptized. My companion and I had prayed about it and we knew there was a great possibility after he got home, that he would not go back to church without a really special spiritual experience. The Lord revealed to me how I should approach him.

Two weeks before he left, he attended one of his friend's baptism. It was the second he had attended and he loved those meetings. After the meeting, I asked him if next week he could come for one last baptism before he left. He asked me who was being baptized. It got very quiet and I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Brother Miller, it needs to be you." He accepted and was baptized the next week before he went back to the states. When he got home...he baptized his wife!

I was then called to go to Mannheim as a District Leader in a brand new District that was opened when a part of the Frankfurt Mission was broken off and given to our Mission. The Mission President emphasized how important it was to start the District off correctly, and help the new Elders understand our mission rules.

So, I went up to Mannheim and worked with Elder Mike Rennert, and then Elder Richard Meyers. We opened up a new area while we were there in Worms, Germany. Worms had a really old Catholic Cathedral dating back to the 1500s in it. It was one where Martin Luther had tacked his thesis to its door.



The Old Lutheran Cathedral in worms that Martin Luther tacked his Thesis to

We looked at the old tree, and though most of it is clearly new growth, they have a part of a really old looking root on it that they say dated back to those times.

One of the things I saw while there in the area, that came back later, was seeing an ancient Dog's Head mounted at an eating establishment on a hill between Mannheim and Worms. It was HUGE and they used to tell us that the old German Princes would import Lions from Africa and then have packs of these huge dogs hunt them.

The tale grew in the telling...but more about that later.

Anyhow, I then was called spent the last of my mission down near the Alps in a town called Kaufbeuren.



A Schloss (Castle) in the Bavarian Alps

On prep days we would hike sometimes into the mountains down there. It was very beautiful as you can see.

We taught many people, but one special family, who lived way out on a small "Dorf," or "village," whom we taught were the Kniebuehlers.

They lived in Leutkirch and later, after I had left, they all joined the church.

Leutkirch was about a four-hour train and bus ride from where we lived. Not that far in miles, just two or three connections that took time to get to. The man was a leader in what was called the New Apostolische Church. They were special people and one of the little girls was about ten years old and just loved for us to come over.

The husband and wife had so many questions...but they could tell that the way the Lord had restored the Church was similar to what they felt had needed to happen, and in fact what their church taught. But the teachings about the Priesthood and "No man taketh this honor unto himself except he be called of God as was Aaron," and the teachings about the Temple and the work for the dead opening up the gospel to all mankind touched their heart and caused them to be believing when they prayed for a testimony. It was very special.

They did not get baptized until a few weeks after I left and went home...but oh how sweet it was to know they were going to and then to hear about it.

Altogether, including my companion at the LTM, I had twelve companions. Some of them became lifelong friends. We were blessed to see several people change their lives and join the Church, and turn their lives over to God in Heaven and Jesus Christ. They learned the truth of the gospel and its restoration, and the grand truths about the Book of Mormon, the Priesthood...which is available to all men and not just those who graduate from some school or seminary. And they learned and accepted the wonderful truth of the temple and that marriage can be forever, and that God has a plan for all of His children and their salvation no matter when or where they lived on this earth.

I kept a journal the entire time. One of my sons, Jared, took that journal with him on his mission, to read it every day while there.

Germany is a beautiful place, with so much history. I learned a lot from the people there. They talked freely with us, as they came to know us, and were impressed with our ability to speak German. I had learned it so well that people could not tell I was an American. Anyhow, they talked about how they as a people had been fooled into putting their national pride above common sense and then suffered horribly in World War II.

Most of the time we spent trying to visit people in their homes or apartments, or working on the streets early in the mornings, or in the afternoons, trying to talk to people.



One of the street displays we used to talk to people about the Church

I learned a lot about life...but most importantly, I learned how to rely on my Father in Heaven and His guidance and how to live to do so. I also gained a greater appreciation for my nation, the United States of America on my mission. I found that the things that my parents had been teaching me my whole life about our freedoms, and especially about how our nation, because of its foundation on Christian principles had been so richly blessed, despite whatever shortcomings and failings it may have had from time to time. This would stay with me for the rest of my life.

My mission was pivotal, and I came home in July of 1977, prepared to go back to BYU.

8.0 Back to BYU, finding my Sweetheart, Marriage, Honey Moon 1977-1978

I returned to BYU, and thought I would marry quickly.

But I found that Linda had almost married one of my best friends (it was actually Trey Martino) while I was gone, but ended up wanting to wait until I got back. She graduated from College right after I got home and I helped her move to Vernal, Utah and her teaching job. We would then drive back and forth every other weekend.

One time when she came to Provo, I saw she had all the things I had given her and she broke it off. I was heartbroken and decided I would simply wait her out. But I also decided to take it to Father in Heaven. So, I went up into the mountains and prayed to my Father in Heaven about it.



“Y” mountain behind BYU. The red line is the trail I took up around the corner into the mountains to pray.

I took my guitar and was up there for a day, overnight, then into the next day. It rained on my while I was seeking an answer...but ultimately the Lord spoke to my heart and let me know I was wrong and that I needed to date other girls.

This was hard for me, but I had learned to listen and so I obeyed.

In doing so, I was very straight forward about my intentions. I was looking to find a wife and let girls know, early on, that if they were dating me, then that was where I was going. It’s funny to look back on now, because several of the girls I dated were simply not ready for that serious of a relationship, and I am sure my straight forward approach probably was pretty startling to them. LOL! They probably talked to their friends about this guy who would tell them on the 2nd date that he was looking to get married!

My roommates tried to help me by planning dinners at our apartment so I could invite girls to come to and meet. But I was pretty much a hay-seed.

The first time I met my future wife, Gail Woodmansee atr one of their dinners, she had come with one of my roommates, Jay Bushard. At that dinner, I told a corny joke about a potato looking like a Texas peanut. It did not go over very well...not too many laughed.

But that girl, Gail Woodmansee, became more and more important to me and since I home taught some girls in her apartment, I arranged to go to a missionary farewell for someone we all knew and have her drive with me to it that Sunday in January of 1978. During the trip back from the farewell, I told her I wanted to come by that night and talk to her and she said okay.

When I got there, she was gone. Apparently a young man she had known most of her life and who many expected her to marry had been home from his mission for months. His name was Randy and he had finally asked her to go to a Fireside with her.

Well, I determined I would wait at the apartment until she got back and then wait until whoever this was left so I could talk to her.

They came back and pretty soon it was just the three of us there in the living room of the apartment. I simply would not leave and kept picking on my guitar while Randy sat with Gail. It was apparent that he wanted me to leave...but I did not. After a while...he told Gail he would talk to her later and he left.

After he left, other girls in the apartment came into the living room, and Gail's home teachers came over. I waited through all of that too. She told her home teachers, when one of them asked her how her dating was going, that she was not too happy, that most guys simply wanted to play a dating game. I thought to myself, "Please, give me a chance."

So, after the home teachers left, I finally told her I wanted to start dating and that I would come over on a particular day. I said it in German because she was taking a German class. She did not understand me as well and thought I was coming a different day.

When I got there, she was not happy. I found I was there at the wrong time. She thought I was coming over to her work...or coming at a different time and when I did not show up, she wrote me off as being like all the rest. I explained the miscommunication and apologized to her. I then asked if she would still go out with me.

She said yes and that first date amounted to about a three-hour walk...talking about everything under the sun. We both desired to find the right person. Gail, at one point, asked me how we could know...how we could avoid getting hurt. I said we had to trust our Father in Heaven, the Spirit, and each other and take the risk.

After that evening, we were together each and every day. It was like a gift from Heaven.

Ten days later, she asked me to come over on Valentine's Day to her brother, Richard's apartment. He and his wife were going out and Gail got to use it to cook me a Valentine's dinner. After we ate, while we were watching TV, I asked her..."will you be my eternal sweetheart?"

She turned me around and said, "What?" So I asked her again and she said yes!

That how we got engaged, and two months after that we got married on April 25th, 1978, in the Salt Lake Temple, for time and all eternity.



Gail and Jeff after their wedding at the Salt Lake temple



Gail and Jeff showing their rings

After being wed, we spent our wedding night in a Honeymoon suite in Provo Utah. Her mom and Dad then got us a similar place in Idaho Falls where we went for a reception.

Then our honeymoon started. It consisted of two weeks of driving and camping from Yellowstone National Park to Bryce Canyon, then Zion's Canyon, the Grand Canyon, and then Mesa Verde...all National Parks.

We ended up at Palo Duro Canyon in Texas, and then home at the ranch in Texas, followed by a reception there in Texas.

Here are some pictures of our Honeymoon and reception in Texas:



Jeff in Yellowstone Park-it was cold



Gail in Yellowstone - still cold!

In that part of Texas, by the end of April, it is warm. No so in Yellowstone. I was getting educated in the Rocky Mountains. There was snow everywhere and it was cold. So we headed south.



Jeff setting up camp in Bryce canyon

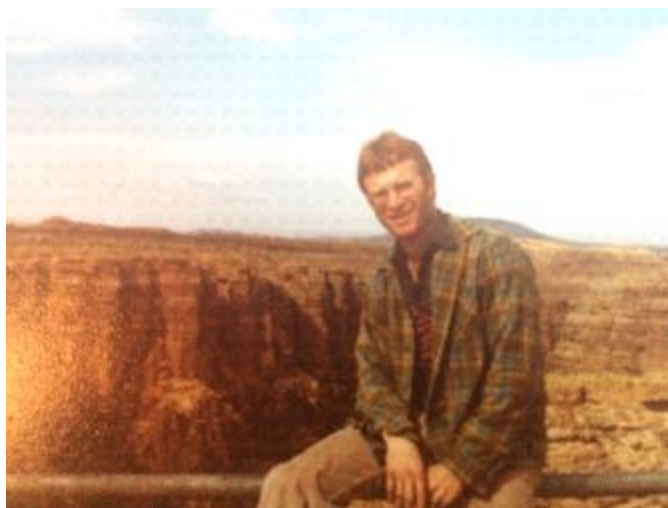


Gail taking our gear to the car in Zion's Canyon

We found it was cold everywhere. It rained hard on us in Zion's Canyon and our stuff got wet. We loaded up and went on, and Gail believes (probably justifiably so) that I left some things there as we loaded up in the rain.

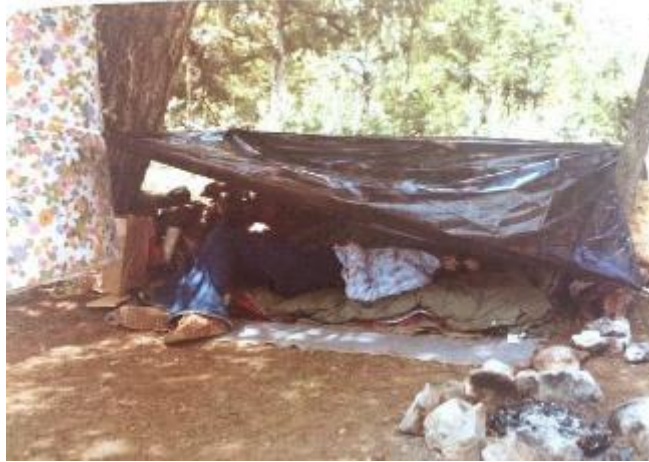


Gail at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon



Jeff at the south Rim of the Grand Canyon

We had better luck on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. It was still cool, but no snow...and very few people. At that altitude (about 7,000 ft.), it could easily have snowed there too. Anyhow, we made camp and I built a lean too, and then covered it with a tarp. We stayed three nights. One night several coyotes ran through camp.



Our camp at the Grand Canyon

From there it was on to Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado.



Gail looking at some of the dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park

We then drove into Texas to Palo Duro Canyon, a deep canyon in the great plains about 1,000 feet deep.



Jeff and Gail at Palo Duro Canyon in Texas

We then drove home to north central Texas and arrived looking pretty spent after two weeks on the road and camping, only using public facilities to keep clean. It was nice to be at the house and be able to clean up.



Jeff and Gail just arriving at the Head Ranch in Texas

Here's a map of the entire Honeymoon, also showing the receptions in Idaho Falls and in Denton, Texas:



Our Honeymoon Route

My Mom had worked with the sisters in the Denton Ward for a reception at the Denton Chapel (back then there was only one). Sister Martino, Sister Ragsdale, Sister Porter, and several others helped to make it a really nice.



Jeff and Gail at the reception in Denton, Texas



My brother Lee and his wife, Brenda with Gail and I



My good friend, Trey Martino, playing the guitar at our reception



Gail, in her wedding dress at our reception

It was all so wonderful and we were so grateful for everyone who helped.

Our courtship, our wonderful wedding in the Salt Lake Temple, the Receptions in Provo, Idaho Falls, and then in Texas were all special events and we were so thankful to everyone who helped Gail and I get started.

And it was time now to start our lives together, and we did not waste any time at doing so.

9.0 First Job, more BYU, 1st Child, Katie Amanda, back to Texas 1978-1979

Gail and I found jobs rather quickly.

I ended up working for a Packaging Company at the Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport as a shift manager. I had worked a couple of summers before graduating as a dock worker, and so had experience working with loading and scheduling. (That work actually paid more than my hay hauling). I was waiting on trying to get on as a draftsman at LTV where my Dad worked...but that was taking some time and we needed to make money.

As it was, Gail got a job at LTV doing some conversion work with documents there...so we both had good jobs.

We ended up renting a home in Arlington, Texas which was fairly near our work.

Then, within a few weeks, everything changed...as life often will.

I was running out to get the car for Gail in a Thunderstorm on a Sunday up in Denton. I slipped in the rain and tore the ligaments badly in my ankle. Luckily, a member there was an orthopedic surgeon and he took me right over to his office. He had to do a stress test and Gail was the only one there to help. So he had her turn on the XRAY machine when he stressed my ankle. Boy did it hurt...but he had to twist it to feel how much resistance it gave to know if I needed surgery.

Turns out, he had not let Gail know enough about turning on the machine...and he had to do it a second time. Gail was mortified...but I told her it was not her fault! She was not a trained technician. Anyhow, the bottom line was that I would need surgery and would be off work for a few days and then on crutches for several weeks.

When I got back to work on the crutches...they let me go. They needed someone who could work on the shift and keep up with the team. So there went my job.

Then Gail became pregnant...which was wonderful news...but she had such terrible morning sickness for the first three months, that she was having a tough time doing her work.

Then, when I got back to where I could drive and look for work...a young man who was an illegal alien ran a stop light in Arlington and hit me and totaled our car. I was blessed not to be seriously injured...but all of a sudden life had changed for us.

So, Gail and I talked about it...and since we were young, and since I had fallen in love with the mountains, we decided we would go back up to Provo, and I would get a job there, get situated, and Gail would follow.

My parents were not happy about this...but we made the decision to go anyway.

I ended up finding one of those companies that moves cars around the country and they had one going up to Salt Lake City. So, I drove it for them.

When I got to Provo I immediately began looking for a job...staying with some old roommates from college.

One really promising job was with a well-known Jeweler Company in downtown Provo. The owner really liked me and offered me a job on the spot. I told him I had to call my wife and see what she thought. He stopped me and said, "If you are a man who has to call his wife to get permission to take a perfectly good job, you are not the man I thought you were."

I excused myself and left...knowing I was turning down what appeared to be a good job. But I also knew that if he was a man who thought that way, he was a man I did not want to work for.

Anyhow, the next day I went into Intermountain Farmers Association, hoping they had an opening because I knew something about farms and ranches. It turned out they did and I was hired there as an Assistant Manager.

Gail though it was a good match and so I accepted the job.

This was GREAT, and so we arranged for Gail to come up to Provo. I was driving a bicycle all over town, but when Gail got up there, we spent what little money we had and bought a used Jeep Wagoneer.

By this time, it was late in the year of 1978. I got a call from a friend at BYU.

He was in the old 50th BYU Ward off campus ward in Provo that Gail and I had been in. He wanted me to come talk to Bishop Callahan, who had been our Bishop in that same ward before we got married a few months earlier. The friend was Erin Gee. Gail and I know both him and his wife, and so Bishop Callahan called me to be his second councilor.

I really enjoyed my work at Intermountain Farmers, and was having a great spiritual experience with the ward.

But, within a few months, we got an opportunity to work with Gail's Dad driving trucks to haul beats for a contract he had. It was great money so we took the opportunity to do that for a few months. IFA could not hold the job, but the 50th Ward waited until we got back, and I drove for Gail's Dad for several months.

I was used to driving trucks on the ranch hauling hay...but this was a true big rig, 18-wheeler. Gail's Dad had faith in me and showed me what I needed to do...and I picked it up and quite enjoyed it.

And the Lord was looking out for us.

One day I was driving home to Idaho Falls with a load of 50,000 pounds of beats and began hearing an odd "thumping" sound coming from the front end. I stopped and could not figure out what it was. So I slowed down and went by the house before going to the beat dump and explained to Gail's dad what was happening.

Ralph came out and took a look and just shook his head and whistled. It turned out one of the front wheels was cracking...and slowly cracking all the way around. It had gotten to the point where there was only 3 or 4 log nuts that were not cracked through. With a load, if the wheel had cracked off, I would have had a terrible wreck and probably killed.

Needless to say...we got it fixed, and the Lord was looking out for me.

One time in December, Gail went with me. She was almost eight months pregnant at the time...in fact she was eight months pregnant at the time.

We got to the top of Malad Summit on the Idaho-Utah border on Interstate 15. Gail needed to go to the rest room. Trouble was, it was snowing like crazy up there and the rest area was all snowed in. So, I broke through the drift leading into it, and then got out and cut a trail for my sweetheart to the restroom.

Then, when we had to leave, I could just not get any traction to go up the hill to get out of the parking area. It took us almost two hours! But, we were young and were having a great adventure!

In January we went back to Provo and back to work with the 50th Ward.

Then, on January 16th, 1979, Gail gave birth to our first child, a daughter we named Kate Amanda Head. She was born in the Payson Utah Hospital because Gail had found a doctor there that she like better than the one she would have had at Provo. So, we drove across the valley to Payson that day in January for her to give birth.

I was there for the delivery and the Doctor let me help. I was a huge education for me. I was raised with four brothers...and I clinically knew about children being born...but I had no idea about the reality. It was miraculous!

Soon after, we found that Dad had gotten me work at LTV in Arlington, and so it was back to Texas for us.

10. LTV job, 1st House, CAD/CAM work, 2nd Child Rachel is born 1979-1980

I began working for the structural department at LTV for a man named Chuck Johnson who had worked for my Dad for years and knew him and thought highly of him.

I was working on a drafting board learning how to draw and create drawings for the designs of aircraft and their parts. I really enjoyed it.

In May of that year, my Dad helped us buy a house down in Arlington Texas. It was a nice little house and we got it for about \$27,000 dollars. It seemed like so much at the time...but these days you can hardly buy a cheap trailer for that much!

But, at this time in our nation we were experiencing the interest rates, the inflation rates, and the unemployment rates were all over 10%. They called it, the Misery Index.” Our new home had a whopping 16% interest rate...which was unheard of. A lot of this was because of a change in leadership in 1978 to Jimmy Carter and his administration. They were very liberal and continued to double down on the welfare state, abortion, and policies that framed the world's problems as America's fault. And so their policies created horribly high gas prices, high inflation, unemployment and high interest. As a young man starting out, I saw all of this, and hoped the people of the country would change things. In 1980...they did, but more on that later.

On most days after work I would come home and help watch the baby. As she got older and started crawling and being able to communicate, we had great times just learning how to interact with and take care of her.



Katie Amanda Head on her Dad (me) in our home

But, as things go, and particularly with us early in our marriage, change came quickly.

I decided I wanted to follow my heart and try and become a Forest Ranger. I loved climbing and hiking in the mountains. I found that there was an opportunity in Missoula, Montana, and called them and they indicated I would need to come up there and talk to them.

My parents were very distraught. They felt we were making a huge mistake...and on top of that, my Dad's efforts at LTV had paid off and I was just walking away from it...including having sold the house my Dad just helped us get.

We really thought we had made a killing on it too, making all of \$4,000 in the sale.

But Gail and I talked and prayed about it and decided we were going to try and follow our hearts just the same.

In the meantime, Dad had talked to the people at work and they decided that if I would go to school, they could give me a leave of absence.

After we got to Idaho we prayed about it and decided that is what we would do.

Although working with the Forest would be great, this direction turned out to be best for us...engineering and the program I could get into at BYU. In essence, the Lord let us make our decision, but He also showed us that it was not best. My parents were happy we had changed our minds.

So, we decided to go back to school, take the leave of absence (which meant they would hold the job for me) and get into the CAD/CAM study. It stands for Computer-aided-Design and Computer-aided-Manufacturing. It was a really new thing back then and BYU had the only four year program in their engineering college for it...and LTV and about everyone else wanted it.

So LTV was happy to let me get that knowledge and bring it back to LTV...even though I had almost ruined my reputation with them by leaving.

By this time (in the late fall of 1979), we had found out Gail was pregnant with our second child!

In December we got an apartment at BYU...and I got called by another friend, Steve Stringham, who wanted me to talk to his Bishop, a Bishop Merrill in the 114th BYU Ward. Soon, I was called again to be a counselor in a Bishopric at BYU.

I was also working at nights while going to school.

I REALLY enjoyed the CAD/CAM work. It turned out I had a knack with the computers in general, and particularly in applying them to do engineering and design work.

I got to know the chairman of the department very well, Brother Max Raiser. He would mean a lot to me over the years to come.

We had a great experience with the Ward at BYU too. Most of it was GREAT and very spiritual. But as with any large group of teenagers and early twenties, they do make mistakes.

A couple of them took a motorcycle they found with a key in it and then stole a pickup truck license plate to put on it and kept it and drove it around for two weeks. When they got caught, the Bishop was out of town and they called me. I talked to them about repentance, just like we taught in the mission field and told them they should confess and repent. So they did, and told the police exactly what they had done.

The next Monday I was called into a conference call the Bishop was having with one of their parents. They told my how wrong it was for me to tell their child to confess. That he could go to prison and it would be my fault.

I told them I disagreed...that the boys were old enough to serve a mission or fight for their country and they did something very wrong. They needed to repent. Anyhow...the Bishop took charge from there and I felt bad that these boys had done wrong. But they had taken something from someone and knowingly kept it...and would have kept it longer if they had not been caught.

Anyhow, at the same time, I sensed if they were sorrowful and it was their first wrong doing like that they probably would not go to prison. Anyhow, in the end, the Bishop worked it out with these parents and I believe the boys got probation...but it was for a felony which was going to be with them the rest of their life.

Making bad mistakes has consequences and it is best to avoid them if you can...avoid making those horrible mistakes at all.

Anyhow, I was finishing that semester at school when on April 27, 1980, two days after our second wedding

anniversary, we were rushing to Payson Utah again and had our second beautiful daughter, Rachel Jewel Head that April 27, 1980.

...and she came quickly. It wasn't like Katie who took hours...the Doctor barely got there in time to deliver her...otherwise the nurses and I would have to do it. But I was getting used to it now. LOL!

After she was born and a few weeks went by, it was back to work in Texas at LTV.

One other thing about these children and the pregnancies. It was amazing for me to learn how early the life comes into the womb and their distinctly different natures develops early on. Katie would poke back resolutely through her Mom's tummy when I would touch her. Rachel on the other hand, did so very gently.

Much like they became in their early years of life.

Oh, remember this! Those are spiritual children of our Father in Heaven there in the womb. It is a gross and horrid sin for our free country to allow the wanton killing of these precious babies when we all know that they are aware...that they are human...and that they feel pain.

11. Back to LTV, more BYU, Bechtel Power, 3rd Child, Becki born 1980-1983

Now at LTV I was making over \$18,000 per year. Which for us at the time was a huge thing.

I was still enjoying the work and began talking about how to utilize Computer-aided-Design equipment and programs in it.

The people at LTV liked me and I worked on several projects I really enjoyed.

The A-7E aircraft that the Navy used (which my dad had been a principle Engineer on) and a version was being sold to Portugal. Also worked on the MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) our army uses in battle to either defend large areas against troops and armor, or to salvo launch when attacking.

The election that year brought the change so many of us hoped for.

Ronald Reagan, a good man, who was about as "All American," as you could get, but who had a way of communicating with people like he was a loving grandparent, was elected and his policies of strengthening America, standing up to America's enemies...particularly the Soviet Union, and opening up America's markets and removing so much regulation made a HUGE difference in a short while...and America was hitting on all eight cylinders again. (That's a saying that those of us who worked on cars back then would say when things were going very well. Cars with eight cylinders sounded good, and they could do amazing things if the timing on the cylinders and their firing was synced and in time.) America was synced and in tune again.

Gail was taking care of Katie and Rachel and our home, and things seemed pretty ideal.

One thing that happened was I had my first Father's Day.

But Gail had wanted to visit her folks and show them our new baby...and especially to let her Dad see our new daughter. Gail asked me if she could go and, of course I said yes. But it hurt because I wanted it to be special for me with our first child.

I had a lot to learn.

Anyhow, Gail left me a card and a recording to open on Father's Day and I did. It made me cry because she was so special about it and had a poem for me and how much she loved me and appreciated me. I felt badly about being upset, and she helped me learn how to be more giving.

That fall of 1980, we went back to BYU to continue with the CAD schooling. I met and had several classes with a fellow who became a lifelong friend, and who worked together with me at several jobs. His name is Jeff Barrus, and we came to know and like each other there in 1980.

We found a trailer in the Orem area and bought it and lived there with our two children while I went to school.

This time I did two semesters and worked very hard at getting as much done as possible.

Again, I really enjoyed the learning and the equipment. By the end of April 1981, I had completed two and a half years toward the degree...and focused on most of my major requirements.

Along with that, I now had over a years' experience actually doing design work.

Companies come to BYU each year to interview for new graduates, and though I wasn't a graduate, we had two kids and were running short of money so I decided to interview somehow.

I went to one presentation by Bechtel Power Corporation from southern California and was intrigued by what they were doing and particularly how they wanted to use CAD.

After his presentation, I knew I couldn't get an interview through the University...so I went up to the man, a Mr. Bill Gould who himself was a BYU graduate and member of the church. I quickly explained to him my dilemma but indicated I would like the chance to talk to him.

He took my number and said if he had a chance he would call.

I did not expect to hear back...but we got a call at home the next evening and he agreed to meet me over his lunch hour that next day.

We had a great talk and whatever I said must have impressed him.

A few weeks later when Bechtel sent BYU a message on who they wanted to fly out to California for interviews...I was on the list! It caused quite a stir as it turned out. Some people did not like it. One or two guys in particular accused me of taking opportunities away from graduates.

Well, I felt badly they were upset...but I told them I had talked to him on my own and for whatever reason he wanted me to interview...so I did.

And I got an offer. It was several more thousand dollars per year than what LTV was paying...and Bechtel was already starting to implement the new technology. LTV did counter...but only could meet me half way...so we took the job with Bechtel.

In the mean time I had hurt my sweetheart.

We had our 3rd anniversary that April before leaving for California and Gail had arranged a really nice dinner for me. But that afternoon I took my brother's (Greg) motorcycle for a ride into the hills. It broke down and I could not contact Gail and I was late by hours and she was worried, and hurt, and I felt so terrible.

I told her how sorry I was...as it turned out, I still had a lot to learn about girls, and about doing all I should do to keep them happy and taken care of like I should.

Anyhow, Gail forgave me, and I love her for it...and now we were on our way to California and Bechtel Power Corporation and a real roller coaster ride...as if though we had not already been on one.

With all of that said, we purchased a new 1980 Volkswagen Dasher Wagon in Provo, and that is what we went down to California in in our new job.

In January 1981, I started with Bechtel. The offices I worked at were in Norwalk California, for Bechtel Power Corporations headquarters. I worked with the Plant Design Department and was specifically working on the San Onofre nuclear power plants.



Bechtel Power Corporation in Norwalk, California.

We got an apartment in Brea, California, about 12-15 miles from work and I would commute in every day.

As soon as Rachel was old enough that Gail felt comfortable, she got a job with the Executive Secretary, a place that did secretarial duties and work for companies. We only had one car, so we would take the girls to a member of the church who would watch them during the day, and then I would take Gail to work, and then afterwards do it in reverse and pick her up and then the kids.

It was a lot of running, but one thing we learned about California...as nice as the weather is...it is expensive to live there. We were actually not able to spend or save as much there even though our salary was higher.

But...the work was good. I was learning a lot and felt I had a lot to contribute.

I was selected to go to Huntsville Alabama and work with the CAD Company, Intergraph that provided us with the equipment we were using. I got trained, and then developed methodologies for training others at Bechtel.

One of the big projects was the San Onofre nuclear plants where Bechtel was building three plants to help power southern California.

A nuclear power plant is pretty easy in concept. You create a non-critical nuclear reaction (meaning it cannot explode) and this creates a lot of heat. You use the heat to boil water and take the superheated steam to turn turbines and create power.

But, the material is radioactive, so though you cannot have a nuclear explosion, it can get so hot that it melts through things. So, the reaction is contained in a very thick and high strength reactor vessel. This in turn is surrounded by a hugely thick concrete building. Triple and quadruple safety measures are in place that back each other up, and very strict guidelines regulate how everything is designed and works. Despite one or two highly publicized issues over many decades, the US has the safest and most productive nuclear power on earth. I was proud to work on it.

With the CAD, and the automation, I and a couple of others came up with an idea for one of the things we were designing.

In each of the power plants there are hundreds of miles of piping. Each of those pipes has to have pipe supports to hold them safely, and they must be built to stringent exactness...particularly if they are in an area of the plant that is "nuclear", meaning within the containment building.

There are tens of thousands of supports in each building and, even using the CAD machines to create the

drawings, we were spending literally tens of millions of dollars just to create the pipe supports.

But what if we could automate that? What if we took the nuclear codes books and all of the parameters we had to work with and fed them into the computer, and then had the computers programmed to automate the design. To do all the look up, all of the measuring and calculating (which they are very good at) and then had the CAD portion take the resulting information and automatically create each drawing?

It would save many tens of millions of dollars.

So, I presented the idea, and we got it approved. We started off testing the ideas and programs on San Onofre...and we got approval to create a Bechtel-wide program. We came up with an acronym for it.

BISEPS - Bechtel Interactive System for Engineering Pipe Supports.

It was working great at San Onofre. I had been given a raise and was managing the group that put together the entire program.



San Onofre Nuclear Plants 1 and 2

This all took about a year and a half.

During that time, we had a lot of fun things we did. Taking the kids to Knots Berry Farms and Disneyland. I took Gail, in April 1981, to Yosemite National Park for our anniversary and had arranged to kidnap her from work. Her boss and co-workers knew...but when I came and got her, it was fun because I simply drove out of town and she wondered where in the heck we were going.

We stopped in Fresno and went to a movie. It was the movie, the Jazz Singer where Neil Diamond starred and featured the song, "Coming to America." We then went to Yosemite and spent the weekend. It was lovely, and beautiful and a good time.

But time marched on....and we were busy and we did not have much money. Sometimes I was late picking Gail up, and this caused understandable issues because we had kids to pick up and Gail had to wait for me whenever something like that happened.

Before we knew it, we were in the middle of 1982 and we had decided to try and buy a house.

Trouble was, the only place we could afford one was in the outlying areas at the time. So, we found a place in Fontana, California, about 50 miles from work.

The deal we had on the house did not last. It turned out the people who had sold it to us had been very loose with the numbers and financing and we ended up having to move out and get an apartment...and also found out that Gail was going to have our 3rd child!

Great news...but now we didn't have much room.

Well, things were about to change.

At work, they decided to export the BISEPS program to other Bechtel offices. They had been talking to me about going back to school and finishing my degree too, so they asked me who I thought could take the BISEPS program I had been managing.

While this talk was going on, on August 7, 1982, our third beautiful daughter, Rebecca Gail Head was born into the world in Fontana, California. Most people may not believe it, but the day she was born, she looked at Gail and me and gave us the sweetest smile...a smile sent from heaven. I took a couple of days off and then on the 9th or 10th brought Gail home with the baby from the hospital

Some people say that is not possible...but I saw it with my own eyes and know that she was sent down to us, just like Katie and Rachel had been, from a kind and loving Father in Heaven, and according to promises made before the world was even created, regarding our being a family.

The other two girls were so excited to see their baby sister. Katie was two and a half, and Rachel was coming up on one and a half at the time.

I went back to work that day...and on the way, was attacked by an individual on the highway. I noticed him following far too close on my bumper on the Freeway, and when I got off on Norwalk Blvd, he followed. He actually began bumping into the back of our car and so I pulled over into a parking lot.

To make a long story short, he had a club and ran up to the car and tried to hit me in the head with it. Luckily, it hit the car frame and dented it severely. I am sure it would have killed me if it had hit me.

A piece broke off and hit me in the face and knocked me out, breaking the orbital bone around my eye.

When I came to the guy was going around our car beating all the windows out with his club.

I lost it and yelled at him. When I did he tried to hit me again, but I used some of the karate I had learned while in High School and blocked him, grabbed his arm, and then began to saw it back and forth on the broken glass of the window.

He did not like that at all, and he pulled his arm back cutting it up his arm. It was different now that he was hurt too and all he wanted to do was get away. He tried to hit me again but I avoided him and was about to grab him when he got back in his car and drove away.

I yelled at some people who had come out to call the police...and then I gave chase. I chased him about five miles down Beach Blvd before he wrecked. I then held him there for the Police.

I had to call my dear wife from the hospital.



My picture the evening after being attacked

As it turned out, I was beat up and had the broken orbital bone but would be okay. Later we found out that the guy thought my car was a car that had cut him off in traffic two days earlier (while I had been at the hospital with Gail) fifty miles away in another direction.

Anyhow, because while he was out on bail he assaulted another person and shot at them, he ended up getting 10-12 year sentence. Sad...but true. Always be careful and watch things happening around you.

Once all of that settled down, a decision had to be made about who was going to take over the BISEPS program while I went back to BYU.

Gail and I had prayed about it and we decided to ask them if I could take the job and they agreed!

So, for a couple of months while I wrapped things up at Norwalk, we had Gail and the girls stay with Grandma and Grandpa Woodmansee up in Idaho, until we were ready to go. While finishing work in southern California, I got the chance to go to Las Vegas with some people in the ward who had friends there who owned a recording studio. I had written songs for Gail, Katie, Rachel and Becki, and some others and played them on my guitar. Those friends got permission to let me record them. A Mountain Morning, Katie Amanda, Rachel Ray Robin, Oh Becki, and several others. It was fun and allowed me once again to use my guitar.

My new assignment was going to be for a year down in Houston Texas to implement the new program on the South Texas Nuclear Project which Bechtel had just been awarded.



South Texas Nuclear Project near Houston

It was exciting and we got a good raise out of it, and then were paid a very good per diem the entire time we were down there.

Houston was hot...but we did buy a second car so Gail had something to drive around while I was at work.

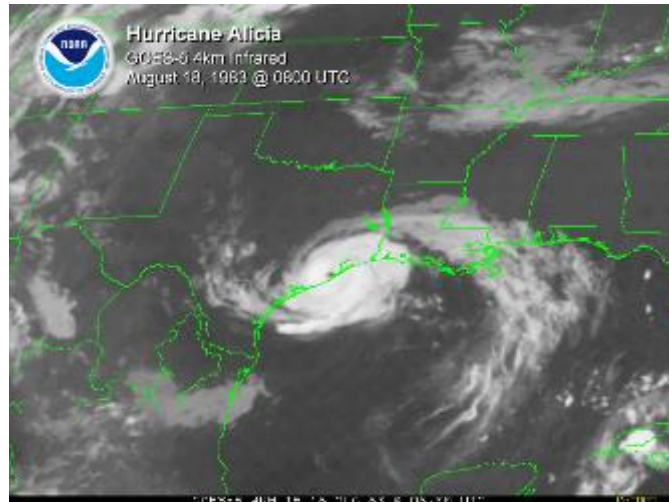
While were there hurricane Alicia hit Houston in 1983. It had been out to sea in the Gulf and was supposed to miss...but then it turned and came straight for Houston.

I called Gail and told her to fill up the bathtubs with water and I would immediately got to the store and get anything we needed.

But guess what...within three hours by the time I got to the store...everything you could possibly want or need for such a disaster was gone!

Luckily, we had the water and some food storage, and Gail always kept a good supply of candles.

So, on the afternoon and night of August 18, 1983, we literally weathered the storm. It caused 1.7 billion dollars' worth of damage in downtown Houston where many skyscrapers had most of their glass ripped out. We were on the Northwest side of Houston, but the eye passed right over us.



Hurricane Alicia and the aftermath

We were blessed to come though it okay.

By this time, we were approaching the end of our assignment in Houston.

The people there wanted me to stay, but Gail and I wanted to do two things.

- 1) Get my education done.
- 2) Not live in Houston...it was simply too crowded and too hot.

So, we worked with Bechtel and I found someone who could do the job, interviewed him, and then the management interviewed him and liked him to take my place.

It was my friend from BYU, Jeff Barrus, and it was a good opportunity for him.

In the meantime, I was working with BYU and Max Raisor, who had become the Associate Dean for the College of Engineering at BYU.

He not only helped me put together an aggressive schedule to complete my degree, but he arranged for me to design a graduate course for the Master's Students, and then have me teach it as his personal Aide.

So, we were going to get a lot of schooling done and get paid to do it.

12. More BYU, Texas, Formtek, Motorola, Dallas Temple 1984-1986

We simply loved getting back to the mountains and BYU!

I had a lot on my plate. I was taking 24 hours of school work and teaching a 3-credit hour class (which I also got credit for).

We found an apartment in Orem and I was called to work with the Young Men at church, to be the Scout leader.

Gail had her hands full with our three girls, particularly through 1984 as we were getting Katie ready to start school.

I loved teaching the Grad Course. It was a lot of fun and I designed the course work.

It was DT 537, CAE/CAD/CAM for Industry, and I drew on my now several years of experience to come up with a curriculum that I felt would help these graduate student be ready not only to understand CAD/CAM, but to be able to implement it in their places of business in such a way to make the biggest positive impact.

I finished all of my courses and maintained a 3.85 GPA on them.

But, sadly, I did not completely finish my degree! I was about 6-8 general-education hours short.

Max Raisor treated me as if though I had the degree!

He wanted me to stay and become a teacher at BYU, and finish the schooling there.

I had left Bechtel making over \$40,000 per year. I had gone from \$24,000 to \$40,000 in a little over three years. We were so blessed.

As the summer rolled around and I had been back in Provo for six months. Some big and exciting opportunities came along for CAE/CAD/CAM.

A startup company from Pittsburg offered me \$50,000 per year to be in charge of introducing their new CAE technology to industry.

It sounded exciting and it was certainly good money in 1984.

We prayed about it and took the job. It would have me working out of the Dallas area in Texas...so off we went back to Texas in the summer of 1984.

We had found out that Gail was pregnant with number four, and that helped us make our decision because we needed more money with the new baby coming.

Formtek turned out requiring far too much travel...and the VP over me was a very profane individual who seemed to take delight in trying to upset me with his language.

He wanted us to meet one time with the Regional Managers at a sleazy/girly joint in Dallas.

When we got there and I saw what it was and I told him I would not meet there.

He said, "Come on Jeff, you not man enough for a joint like this?"

I told him that the problem was that I was too much a man for it, and had a wife and children whom I would never sully by entering such a place. I saw a Burger King about 300 yards up the road and told them I would be

there when they got done.

So they went in and the big boss was mad at me...and they had their meeting while I have a Whopper!

One of the other managers came and got me and thanked me for standing up to the individual.

I turned in my notice that next week, and already had some opportunities on the table.

One was with EDS (Electronic Data Systems) in Detroit that was very intriguing.

It was the middle of the Reagan years and EDS was run by Ross Perot who had saved his own employees during the Iranian crisis in 1979-1980. I respected that, and knew that they were on the cutting edge of a lot of important technology.

But, at the same time, we had purchased a house in Krum Texas, that June about eight miles from my folk's ranch, and we loved it there. My Dad helped us with the down payment and co-signed on the loan. It was at 12 Finley Circle in Krum. Here is a picture of the home:



12 Finley Circle, Krum, Texas

We loved that home, but nonetheless decided to go to EDS, which meant we would sell it.

But the Lord had different plans!

A week before the movers came to get us, my Father had some heart problems. He drove himself into the hospital on his way to work...but it was serious and he would not be able to do the things he liked to do out at the ranch. He was going to have to take it easy for months, or risk a major heart attack.

Gail and I prayed about it and decided we would take our 2nd choice offer with Motorola in Fort Worth, Texas.

It was a good offer at \$50,000 to run their CAD/CAM department for their portable product division making radios for the military and law enforcement.

At the same time, in the Denton Ward of the Church, I had been a counselor in the Elder's Quorum there when they called me to be the Elder's Quorum President. Next to the Bishop, and along with the Relief Society President, the Elder's Quorum President in a big ward is an important job, and it requires a huge commitment.

I looked forward to it because I had been thinking about how our Quorum could be closer and help one another and the other members better.

It went back to some of the concepts Erin Gee and I, and Steve Stringham and I had tried to implement in the BYU Wards when we had been in Bishoprics there.

As a note...usually a member of a Bishopric is called a High Priest and is no longer an elder. But in the late 1970s and early 1980s, at BYU the church had decided to call Elders to those positions so that they would not have so many very young High Priests coming out of BYU. So that is how I came to be in two Bishoprics without at the time being a High Priest in the Church.

Anyhow, as we implemented those programs and held our personal priesthood interviews religiously, and as myself and my counselors worked with our members and ensured that by the 24th each month if the Home Teaching had not been done (which is a program where two priesthood holders watch over several families and try and make sure that their needs are met, particularly in emergencies). Anyhow, as the three of us worked with those Elders and helped them do their Home Teaching each month, over a period of time, our Quorum changed and it was a wonderful experience.

Staying in Texas and taking the job at Motorola allowed us to keep out home, to give some much needed stability to our kids and their living...as well as for Gail who simply wanted to be the best home keeper and mother and wife shoe could, and it allowed me to continue the work we were doing ...not to mention being in the area to help my Dad.

And, I was blessed at work. I came up with a plan to improve and upgrade their CAD/CAM with a project to review what we really needed, and where we wanted it to go in our factories, and then put together a requirements document and a tender for companies to bid on.

I worked very hard at these projects...and found a lot of satisfaction in the success.

We had gotten a new station wagon for Gail, and on a trip where Gail's parents came to visit us. Her Dad and I went out and I bought a new Ford Ranger Pickup. Back then the brand-new pickup (it was a mid-size, not a full size) cost \$5,999! Hehehe, imagine that.

Becki particularly liked that Blue Pickup.

That October of 1984, they were having an open house for the new Dallas Temple dedication.

They put the word out for as many people who could take the time to meet at a Stake Center in the Dallas area to help get all the Church dignitaries back and forth to the airport and temple from their hotels by volunteering to drive them.

I raised my hand and went. At the meeting, they asked if there were any of the group who could spend four full days doing the same. I had some vacation saved up and so I raised my hand along with a few more.

We went in to another room and met with a group of gentlemen who represented Church security. They asked us a bunch of questions, and because of my clearances with the military for the work I had been doing, I kind of hit it off with them.

The bottom line was that I was assigned to be the local guide for Ezra Taft Benson, who was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time, and for Carlos Assay, a General Authority of the Church and the man who had married Gail and I in the Salt Lake Temple, and who had helped teach us in 1970 when he was the Mission President in Dallas, Texas.



Ezra Taft Benson and his wife

The next few days were wonderful! President Benson was such an inspiring individual, and at the same time very down to earth. He could have you in stitches laughing one minute with some of his humor, and then having you cry because the spirit was so strong in the next.

He took time to ask me about our life, and he gave some advice. He asked me if I had read any of his books...and boy had I.

President Benson, after World War II, had led the Church effort to help bring food and material to the war-torn peoples of Europe and had worked with General Eisenhower at the time. Later, Eisenhower remembered him and asked him to be his secretary of agriculture during his administrations in the 1950s.

In addition to being a very spiritual man, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ and leader in the Church, he was also a very powerful and loyal American patriot.

He had written several books about the Constitution, one called, "The US Constitution, a Heavenly Banner." Another called, "The Red Carper," about the dangers of Communism, and another called, "An Enemy hath done this," about how our nation was being led astray with more and more Marxist principles, and horrible moral actions like abortion which were horrible in God's eyes and terribly weakening the moral fiber of our nation.

We had some great discussions!

We had one meeting during the dedication where Gail got to come and Sister Benson saw that she was pregnant and talked with her.

The whole thing, especially the dedication of that Temple, was just an inspiring experience.



The Dallas Texas Temple for the Church

On one occasion, a man shook President Benson's hand and said, "Oh President Benson, you called me on my Mission when you were a Stake President in such and such a place," President Benson said, "Well brother, how's the work?" When the man indicated that he had been released from his mission long ago, President Benson said, "Well, I never released you," and then hugged the man and everyone was smiling.

On another occasion, he let me know that the things that had been happening with our nation that Ronald Reagan was helping turn around at the time (only to see it turn around even worse later), were not new.

He told me that Dwight Eisenhower was a great American but that even during his administration there were enemies within the government. He indicated that he had a meeting with Eisenhower specifically about some people that President Benson was aware of who had gotten into the administration but who were working at cross purposes to the best interests of the nation. He told me that President Eisenhower listened to him, and then kind of bowed his head and shook it, and then looked up at Brother Benson and said, "Ezra, I know...but there is nothing I can do about it."

Imagine that. A strong, patriotic man like Eisenhower, and the President of the United States, not being able to do anything about it...and this was back in the 1950s. It just reminds us how important it is for the people to be aware of what is going on and to stand resolutely for what is right...and then vote accordingly. It also reminds us of how important trusting in God in Heaven is when it comes right down to it.

He has helped our nation in the past...and I am sure, and President Benson promised me that as long as some appreciable portion of Americans worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ, He would continue to vouchsafe America and that the Constitution and the US Flag would be flying over this land when the Savior returns.

I believe that with all my heart, and tried to live my life accordingly. I believe it still, even though it is now many years since President Benson has gone home to our Father in Heaven.

Anyhow, the experience with President Benson was a singular experience and I can testify from the spirit that he was an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the work he was involved in was oh so important to all of us.

In addition, on Dec 24, 1984, New Year's Eve, our 4th child and first son was born. Jeffrey Lynn Head Jr. More on that in a moment.

13. Jeff Head Jr. Born, Intergraph, learning priorities 1984-1985

As I say, that December 24, 1984, Christmas Eve, Jeffrey Lynn Head Jr. was born in Denton Texas at Flow Memorial Hospital. He was our first boy, I used to like to say that both he and Jared were born in Texas where a man ought to be born! Like his sister Becky, his hair was very, very red!

Sort of like that early picture of me near the beginning of this story. LOL!

I remember another swift run to the hospital, this time into Denton, Texas.

That Hospital was to be decommissioned within five years and turned into a counseling center. The building may still be there on the hill behind the old Junior High School...but it may have been torn down by now too.

But at the time, it was a nice hospital and had been in Denton my whole life and longer.

As 1985 rolled around, I was completing my program to purchase a new CAD/CAM System for Motorola Mobile Projects. It had been a very successful program and allowed us to get our needs on paper, got consensus agreement from the various departments, and did so in a way that we could judge the efforts of the suppliers who had to meet our specifications. We put the bids out and several companies responded.

The two finalists were Computer Vison (whom we already used) and Intergraph, whom I had worked so much with at Bechtel Power.

Computer Vision won, and we began implementing the plan to modernize and further increase the productivity and capability of our systems.

In July of 1985, my Dad had a major heart attack. He was feeling bad and would not let Mom take him in. We ended up giving him a blessing, me and the Bishop. By this time it was early in 1986.

About three months after losing the bid, the Regional Director for Intergraph called me. I was surprised to get the call. The individual was named Dave Eggleston and we had become friends during the process.

He indicated that his reason for calling was because, even though he had lost the bid, he was impressed with the process I had put together and knew that there were many companies that needed to learn that process.

To make a long story short, he wanted me to come to work for him at Intergraph and become the Regional Technical Manager for the Region that he directed. He was offering me over \$70,000 per year plus bonuses!

I knew Intergraph's product very well, and this job would entail some travel to the various offices in the Region, and to companies who were implementing their product. I would be managing 10-12 senior technical individuals and engineers who would present the product to those companies, or help support them after they purchased it.

Again, Gail and I prayed about it and decided to take the job. It would be in Dallas so we would not move. To date I had had a great experience at Motorola and put in place a program to improve their use of CAE/CAD/CAM, and felt it would be a good thing to help many companies do the same thing. So we said yes and in April of 1986, I started with Intergraph.

But, it was also a busy job, in fact, over the next two years, it was VERY busy.

In January 1987, my Dad had quadruple by-pass surgery. They had helped him when they treated him for the heart attack...but his arteries were still clogged and without the surgery...he was going to die.

When I came and saw him afterwards, he looked worse than when he had the heart attack. At this time, they still cut a person open down the middle of their sternum, spread the chest cavity apart, and then worked on the heart that way. He was in the hospital for four weeks...but he made a miraculous recovery. He would just have to do less physical work, and not get as stressed, and take it easy. We were blessed to have him remain alive, and I know Mom was very thankful. In 1988 they had been married forty years.

I took time off when this occurred, but then I had a lot of travel to catch up on. Between all of that work and traveling, my calling in the Elder's Quorum, and all that entailed...Gail was left with the kids a lot and she began feeling alone with raising the family.

I did not see it...and we she wanted to talked about it, I would try and reassure her without really changing anything. Once again, I still had lots to learn.

One day I came home from work and she had left a note saying she was taking some time and would be gone.

I had resisted efforts to see a counselor, and now Gail was desperately trying to find within herself the love and cherished relationship we had started with.

I was heartbroken.

However, she returned within a couple of days and we talked, and we did go see a counselor. The net result was that I got released as the Elder's Quorum President. The Stake President informed me that the point was not to work our people so hard that it ruined the family, and that I had done a great job, but doing a great job as a father and a dad was more important.

I was humbled...but would later have to learn the lesson again.

Sometimes the good Lord gives us experiences that stretch us exactly where we need stretching, and each of us sometimes need more than one lesson. Gail had worked so hard and was the life that kept our family going, when I was away a lot. I needed to learn to recognize that for what it was...even though I thought I did...and then SHOW Gail how much I appreciated it and understood it by setting aside some of the things I was doing.

As I said, as my career continued and opportunities kept coming, it was something I would have to learn again. Oh, if you are reading this, learn the lesson...if possible, without making the mistakes...and if you do make the mistakes, try and learn the first time.

So, my work continued at Intergraph, and Dave and the upper management were very satisfied.

...and we had the types of experiences that families have that punctuated the issue.

One day at church, while some young women were watching the kids in the nursery and Gail was working with Relief Society...and I was out of town on business...little Jeffie, who was two years old at the time, broke his leg. Apparently one of the kids was jumping around and accidentally jumped on Jeff's leg somehow and broke it.

Another time, when I was on business again, Katie slipped near our home in Krum, and broke her elbow.

I can remember each time something like this happened and wishing I were at home...and wanting to get on an airplane and come home. But Gail was able to take care of it...as she always has. As it turned out, we were not through with broken bones in our family.

In January 1987, Katie turned eight years old and was baptized into the Church. She was so pretty in her white dress! She was the ground breaker for everything new our kids learned because she was the oldest. She also had to put up with us learning how to be parents at each new stage.

In June 1987, Gail was doing some Relief Society work and I was working in the yard with the kids playing. I

noticed that Jeff Jr. was not around. He had been taking a nap, so I went in to look for him.

But he was not there! I looked all over the house, calling him. He was approaching two years old. Try as I might, I could not find him in the house or the yard.

I enlisted people in the neighborhood and wondered how I was going to tell Gail that our precious son had gone missing? We went up and down the street. Everyone was checking in their yards, and in their houses and garages...but no Jeffie. We could not find him anywhere!

I went back into the house and prayed again. I knelt down and poured my heart out to my Father in Heaven. ...pleading with Heavenly Father to help me find him. Even though I had looked in the house...and neighbors had numerous times, after my prayer, as I got up, Jeff came walking around the corner, calling out to me.

I picked him up and hugged him through my tears. Where had he been?

To this day we do not know what happened...whether he had fallen asleep somewhere or what. But we looked everywhere...under beds, in cabinets, in the garage. Everywhere we could think of...and the neighbors had too.

As I said, we do not know where he had gone...and thinking back on it I remember how helpless I felt, but also how sincerely I prayed to our Father in Heaven.

I know that the Lord answered that prayer. I cannot say exactly what happened...but I know a loving God heard and answered my prayer and Jeff just appeared from wherever he had been.

16. Changes as Intergraph, another move to GE Calma in California 1987-1988

Late that year (1987) management changed at Intergraph. They brought in a new President, who was a man I knew, John Mostert. Through my work at Intergraph, we had become friends. He was from Canada and had been an early founder of Intergraph.

One day he called me and asked if I would consider moving to Huntsville and being the National Manager of Technical services at Intergraph. It would be a HUGE raise and would involve an executive position.

Gail and I talked and decided we could do it.

But...it was not to be. A few weeks before we were going to go out on a house hunting trip, John called and indicated that he was resigning and returning to Canada.

He too had a young family and he saw how much it would take to be the President of such a large, high-tech company, and decided against it and would be returning home. I told him how much I respected his decision, even though I was sad we would not be able to work together.

In the meantime, the new management had their own people they wanted in the position I would have taken.

As it turned out, my boss, David Eggleston had left Intergraph and become a Sr. Vice President at GE Calma, another CAD company in San Jose, California. In late September of 1987 he called and offered me a job with GE Calma. He wanted us to come out to California and interview.

Gail and I decided to make it a family vacation and take some time off to make the interview trip.

So we did.

In October of 1987, we drove up to Canada and visited John Mostert and his family in Calgary.

We then went to Kananaskis Park in the Canadian Rockies and camped there for two days. One night the kids got to hear wolves in the distance. It was a little scary for them, but I let them know we would be safe. I had brought a rifle, which was legal to do at the time in Canada.

It was a beautiful experience, and the first of several long family sightseeing and camping experiences we would have through the years.



Kananaskis Provisional Park in Canada in 1987

Hehehe...one word about guns and Canada. DO NOT ever try and bring a hand gun into Canada. I had one with me. At the border, they asked if I had one and I told them about the rifle...but not the hand gun. When the border patrol agent asked if there was a hand gun the second time, Gail said, "Yes we do honey, you remember

that one in the compartment.”

I looked at the agent and he was clearly not happy. He informed me how serious Canada viewed this law and I gave him my hand gun. He told us we could pick it up on the way out. As it turned out, we left the country several hundred miles to the west of there...and we never saw that hand gun again

After driving back into the US, we drove down to The Redwoods National Park in northern California, and then drove through the Redwoods north of San Francisco. We all remembered the drive thru-tree there.



Drive thru Tree in the Redwoods

We rented a cabin for three days at one point. It was a LOT of fun.

We also went down to the Pacific Coast, which was beautiful



During our trip to Interview, the Pacific Coast of Northern California...the whole family

It was a great trip and as you can see, the entire family had a great experience.

The interview in San Jose went great and they offered us a job on the spot. We accepted and were on our way again for another big move and adventure, this time in northern California.

Once the decision was made to go to San Jose with GE Calma, things moved rapidly.

They got us an apartment in San Jose where we lived for about a month while we looked for a place more appropriate for our family of six. We found it in Livermore, California, about 20 miles outside of San Jose, and

over a small range of hills on the west side of the bay. It's the location of Lawrence Livermore National Labs.

Immediately, things were very busy at work. I was in charge of Six Regions all across America and had to get out to meet the Regional Directors who reported to me, as well as get to know the managers there locally.

Calma had some good products, both for Mechanical Engineering and particularly for Electrical Engineering...but they had been mismanaged and were not generating enough revenue.

That was what the sales force had to do and I had technical people in each region to help.

I found out within two months that upper management was working on trying to sell the company. They wanted my help in that endeavor, but this came as a surprise to me as you can imagine.

We had just moved our entire family out there and to realize that the company might be sold was not the best of prospects. I let Gail know and so we both worried about what might happen.

In the meantime, we had to keep the business going, and make it as profitable as possible.

Ultimately, we did so.

While there two important events occurred in our lives along with our day to day living.

On 25 April 1988 Gail and I observed our tenth wedding anniversary. It was simply amazing to me that we had been married for ten years! So much had happened, as this story attests.

Two days later, Rachel turned eight years old. We celebrated her birthday and then when we could schedule it...within a week or two, she was baptized into the Church, as Katie had been.

I wish I had been able to do more, looking back. But my position required a LOT of time and travel. At least we marked the events and thanked Heavenly Father for our good fortune.

A company, Valid Logic Systems, was particularly interested in the Electrical Engineering product we had. Within a year of getting to San Jose, and then to Livermore, they had made an offer to buy that part of the business.

For me, the offer meant another decision.

I could either be assigned a director level position somewhere else at General Electric, I could stay on with GE Calma and help them sell the rest of the company, or I could accept a Director level position with the new company.

Gail and I prayed about it and ultimately decided to go with the new company, Valid Logic Systems. They would locate me...guess where? Why back in Dallas, Texas (imagine that?)

So, there we went again.

I got Gail and the kids moved back to Dallas with my parents, while I had to spend six weeks finishing up things in San Jose. Dave Eggleston, who had become a good friend, helped take care of me while that family was going and I was waiting to move. He had a sail boat and would take me out on the San Francisco bay and even let me control the vessel. It was a nice thing...and I really enjoyed it. I imagined how my Dad felt and saw in some small way his own love for the Ocean and navigation that he would talk about some times from the war:



Sailing Dave Eggleston's sail boat

Another thing I had learned to do, and enjoyed, was to boogie board surf in the Ocean. The ocean there is cold so I had a wet suit and a board.

While alone, I would drive over to the coast on Friday and spend Saturday surfing. It gave me something to do during the weekends and I enjoyed the coast and the water.

One day though, while I was about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off the beach, I was catching a wave when I noticed this huge dorsal fin near me. It circled towards me and this HUGE fish bumped against my leg. That fin was a good foot or two away when it did so and this thing was very big. It looked big enough to eat me in one bite! It was all black with white markings.

I immediately got on my board and came into the shore. I was shaken up a bit and talked to people there. They told me it was an Orca...or killer-whale. They said when it bumped me it was smelling me, probably thinking I was a seal because of the wet suite.

I tell you...I took my things and went and got in the car and drove home. Something told me to not surf anymore...and I never have. Amazing what realizing that you are not on top of the food chain! LOL! But seriously, I believe the Spirit of God told me not to do it again...and I have been true to it.

By the time I was done with my preparations at GE Calma and with Valid Logic, it was time to head back to Texas. Gail had already found a place for us. It was a used home that a man had lived in singly for years and not kept up too well. But it was on about five acres and only a couple of miles away from my folks...being north of Bolivar Texas (which is four miles west of Sanger) instead of west of Bolivar like my parents' place was.

17. Valid Logic, Gail and I travel to Germany, 5th Child, Jared born 1988-1989

We closed on our home there in Texas on May 27th, 1988, after I arrived back in Texas. We had a lot of work to do on our home. My Dad and others helped us a lot.



The Home in the Country near Sanger...needed lots of work

We moved into a home that literally had had snakes and small animals living in it. The man who had lived there had gone through a bad divorce and literally left the house open. He had a bunch of coops and wiring up for quails that he raised to make money.

All of that had to come down and we also decided to remodel the living room and raise the “sunken” floor there. We poured concrete to level it and then put in a new floor.

The house had a large master bedroom upstairs with a beautiful view and porch up there looking to the west.

The kids went to school in Sanger, and I commuted into work in Dallas.

In July 1988, Valid Logic made me the Director in charge of their consulting services and their University outreach program. I worked a lot with the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester New York, and with some other major Universities.

They were excited to get the equipment and I had convinced the management at Valid to give it to them on very generous terms, only requiring that they integrated it into their curricula so the students would learn it. I used my experiences at BYU to do this and knew that kids who went out into industry were prone to request the equipment they knew how to use, and that the companies benefited from it because they did not have to do training and live with a learning curve where costly mistakes were made.

Around this time, I began to have thoughts of sometime owning our own business...maybe consulting. Gail thought it could work, but we needed a lot more savings before we could afford to even try such a thing...and she was right.

In the early fall of 1988, Gail and I had planned and took a vacation we had longed to go on.

With all the travel I had done, I had earned a lot of travel points with the airlines. Those miles allowed us to realize this dream vacation we had.

For years I had talked a LOT about my mission and all of the stories. I had read my Journal on numerous occasions to Gail and the family.

So, in the fall of 1988, we scheduled and took a three-week trip to Germany...just Gail and I...to visit all of the areas in my mission and show Gail the places I had spoken of. It was a FANTASTIC experience.

We met so many of the people I had known...and surprised them with visits.

One of the most heartwarming was visiting the Kniebuhlers in Leutkirch. We simply walked up to the door and knocked. I will never forget sister Kniebuhler seeing me and asking what we wanted...and then seeing the recognition come into her eyes and having her give me such a HUGE hug. The same with Brother Kniebuhler.

They would not hear of us staying anywhere else except with them. And we did. We stayed up very late talking.



The country-side in Germany near Luetkirch

The little girl who had been about ten years old when we taught them the gospel was now grown and married with a small child of her own and she came over to her parents that evening. It was like a reunion in Heaven.

In Karlsruhe, there was an older sister who used to have all of the missionaries over each Sunday for Sunday dinner, Sister Stuba. She was older when I was there 13 years before...but at church that Sunday of our visit in Karlsruhe they let us know where she was living and we went and visited her. The spirit of all of this was SO special. As I say, like a reunion in Heaven!

While on my mission, there was an old-drunk in Karlsruhe who liked the missionaries. Whenever he would see us in downtown doing one of our street displays, he would come over, carrying a big bottle of wine and would raise his voice and tell people to listen to us.



Side Street in Karlsruhe

I remember some of the Elders being embarrassed, and I have to admit that at first...so was I. But then sat down and talked with him and he told me that he loved the Mormons because at the end of World War II he remembered the Church providing food for them. He loved the Church ever since, and I came to love him.

He never joined at the time...but I respected his story and told the other Elders.

And now 13 years later, he was still in downtown Karlsruhe, drinking and panhandling. But when he saw me...he remembered, and we had a great reunion too there on the street.

In one city we went to a carnival, like a County Fair with rides and everything. It was a lot of fun.



Gail and I at the German Carnival

We drove through the Black Forest and stopped and bargained with a man who lived there. His father and his sons helped him build Koo-Koo clocks from scratch for which the Black Forest is famous. His family had been working in that shop for hundreds of years! And they were VERY good at it. We have that clock to this day.



Our German Koo-Koo Clock...almost 30 years later

We drove up to Kaufbeuren and hiked the same trail my companions and I did, and saw the Castles there in the Bavarian Alps from Prince Ludwig.



Neuschwanstein Castle near Kaufbeuren

Gail summed it up best for those three weeks...you reach a point where there is just so much you are seeing that is so good that you can hardly take it all in! That's the way that trip was for us.

From Neuschwanstein we drove down over to a place I had not seen on my mission but always wanted to. It's called Koenig Sea, or Kings Lake. I had learned a song about is "Steh Ich auf Berges Hoerh!" When I am standing on the mountain Top, "und horer die Glocken von Koenig's Sea" and hear the bells from Kings Lake.

The fastest...and prettiest ...way to get there was to drive down through Austria...and it was VERY pretty. And while driving though Austria, we came upon a small herd of cattle being herded down from the mountains for the winter. The Austrian and German farmers are very superstitious about such things. They dress up any cattle that had not had any type of fall during the summer ranging in the mountains. They believe it will bring their family good luck. Anyhow, while we were driving down, a herd of cattle was on the road and it was so narrow that you simply had to go the speed they were going until they got to a place where they could gather.

Anyhow, this one guy in a very expensive BMW started honking and trying to squeeze slowly through the cattle. The herders got very mad...especially when he bumped one of those dressed up cattle. I thought those herders were going to pull the guy out of his car. As it was, he got through and sped on his way. They have folks like

that everywhere. Nonetheless, the trip in Austria was just gorgeous and something we will always remember.



Small Austrian town in the Austrian Alps

Once back into Germany, it was getting dark and so we took advantage of a little-known tradition that US military bases abroad practice. That is, if they have any available room or houses, then US citizens can stay very reasonably on base. We found a small base in southern Germany and we got a room. It was fun to go into the PX and get a Cheeseburger. I got a milk shake and Gail got a soft drink with ice in it. In Germany, it's hard to find any drink with ice in it. I believe it goes back to the days when any water had to be boiled to be safe.

The next day we were able to visit Koenig Sea.



Koenig Sea in Bavaria

From there we drove to Munich and saw October Fest. Every fall in Munich they celebrate the product Munich, Germany is famous for...the beer. Of course, we did not partake, but there were huge traffic jams (called Stau in Germany which was a word I had never learned). Unbelievable numbers of people going there to celebrate and get their good German beer.

We finally got over the area that included Worms, where Martin Luther had stapled his thesis to the Catholic Church on its cathedral...among several others. His break away from the Catholic Church and forming the Lutheran Church was a huge part of what ended up being called the Protestant era, where religious freedom

really had its start, and ultimately led to it coming to America and the Restoration of the Gospel.



One of the doors to the Cathedral in Worms

Another funny story was that while in this part of Germany as a missionary, my companion and I went to an eating place in the hills between Worms and Manheim for his birthday. For years I had told Gail and the kids about this huge dog's head that was hung on the wall there. I said it was as big as a Grizzly Bear's head and that the German Princes in the Dark Ages imported these huge hunting dogs to hunt Lions they imported from Africa.

We looked all over for that place...and finally found it, and as Gail suspected, the story had grown in the telling.

When we went in, I explained to the greeter that I was looking for the eating place where they had the head of the ancient dog that the German princes used to hunt Lions. He looked at me and said, you mean that one...and pointed over my head.

Sure enough...there it was! At long last I could get it verified. And the dog's head was there...about the size of a large Mastiff perhaps! LOL! Oh well...it was still a good-sized dog...but it certainly was not the size of a grizzly bear, or any other bear for that matter.

A few days later we flew home.

Speaking of which, I have to take the opportunity, though they are both gone now and back home with Heavenly Father, to thank my parents for watching our kids those three weeks.

Four kids at the time, all from eleven years down to four. I know now that for folks their age how much work that was...and I love them all the more for doing so, and doing so gladly to allow Gail and me to have that trip.

When I got back from Germany, Valid Logic decided they wanted me to do heavy consulting with their major companies (which goes back to fulfilling my Patriarchal Blessing). One of these was Sundstrand Corporation in Rockford, Illinois. They were a defense contractor who made major electronic components and sensors for the military...and they had purchased Valid Logic's system to do the electrical engineering work. I spent November and December of 1988 helping them get their system up to speed. They had me living in a small apartment across from the factory, and I would get a 3-day weekend every two week to go home with the family.

The last two weeks of December 1988, I arranged for some members of the Church in Rockford to watch him and got Gail to Okay me taking Jeff Jr. up to Rockford for those two weeks to spend some time with Dad. We had a GREAT time. By that time, he was approaching four years old and on weekend we would have a grand time.

One weekend we drove up to the upper parts of Wisconsin to see Lake Michigan. It was beautiful.

Just before Christmas I finished the Sundstrand job and came home for Christmas. On a sad note, somehow the airline lost two of my bags that had all of the Christmas presents I had bought for the kids and Gail! We quickly bought replacement presents, but never got back what had been lost...or stolen. We never knew which...but enjoyed a happy Christmas just the same.

Then, that spring of 1989 in Texas, about the end of March, we had a HUGE snow storm. One of the old weather forecasters who I used to watch, Harold Taft, had said that night that a cold front was coming and that if conditions worked out just right with a low-pressure system over Mexico, it could pull down a lot colder air than others expected and to watch for possible snow.

The other's scoffed at it and said that even though it was going to cool off into the fifties and maybe forties (which is cool for that time of the year in that part of Texas), that there would be no snow.

Late that night I heard thunder and then what sounded like small hail hitting our window.

I went out on our front porch and it was sleeting. I told Gail it looked like Harold Taft might be right.

The next morning, we had a foot of snow and it was well below freezing and it stayed that way for five days.

We were literally snowed in.

We have lived in Montana, Utah, and Idaho...but the only place we were ever actually snowed in was up near Sanger, Texas.

I got a local rancher whom I used to haul hay for to let me use his tractor and I pulled my pickup to the paved road where they had been trying to use a road grader for a snow plow. They just do not have that type of equipment in that part of Texas. Anyhow, to make a long story short...I would carefully drive into work each day after the second day, and then bring home whatever groceries Gail said we needed.

I would then park at the paved road and hike the ¼ mile to our house.

One afternoon I decided to cut across the field to shorten the time. Gail and the kids were watching me as I came down the hill with those groceries...and stepped in a fence post hole full of freezing water and dropped them all. When they saw I was not hurt...they busted out laughing because it looked so funny!

Later in the spring of 1989 we found out some more exciting news.

For three years, I had had a strong feeling that there was another child in Heaven, waiting to come down to our family. Gail had had a rough delivery with Jeff. The hardest she ever experienced and she was not excited about the prospect of another like that...especially since she was now well over 30 years old.

Ultimately though, she prayed and came to the same conclusion.

So, that spring of 1989, we found out that she was pregnant and number five was on the way.

I was convinced he would be another boy and we had the name, Benjamin Jared Head picked out. Benjamin for King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon, and Jared for the Jared in the book of Ether.

Finally, on August 20, 1989, Benjamin Jared Head, our fifth child and our second son was born in the Denton County Hospital.

He came out just fine, and promised to be a great joy to all of the family.

Then, as I was continuing to work at Valid, sometime in September 1989, Gail got a call at the house. It was a head hunter (a person who other companies use to locate individuals to fill certain positions for them). Gail told me about it and said she knew from the moment they started talking that we would be moving again.

It turned out that another individual, Ed Shafer, I had met at Intergraph and hit it off with, who had been the Regional Director of another Region there, was now the Executive Vice President over Sales and Support at Structural Dynamics Research Corporation. They were a well know Engineering consulting company who had also developed a Solids Modeling CAE/CAM program.

Ed had specifically asked to find me by name and get the offer to me. He knew Dave Eggelston and had seen what I did at Intergraph and then at GE Calma. They had also talked to Max Raisor at BYU.

It was a HUGE opportunity. Like the ultimate job for what I had been doing.

And I knew Ed Shafer well enough to trust him completely.

They were offering over \$100,000 in salary and another \$25-40,000each year in bonuses if I hit the targets.

18. Four Years at SDRC in Cincinnati Ohio, ultimate CAD/CAM job, 1989-1993

In January 1990, Gail and I took the trip to do my final interview and look for housing. Amazingly we found the perfect house in a suburb of Cincinnati called Anderson Township. It was about eight miles from work. We made an offer on the place while we were there and it was accepted



Our Home in Anderson Township, Ohio

My interview went great, as I say, I knew, liked, and trusted the man who was hiring me.

They wanted me to come in and revamp their entire support to keep up with their growth.

I went to work doing that and thus began a four-year experience that was the ultimate for me as far as my CAD/CAD/CAM career was concerned.

I took their existing organization and created several new departments. We had four regional departments spread across the United States, each with from 10-15 engineers, a Regional Technical director and administrative staff. We had a call center for incoming support calls. There were about 12 individuals in that department. This was backed up by a technology center of senior engineers who took on the more difficult support calls, but also worked with major customers, and with development to improve the product.

We had a training department made up of 15-20 engineers who conducted training at our facilities and on site.

I had a Warrant Services administration group made up of 10 people who ensured that our warranties were honored and that customer knew how to purchase and use the service.

Finally, I had four very high end technical people, who made extremely good money who worked with our most important customers and could be purchased for anywhere from 25% of their time up to their full time to help them implement the product on major projects or into their engineering departments. We charged \$250,000 per year for these guys full time and they allowed those customers, whenever necessary to bypass our normal support and work directly with me or the directors of software development and our Sr. management.

Companies like Lockheed Martin, Electric Boat Shipbuilding, Ford, and others took advantage of this service.

I reduced my own admin staff down to one person. There was a middle-aged lady in her fifties named Millie Apgar who was able to take on all of it and did a fantastic job. She and her husband became friends and she tried her utmost to keep unwarranted and other trivial matters from taking up my time.

Altogether, I managed a staff of about 150-175 people and we generated maybe \$30 million of revenue ourselves, but more importantly, we supported a sales stream of about \$250 million dollars a year and growing.

I hired my friend Jeff Barrus to come and manage the Technology Center and he did a GREAT job and it was good to have another friend there to work with.

I got management also to allow me, whenever necessary, to take on the lead job of managing really major projects myself. Over this time some of the major projects I worked on closely were

- 1) The NSSN Project which was being accomplished by General Electric Shipbuilding and later became the USS Virginia class nuclear attack submarine project. They used our product a lot to model and test those submarines.
- 2) The investigation into and recommendations on the Challenger shuttle disaster at Thiokol. We had a group go out there to work with them and I managed the effort. I was awarded a Vice President award for that...but was happy just to be able to be a part of helping our nation at the time. Thiokol could improve some things and we helped them do so...but in truth, they knew what the problems were and the real issue was an unwillingness of their upper management to listen to their engineers and cancel a flight when they were being told that there was danger.
- 3) The THAADs (Theater High Altitude Air Defense System) which was being developed with some of the "Star Wars" Technology that President Regan had encouraged. It was successful and ready to implement before I left SDRC, but incoming President Bill Clinton canceled the program. Luckily, in 2001, President Bush reinstated it and it has now been deployed for US forces and our allies.

I took a lot of pleasure and satisfaction in doing those jobs. But, as a family, we also did a lot of traveling while at SDRC. The kids were growing up and getting further into school. Katie was 11 when we moved there, Rachel was 10, Beckie was 7, Jeff was 5, and Jared was still a baby.

One very serious thing while we were in Cincinnati was that we discovered that Gail's issues with her thyroid had returned. I had not mentioned it before. It was something she had when younger before ever meeting me. But it began bothering her and so we went to the Doctor there about it. They discovered some growths and decided they needed to operate. It was very troubling. She was young and you just do not think about it until it happens to you. So, in 1991, she had the surgery, and after a lot of prayers, priesthood blessings for her, and faith in the Lord, the operation went fine, but a major part of her thyroid was removed and she would have to be on medication for the rest of her life. We discovered that the thyroid is kind of a black box...particularly for women. They worked with Gail and got her meds to where she was okay, but it was something she would be working with for the rest of her life. We were just thankful she was all right and that they were able to address her problem there at the time. The Lord answered our prayers and the blessings she received helped.

Also, while in Cincinnati, we took trips to Alabama, around Lake Superior, to Canada, Minnesota, Texas several times, Missouri when my parents got a time share at Branson, and also into Kentucky and West Virginia. We also took the kids numerous times to Kings Island, which was Cincinnati's version of Six Flags over Texas.

It was a lot of fun and gave us memories as a family we will always remember.

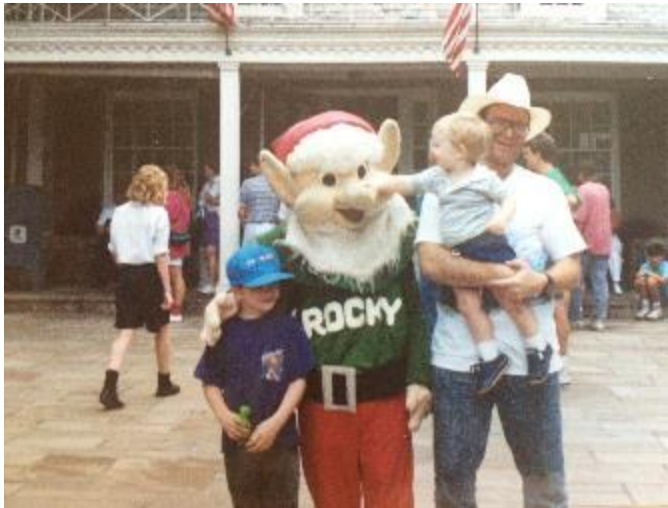
Here are some pictures from some of those trips.



Kate, Jared and myself at a slide



Pukaskwa Provincial Park above Lake Superior where we camped on the way to Minnesota



Jeff Jr., Jared, and myself at Lookout Mountain in Tennessee



Gail and the kids on Lookout Mountain in Tennessee



Jeff and Jared next to a Lake where we camped in Alabama.



Here I am in West Virginia near with my "SDRC" Sweatshirt on

A word up out trip to West Virginia. While in Cincinnati, Gail started her own business as a beauty consultant for a company called, "Beauty control." She was very good at it and enjoyed it. Now and then (about once a year while she did it), she would go to a conference. One time, when she went to Dallas for several days, I took all

the kids on a road trip. We went into West Virginia and followed the New River there. We did it because I had read the story of Mary Ingles who had been taken by the Shawnee Indians from her settlement in Virginia in the 1750s. All the men, including her husband were killed. She escaped once in the Ohio area and followed the river they brought her all the way back to Virginia. The book is called, "Follow the River," by James Alexander Thom and is a very good book about a true story of unbelievable hardship, privation, and heroism by this young girl. Anyhow, I told the story as we drove along the river and recounted my feelings to the kids.

Also, we got our first real family dog in Ohio...though we had had a couple for short periods before. But Missy was "our" dog and she would be with us for sixteen years. She was a Curly Haired Black Labrador, and about as good natured a dog, and good family dog as you could ever want. He she is one winter morning in our backyard at our home in Anderson Township.



Missy in the back yard at our Home in Anderson Township, Ohio

We really enjoyed our life in Ohio. The kids, for a long time, called it "the good old days." We were making unbelievable money for the time period and our age. We had a beautiful home in a great neighborhood. We were providing well for our family. We enjoyed our church callings.

One story about that.

I was in the Young Men's organization working first with the Boy Scouts and then with the Priest age boys, ages 16-18.

I came up with the idea of using our Stake's Campground in mid-Ohio near the Ohio River, as a retreat for a weekend each year for the young men. The idea was to go in the fall when the leaves were off the trees and before it got real cold in the winter. We decided to go there and have a huge game of capture the flag...but using pain ball guns. At first, we thought it would be too expensive and not many people would come. But after the first year we could hardly hold all the boys and their fathers who came.

By the third year we had upwards of 30 young men and almost as many fathers. We even had guests coming to visit families to go with them.

The last year we did it, in about 1993, one of our nephews, Gail's sister, Sandy's son, Skeat came along. We would always have testimony meetings and short lessons in the evenings for the three nights we were there.

We played the big "Capture the Flag," game, the second one (we always had two) the last day pitting the men against the boys. They had us outnumbered almost two to one, but we thought we would take them easy.

Myself and my friend Jeff Barrus (who brought his boys along), we with two other men who were our attack

group. Myself and Jeff found their flag and flanked them on the left while the other two men attacked directly in the front against the eight boys guarding the flag.

It worked like a charm. All eight of those boys went after the other two men...and ultimately got them both, while Jeff and I snuck up. When we got to the flag, I was reaching to take it down and return to our camp and win. I heard a small rustling noise and looked down only to see a paint gun barrel protrude from the leaves under the flag...and then shoot me. One of the 16-year-old boys had completely covered himself with leaves and stayed behind with the flag. He got me. Jeff may have been able to get him, except six of the other boys came back from getting our other two men and got him!

About five minutes later the fifteen boys who had gone after our flag returned. They were short six boys whom our men had gotten, but the other nine got them and our flag! The boys won!

Anyhow, it was a lot of fun for men and boys alike.

The testimony meetings were GREAT! Hearts were touched, and in an environment that the boys and their Dad's loved. Years later, Skeat told me that on that trip was when he decided to go on a mission for the Church.

Another short story.

Sometimes in the early evening I would go out in my pickup and talk to the truck drivers on the CB Radio. I always had a good CB Radio and even a small short-wave radio in my truck during those years. I would get on and talk to trucker and knew how to speak the CB lingo from my own truck driving days. Anyhow, I would try and get them engaged on the subject of religion a little bit. As you can imagine I took my share of ribbing and downright ugliness from some...but there were some who would talk to me while in range.

Sometimes I had one or more of the kids with me.

One night I was talking to a guy whom I had talked to several times. Others, unbeknownst to me at the time would listen in and that started calling me "the preacher." Anyhow, I was talking one night to this fellow about the horrible sin of abortion, and how God in Heaven would not forever allow such a horrible thing to go on.

He asked me what I thought God would do about it and I told him about what the Bible says about the days before the 2nd coming. I told him in the end that there would be a horrible storm of hardship which would cleanse the world of sin before the coming of the Lord, and that according to some, it would last seven years. I then said, "There's going to be a storm, and it is going to blow hard for seven years."

At that point, several truck drivers said they believed it, and that they believed in God.

One man said, "This guy is spooking me Jack, this preacher is spooking me."

I cannot remember whether it was Jeff or Katie or who was with me, but we always remembered that reaction.

Another thing I need to mention is Karate. While I had been in High School I took Karate (Tai-Kwan-Do) and got to my green belt. I had always wanted to do it again.

So, I signed myself and the four oldest kids up for the ATA (American Tai-Kwan-Do Association) and we took our classes at a GREAT club in northern Kentucky. We went every week. Over a two-year period all of us progressed and we all did well.

Jeff Jr. and I were testing for our Brown Belt when we finally left Cincinnati, all of the girls had, or were testing for, their green belts.

The people who ran the school were great folks. The master has his eighth or ninth degree black belt, and their whole family had been into it for many years.

I felt it helped the kids a lot. There was discipline, good health, good character, and a work achievement all things young kids need to learn about.

Another thing that occurred during our time there was that my brother Greg, had moved to Alaska and was working there as an engineer. He had served a mission in Virginia and Maryland, and then finished his engineering degree at BYU. He and I had roomed together when Gail and I were married.

Anyhow, he moved up there and I flew up once on business to visit him. It was fun and we snowmobiled to Eklutnah Reservoir and spent the night at a cabin there and were able to hear the wolves, and also the "Elkutnah Echo," which was as clear an echo, with about a two to three second differential as I had ever heard.

Sadly, the next time I went up there was to visit Greg in prison.

He had gotten crosswise with the law, in with the wrong people, and was caught and convicted and was serving a ten-year sentence and I went up and visited him. My Dad, I, and Lee were all able to visit him so that he knew we loved him and would not forget him...and also encouraged him to repent, get out, and return to the Lord.

Ultimately he would...but it would be many years.

Also, ultimately, things at SDRC and in Cincinnati came to an end.

Ed Shafer called me into his office one afternoon and told me he was leaving the company. I was really sad to hear this because he was not only a great boss, he was a good friend. He was someone who knew what I could do and allowed me to do it, and we had great success. We liked and trusted one another.

He told me that the company was hiring a new sales executive and that he, Ed, knew this man and that it would not be too long before he would bring his own technical manager in. I asked why he would do so, and whether upper management would let him seeing how successful we had been.

He told me that it would not happen immediately because of those very reasons, but that he knew this guy and that he would take a year to build a case against me, and document things he would say he did not like and that ultimately, he would do it.

So, Ed left in 1992...and things happened just as he said.

About five months later a new Sr. technical guy was hired who did not report to me. He was reporting directly to the new Sales Executive as a consultant. I found that he knew the new sales executive and had always followed him where he went. I thought, "In reality, I had been similar."

I knew Ed. I did not look to get a job for him and had never worked "for" him before. But he wanted me and he got me...and now this guy wanted "his" person and he was going to get him.

I talked to Gail about this.

At home, we had some issues as our kids were growing up. Katie was very mature physically for her age (12-13 at the time) and there was a 17-year-old boy in the neighborhood who clearly liked her...and not just for her character and future. I had already talked to his father and he had talked to his son...but it was not helping.

So Gail and I decided to move.

We had saved a lot of money and wondered whether it would not be time to realize that dream we had of owning our own business.

We started by taking a look at where it was we wanted to live. I wanted Montana. I had a dream of living in an area where there was a small town...agriculturally based, any larger city was within an hour or two.

We had no idea what kind of business we wanted. Something we could work at together.

We considered a gas station or convenience store and even found a couple in Utah, well outside of Salt Lake, which were available. One in particular was out near Roosevelt Lake. But in the end, since we desired to not sell tobacco or alcohol, we rejected that idea because everything we could see told us that those place made most of their money off of such products and were likely to fail without them.

Finally, we took a three-week trip to Montana in spring of 1993.

We had purchased $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pick-up by that point to pull our 29' Wilderness trailer behind it.



Our $\frac{3}{4}$ ton Chevy Pickup



Our Wilderness Trailer

Despite being nicely set up, we had some difficulties however.

We planned the trip to coincide with my younger brother, Paul's, second marriage to Adolis, his new sweetheart. So we swung down to Texas. They had a wonderful wedding, and we then headed northwest. But we didn't get far.

In Wichita Falls, our truck (and it was brand new) broke down and we had to replace the transmission. It was

HOT, and we ended up staying at a place near the dealership that was like a City Park and we were allowed to stay in the parking lot.

Then, once we got up into Montana, we started having problems again. We wanted to start our search over in the Missoula area, but about 100 miles before Butte (which was still over two hundred miles from Missoula) the transmission started acting up. We nursed our way all the way to Missoula and the dealer there said again, that we had to replace the transmission. I knew something else was wrong and indicated it to the dealership.

This was a brand new, $\frac{3}{4}$ ton, heavy duty pickup. But the dealer told us that since they had already replaced it once in Texas, they would not honor the warranty.

I was livid and we had some pretty strong words...but they would not honor the warrant on a brand new truck.

So I had to pay for it directly...which we did. I was not happy about it, but after that things went well.

We went and stayed several days at a campground east of Missoula we had seen. We had a great time and the kids loved it. We went horseback riding and hiking while there.

Rachel saw some deer and she crept up amazingly close. If they had been Elk or Moose I would not have let her because they could be dangerous, but these were smaller white tail deer. Anyhow...we were making great memories as a family.

At one mining town, Katie climbed up on a slope that was a little too steep and got stuck and was afraid to come down...I went and helped her.

We then looked all around the Missoula area, particularly south of Missoula about fifty to seventy-five miles. The country was beautiful...but we could not find a business we could feel good about.

We then drive further south to Hamilton and found the same. GREAT country, but not a business we were interested in.

Finally, we went over Chief Joseph pass into the Big Hole River area and ended up in Dillon, Montana. Another GREAT cow town. This one had the closest Mall in either Bozeman, or in Idaho Falls (where Gail's parents lived) each between 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours away. We really liked that.

And, we found the business we were looking for. Beaverhead Printing and Office Supply, which was owned by an older gentleman and his wife who had built it up. It was in decent shape and Gail and I both felt we had found what we were looking for.

By that time, we were ready to go home and I had to get back to work. We told Jerry (the owner) we would be in touch with our decision, and then we went back to Cincinnati.

By the way, when we got back, our dealer honored every bit of the warranty when they found out what happened. In the end, it was the gearing in the differential. Somehow at the factory they had geared it for a light $\frac{1}{2}$ ton pickup and that gearing was literally wearing out the transmission in the truck. They fixed it all...and they paid us back for what we had to spend out of pocket, including the cost for the places we had to stay with the trailer. I really appreciated them for that.

Gail and I decided Beaverhead Printing in Dillon Montana was for us. We made an offer and it was accepted and we bought the business.

In the early summer, I moved Gail and the kids out so they could get into school, and then I went back to work for another three months...living in our trailer, until August of 1993.

I owed it to SDRC to not leave them up in the air, even though the manager over me was planning my

replacement. I told some close friends at work what was going on so they would be prepared. Then, three weeks before leaving I informed my Executive Vice President what I was doing.

He was not real happy...but when we talked about it and what was obvious to me about the guy he hired to replace me...he indicated I was right. He let me know that I was beating him to the punch, and I said, well, I am sorry, but I had to look out for what was best for my family and he agreed with that.

The people in my groups gave me a very nice going away party. I still have to this day (2017), some of the presents they gave me, and that was in 1992. By then I had spent over four years with them and we had had a lot of great experiences. But it was time to go and start the next part of our life.

Before heading out to Dillon, I traded in the ¾ ton pickup and got a Ford, F-350 one ton. After buying it, I then got a really nice Elk Guard for the front end, and some running lights.



Our Ford F-350, crew cab, 4x4 Pickup



Heavy Duty bumper/Elk Guard and running lights added to the truck

I felt with that truck I would be in a position to haul our trailer with no problem, and also to do the hauling and work we might need to do with our business. And it proved completely capable of that and more.

One experience while I waited to head to Dillon...and I could hardly wait to go. Katie was 13 years old at this

time and had not yet turned 14 when she would be able to go Church dances. One night I called them as I did almost every night and found that Katie had talked Gail into letting her go to a dance.

I was very unhappy. I felt we should follow the council of the church and I asked Gail to go and get her and bring her home. Gail did not want to do this, since she had already taken her over there. I should have accepted Gail's decision that had already been made. She was the one on the spot. But I insisted and Gail went and got Katie. I just felt that with some of the issues we were already having, it would be best to follow the rules and make sure Katie understood this.

In the end, Gail went and got her and brought her home...but then she had to live with the aftermath. I was still in Cincinnati. I did explain to Katie that we were going to follow the rules, and that almost 14 (which she wasn't yet) was not 14 and that she would just have to wait.

However, things like this build over years and lead to conditions we do not anticipate...as we shall see.

19. Move to Dillon MT, Beaverhead Printing, and our life there 1993-1996

Dillon is a really nice, all American, small western and mountain town.



I loved living there. Cool summers at an elevation of over 5,000 feet. Nice cold, snowy winters, with snow that came and stayed on the ground for 2-3 months, and with some temperatures being well below zero...in fact some days not getting above zero.

We owned and worked at Beaverhead Printing and Office supply and lived at 75 Bryce Lane 3 miles from work.



To the right, Beaverhead Printing and Office Supply at 20. E. Glendale



Our home and Garage at 75 Bryce Lane in Dillon

I felt that I fit in real well because it was a ranch town at heart, and I had that country background myself and as the people learned about it, they accepted me readily.

We had offered a job to Gail's younger brother, Ralph, and they came and joined us and he and I learned to run the printing press...but that was to be his job. He asked for us to pay him what he had been making and we said okay, but that it would mean his wife, Paula, would need to work in the business and help Gail in the office supply part and with the books.

This went well for a year...but ultimately Paula decided she did not like Dillon. It was a huge adjustment for her because she had lived her life in the City. Finally, and sadly, she lost a child soon after the birth. This was for her, and for Ralph, the end of it. They decided to move and Gail and I hired another guy to run the press, and had a lady who had worked for the prior owner who agreed to come and help us in the front part of the store.

I got the jobs, delivered the material, helped set up and run the print jobs, and helped keep the finances. When the kids had a recital, or a ball game, we hung a sign on the door and went to it. It was that kind of place.

I was called to work in the Elder's Quorum Presidency, and then later to work with the young men. This place around Dillon was Heaven for scouting programs. We did not have to plan super activities...we lived where others planned to go for super activities. Plenty of beautiful mountains all around.



Beaverhead Mountains to the north and west of Dillon

There is a lot of history too. The Lewis and Clark Expedition came through in 1803 on the Beaverhead River. Their Indian guide, Sacajawea, led them past the Beaverhead Rock, which is just to the north and east of town.



Beaverhead Rock between Dillon and Twin Bridges, Montana

While we lived there, Katie and Rachel both tried out for Miss Teen Montana and we went through that whole program. They were both beautiful, and did so well.

Hehehe...they also learned that I was pretty old fashioned and insisted on meeting any young man that wanted to date them.

I would have a "talk" with them...asking them their intentions and feelings for my daughters...and being straight forward about what would be allowable and what would not. I figured if after such a talk, if they were not frightened by me talking about how much I loved and respected my daughters and that they would do the same...oh, and did I mention? I also let them know what a wonderful gun collection I had. LOL! Anyhow, I figured if they still wanted to see my girls after that talk, they most probably they would be alright.

But the girls did not like it much.

Anyhow, although neither of them won the Miss Teen Montana, they did well, and were so beautiful, and they did get to show their talents and to continue to learn discipline and hard work.

We had a piano in the home and both of them had learned to play it rather well. Rachel also played the flute. I played the guitar...which Jared, even as a little boy took interest in. The point was that we had music in our home, and it was a wonderful part of our life.

The kids helped us in the business a lot. The big print jobs required a lot of manual work of sorting pages and groups of printed material together and we had, particularly for the Brand Book (as in Brands for Cattle), and the September Dillion Rodeo Programs, where we would buy Pizza and stay up until early hours of the morning working as a family to put those things together and meet our schedules.

I got to hunt and was able to get a couple of Elk.

I had shot a Mule Deer in Utah the year before we left Cincinnati. I took a trip with my friend Jeff Barrus and his son, Mark, and another friend, and we went into the Uintah Mountains along the border between Utah and Wyoming. One evening as the sun was going down, right from our camp we saw a deer drinking water from a pond. It was about 150 yards away and Jeff, whose turn it was to shoot, could not find him through his scope and told me to take the shot. I did and the water exploded behind the deer so I thought I missed. He jumped up and started running and so I tracked him as he ran and took another shot. He went down.

I shot that deer because he looked like a really nice four-point rack. As it turned out, he had a really neat asymmetrical rack, that when viewed from the side looked like four points...two high and two low on each side

(what they would call an eight-point back east). As it turned out there were two high on one side and two low on the other, and when looking at them from the side, there appeared to be four to the side when there were only three. So, it was a three point (three on each side, but asymmetric).

We cleaned him and discovered that my 1st shot was the one that killed it. It hit the left side of his heart and he had enough life to run the last 100 yards. My 2nd shot hit him in the side and made the cleaning a mess. I took the meat and the head and got it to a taxidermist in Salt Lake and had it sent to Cincinnati. I keep him to this day.



Buck

One last point about Buck. Rachel wanted nothing to do with it. She hated the idea of eating a sweet Deer. I tried to explain to her that Calves were sweet too, but she was willing to eat hamburgers. It did not help. So, one day I made some Lasagna, one of Rachel's favorites. Unknown to anyone, I used Deer meat in it.

Rachel was scarfing it down in Cincinnati before we left there. I asked her how she liked it and she told me it was great...that I always made good Lasagna. I then asked her in particular how she like the meat. She was mid-way to putting a forkful in her mouth and stopped. She is a very smart person and figured it out just that quickly...and got mad. She got up and left the table and was mad at me for several days.

But...she learned. Years later, after we left Montana, she went hunting on numerous occasions and sent me photos of her, herself, cleaning deer she had shot. Just an example of how things change as we get older. As I say, Buck adorns our wall to this day.

Anyhow, back to Dillon. I got two nice Elk while there.

One was the second year, when a customer we had called me and told me he had some Elk feeding in one of his hay fields that had been cut. I simply drove the 30 miles to that field and drove in through the gate. I got within 100 yards in my truck, got out, picked the one I wanted...which was a young spike Elk), and shot him. It was not a hunt at all. But we could use the meat...and did...and I cleaned him there and drove into town and got him turned into steaks, Elk-burgers, and sausage.

I had left the house about 6 AM and was back home by 11 AM that morning.

We ate on those steaks for Sunday dinners for almost a year. And as a young spike elk, feeding on hay, they

were about as tender as you could ever hope.

The second was two years later...the year before we moved.

A friend, Skip Mathewson, had been scoping Elk for the hunt. He was a bow hunter, but lived near Wisdom, Montana, and he knew I used a rifle.

By the way, for all my hunting back then, including for "Buck," I used a 7mm magnum by Ruger. A great rifle that you can load with all sorts of different loads from hunting varmints, clear up to hunting Moose. Back then I had the equipment so I could load my own and make my own bullets.

Anyhow, my friend had found a great place where a herd of Elk crossed every morning. So, we went up there, into the Beaverhead Mountains and as we were getting to the place he had selected, it began to snow hard. We could not see more than 20-30 feet. After about an hour we gave up and started walking back to the truck. As we did, we crossed a trail of fresh Elk track in the snow. It was snowing so hard that they had to have passed by there just a couple of minutes before us.

We followed them. The trail went right up the side of a mountain and it was a steep climb in the snow. We had to climb about 1000 feet and came out on a flat, heavy with timber. Both pine and fir trees.

We knew that Elk watched their back trail so we got a good 20-30 yards off their trail and would check every few minutes to make sure they were going where we thought they were...and thus we tracked them.

About ten minutes later we came to a spot where I thought I saw some antlers over toward their trail. At that moment, sure enough, two Elk blew right out of the snow about 30 yards away.

Skip pointed and said shoot...but I already had my gun up and...BANG...shot the one closest to us. He was a four point and he went right down. He was good sized. Too big for the two of us to take in one load. Skip volunteered to walk back to his vehicle, a Scout, and come up to the bottom of the ridge. I stayed and cleaned the Elk and then quartered it.

It was then a good hike down to Skip's Scout. We had to take two trips. But we got it done.

This hunt was quite a bit longer. Left at 4 AM and did not get home until about 7 PM.

Again, though this meat was not as tender, it was still good eating and we had Elk steaks for another year.

You can see one of the reasons I liked Dillon so much.

As the kids got older, and as in the mid-1990s home computers came more and more into play, we would spend some time with the kids down at the office playing on them. All of them had great aptitude on the computers...including Gail too. I, of course, had been using computers my entire career, but every one of the children, and Gail were very adept at their use. We used them a lot in the business, designing things for folks on the computer and then producing the prints we would use to print them on our Ryobi printer.

We used Apple computers for the graphics, and Microsoft/IBM for the business work.

We also played many games on the computer.

Sometimes we would work late, and as I say, have sorting parties at the shop. A couple of times afterwards I would stay with the kids and play games.

It made for some good memories for us...but one also has to be careful not to over-do it. A couple of times we did, and paid the price by being tired the next days.

Also, the kids were turning into young adults.

Katie started a job. She wanted a car but I told her she needed to ride her bike.

She did not want to and argued heatedly about it. But I would not give in. So, she got on her bike, with her work uniform on, and mad as she was, she started to ride the three miles into town.

I touched my heart and after just a few minutes, I got in the truck and went after her and picked her up and took her to work.

I loved her so much for being willing to do what she had to do, even though she disagreed with it. We later got her a car to drive...and she proceeded to run it into a ditch.

Gail and I got the call at work and I went right over there near our house where it happened. She was so scared...but okay. She hugged me tighter than she had done in years when I got there.

Another reason I liked Dillon was that the people, for the most part, were all-American and loved their freedom and understood what it cost to maintain it.

I joined the local Search and Rescue group and enjoyed the association of those folks, and the help we were able to render others.

We also became aware of how much the Federal government was usurping its constitutional powers when dealing with agriculture and particularly the ranchers and their water rights. These were several very hard examples of this at Ruby Ridge in Idaho, and Waco in Texas. Where Americans, in those cases who admittedly loved alone and their own life styles, and who in both cases believe they had the right to defend themselves, were made examples of by the Federal government. People whom juries later decided were innocent of fabricated charges against them died...and at Waco it was a lot of people, including many children.

People in Dillon understood the gravity of these things and banded together to be ready in case they needed to defend themselves.

It may sound outlandish...but it was true...and at the time there was good reason for it.

Anyhow, I enjoyed the association of patriotic Americans who loved their country, who loved the Constitution which was inspired by God, and who understood the importance of standing up for them.

One example (although not nearly as dangerous as the two I mentioned) occurred in Dillon while we were there.

I will not go into great detail, but the bottom line was that one-day Katie, who by this time was in High school, brought home a sociology book they were using in one of her classes. That book, and the teacher, were using it to imply two things in particular that I was outraged by.

One was that Marxism as envisioned by Karl Marx was potentially better than our own Constitution and that the teacher considered Karl Marx a better critical thinker than the founding fathers. The second was that homosexuality was something that these kids should consider, and look into to see if they thought it was a life style they might have interest in, and then proceeded to teach them about some of the habits of such people.

Neither of these things were right, or of good report or praiseworthy...and they certainly had no place in a High school class. I was livid that this teacher was undermining us as parents, our country, and our morals.

My Mom had been a part of text book selection groups, both with the Parent Teacher Association, and with the State of Texas as we were growing up. I knew here was a process by which text books were approved for usage in schools, where the school administration worked with the parents to select decent books for the community. In this case the teacher had followed none of them, and he would tell the kids, "This is adult material, if you are

not old enough to deal with these topics, don't go trying to tell Mon and Dad. The course is elective...just do not take it." I viewed that as insidious and a manipulation of young minds.

Well, Katie knew better and so she told me about it.

I made a big deal out of it and printed the pages with the material in question and then began to spread it around the community calling for a school board meeting.

I found that there was a relatively small, but very vocal of very liberal people even in Dillon, Montana. It was a real fight. I was accused by them of being like a Nazi, wanting to burn books. I responded by saying, no, if you want such a book, you are free to buy it and teach it to your kids...but you are not free to teach it to my kids, or to bring it in unapproved either and make me pay for it with my tax money.

Ultimately there was the meeting...which they tried every way they could to stop...including trying to entrap me into violating public rules about how to deal with the School Board. I will never forget that.

A man I know and member of the church invited me to his office to talk about it. He said that he (who was on the school board) had worked out a plan where I could meet individually with each board member, tell them the issue, and that that would help decide the vote.

At first it sounded good, but then the Spirit let me know it was a trap. The school board is an elected body. You do not have private meetings to influence them. You can be arrested for trying to do that and the Spirit let me know that that is what was happening.

I told this man, a member of the church who I thought was my friend exactly what I suspected and that...no thanks. We would hold the meeting. I know the Lord protected me right there.

So, we ended up having the meeting. I and this teacher were given the chance to speak and make our cases. There were about 400-500 people there.

The teacher and some of the school administration had invited about 100 kids from a college in Bozeman about 125 miles away. The people in the community saw this for what it was...an attempt to manipulate their local decisions, and stack the deck against the local community.

The teacher basically said I was a throwback, and that our kids today needed to have their minds open to other life styles, and be able to experiment and test them themselves...and to know different governmental methods and do the same.

I responded with history about Marxism and how every nation that had tried it had either face economic ruin, or worse, including genocide. And that homosexuality demographic figures showed it for what it was...a very dangerous and very deviant life style where traditional values went out the window, and where sexually transmitted diseases were rampant, and where aids was killing many of the adherents. I indicated that the lessons proved that our children should be warned about the truth of these things, that they should be avoided at all costs...and not experimented with. That the truth about them should be taught.

In the end the vote we overwhelming for taking the book out of the class room.

We were blessed...but it also showed that even in such a small, out of the way community like Dillon, which had every aspect of the all-American life...the evils of the day were penetrating and that people and the citizens of those communities need to always be vigilant.

So many things happened in Dillon as our kids grew up. I am glad we had our time there because it was a down to earth place for us to have these experiences.

On one occasion, a young man at Beaverhead County High School said some very unkind and unseemly thing to Rachel. As her father, I decided to talk to his father about it. They lived well north of town. So, I went up there and talked to them. I was concerned that it might not go well because everyone, including myself, tends to set their kids on pedestals and would not like to hear such things. As it turned out, this man was respectful and he talked sternly to his son. As far as I knew (and with teenagers you may never hear the whole story – LOL) the trouble never repeated.

Also, Jared was getting older. When we moved there, he was only about 4 years old. But he started pre-school and kindergarten there. One of the places we all loved to eat was an eating place downtown and around the corner from Beaverhead Printing. Jared and I sometimes would go there for lunch after he got done with his half days of pre-school. We also liked to go around the other corner to the company that made fresh bread in town there. They would serve fresh hot bread and honey one day a week to anyone who came by their store. We enjoyed that a lot on cold winter mornings especially.

Anyhow, Jared had a friend who one day convinced him to make prank calls. They would call people and simply say a bad word to them, then hang up. One day, he called the wrong number. Beaverhead Printing! I answered the phone and heard my son's voice say a nasty word and then hang up. I went and got him and he got something I had gotten when I was a kid and said a bad word that my Mom and Dad heard. He got his mouth washed out with soap and a stern talking too. He remembers it to this day.

Another HUGE thing went on with Katie. She started High School in Dillon. When she was only 14-15, a young man named Juan Trujillo returned from his mission. He took a liking to Katie who was like seven years younger. He began talking to her at church and then he came over one day and asked if he could date her. I talked to him about it and said no...it would be best for her to date, non-seriously at her age, and with kids her own age.

A few months went by and then one day he came over and told us he wanted to marry Katie! I was dumbfounded. But he was serious and Katie was smitten too. So, we told him that he would have to do things in our presence until she graduated High School, and then, if she still wanted, he could marry her. Well, that was hard thing for me to give in to. I actually thought it was crazy. As it turned out, Katie herself figured it out and ultimately broke it off...though there were times later that he would contact her. She stuck to her decision and ultimately met her intended. But more about that later because it turned out to be kind of fortuitous.

Finally, there was a really neat hike and climb Jeff and I made. It was while Mark Barrus was visiting us one summer. He stayed in the trailer while there. He and I had one experience while delivering some material...actually one of our largest orders of office equipment to a ranch that was owned by Japanese. The man who ran the place had been the foreman and he married the daughter of the Japanese family that bought it. It was a huge ranch...but there were some folks in town who did not like the idea of foreigners buying up American land. Anyhow, when we took the material out, I asked Mark to ask them if this was the right place as we drove up and saw the lady and her husband getting into a car. He got out and asked, "Excuse me, is this the "Slant-eye" ranch?"

Apparently in town they had developed that mean name for the place and I was unaware of it...and Mark, who was about 16 at the time, thought it was the actual name. Well the owner blew up! He was angry and I thought he was going to hit Mark.

Luckily, we got a chance to sit down and talk and I explained Mark had just gotten to town and apparently had heard that name and did not know any better. The man, who was ready to cancel the order and send us packing, ultimately cooled off and accepted our order.

But, back to the mountain climb. I, Jeff, Mark and Jeffie determined to climb Torrey Mountain in the Beaverhead range and we drove up there to do so.



Torrey Mountain from the forest Service Road

We got to Deerhead Lake that day and camped there for the night. It was beautiful and we wanted to get an early start the next morning taking the trail to the right of the lake to work our way up the mountain.



Deerhead Lake, with Torrey Mountain in the background

We started as the sun came up. It was a long hike. Missy and all of us were tired as we got above the tree line and started up what we thought was the final ascent.

It took us hours, and it was steep and hard work.

Finally, we topped the rise...only to find we were still about 1,200 feet below the summit. It was past noon by that time and we were just worn out. The final ascent was even steeper and Missy was already limping from walking on the rocks which she was not used to. And Jeff, who was young, was also really tired. Truthfully, I was tired too. We were at over 10,000 feet and decided to call it quite there below the peak.



The saddle below Torrey peak, looking back at the top of the rise to that point. This is about where we stopped.

So, we turned around and went back to Deerhead Lake, getting there about dark. It has made for a good story ever since...and though we promised to go back one day and defeat Torrey...we never did. But we had a great time in the attempt. I will tell you, Missy got home and laid down for over a day and limped for several more. To tell you the truth, we all rested up afterwards! Hehehe...by that time I was approaching forty years old in 1995, and was not as in shape as I had been.

So many experiences. I could write a whole book about our time in Dillon, Montana.

For example, on one occasion, a good friend, a guy who was a down to earth cowboy who made part of his living cowboying in the spring and summers, and then would hunt coyotes and other animals in the winter and make money from their furs, needed someone to fly to Alaska for him and get a loaded truck he had there.

Now, Steve had other issues we will not go into...but despite his issues, we had become friends and I wanted to help if I could. Apparently, he had committed to something else, and his truck could get impounded with all the equipment, so he asked me if I could help him. I talked to Gail and had always wanted to make such a trip. I had been to Alaska as I mentioned earlier, twice to visit my brother Greg. But in both cases I had flown in and then flown back home to the "outside," which Alaskans use to refer to the lower 48 states.

This time I would fly in, but be able to drive back on the Alaskan Highway which was something I had always wanted to do.

Gail figured she could handle the business as long as I made sure we got caught up when I got back...and so I was off. Steve flew me to Anchorage, I found the truck, and boy was it loaded. It was like a big rig front end, but no trailer, just a 24-foot flatbed behind the cab. The cab was absolutely packed full of stuff except for enough room to drive and the back was loaded down with all sorts of equipment under a big tarp that was all tied down.

I used the keys, got in and drove off. Steve had given me a credit card to use for gas.

I drove out of Anchorage up to Palmer near the prison Greg had been in (he was out by then and living back in Texas). I then drove to Glen Allen and then to the Junction at Tok. That was about 400 miles. I turned southeast there and headed for the Canadian border, about another 100 or more miles from there.

Once in Canada, I drove over to White Horse, Yukon Territory. After Whitehorse I had to make a decision whether to stay on the Al-Can (Alaska-Canadian) Highway, to take a route that was not as well used, but was supposedly prettier...called the Cassiar Cutoff. The Al-Can was Canadian Highway 1 and went over into Alberta and down. The Cassiar Cutoff was Canadian Highway 37, and stayed in British Columbia for hundreds and hundreds of miles before you cut over into Alberta. I decided on the Cassiar.

When I passed through White Horse, I saw a lot of pawn shops, and Palm-Reading shops that said, "Walk-ins Here." I thought they were just signs that meant you could walk in off the street without an appointment.

Apparently, I was wrong.

This was in early September and the season had already turned and there was a bite in the air. Outside of White Horse, I saw a family, a man and a woman with two little kids (both under eight years old) standing on the side of the road hitch hiking. There were some snow flurries in the air and I just could not leave them there. This was a good ten or more miles out of town. So, I stopped and asked them what they needed.

They wanted a ride and they were going down the Cassiar. They were headed for a small town named Boswell on a Lake called the Kootenay Lake. This was right on my way and about 1,500 miles distant.

It took me almost three hours to repack the back of the truck with everything from the cab and then tie it all down. The man and wife helped me. Then we were on our way.

For the first 1,000-1,200 miles, sometimes the little towns are almost 150 or more miles apart. We had a long way to go, and the first over 1,000 miles back then were gravel, except within about 10 miles of each town.

So, we talked a lot. I cannot remember the name of these folks...but they were good people.

He was a circuit, non-denominational preacher who had been up there all summer preaching to the Indian "First Canadian" peoples. He indicated that there was a lot of spiritualism cropping up, a lot of drinking (which is not unusual on any reservation), and that they went there to preach Jesus Christ to them.

I explained to them about the church and they were very familiar with, and not antagonistic towards the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We spent four days together and it was a very pleasant trip. They had enough money to feed themselves and wanted to pay me, but I would not take any money.

They told me that those "Walk-in" signs at the Palm Readers were not what I thought. They said that they were for people who were either emotionally or mentally depressed wherein they would have these spiritualists invite a "spirit" into their body to take control so they would not have to worry about things.

I had never heard of such a thing, and felt anything like that would be evil. They told me it was in fact so, and that they had preached against the practice. I had not heard of it before or since, but it gave me a bad feeling and I knew if anyone was doing that, that it was not of God.

Ultimately, we got down there, passing through Kamloops on the way.

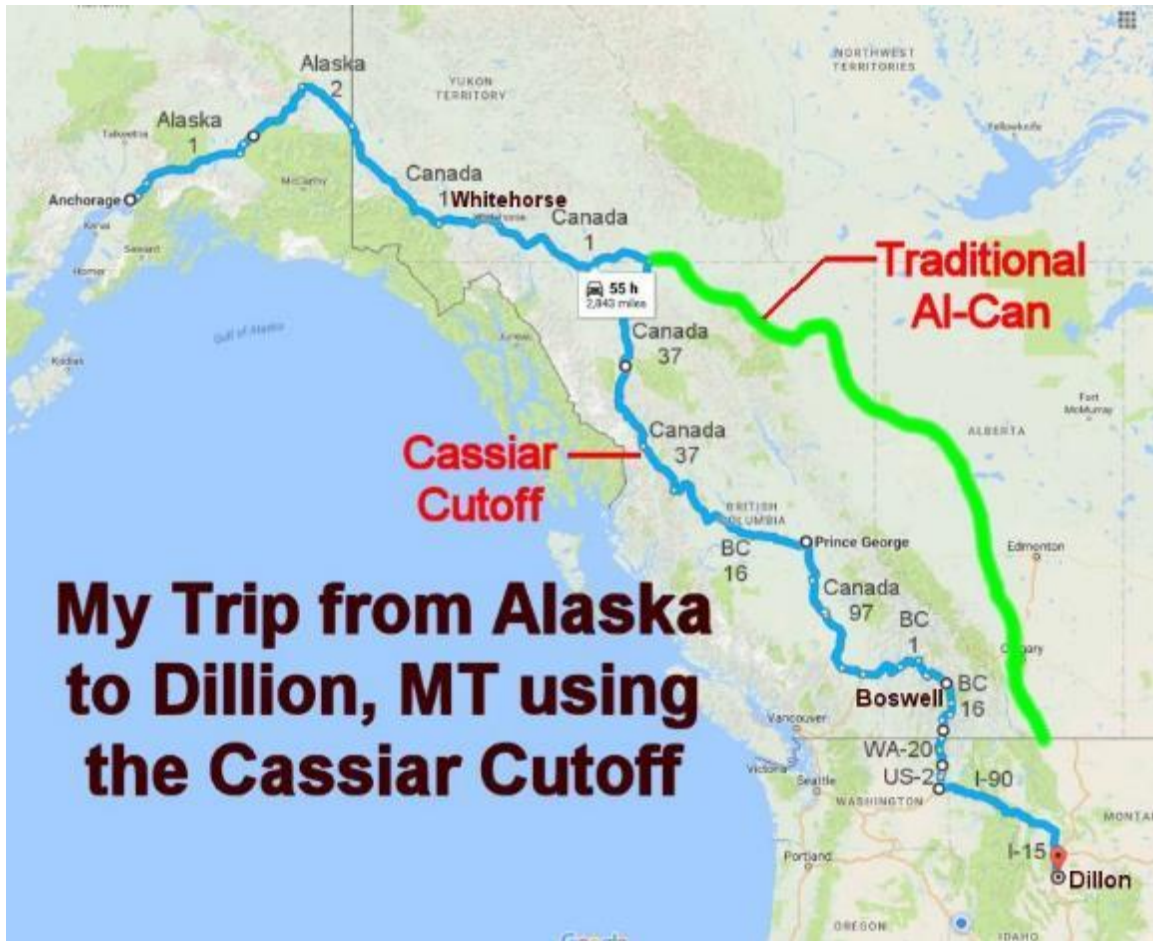
Their town was a beautiful town on a glacial lake. For all the world it looked like a Fjord in Scandinavia. Very beautiful. Apparently, there was a legend about that lake too. Apparently, sort of like the Lok Noss Monster...people in the area believed some large serpent like aquatic animal lived in that lake. I never saw it...but who knows? A lot of people believe in Big Foot too! LOL!

But I have to say, the drive was spectacular and beautiful. Never let anyone tell you we are almost out of forests. I drove down there through almost 1,800 miles of constant, very thick forests...and more large forests (although not continuous) for another 900 miles. Some of the most beautiful driving you could ever hope for and I recommend, if you ever have the opportunity to take the Cassiar highway (Canada Highway 2) up to Whitehorse and then on into Alaska. But have a good vehicle, at least two spares, and plenty to eat and emergency supplies. Also, be good to have either a satellite or short-wave radio too in case you broke down. The actual Al-Can through Dawson is not that way. There are plenty of people who drive it and you are not apt to have to spend very long alone and get stranded. But back then the Cassiar was far less traveled.

I gave the family a Book of Mormon I had with me when we parted, we all hugged, and they said they would

read it. I hope they did. I told them if they had any questions, to find the closest Mormon missionaries.

I then drove into Alberta, down into Washington State, and then on into Montana and back to Dillon. A total of almost 2,900 miles altogether.



Anyhow, back in Dillon, as with all things, time passed and our lives changed as the kids grew older.

Gail saw early on that we needed my Engineering income back. That It was a blessing to help our kids and grandkids with. She began urging me to do so.

I fought it...she had to almost drag me out of there...but ultimately saw that she was correct. I had been blessed, and as our kids began nearing High School graduation and then college, marriage, buying homes, and having and raising kids, we needed and could be in a better position to help them

We decided we had to sell the business...and while doing so, I had to get some engineering work and better income coming in.

20. Leaving Dillon, Consulting, my Trip to India and Romania 1994-1995

We found a buyer for the company. A young couple but who wanted assistance getting it up and going. I went looking for engineering work while Gail helped them.

They ended up buying us out and we had a twenty-year agreement with them to give us a very decent secondary income that would pay us back for all our savings we had put into buying it in the first place.

A word about that.

It did not work out that way.

Within five years the young man contracted cancer and passed away. The wife tried to work on...but she could not afford to do so and they ended up trying to sell out, but could not find a buyer. They were upside down in the business, which meant they owed more than they could sell it for. They ultimately declared bankruptcy. In the bankruptcy by the time the bank got their part, and the Federal Government got their part (apparently, they were behind on their taxes) there was literally nothing left. We lost everything we had saved and put into Beaverhead printing. This meant, at over 40 years old at the time, we had to start over and start saving again for retirement...which at that point was a whole lot closer than it had been before we left SDRC.

But it was what we had chosen and was one of those turns life takes. We had several more awaiting us.

I initially found work with a company called Cambric in South Salt Lake City. They were a company that did Engineering Consulting and they had a job with a company out of Nephi Utah, Mid States Consultants, who were looking for companies in Europe to do CAD conversions for. This means taking older hand drawings and converting them to CAD. In order to do that, they would need to know the CAD equipment, and they would need to understand English.

Mid States had a contract with Bell Canada to get upwards of 10,000 drawings converted and Mid States did not have the staff to do so. Cambric had the contacts off shore in India, the Far East, and in Eastern Europe. They hired me to go to those places with a representative from Bell Canada and check out several companies that wanted to do this conversion work. So, in early 1996, I went on a long trip, 3-4 weeks to visit India and then Romania to look at four or five companies.

It was an eye-opening experience.

India was, on the whole, very poor. People followed us around everywhere when they saw we were westerners. They had to bring along extra people from the engineering companies to keep the crowds back.

We visited four companies. One in Bombay (now called Mumbai), one in Madras (now called Chennai), one in Bangalore, and the fourth in New Delhi.

The engineering people were nice. They welcomed us and treated us very well.

But the conditions all around were terrible for most of the people. Bombay was SO crowded. You can hardly imagine it. It is like conditions on a busy day at Six Flags over Texas or other very popular amusement park...except all the time, including at night.



Crowded Bombay Street

In Bombay, we drove to Larson and Tubro, one of the largest companies we visited, and along the way we passed what was clearly a huge garbage dump. But about every hundred yards I noticed that there was a road of sorts pushed through the rubbish and people were living in there. I asked the driver about it and he told me in that Indian-English accent they have, that it was a re-cycling factory. People would work there, with their families, and take wood to one corner, plastic to another, and metal to a third corner of the place. They were paid 36 rupees a day (which amounted to just over a dollar a day) and could keep and sell for themselves anything that did not fit into one of the categories.

There must have been twenty thousand people living in there...and that was their home.

In Bangalore, which was a beautiful city, and where we met with a smaller company run by three younger men in their 30s. I got to visits a couple of places. They asked me if I would be willing to visit one of their Temples. I did and they were so happy.

They told me that western Christians hardly ever accepted such an invitation. So, I went to this huge, ornate building.

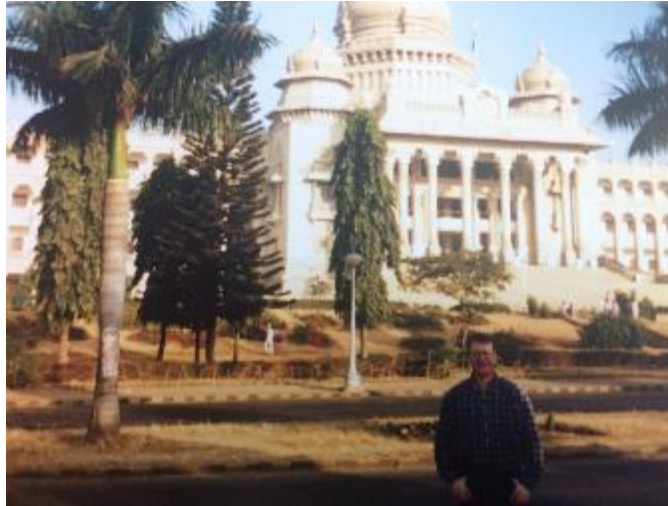


Kushalanagar Buddhist Temple in Bangalore

There was a big area where worshipers would pray to hundreds of deities that were lined up on a ledge above and around the whole enclosure. They explained to me about all of these "Gods" who had visited the people in times past, performed miracles and taught them things. I told them that they sounded like prophets to me, sent from God, like in the Bible. We had some interesting discussions.

The man who was with me from Bell did not like me making such visits because he thought they were just doing it to try and get me to like them and pick them. I told him that what I did after hours was not part of the job, and I was capable and professional enough to make my decision accordingly.

I also got to see the huge, and apparently famous legislative building in Bangalore:



Here I am outside the Vidhana Soudha legislature building in Bangalore

Finally, in Bangalore, we went on a tour of the Maharajah's Palace about 40 miles out of Bangalore. It was very interesting and another very beautiful place. But going there we crossed a "river" that stunk so badly I could hardly breathe. At that time...and maybe to this day...the first thing you notice when you land in India is the smell. It is pervasive and it is because most of the place still uses open sewers. Meaning their waste does not travel through pipes under the ground, but through concrete canals in the open air. So it stinks very badly.

Anyhow this river was the worst I had experienced. The people with us told us that it was not a river at all...but the main "discharge" from all the sewers in Bangalore...a city of about two million people at the time.

All of that waste made a river of human waste and brown water from commodes and what not that looked to be 3-4 feet deep and ¼ mile wide, running all the time. They told me it ran into a river about 20 miles down from where we crossed it. I tell people I know now what it like to truly be up at the top of "poop" creek.

I do have to say that the palace in Mysore was impressive. We spent most of the day there.



The Palace in Mysore

We also got to visit the Tal Mahal out of New Delhi after our fourth visit. It was unbelievable ornate, huge, and beautiful. It was made by a great leader who made it for his wife.

It sounds really romantic until you find the history of it. The man never wanted anything like it built again by the

artisans whom he hired. Maybe 20,000 people worked on it. In the end, all of the chief sculptors, as the story goes, had their hands cut off so they could never build such a thing again.

When hearing this, I could never look at it as beautiful again.



Taj Mahal near New Delhi India

We went from India to Romania. We flew into Budapest, Hungary and then drove into Romania. It was at a time when only fifty or so miles south of the route we traveled they were having civil war in the countries south of there. We had no difficulty, but it was disconcerting as we drove there.

Budapest, Hungary is a huge city on the Danube River. It is really quite pretty for the most part.



Here I am in Budapest, next to the river.

We drove over to Romania and crossed the border. We were going to a small city in the western and central part of the country not far from the border called Oradea. It is a city of about 250,000. Remember, this was not too many years after the “Iron Curtain” came down. Most of the people were pretty poor, albeit not as poor as most Indians.

The man who owned the company we were looking at was a really good man. He had escaped Romania in the mid-1980s, risking his life to get to freedom. Sadly, at the time he was unable to get his family out, but ultimately was able to arrange their release. He had made a point out of, ever since he got to America and became successful, to try and help others in his country. He had started a small engineering business in

Romania after the Iron Curtain fell, and was trying to get contracts for them so they could make more money.

When we arrived, he told myself and John, the executive from Bell Canada, that he had arranged for us to stay with him and one of his Executive Vice Presidents. John would hear nothing of it. Like in India, he looked at everything through a prism of thinking people were trying to manipulate us.

We found out different.

After dinner that first evening and John demanding that we be taken to a nice Hotel in town, they drove us in and arranged to pick us up the next morning. One of the executives asked if we were Christians. I immediately said, "Yes, I am." John said, "I do not see what that has to do with anything." Well, the individual who had asked arranged to pick me up because that evening was a youth meeting and he wanted the kids to hear something from Christians in America.

The Hotel looked like something right out of the Soviet Union. Apparently, it had been the main living place for the Russian ambassador or an attaché and then someone made a hotel out of it when the Russians were run out. And in Romania, they were one of the countries in Eastern Europe who had a violent overthrow of the Communists. They executed the puppet ruler that the Soviets had placed over them, and had a short but bitter fight to wrest power from them and their family. Many of that ruling family was lined up and shot because of the depravity and cruelty with which they had ruled, and the Soviet/Russian political leaders barely escaped with their lives.

Anyhow, the Hotel did not have a good feel about it. They would not accept John's Canadian currency...they only wanted my US Dollars.

I had a great time talking with the youth at the church. They loved America and felt that Christianity's great hope in the world remained America. When they gave me a chance to speak I thanked them and their families for holding fast to their faith in Christ, even in the face of such persecution as the Communists offered. I told them that it was they who were the heroes to people like me. I then bore them witness about the restoration of the Gospel of Christ through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. None of them had ever heard about it and I advised them to wait a short period and talk to the LDS missionaries when they arrived in their country. I know many of them would do so...but unfortunately, I never had contact with them again.

When I got back to the hotel, John was not in the Restaurant/Bar where he said he would wait for me.

I went up to his room and knocked on the door and he asked who it was. I told him it was me and then heard him moving furniture and what not out of the way of the door. When the door opened, he was somewhat pale and I asked him what happened.

He told me that while he was in the Bar a huge bear of a guy, a Romanian, had asked him if he would change Romanian money for US dollars. John told him he had no US dollars. The man asked him if he wanted a woman for the night...and John said no, he was happily married. Apparently, the man got upset, and had some other, even worse things to say at which time John went back to his room and barricaded himself in.

Needless to say...after that we stayed with the people from the company.

Anyhow, to make a long story short, the people at the Romanian company, bless their hearts, could not speak English well at all, which was a requirement of the contract. They also did not have a very good knowledge of the CAD program they would need to use.



Outside the "Hotel" in Romania

Sadly, we could not offer them the work...even though I wish we could have.

We ended up giving the award to the company in Bangalore which was started by the three men I spoke of. Their employees all spoke English well, and they were very proficient with the software.

I convinced Bell and Cambric to offer them three dollars more an hour for the work, but to stipulate that all three of those dollars would go to the people doing the work for us. My reason was that the company first of all was going to make good money on the project even without the \$3 per hour more. But more importantly, the personnel working on our project would be absolutely dedicated to us and loyal to a tee. Three dollars an hour extra in India was like a gold-mine, and they would give us their all to do a good job and remain on it for as long as they could. And they did.

After getting back, Mid State's offered me a job managing that contract and then starting a new department in their company to get more.

21. Working for Mid-State consultants in Nephi, Utah 1995-1997

We moved to Nephi, and it was a nice move.

It was not Dillon, Montana, but it was a nice small town off of Interstate 15 about 80 miles South of Provo. Great agricultural town, but doing Engineering work that paid more.

But not everyone was happy.

Katie was ready to graduate and ended up doing so from Beaverhead County High School. She worked hard to finish all the necessary work before she left so she did not have to attend school in Nephi. We went back with her when graduation came that spring and she got her High School Diploma



Katie getting her High School Diploma

Not long after this, Katie took a job being a Nanny in Connecticut. It was such a long way away. We took her to the airport in Salt Lake City as she left. She was the first one in our family to leave home. I have to admit, I cried like a child, as did several of us, as we said goodbye and she got on that airplane.

But she went out there and did us all proud. Just as she had done when she went to drive that bicycle to work in Dillon. But everything was not alright beyond that.

Rachel in particular was very unhappy with the move. I could hardly blame her. I did not like leaving Dillon, and there she was, a year away from graduating, and she was having to move.

We found she was preparing to run away and go back. So, I had a talk with her...and it was stern...too stern.

She did not want to go to church. She did not want to live with us, though she was still 16 years old.

I told her I was not going to "force" her to go to church. That at her age she should decide for herself...though it disappointed me. I also told her we knew of her plans and that we would not allow it. She needed to stay with her family unit she was at least 18, and then, as an adult she could do whatever she wanted.

I told her she could do that...not go to church, but she would have to stay at home. And that if she tried to run away, we would find her and that I had a former Bishop who had a school for wayward teens in Central Utah about 30 miles from the nearest town and we would put her there for her own good if we had to.

She became very emotional and Gail intervened.

Gail was not happy the way I had presented Rachel with her options, and she showed me there was another option. She took Rachel, Becki, and Jared...found an apartment in Dillon, and moved back!

I was devastated. I did not think it was the answer and that it was not good for Rachel in particular.

But that was not the real issue for Gail...and I STILL had lots to learn.

We arranged for it to be that way and Jeff stayed with me in Dillon.

Ultimately Rachel would not follow Gail's rules even in Dillon. I had some harsh words with a young man who was her suitor because it became apparent that their relationship was something that we, as a family, felt was unwholesome. I explained to him what statutory rape meant. I am sorry to include this in my history...but this is what happens in life...and it not always all roses.

It scared the boy...as I hoped it would. Because I told him as Rachel's father, even if Rachel did not oppose his advances, that if she was under age in Montana, I as the father could press charges, and that I would.

Well, he did not want that...but this, you see, just made Rachel more upset with me. She ultimately went to a Judge there in Dillon and got legally separated from our family so she could live on her own. My efforts to try and "protect" her from what she wanted to do led her to that Judge in Dillon who approved her request.

I was very upset with that Judge and felt he was allowing the virtual break up of families. Of course, he may well have remembered me and my fight over the text book in Dillon and could well have been one of the individuals who did not "approve" of me getting the community all worked up over it. To this day I do not regret doing so...but I did regret what happened for a few years to our family.

Anyhow, some friends of ours in Dillon agreed to let Rachel live with them, and Gail and the other kids moved back together in Nephi. I am glad we did. We needed to, and the thought of our family separated like that was like driving a nail through my heart.

At one point in all of this Gail and I agreed to meet with Carlos Assay. The man who helped teach my family the gospel and who had married Gail and I in April 1978 in Salt Lake City Temple. He had some hard advice for me.

Basically, it was, Jeff, you need to be less imposing and insistent. Yes, you are the leader in the home...but you have to lead with love and insure that your decisions, however right they may be, do not drive the family apart.

One thing I have to say here. It is a memory I have that I should share. Jeff stuck with me in Nephi and we would play those computer games. On one occasion, we were fighting the computer together. We were winning but I kept noticing I was being attacked and could not figure out from where or whom. It turned out it was Jeff! The little bugger had broken our alliance and I could not even imagine it and as I was fighting the computer, he was out to win the whole game!

On another occasion I was too much into the game. Jeff was just young and he made a mistake and it cost us as we were playing. I remember being frustrated and saying, "Jeff...how could you be so stupid!" Well, it broke Jeff's heart and I could see the tears coming out the corners of his eyes. Then the Lord and His Spirit chastised me and I had to repent. I hugged him and told him how sorry I was that it was not him that was stupid, but me. I apologized and let him know that things with the family were hurting me and I was so sorry to respond that way and take it out on him. He forgave me...and I was thankful for it, and his love.

As I say, even as we grow older we all have lots to learn.

Ultimately, Gail came home and we had a good home in Nephi, and our family was back together there, now

being Gail, myself, Becki, Jeff, and Jared.

Jeff got into playing football, and Becki was a cheerleader there.

Jared had started school in Nephi and our family, though smaller now by two, was experiencing what all families do one way or another. Our kids were growing older and leaving home



Our home in Nephi, Utah

In the meantime, work in Nephi was stable and the people there at Mid-state Consultants liked me. They gave me a raise and lots of responsibility.



Mid-state consultants in Nephi, Utah

But, despite all of this, I was still somewhat stubborn about Dillon, and I did not like the course our nation had taken under Bill Clinton.

We had some property in Montana still and I had thoughts in the back of my mind about the family homesteading it and getting away from the trouble that might be coming. This idea only further intensified Gail's feelings...and understandably so.

She was looking for us to become stable...and stable for years. Talk about potential downturns and government individuals who might destroy stability was not helping...however much it could prove accurate.

Such feelings and such conflicting interests are what families have to maneuver through in life. Ultimately, their love of God, their love of one another, and their love of country and in particular in this land, the Constitution

and the principles the mansion is founded on, itself (and in that order) have to guide families through such circumstances. Ultimately it would us...but it still was going to take some time and experience.

As far as the country and the constitution is concerned...I had been raised by parents who had an unwavering commitment to it. By a father (and his father, and my grandfather on Mom's side, and her brother) and many uncles who risked their lives for this nation and the principles upon which it was founded. My Mom's brother, Uncle Albert, died over Germany defending it and fighting those forces who would destroy it.

Brother Benson had reminded me of these things in the 1980s when I met with him for that week. That our nation also faced dangers...serious dangers...from within. Coming to terms with it and how to fight it was something we were struggling with while ensuring our family was not only safe...but sound. It was a part of who I am, and learning how to deal with that part without forsaking it, but being able to keep it such that our family was strengthened by it and not harmed, was something we both (Gail and I) had to learn together, and as you shall see...we still had more to learn.

I ended up looking for even better work for our family. Max Raiser at BYU was willing to hire me to teach at BYU. Such a job, though not as high paying, would provide for all of our kids college education at BYU. In addition, my friend, Jeff Barrus, who had worked for me at SDRC, was trying to put together a position for me at Micron Electronics in Boise, Idaho where he had ended up as a Director over laptop computer development.

I some time off at work and took Jeff and Jared and went to the property in Montana I spoke of. I wanted to pray about it, and I wanted to see what the boys thought of the land and living on it. We took our old Suburban that we had had for some time while we were there.



Our Suburban on our Land in Montana in early 1997

While we were there, a friend of ours, Gordon Cleverly, whom we knew from Dillon and who had been in our Ward there and was a good friend with whom we had done numerous things as families...like helping them brand their calves and do work on their ranch, showed up one night with a message that I needed to call Gail immediately. He knew where our property was and he drove all the way to get us Gail's message.

I got the boys and we went down to the Cleverley's house, which was about 40 miles from where we were, and I called Gail. She wanted me to know that the offer from BYU and Max Raisor had come through, and it was a really good offer. But he needed a decision

We cut our trip off and drove back to Nephi.

I talked to Jeff at Micron and let him know I needed to know what he had, because the offer at BYU was on the table. He went to his Vice President and within a few days, he too had an offer. Gail and I prayed about them both. Ultimately we felt strongly, through the Spirit, that our family needed to go to Boise. It would be more like our family had been used to, and would cause the least immediate strain...but more importantly, we had that spiritual feeling inside, in our hearts and souls, that it was right.

So we chose Micron and ended up going to the Boise area to look around.

The salary, though not as high as what I had enjoyed at SDRC, was very generous and would help us start to make up financially for what we had lost. We found a small town, Emmett, Idaho, about 25 miles from work and from Boise that also gave us that good feeling...like we were supposed to find it and be there.

I told Max Raisor, and felt somewhat bad, even though it was the right decision. I explained it to him and he agreed...but he had pulled some strings and made me a generous offer to teach like that at BYU...which I know I would have excelled at and loved.

I told the folks at Mid-State. I have to say that I was sorry to leave them too. They had been so good to me through some difficult times. The Lord had provided them as a shelter for us...and for me in particular, to bridge my return into Engineering.

I went to work for Micron Electronics in the fall of 1997

22. Move to Idaho, Micron, getting a Home, Katie gets married 1997-2000

I was hired as the director of Portable Product development. It involved leading the entire team, design, manufacturing, marketing, sales and support...the entire business of making Micron's portable products available to the customers. From individuals, to companies, to the government...local, state, and federal.

Micron Electronics as known for the best engineered portables...notebooks and laptops, but not for the least expensive. We were the 3rd largest producer in the world, behind Dell and Compaq computers.

We had great margins and looked for ways to reduce our pricing, but maintain our profits.

I had a team of engineers and product managers who reported directly up through the various product lines.

As I had done at SDRC, I became personally involved with a lot of the work. I took my job personally and wanted to make sure if I was going to make decisions, then I wanted to be aware enough of the design and the issues to be able to do so soundly. This meant travel to the manufacturing plants that we were using and ensuring that our product managers and quality assurance people knew what our company management expected of them and for them to be able to pass it on to our partners.

We assembled some of the machines in our own plant from some of our own and some supplied parts. We had other machines where they were assembled in plants off-shore that we, in essence-managed to ensure that they built them properly to our specs.

This business model was where we could make the best money...but also where the most risk was unless we managed our partners properly to get them to make the product according to our specifications and design.

I ended up spending a lot of time in Taiwan with a new partner we choose, Alpha Top in Taipei. Apple had also chosen them to help build some of their products. I go to know them very well, from their product mangers up to the President of their company. I made several trips there...sometimes as long as 3-4 weeks at a time.

It would be easy to ask, "How this was helping at home?"

Well, it was because we had both, Gail and I discussed the decision and made it together. She knew this was right for us, and so what it took to do the job was also right as long as we both stayed together on it.



Myself and one of the Product Managers at Alpha Top in Taiwan



Some of the Distinctive Chinese architecture in Taiwan



7-11 in Taiwan...LOL!

The people in Taiwan loved America and most Americans. I remember in 1998 hearing their President giving a speech on July 4th that put our President at the time, Bill Clinton, to shame. Whereas in Taiwan they talked about the foundation of America and its inspired Constitution, and celebrated it, President Clinton at the time was running America down and implying that we might be a lot of the world's problem...which was just not true. Just the same it was an interesting experience.

As you can see, in Taiwan, like most of the foreign nations I visited, they had 7-11s, McDonald's Kentucky Fried Chicken, etc. But my main purpose in being there was to ensure that they were meeting our needs as a company...and I have to say that they were.

While all of this was going on, we found a home.

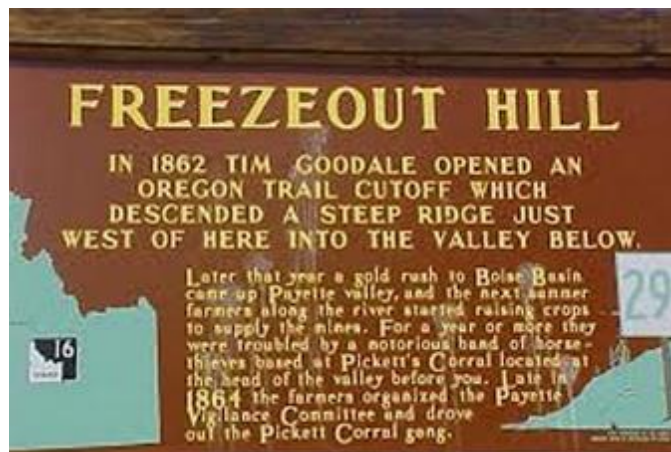
First, I moved into an apartment the company provided for me in September 1997. It was only about ten miles from work, over on the west end of Boise. Our factory was in Nampa, Idaho, to the west of Boise.

Gail and I decided to buy a manufactured home. Not a mobile home, but a home manufactured with 2x8 interior studs, a normal slope to the roof, and much larger than "mobile" homes. This home was almost 2,000 square feet and we were adding a front porch and a carport to it that we would later turn into a garage.

We found a perfect lot for it just outside of Emmett, about two blocks from church. It already had a well, had irrigation rights for water, and already had a septic tank. Someone had been going to build there, but then were unable to do so and were selling it all for a good price. We were blessed to find it.

Emmett is a beautiful small town on the Payette River, over some foothills from the Boise River valley where Boise, Eagle, Meridian, Nampa and Caldwell are all located in what is Idaho's largest metropolitan area of about 225, 000 people

As you come down from those foothills, the valley opens up in front of you at a Historic/Memorial Turn out:



There is a 911 Memoria also there that is very nice:



This leads to a wonderful view of the town and valley:



In October 1997, Katie (who came back from Connecticut, and who had met her future husband in Nephi), and Becki moved in with me. Then in December Gail and Jeff and Jared came. That small two-bedroom apartment was something we lived in while they were getting our house ready and it was quite cramped. We will always remember it, and our downstairs neighbors who, let's just say did not have much patience for a family living above them. LOL! How many times will we remember the man banging on the ceiling of their apartment at the slightest noise...or even movement? But all of that passed and we soon moved into our home.

Rachel was still in Montana. I had driven up to see her the year before and took her out to eat. I told how much I loved her and how sorry I was we had been upset with one another...but that I was not only sorry, but willing to forgive her too, if she would me. We had gone to see her get her diploma, and by this time she was living with a young man in Bozeman, Montana. We had driven up to help her move...but that too had ended badly, and I just knew I had to tell her I was sorry for how things had turned out...and even though I would always, as a father, try and look out for my girls, I was sorry it had caused such upset feelings.

She said she would forgive me and we parted and left it like that for the time being...and I believe it helped and turned some corners for us.

Not long after that, Katie and her boyfriend, Nathan Trujillo (no relation to the earlier Juan Trujillo...but interesting how things come around, eh? LOL!). Anyway, the two of them got married in May 1998 not long after we moved into our new home. Later, they were sealed in the Salt Lake city Temple. We were very proud of them both.



Katie and Nathan at the Salt Lake Temple

And, as I said, we moved into our new home. We started off with the house and carport, and then over a 16-17 year period, built out the carport, then added on an addition, then turned the addition into an apartment for Gail's folks. Here are pictures of that progression to our home.



Our home with the porch and car port...and Jeff standing in front



The house, circa 2003, with the carport closed in.



The house, circa 2016 with the complete addition completed

So, we had found and had built the home we wanted and have lived in it ever since. As I write this, that's been twenty years! What a blessing for us. That, probably above many other things, helped our family become settled and at ease, and allowed us to rediscover the wonderful and eternal love we always had for each other...despite whatever difficulties. And there were plenty of difficulties yet to come.

The first came in 2000, when new management at Micron Electronics literally bankrupted the company.

I was working closely with upper management, so saw it coming. Jeff Barrus and I tried talk about to management and did our level best to warn and inform them of what was likely to happen. But they would have none of it. They simply either could not, or did not want to hear it.

I came to the conclusion that there were some risqué stock deals going on, where the new President came into to purposely run the company down and sell it off. Which was exactly what he did.

And then, after taking a multi-billion-dollar company down, and literally having to give money to the new buyer to take it, he got a huge promotion by getting a much larger paying job with an even larger company at the end of it. I suspect that someone made a lot of money in those deals.

Problem was that about 2,000 people lost their jobs, many of which had to move with their families and try to find other work. I saw it coming and so left Micron before it got so bad that people were desperate and flooding the market looking for jobs.

First Alpha Top hired me as a consultant and I got some really good work done for them. It also gave me the opportunity to become personally involved in a couple of things happening in the country while I was between consulting Jobs. And once again...I had friends in time of need.

23. Alpha Top consulting, March for Liberty, Jared's Journal of our trip in 2000

As I had mentioned, I came to know the President of Alpha Top in Taiwan. As Micron was making the decisions that ultimately had them go out of business, I approached them about leaving Micron and becoming a consultant.

I had to do so carefully to ensure that there was no potential for any accusation of insider kind of deals, or conflicts of interest. I did this by simply being above board with Micron and getting their permission to become a liaison between Alpha Top and themselves, and to sign legal agreements that nothing I knew about Micron would be passed on to or divulged to any other company I was likely to consult with. With those stipulations, they were happy to do so.

So, in 2000 I began working for them and it was a pleasant experience. They had complete trust in me, and I in them. They knew that I understood the business and was completely honest about what they could do to best make the business work positively for both Alpha Top and Micron, and anyone else they had me work for.

And we did good work.

At the same time, deeply concerning things were happening in the nation.

As I mentioned earlier, the Clinton administration had turned the country on its end and were doing things patently unconstitutional.

Having worked on numerous military contracts in my career and having to have secret government clearances wherein I took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign or domestic and to bear true faith and allegiance to the constitution, I was very concerned and took that oath seriously.

I began to write articles and to speak out, and many people read them because I published them online.

A number of us decided to put together, get permits for, and hold a rally in Washington DC in the fall of 2000. People would be coming from all over the country.

Gail and I took a three-week vacation to do this. It centered on meeting in Washington DC, but we also decided to make it an historic trip following the migrant trail out, going to the rally, then on to Boston to visit Gail's brother Denni and his wife and also visit all of the historic sites around Boston dealing with the revolutionary war, and then follow the Mormon Pioneer trail back.

Becki and Jeff could not get out of school for that long, but Jared's elementary teacher actually encouraged him and said if he kept a good journal of all the places we visited and what they meant, and then presented it when he got back, that she would give him a grade for all of his other work commensurate with the grade he got for the report.

It was a GREAT thing!

The Rally was about the constitutional issues that were occurring and we invited anyone who understood the types of things that were happening to come and they could speak at our rally.

We had a few better-known speakers, but we announced and promoted it for the everyday persons. Literally anyone who wanted to come and speak out. We had some guidelines to make sure people who might be opposed to what we were doing could not use it as a soap box to attack us. (That meant that I and others who were managing the rally would listen to the speeches and if anyone got off queue, we simply cut them off and asked the next person to step up).

Luckily, we only had to do that a couple of times and we had the Park Service Security people there to back us up if needed. They never had to.

Here are some pictures from the trip out, the even itself, and then the trip back.



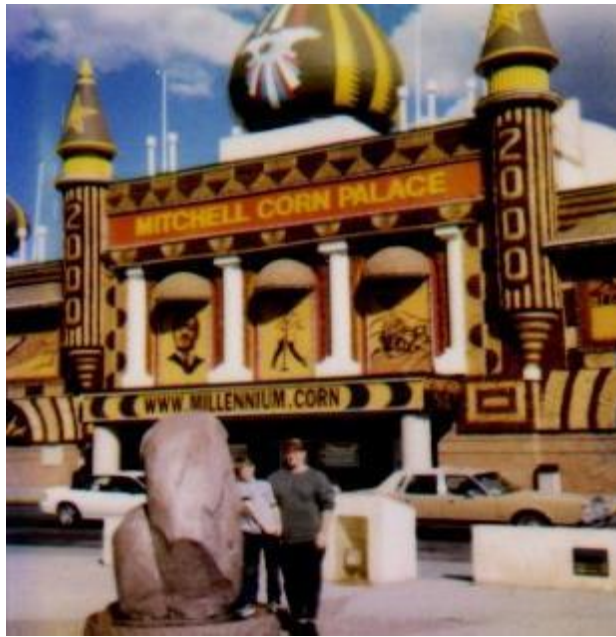
Independence Rock in Wyoming



Jared at Independence Rock in Wyoming



Here I am at the little-known Nebraska National forest



Gail and Jared at the Corn Palace in Kansas



Jared at the Bloody Angle at Gettysburg



At the spot of Confederate General Armistead's furthest advance at Gettysburg



Coming into Washington DC

Once we got to Washington DC, it was time for me to prepare for and hold the rally. We stayed the night with some friends in Virginia who knew we were coming. In fact, we stopped along the way and met with several friends who knew we were coming by, but who themselves could not make the rally. They were so supportive, and good friend. Anyhow, here are some of the pictures from that event, the March for Liberty on 2000 in Washington, DC. Held at the Lincoln Memorial



Me and my friend Tom, before the Rally.



Delivering a speech at the Lincoln Memorial about the Constitution and how critical it is to be vigilant



Talking with folks lined up to speak



My friend and another organizer, Bob, listening to a speech

We held the rally for about seven hours, from 10 AM until 5 PM. Most of the time there were 100-200 people around, sometimes more and sometimes less. Around noon, we several hundred. Not a huge turnout, but it was effective and I know a lot of people left there thinking much harder about our nation and the state it found itself

in...and moved to be vigilant about the Constitution. To read it. To understand it, and to protect it.

It was a great experience, and I know it helped stoke the flames somewhat of my own commitment to trying to keep people informed. So, I set up a web site, JEFFHEAD.COM and began posting articles there and keeping track of some of the issues of the day. That site, over the following ten years got upwards of five million hits from people who heard about it and then began reading.

I do not believe there is anything someone like me...relatively unknown...could ever have done to get the world out any better...and our nation needs us to understand what its freedoms are based on and help others to understand so we preserve them.

The most important of those has always been to understand that there is a God in Heaven, who, like Patrick Henry said, watches over the affairs of man. It is He who safeguards our freedoms as long as we worship Him and follow Him as He has asked. In fact, there is a promise on this land in particular, that if we shall follow Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, we shall be able to always keep our freedoms.

Read Ether 2: 10-12, and in the Book of Mormon. Also read II Chronicles 7:14 in the Bible. This is how America stays free, and her Constitution was inspired by God towards those ends.

John Adams, said the following about it, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

As the rally was going on, Gail was taking Jared to the Smithsonian Institution and to see other historical places around the Capitol and the many monuments.



Jared at the Smithsonian Institution

From Washington DC, we drove up to Boston and spent a few days with Gail's brother, Denni. It was a wonderful visit and they welcomed us into their home. Here are pictures of some of the many things we saw while there in the Boston area...an historical Mecca for America. From the Pilgrims, through the Revolutionary war and further on too.

I have to say, I really enjoyed the many things we were seeing. I cannot believe any American citizen with an ounce of love for their country could not.



Plymouth Rock



The Mayflower



Lexington Green



North Bridge at Concord



Paul Revere's starting point, one of by land, two if by sea



The USS Constitution

We could talk all day about all that we saw in Boston. There is a National Park there that follows the Battle Road from Boston to Lexington where the British defeated a small band of militia who were determined to stop them, on to Concord where the Minutemen turned the British at North Bridge and chased them back to Boston.

We also visited Bunker Hill, where the British attempted to push the Americans away from Boston and. Though they took Bunker Hill, they could not dislodge the Americans from the next hill and had to withdraw.

Anyhow, we had a great time, and then started back, following the Mormon trail from New York, to Ohio, to Missouri, to Illinois, and then ultimately across the plains and to Salt Lake City. First we crossed Vermont.



Gail at Green Mountain Vermont. We purchased some great Maple Syrup in Vermont.



The Hill Cumorah Monument in upstate New York, near Palmyra

The Hill Cumorah Monument marks the hill where Joseph Smith was led to find the Golden Plates, which the Lord then gave him a gift to translate into the Book of Mormon, an ancient record of people on the American continents who had been led here by God to escape the destruction of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar.



Jared at the Hill Cumorah Monument

We also visited the sacred grove, near the Smith farm, where Joseph Smith had his first vision. The same trees in the grove have long since died, however, the place is still given over to trees and it is a special place to visit.

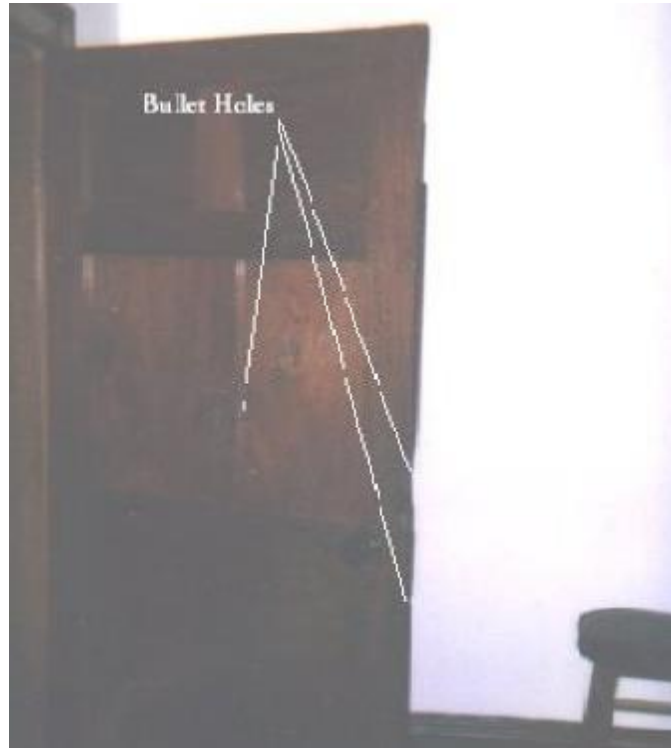


The Sacred Grove near Palmyra

We continued our trip home and saw things in Ohio and Missouri, and then went on to Illinois where the Church had a brief, four-year respite from persecution. But ere long, they were persecuted again and Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum were killed, and then the Church migrated west under the leadership of the next Prophet, Brigham Young.



Gail and Jared outside the Carthage Jail with an older Missionary serving there, where Joseph Smith was killed



The door into the room where the mob stormed and fired shot through the door. The bullet holes are still in the door. There is simply not room or time for me to put all of the pictures in this record...but they can be seen on line, and I would recommend a reading of the Multiple Volume, History of the Church, which tells the tail in great detail. Also, I would recommend a visit to all of these places.

From Illinois, we continued north and west into Iowa, and then west across Iowa and the Nebraska, following the Mormon Pioneer trail. The Mormon trail is on the southern bank of the Platt River, while the Oregon Trail is on the north side of the river as it crosses the plains.



Jared at Scott's Bluff Nebraska



Here I am near where the Martin and Willie Hand Cart company camped on their tragic way west

This experience was a wonderful one for all of us. We learned a lot, and had a great time.

Ultimately, we got home and Jared put together his report from these and other pictures. He listened well and told the story. He got an "A" on it and his teacher was very impressed with the job that he did...and so were we.

Also in 2000, we had another very important experience. Becki was a true Millennial and the year 2000 was her graduation year and she graduated that year. She did have to take some extra classes to get everything done...and that's our Becki...but she did what she had to do to get the job done, and that is also Becki.

She had been in High School when we moved to Emmett, and it was a big adjustment for her.

She had been a cheerleader in Nephi and was well known there, even though we had been there only a relatively short time of a couple of years.

Becki is a very outgoing, and friendly person, and she makes friends and holds them loyal. Moving to Emmett broke those relationships that she had begun to make in Nephi. I felt badly about that, but the move was what we needed to get our finances back in order to be able to provide for everyone...but true to form, she quickly adjusted, made new friends and did well.

That is not to say that everything was "rosy," because we did have some issue with Becki as she did not really want to keep the standards we tried to establish. LOL! We found out later, after several years, that she would wear one set of clothes to school, and then change into another set of clothes while there.

I remember her prom date. Of course, as a father I was worried and wanted to make sure that the boys understood how to treat my daughters. I still had those talks with them and this embarrassed the girls. But I did so anyway...I think it was a part of how I was raised. Here's Becky with her flowers, before she got all dressed up to go out on her Prom Date:

On another occasion, when Gail and I made a trip over to Oregon and took Jared with us, Becki and Jeff stayed

home for that weekend. Unbeknown to us, Becki “arranged” to have a party at our house while we were gone. She invited her friends, both boys and girls, and they also had some...let’s say beverages...at the party. Problem was, the beverages were alcoholic and they were all underage.

When we got home we found some of the left overs. Bless her heart, as is usually the case, the Lord watches over those He has a special purpose for, and He has them for Becki. Anyhow, Jeff who was till in Jr High School at the time went back to his room and remained there throughout the party.

When we got home, as I say, we found some of the left over from the party and confronted Becki about it. She of course got in trouble, was grounded, and we contacted the parents of some of the kids. I do not recollect all of it, but I believe some of the parents may have provided the drinks.

At any rate, I relate this to show that these things are just part of growing up, and a part of having and raising a family. More important than what happened is how you respond to it...and continuing to love one another. As I said at the very beginning, if you think there are people or families that do not have issues such as this...it is likely that you simply do not know them well enough.

Despite any thing like this, Becki has always had and still does have a good heart. She is also a very hard worker and is always able to find very good work and excel at it, and fulfill significant responsibilities she is given there. That does not happen by accident. The qualities she has of having a good heart and helping others, working hard, and being able to find and do good work are important qualities for life and for families...and enable a person to get through difficulties...all of which Becki has demonstrated in her life as an adult, and all of which, as I say make is proud of her.

These other things were things we were just dealing with and are the issues we all have, to one degree or another, of finding our way as a family and dealing with the free agency we all have and the choices that are made as a result. They all tend, if we will allow them, to make us better people.

24. My experience at Klamath Falls, Oregon, 9-11 Attack 2000-2001

Throughout 2000, as these things were occurring, I was consulting more on my own. Alpha Top broke off relations with Micron as Micron went under. I could not blame them. They still used me occasionally, but they were doing more and more with Apple, and the occasions when they needed my help became less and less. They wanted me to move over there...but we had moved too many times already and I thanked them for the offer...they were doing it out of friendship. But we declined.

I worked with a couple of individual companies. First one in Texas for three to four months where I helped them, and Jeff Barrus who was a VP for them, get their operations up and running. And then for a company in Boise.

This was good because it was near home and some place I could simply commute to.

As this was happening, I got a message from some close friends of mine who lived in the Klamath Basin on the border between California and Oregon, near Klamath, Oregon. They contacted me because they (three or four families I knew personally) and about 1200 families in total, were being destroyed by the Federal Government.



The Klamath Basin

It seemed that these people had water rights to the water in Klamath Lake which had been built specifically for irrigation in the early 1900s. After World War I, many veterans were offered land, a home-stead, and the water from the lake that the US Bureau of Reclamation had dammed up if they would go out there and work the land. The idea was for them to pay an irrigation district so much money each month until the 1200 families had paid for the construction of the irrigation works.

That happened in the early 1940s, but because by then World War II was going on, the government indicated that it could not give up the irrigation works at that time.

In the meantime, NGOs (which stands for Non-Governmental Organizations), working with the UN, had decided that the sucker Fish in Klamath Lake were endangered.

In the West, the Sucker Fish are like Carpies back east. They are fish that feed on other fish and they are actually a huge nuisance...and they are definitely not endangered.

And these NGO's and the liberal biologists supporting them admitted this...and they wanted a judge to rule specifically that the fish were only endangered in that lake.

This was preposterous...but then a federal judge ruled for them and the decision was to simply turn off the water because they said the sucker fish needed a full lake to not be endangered.

Again, this was preposterous...and everyone knew it. Sucker Fish can burrow in the mud and if there is an empty lake with some moisture in it, they will make through the dry time.

As it turned out, the NGOs wanted to work with the Wildlife Federation and get the people off the land and then

buy up the land at pennies on the dollar to make them wilderness areas. That was the real issue.

And they were willing to trample on the rights of 1,200 families to do it.

We thought the Congress would act and stop this...but they did not.

An election was coming in November of that year and it was clear that the Clinton administration was rushing to get this done before a Republican President might win and not allow it.

We thought the Oregon Representatives and Governor would fight for their own people...but they did not.

What do you do when so many people's life and livelihood are being destroyed with a will...trampling on their clear land and water rights and having a judge make a ruling and then give it the force of law as if though Congress had passed a law? (But of course, they had not any such thing.)

Well, after you try all recourse...you act...and that is what a number of us did in the spring and through the summer of 2001.

I became involved on line and got a petition going which gathered tens of thousands of signatures. However, while that was going on, the government simply turned the water off to the farmers. They waited until the farmers had already purchased their seed and planted it. This meant that the farmers had spent their money and simply had to harvest that planting in order to be able to pay back the cost of the seed and then make a profit so that they could feed and clothe their families. That is how farming works. While some may get well ahead and have saving to last through a complete loss...most do not. Many of these people were going to go bankrupt with no income possible for their crop because without water, the crops would die.

I got a call in early July. After a big rally where the government people from Oregon, and federal representatives had come out several weeks before and promised action...nothing had happened, the water was turned off, and their crops were dying. They called and asked if I could help.

I closed the door to my office, knelt down next to my chair and said a prayer. I knew these people needed help. We had tried for months to get them help. Now a group of farmers were going to act and they were going to go to the head gates and turn the water back on. The head gates are controlled by a large electric motor that turns gears to open the gates. But the gears are there in the open and if you had good strong backs, and if you had the right pry bar, you can do it manually...and that's what they did.

It was a six-hour drive to Klamath from Boise. I called Gail and let her know...but she was not home. Hehehe, I know it is hard to imagine now, but this was before we all had cell phones.

I arrived there about 9 PM on Friday night on July 12th. I found about fifteen local people who were staying the night. Earlier in the day they had 150 people...but most of them had gone home once the gates were opened.

They had arrived at the gates to find two US Marshals standing watch. These farmers told them that the water was theirs and that their fathers had paid for the head gates, and that 1200 families were being destroyed. They then indicated that they were determined to open the gates. The Marshals told them they could not allow it.

The farmers locked arms and surrounded the Marshals and then...began to sing Hymns to them. After a few minutes the Marshals left and the farmers proceeded to open the gates and get the water flowing down the irrigation canal. The basin farms are miles away and it would take many hours for the water to arrive.

I asked where everyone was, and they said that they would be back in the morning. I told them I was concerned. That the local and federal government would not stand by and let them do this and that the only hope of keeping the head gates would be to not only have the 150 people, but to grow those numbers and have several hundred people there before the government could react and come back.

They ensured me that they knew the local officers, and they would not let it happen. I was very worried and told them I was afraid in the morning, an hour or two before sunrise, that we would be visited by a large number of law enforcement.



Farmers open the head gates at Klamath Falls

I watched through the night as suburban vehicles came driving by every half hour or so. I told the people with me that these were government vehicles and they were checking on us to see what they would face.

About 5:30 or so, a group of twenty local police cars and Sheriff's deputies came to the front of the gates. While we locked arms, another group of twenty or more federal officers came behind us. I had parked my suburban and blocked that gate, so they had to go around and were unable to drive up to the back gate.

With their hands resting on their pistols, these 50 or more officer told us fifteen that we had to move aside or be arrested. We moved aside. There was no sense in fighting, and I told them so. We would have to organize and get public opinion and a lot more people there to Klamath to do any good.



Officers retake the head gates

The lead officer called for the owner of the Black Tahoe with the Idaho plates to come forward.

I raised my hand and did so.

He took me inside the fenced off area away from the farmers and others and had a talk with me. He informed me that it was illegal to block a federal facility the way my car had done. I informed him that I had slept in my car up there away from the night light that was on all night.

He asked me if I took him for a fool and was some sort of wise cracker...except he used more course language, and indicated that he could arrest me

I told him he would have to do what he felt was best, but that what he was doing in taking these head gates away from the farmers was a breach of his trust to the people he was sworn to protect, and particularly to the Constitution he was sworn to defend and bear true faith to,

He said that it was not up to him to interpret it...and I said, that since I had taken the same oath, that I disagreed. That it was our responsibility precisely to interpret it and ensure that we were able to defend it and bear true faith to it...and that if "following orders," was the end-all, then we could easily lead to what happened in World War II when a whole group of people "followed orders," to the point of exterminating millions of people and that this was how all of that started.

He got visibly upset because I think it hit the mark and moved his heart. He had the other officers escort me back to the farmers and told me not to block the facility again. I was relieved and offered a prayer of thanks in my heart as I was taken back out.

That Saturday several hundred people did show up and each week those numbers grew until we regularly had over 1,200 people at the head gates, and a pavilion was set up where local people and businesses brought food and fed the people who came to protest. The people there were, in the main, firmly behind the farmers.



People begin arriving and a pavilion/shelter is set up

I will not go through all the detail here. I wrote a book about this entire incident and documented it all. It is called, "The Stand at Klamath Falls: How Rural Western Farmers stood up to the Federal Government and Prevailed."

It is available at Amazon and Barnes and Nobles. It is also available as an eBook for Apple, Kindle, or any of those eBook devices in their online stores. In addition, for as long as I can, you can get a free PDF file of the whole thing online here

<http://www.jeffhead.com/ebookdownload/>

However, I will cover the basic events, because I think it important that my family, and particular grandchildren and later know what it takes to be able to remain free.

These people were God-fearing Americans. They started each day and each meeting with a prayer, imploring God in Heaven in the name of His Son, to help them retain their rights and save their farms.



Farmers pray for help after losing the head gates

Each week I would spend the weekend in Klamath, and sometimes parts of the week.

I spoke to the man who owned the company I was working for and explained to him my involvement. He was supportive. However, there was an executive Vice President who was not, and even though I ensured that I got the job done, and was in contact with the people who worked for me, he was insistent that I stop or that I lose my job. Luckily, the President of the company at the time did not share those views so I was able to continue.

I spoke many times at the head gates, both to the farmers, to the people now coming in from all over the country, and to the federal officials there.



Speaking to the people at the head gates

When our petition reached the 35,000 to 40,000 mark, I presented those names to the Sheriff and the irrigation people in the Klamath area.



Presenting the Petition to the local Sheriff

This went on for weeks. At one point, as we met as a group with the farmers, local supporters, and local officials, an idea was presented to pipe water around the head gates. This made national news.



Farmers and their supporters lay pipe to pump water around head gates

Later, as time went on, the size of the piping was increased to the point of putting even more water out.



Farmers place much larger pipe from pumping

This was symbolic, because it amounted to a very small fraction of the water needed...but with each step the farmers took, and took peacefully, more and more people supported them, including the new administration of George Bush, which had won the 2000 election and had established new guidelines that were sympathetic. I was told by a friend who worked for the Bureau of Reclamation to just hold on and help would come.

We got together and arranged for there to be independent truckers who volunteered their help and I helped coordinate stops all over the west for food, clothing, material, and even money to be brought to the farmers on trucks who had routes starting for Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver and a couple of other places, stopping at cities as they came, to bring help to the farmers. One of the stops was in the Boise area.



Boise stop for the Klamath Relief Project

The local sheriff ultimately withdrew his support of the Federal officers and the farmers moved right inside the fence up to the very head gates there. One of the big water lines was placed right across the entrance to the head gates, not five feet from the federal officers...most of whom did not want to be there by that time and themselves felt a travesty was occurring.

As summer began to turn into fall, we held a massive Rally in Klamath where governmental officials, state and local, showed up and spoke. It was clear that our message was being heard and acted upon, 25,000-30,000 people showed up. The streets were lined with people as our convoy of farmers, truckers, and citizens drove down to the governmental offices there in Klamath and the speakers made their points.



The large gathering in Klamath

The Bush administration was working now behind the scenes to get new rulings, and new findings. New administration of the various Bureaus within the government which oversaw the dams and the endangered species act were clearly going to "find" that the sucker fish were not endangered.

Then...as we all know now, the horrific attacks occurred on America on 9-11. Islamic Fundamentalists hijacked four aircraft and used them as weapons to attack America. They ran these airplanes into targets in America. Two hit the World Trade Center in New York City, which ended up causing both building to collapse

One hit the Pentagon in Washington DC, causing the front part of that building to collapse.



The world Trade center buildings are hit by Terrorists



The World Trade Center Collapses



The Pentagon is hit

Another aircraft was hijacked and was coming towards Washington DC from the north. By that time US fighter aircraft were in position to intercept it. Before they could, the people onboard attacked the hijackers, having learned from cell phones what was occurring. Their attack caused the aircraft to crash in a field in Pennsylvania.

All told over 3,000 Americans were killed by a relative handful of terrorists. These terrorists had come and lived amongst us and even took training classes on how to fly aircraft, pretending to be interested in becoming pilots.

It started a war which I will explain more about later.

Our new President, George Bush, rose to the occasion and promised that the attacks would not go un-answered. A terror group calling itself Al Qaeda out of Afghanistan claimed responsibility, operating with a fundamentalist Islamic government that gave them safe haven.

In addition, in Iraq, Saddam Hussein, who had been defeated by American and allies in the early 1990s when he took Kuwait, had been helping terrorism and not abiding by the agreements he had signed when defeated. His regime was suspected of helping fund the attack. President Bush took the fight against them all.

But the attack itself impacted all of us. To begin with, the country came together like it had at the start of World War II after Pearl Harbor. Sadly, the unification did not last. The divide in America regarding morality, abortion, even how to fight for our freedom were just too deep. But for a time, America did unite.

This impacted things at Klamath.

The farmers met with the federal leadership and made an agreement. If they would simply leave and go and do things that they should be doing anyway, like protecting the nation from terrorists, the farmers, since it was now turning into fall and the plating and harvest season was over, would not turn the water back on. They all agreed.

The next year, the water was restored to the farmers and they began a long process of negotiating with the various people contending for the water, which included the farmers, the fishermen, the liberal NGOs and even the Indian tribes (who had gotten involved, some on both sides of the issue) during the months of protest and when the issue began to get national attention.

My point in putting this in my history (my account in the book is much more detailed) is to point out to my kids, grandkids, and following generations is that Americas can make a difference for the better if we will stand up. There is risk involved. In this case hundreds and hundreds of families were being destroyed by very liberal and very atrocious efforts of those who want to change the lifestyle and livelihood of the people.

In such circumstances people should stand up and fight for their way of life and their land and water rights. We had many discussions about this and some people, understandably, were willing, once the officers came with guns to use their own guns to face them down.

The 2nd amendment is not in the constitution for hunting. It is precisely there so that the citizens, in great numbers can be armed and protect their rights, if ever necessary, from the government itself. The founders saw what happened when a government became tyrannical and trampled people's rights and they were determined to arm the people in large enough numbers so it would never happen again.

I urged the people to give our peaceful communication and efforts a chance before they took that step. I am convinced we were blessed by God to avoid violence and end up getting the farmers their water back...and to also provide for them through that winter of 2001—2002 when they lost their crops and income. It was a humbling experience...but also a very joyous one as we saw Americans come together and turn a travesty around...and I hope my own lineage will read of it and remember it.

It may not always end peacefully. I hope we always try everything we can, and one of those is to always remember God in Heaven and seek His help and guidance in our efforts to maintain our freedoms and the principles upon which they rest.

I became involved in several such encounters over those years. Starting with the March for Liberty which I recounted above. But also including the 50 Million Round March about the 2nd Amendment where we organized peaceful Father and Son days at thousands of shooting ranges all over America including Independence Day and Thanksgiving. We countered a large anti-gun movement that was attempting to bear sway during the time.

Another was the crisis at Jarbidge, Nevada, where the government unilaterally closed a state road that was also used by the Forest Service, forcing inhabitants to go around almost 100 miles because they said the Bull Trout needed their protection. Then, after shutting the road, they used large bulldozers and equipment to move large rocks to block the road, and then to reroute the stream in the area over the road itself, causing far more damage to the water way and the trout in the stream. Several thousand people met there on July 4th 2000 with the County Commissioners and the local Sheriff's department approval and protection and we moved those rocks.

You can Google all of these and read about them. I was involved in each and it was my privilege to stand beside many hundreds, and in some cases, thousands, of God fearing, Patriotic Americans to do the right thing.

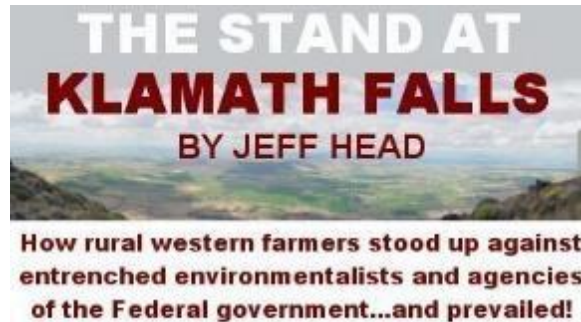


Patriotic Americans moving Liberty Rock at Jarbidge, Nevada. Jared and I can be seen circled in the 2nd picture.

25. Being an Author, “The Dragon’s Fury,” and “The Stand at Klamath Falls.”

Starting in 2001 during my time working at Klamath and extending into 2002, I wrote two books...actually six, but five of them were five volumes in one large series of books.

I already mentioned The Stand at Klamath Falls. It was a single book in trade paper format, and then later as an eBook about the entire experience at Klamath Falls.



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The Stand at Klamath Falls Book cover

Most of the book came from the online journal I kept of the event here: <http://www.jeffhead.com/klamath/>

The other was a serious, military techno-thriller about a potential third world war pitting the United States and the western countries against China, Iran, and Russia and India to begin with.

I had helped design a number of US military systems, and watched as a couple of US administrations in particular did all in their power to lower America's ability to defend itself and not spend the money necessary to do so. Instead they wanted to cut essential defense programs so they could have more money to promise free "stuff" to voters who would vote for them. Everything from free college, to free homes, to free cell phones and free health care. These things had me greatly concerned. I also saw a continual diminishing of our education system, particularly in teaching children the basic and fundamental principles that our liberties are based upon.

My experience in Dillon showed me that even in high schools there are now teachers actively teaching that Marxism is preferable to the Constitutional Republic our founders were inspired to give us, and as critical, if not more so, that the basic moral values that ensure that people are able to handle the responsibility of being free, were being discounted and children taught that whatever you "feel" like is all that was important.

I know that these things are not true. We are free because of the moral underpinnings of Judaea-Christianity

and particularly the teachings of Jesus Christ. A moral people govern themselves, and treat one another well as long as someone is not trying to criminally infringe on their lives and rights.

Anyhow, I decided to write a book about what could happen if America descended to the point of being vulnerable, and how terrible things could happen...but also, that people could turn things around if they would turn their lives around during such hard times. With this in mind, the book is a techno-thriller about modern military warfare, but it is also a book about everyday people dealing with those hardships and ultimately coming together to overcome the hardship.

It is called, "The Dragon's Fury: World War against America and the West."



Dragon's Fury: World War against America and the West

Originally written as five trade paperback books, I ultimately combined it all into one large hardback.

I had so many people buying all five volumes that I decided one hard back book, which is a better and sturdier product, was cheaper to the customer, and a better book to have in their library.

I then took that one large book and turned it into three eBook volumes.

You can google the name of the novel and find the hardback at Amazon and Barnes and Noble and other places, or the eBooks at the Apple Store, or on Nook or kindle. Here are links for all of them:

Dragons Fury: World War against America and the West: Amazon
https://www.amazon.com/Dragons-Fury-World-against-America/dp/0971577900/ref=tag_tdp_title/002-3759037-3206410

Dragons Fury: World War against America and the West Vol I eBook
<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/37410>

Dragons Fury: World War against America and the West Vol II eBook
<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/38251>

Dragons Fury: World War against America and the West Vol III eBook
<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/40895>

Or, for family members, here's the free PDF download for both:
<http://www.jeffhead.com/ebookdownload/>

It was a blessing writing it and I know I was helped in doing so. I had never done anything like that, and then I learned how to format it for production both for printing and eBook, and then came up with artwork, ISBN numbers, etc. and then found two companies (Lightingsource for printing, an Smashwords for eBooks) who would distribute them. So, they are self-written and published.

Anyhow, it was a LOT of work, and I am grateful for the help of others, and particularly the patience and help Gail gave me. Here are forwards by two other authors who have written best sellers:

From Larry Schweikart, the author of "A Patriot's History of the United States," which is sold and used in colleges and high schools as a history text about America. Larry also met with President George W. Bush twice and worked with his administration on the need for better historical teaching in America's schools:

"From the moment an unholy alliance of Asian and Islamic powers forms to make war on the United States, the future of liberty in this thriller is in doubt. Using secretly developed, high speed, super-cavitating torpedoes and mines, the Red Chinese and their allies threaten to do what no power has done in the 20th century-dominate the United States at sea. Jeff Head weaves a story of what World War-perhaps the beginning of which is our war on terror -would be like, and it isn't pretty. It is, however, entirely plausible.

"For 20 years, the United States has watched the Chinese communist governments conceal their socialist character and pretend to be free market capitalists, often at our expense. They have acquired high-level technology, especially during the Clinton administration, without any concessions to internal freedom, and have flagrantly constructed a blue-water navy with one sole purpose: to challenge American dominance in the Pacific. Sadly, even in the otherwise erstwhile Bush administration, such advances have not been tempered, let alone reversed, with the likely result being that, barring a remarkable weakening of China from the inside (as occurred with Soviet Russia), a conflict with the Red Chinese is nearly inescapable.

"The good news is that, presently, the United States retains a quality edge over our potential enemies, and our submarines are superior by several orders of magnitude. But the Chinese see this as an incentive to improve their own programs. While an alliance such as Jeff describes is unlikely in the short term, the world has witnessed much stranger bedfellows at the drop of a hat.

"Jeff's is a story of heroism, sacrifice, pain, and redemption. His analysis and descriptions are so prescient that we must hope it remains a work of fiction and not history before-the-fact."

And from Matthew Bracken who has written two series of techno-thrillers himself that have been best sellers. Matthew Bracken was also a career US Navy Seal who retired as a Lieutenant Commander with the Navy SEAL teams:

"If you enjoy reading big-and I mean big-techno-thrillers, then Dragon's Fury by Jeff Head is for you. Imagine a history of World War Two, from the invasion of Poland until Hiroshima: that will give you an idea of the sweeping narrative in this "future history" of the next world war. In Jeff's scenario, communist China forges an alliance with a unified Islamic world, and brings a reluctant India aboard. China leads the

way, determined to drive the U.S. out of the Mid-East, the Indian Ocean, Asia, and the Western Pacific.

"The war begins with a series of surprise attacks on American naval forces. The Chinese have secretly developed and deployed new classes of weapons the US Navy cannot counter, including hyper-speed super-cavitating torpedoes. With their breakthrough weapons and millions of expendable soldiers, victory after victory goes to the Chinese-led axis, until much of the free world is crushed and subjugated.

"The defeat of the United States seems certain, but America and her remaining allies rise to the challenge. The United States deploys its own breakthrough weapons and, without giving away too much of the plot, Jeff's techno-thriller shows that space will be the ultimate "high ground," to determine the outcome of the next world war.

"In such a scenario could today's bitterly divided America unify and rally behind a strong wartime President, and endure the hardships of years of defeat? Could such a war be fought, and not go nuclear in the opening battles? I wondered about these questions, but in Dragon's Fury, Jeff Head weaves a complete story line that plausibly suspends the readers' disbelief, and takes him or her along for a wild ride that is the next world war."

And here is my own introduction:

"I have been the recipient of the very best the United States has to offer. I have lived in prosperous times brought on by the strength and vitality of free enterprise in a free market that is based on liberty and broad-based faith and morality. I have also had the opportunity of world travel in my career and observed many other cultures and people.

Over the last thirty or more years, I have watched, with growing discomfort, as our traditional American society and system of government, and everything it is based upon, has been attacked, compromised, watered down, and corrupted by individuals, institutions, and governments, both foreign and domestic. It's happened gradually, as most Americans have been too busy with professional and material pursuits to notice it.

"In the meantime, our most sophisticated technologies have been given away, sold, and stolen, and potential enemies are building up while we "staff down". The wealth of our markets has been ill used by manipulators, politicians, and regimes who are not our friends...who represent the antithesis of our way of life, our system of government, and the values that it is all based upon. In addition, our entire society has been watered down by a form of political correctness and immoral socialization that I believe the founders of this nation would have fought to prevent.

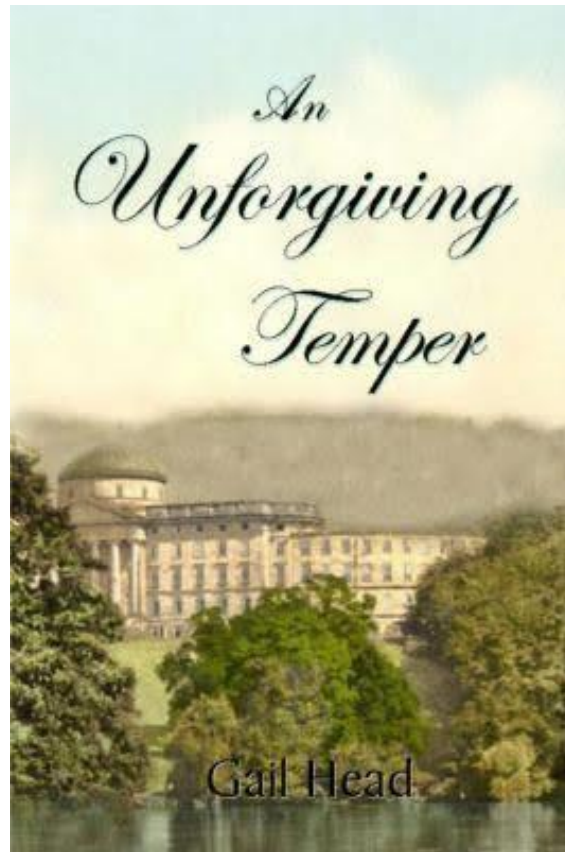
"The result is that we have become vulnerable. On September 11, 2001, we were shown how vulnerable in a horrific way. In order to avoid much worse, we must be vigilant and grasp tightly to the heritage and moral values that have made this nation strong, and re-institute them into our lives and society. If we do not do this, then events could lead to a scenario where we risk losing our liberty, our way of life, and our very lives...all of which have been purchased in blood by those who have gone before.

"This novel has been produced with the hope that while reading it, individuals will be inspired to look to the foundations of their liberty, and have a desire to restore the strength and vitality that has kept that liberty alive and shining in America as a beacon to the world for so long. This is the underlying reason for "Dragon's Fury", along with a simple desire to produce a compelling, exciting story that is simply a "good read."

We have been blessed with some good income from these books. I have sold over ten thousand books now over the years. Gail liked what I did so much that she wrote a book herself. It is a takeoff of the Pride and Prejudice story by Jane Austin. They call it "Fan Fiction," but they are sold like any other book. Since I knew how

to format them and get them set up, I did so for Gail's book too.

It is called, "An Unforgiving Temper," and is a takeoff of how Darcy handles Wickham and how Wickham's bad actions make things even worse than the original story. She has gotten A LOT of good feedback for it. Here is its cover:



Gail's Book, "An Unforgiving Temper"

Her book has also sold thousands of copies. It is also available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble as a printed book, and can also be had in eBook format for Apple, Kindle, Nook, etc. Just google the title by Gail Head.

In truth, at least in my opinion, she is a better writer than I, and I know she enjoyed getting her thoughts down on paper regarding Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*.

26. 1st Grandchild, Awards, Government job, Dad and Greg pass 2002-2004

Not long after 9-11, we had our first grandchild. Katie and Nathan had a son, Braedon. Gail and I were both in our forties. I being 45 and Gail being 46. It was a wonderful experience, and the start of a beautiful part of life as we had more and more grandkids as the other kids began getting married and having children of their own.

In 2002, as I was writing my books and working, it became apparent that my consulting was not going to provide us with the support we needed. 9-11 dried up a lot of consulting off shore. The President at the company I had been working for ultimately gave into to the Vice President who was upset at my activities at Klamath and he let me know I would need to find work somewhere else.

I spent six months in Texas helping run my Brother Greg's computer business as he fought Lymphoma cancer. I was glad to do so...but ultimately had to get home, and he had a recovery that allowed him to go back to work.

I have to tell you, that holding a grand baby is a special thing all its own. It is not the same as holding your own...that too is a very special experience that you have with your spouse and God in Heaven and that little spirit who has just arrived on earth. But a grandchild is similar...but also different. It is like seeing God's plan unfold for the future before your eyes, knowing that you are involved with that process and have passed on the legacy to your own children now.

When we went to visit them and see our new grandson, they got this picture of me with him:



Grandpa (me) with his first grand child

That picture was actually taken in November of 2001...but time flies with the wind.

During the same time, right after the 9-11 attacks, I had created a site online called "The Attack on America Memorial site, by Jeff Head." It detailed the attacks and the things that had happened.

Not long after the attacks, the first of the divides that would once again split America and blunt our efforts to fight the ruthless enemies who are using Islam and its fundamental precepts to try and destroy America and the west (which I also talked about at length in my books) occurred.

At the World Trade Center site, on the day of the attacks, some responding firemen had set up an American Flag. That act had inspired millions of Americans. Sort of like when they raised the flag above Iwo Jima Island in

World War II during the ferocious battle to take that island back from the Japanese.



Firemen raise the flag on 911

Well, in 2002 they decided to make a memorial out of this...which was a great idea. The problem was, the people in New York, the government officials who wanted to do this decided to get “politically correct” and presented the flag being raised by three different firemen of mixed races and colors.

The firemen who had done it and their union were upset, saying that they should depict as it happened, as you can see above. I agreed with this. It was not about race...we are all Americans and history should be depicted as it happened. I got on line and wrote an article about this that got a lot of interest. I also started a petition regarding it which got many hundreds of thousands of signatures.

Ultimately, the pressure on these liberal progressives prevailed and they depicted it the way it occurred.

As a result of this, and as a result of my involvement at Klamath Falls, in 2002 I received an “American of the Year” award from a large patriotic forum called Free Republic, of which I was a member.

They asked me to give a speech and accept the award. When I spoke at their event in Las Vegas, I accepted the award on behalf of all the many people who had been involved and who had helped me. That was my condition for accepting it. Because I certainly had not done those things alone. It took tens of thousands of people showing up at Klamath and it took hundreds of thousands of people getting involved with the petition.



Speaking at Free Republic's Award Ceremony

As all of this was occurring, the consulting work was continuing to dry up.

Finally, after a year of less and less consulting work, which had me doing local computer work in Emmett for families needing help with their home computers, and also substituting at the local alternative High School (what we used to call a reform school) and teaching math and science there, in 2003 I was approached by a local friend who had talked with me while I was involved at Klamath. He worked for the Bureau and indicated that the Bureau itself could use my engineering and electronic expertise.

I got a job on a temporary basis redesigning and then re-wiring a security system at one of their dams. It went well and in late 2003, a permanent job offer was made.

The job entailed doing the design, installation, and then maintenance of electronic control and communication equipment to help run power plants remotely and monitor them. It was a lot of fun because many of the dams were in off and out of the way places in the mountains, and we would have to go into those sites whenever there was an issue.

Here are a couple of pictures of some of the places...I will talk more about it later as I focused on particular areas of work, got promoted, and had a wonderful many years' experience with a true career job.



Black Canyon Dam near Emmett

I was based and had my offices at Black Canyon Dam, in some administrative buildings to the left of the dam you see above. I worked there for fifteen years. It is about seven miles from our house, driving away from Boise and there was truly little or no traffic each day I drove to work. I was close enough that I came home for lunch.



Anderson Ranch Dam

I got to work and some truly beautiful places, sometimes staying the entire week out there, but almost always being home for the weekend, and the majority of the time, being home each night. I loved the mountains and now I could go into them with four-wheel drive vehicles, on snow mobiles and snow cats, and even in helicopters when necessary. But more on work as we go along.

My Dad was all for this job. He had always wanted me to find a career job I could stick with and use over years to prepare for the future and our retirement. And he was right. I was 48 years old, and not prepared for my retirement, and I knew I needed to do so. So I accepted, starting full time work early in January of 2004.

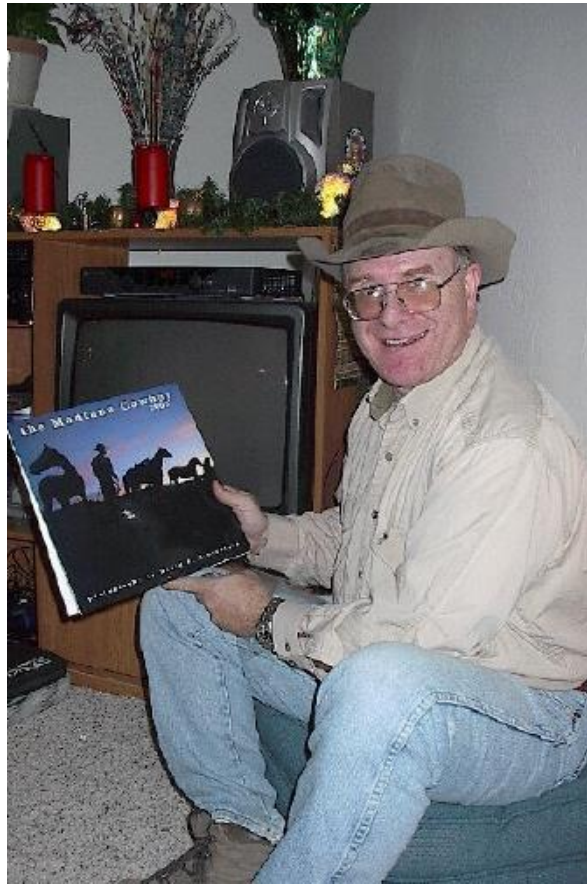
Before starting, I had to go to Texas. We had been planning on visiting Gail's sister, Sandy and her husband, Steve, in Minnesota, whom we had visited while we lived in Cincinnati. But my brother Greg, had been fighting Lymphoma cancer was doing badly and Dad called and told me I should come down for Christmas because it may be the last chance I got.

So, Jared and I went to Texas, while Gail and Jeff went to Minnesota. The plan was to then meet in Minnesota and drive back to Boise together. Greg was in bad shape, but the crisis past, and after Christmas with my folks, on New Year's Day 2004, Jared and I drove to Minnesota.

As we left, my Dad gave me a HUGE hug and thanked me for coming. He told me to hold onto that job at the USBR (US Bureau of Reclamation), that it was a decent income and had good benefits and, as I say, that it was time for me to keep a job for years and prepare for retirement.

I will never forget that goodbye and the love we felt together as we embraced...as it turned out...it was our last.

We drove on up to Minnesota, had a couple of nice days with Sandy and Steve, and then drove home, stopping in North Dakota, where Rachel had moved and was now living. That was a good visit as well and I was so thankful that our relationship with Rachel was getting better too.



Opening a present from Rachel in early 2004 while visiting her in North Dakota

We got back home and I started work on January 12, 2004.

On Thursday, January 22, 2004, I got a call from my brother Lee who told me that Dad was in the hospital. It did not look too bad, but he wanted me to know. Since his heart attack and first quadruple by-pass, he had had two more open heart surgeries. One of them had been in 2000 when he and my Mom came and visited us and he had an aortic aneurism that had to be corrected here in the Boise hospital. They spend a month with us then before going home. I wanted to be sure, but Lee told me it seemed alright.

Then, late Saturday he called back and said that Dad had turned for the worse. The procedures they were using to try and control the arrhythmia of the heart were not working like they had done before...he told me I better come now!

We thought we had the time so we gathered together and myself, Gail, Jeff, Jared and Becki all loaded in the car and off we went. We were coming up on Snowville Utah, close to the Idaho, Utah border when I got a call from Lee. It was in the middle of a white out snow storm and we were only able to go about 15-20 miles an hour.

Lee told me Dad had just passed away.

We stopped for a moment and I said a prayer...and I told my Dad goodbye. It is hard to describe the emotions of that moment...and only those who lose a loved parent can really relate. But at least we knew where he had gone and that we would all be together in the future.

I could hardly believe it. I thought back to that hug and his advice and somehow, I believe he knew. Anyhow, we drove straight on through to get down to Texas.

I and my brother Paul dressed my Dad in his temple cloths for burial. I cried because I was going to miss him.

This man who had helped me from the time I was a child throughout my life. Who gave me the best advise possible all the time, and who was probably as close a friend as I could ever have, as well as a great father and grandfather. He was also a great patriot who as a young man had fought for our country and who had always stood strong for what America was based upon.

He had visited us so many times and helped us get into houses, do add-ons, work on cars. You name it, he did it.

Now I dressed him for burial and told him goodbye again. We buried him in Bolivar Cemetery. He had realized his dream and purchased and made his ranch in rural Texas for his family...and particularly his sons. Now he is laid to rest in that same ground to await the resurrection. I blessed his grave that day and look forward to meeting him again in God's time.



Mt Father, Albert Lee Head Jr.'s headstone



My father's US Navy footstone, commemorating his World War II service

As I write this it has been 14 years and more since his passing...and not a day has gone by that I have forgotten him, or not missed him. But I also know we will be together again...perhaps soon.

As you can imagine, this was very hard for my Mom. She lived on there at the ranch with my brother Greg, who was deathly sick with Lymphoma himself.

Six months later, in July of that year, Greg passed away.

I went down a week before when we knew the time was near. I was with him when he passed as were my brothers Lee and Paul. My Mom had stepped out and that was a blessing. When she returned I met her at the elevator and she knew when she saw me...and she broke down.

We buried Greg there in Bolivar next to my Dad, with a space left for Mom on the other side.

Greg and I had been pretty close. We roomed together when Gail and I met and dated and were married. We were only a year apart in school and played on the same football team...at which he truly excelled. He went on to play four years at BYU on scholarship. I visited him in prison.

In the end, he had repented and returned to the Lord. He started by listening to Tabernacle Choir music. Ultimately three years before his death, and before he got the cancer which killed him, he returned to the Lord.

I can always remember him calling me by the name that my grandparents used for me (on my Dad's side from Alabama), "Jeffry". Now he too was gone.



Laying my brother Greg to rest in Bolivar, TX

My Mom then moved in with my brother Paul and his wife, Adolis. They had been given some property on the ranch and built their home there and for the next two years, until they had to move away, Mom lived with them.

It was a blessing that they were there at the time for her.

27. Memories, kid's sports, Scouting, Becki marries, Jeff Graduates 2004-2006

Our life now became more or less the American dream in many respects.

I had a good paying job that kept me home and was nearby. Our three youngest kids were in school in our small town. Gail and I were involved in church activities, and Gail started her own business of doing decorations for marriages and other events.

Rachel had moved, as I indicated earlier, to North Dakota and was working there. She would visit every so often and we were always so glad to see her. She worked at several things. She was a great sales representative for a Jewelry Company. She then did travel scheduling and arrangements for people which she REALLY excelled at. Finally, she settled in for years as a waitress at a local bar and grill, where the people there really depended on her and gave her a lot of responsibility and paid her well.

She was very responsible in her work, and she had finally met the man we felt she would ultimately marry (and they would) named Chad Severance.

Becki had graduated and was working in Boise. I helped her buy a new car.

Gail started working at Boise Cascade Company in Boise...and for Christmas I got her a car too. And she needed it. In this area of Idaho the summers may not be too long, but they can get hot, and her car's air conditioning went out. So, I arranged with my father, before he died, to buy a van from them that was in good shape when they bought a new one. My Dad gave me an excellent deal on it, more because he could see the need and because he would do whatever he could do to help his family that he could.

I know this, that Christmas morning, Gail was overjoyed with her new vehicle.



Gail opening her present and reading the note



Gail getting the key and finding the car



She like it...and she needed it too!

In the meantime, at Emmett High School, Jeff and Jared, in turn, went through High School and did the things that many young men in High School do. They both became involved in sports.

Both of them did track, Jared also did basketball early on in Jr. High, and Jeff also did football.

Becki had done track too...she pole vaulted...and pole vaulting for the girls was pretty new to Emmett. But she had a good coach, Gary Thomas, whom we knew well (he was our Bishop at the time) and though she did not do it for all of high school, when she did, she did well.

Jeff and Jared excelled in track and both would qualify for the State finals in Boise in their respective events as they got old enough. Jared did pole vault, be he excelled most in the High jump. Though he also ran relays. Jeff really excelled in running, both single events and relays.

I remember the time when Jared really came out. It was early on in his track experience. To that time he had been sort of in the background with the other boys. Sort of in the shadow of some of the others...and a little bit in his older brother's shadow. But then there was this track meet and he was in the medley relay. That is a four-person relay where they pass batons and each person runs a different length. In high school the four members run two 200 meters, one four hundred, and one eight hundred I believe. In Jr. High, which is where Jared was at this time, they run two one hundred, one two-hundred, and one four-hundred.

Well, his team started off badly and by the time Jared got the baton, he was at least fifty yards behind the rest of the runners. But then, somehow, he absolutely turned it on and really took off. Gail and I were both there watching and there came Jared. The entire crowd got involved because I guess it was the story of the underdog

really rising to the challenge and winning.

And that is exactly what Jared did at that race. I remember the kid that was leading hearing the yelling and he started looking back as Jared passed the other runners and the young man realized Jared was coming...for him. LOL! And he did. Right at the end Jared passed him and won that race.



Jared catches, passes the leader...and wins!

His team mates were ecstatic and it was really good to see our youngest child make good and receive the congratulations of his friends and peers. It gave him the kind of self-confidence helps a person, and it did him.

As you might tell, I was able to take time and go to their track events and I got a LOT of pictures of them. I will show a couple more pictures of each...but realize, hehehe, I have literally hundreds.



Jeff starts the State Medley Relay team that one 2nd place that year



Jeff's State Medley Relay team that took 2nd place in State



Jared starts a Pole Vault Run at State...but he did not place



Jared places 3rd in State High Jump finals with a jump of 6' 2". He barely missed 6' 4"

It amazed me how Jared, who was the shortest of Jeff, himself, and myself, could jump over that bar at 6' 2"...four inches taller than he was and place at state like he did.

During this entire time, we took numerous trips as a family into the mountains and around the area. We lived in a beautiful valley, but were never more than 15-20 miles from being in some very beautiful country. In addition,

we would take the “scenic route” sometimes when we went to Gail’s parents in Idaho Falls, or to visit friends in other areas. I was always game for that, whether it was all of us, or just a few.

We also took trips to get Christmas trees, to do our own campouts, etc. Here are just a few pictures of our family doing that sort of thing over the years after we got to Emmett:





We have hundreds of pictures of our trips, but I put these here so everyone can get a feel of the memories we made and the fun we had as we made them as a family.

One story about one of those trips.

Sometime in 2002 or 2003, I took Jeff down to Texas to pick up a car and help me drive back. We went down with one vehicle, and came back with two.

As we were going down, we stopped outside of Amarillo, Texas to get some gas and snacks. From there we only had six more hours to reach the ranch outside of Sanger and Bolivar. As we got back on the freeway, there was an old black gentleman standing next to the light near where we would get on the freeway. He was clearly there and had a sign, asking for money and help.

I stopped next to him. I felt the Spirit tell me to give him some help. So, I reached out and shook his hand and told him that we would help him. I reached in my wallet to get a \$20 bill. As I handed him the bill, I noticed that I had inadvertently picked a \$50 bill instead and was handing it over to him. For an instant I felt like it was too much and was on the verge of pulling back...but I was constrained by the Spirit and knew that the \$50 was exactly what I needed to give him and why I was there...so I did not pull back. I gave it to him and told him I wished God's blessings on him.

When he saw that I had given him \$50, he threw his sign down and did a little dance. He was probably in his 60s...but he cried out, "Thank you, Jesus...I am going to be home tonight!"

I will never forget that, and I was glad Jeff was there to see it. I know it was the right lesson to teach, and I know that man needed our help...and that lesson would come back later in a very special way.

In 2002, Becki got married. Her husband, Jared Doney, was someone she had met in Boise.



Becki with her flowers for marriage

They would ultimately have three children together...but they had a lot of difficulties too. Jared had alcohol problems, and it turned out he was alcoholic.

When not using it, he was a delightful person to be around and he loved his kids and family. But he could not keep away from it and it kept getting him into more and more trouble.

He wanted to be a Golf Pro and he was pretty good at it. For a while they lived near Garden Valley and he worked for a Golf Course up there. But they had a fire in their home and they ultimately had to move.



Becki and Jared's burnt out home near Garden Valley

I will speak about all the grandkids later and tell a little something about each.

But I did want to share one of those critical decisions in life that are made sometimes when things are difficult. As a parent it is even harder to witness it with your children than it is to go through them yourself. You keep loving them, and do all you can to help.

But Becki's first marriage ended badly and they ultimately were divorced, principally due to the alcohol. The hurt of that, and the difficulties caused Becki to make mistakes too. She and Jared saw other people. Becki became pregnant as a result of one of those.

She was living in the world and there was so much pressure on her. We were afraid of what she might decide. We prayed and asked God in Heaven to help her. And He did...and she had the heart, and the love for her unborn child to hear and respond. She made a courageous and heroic decision that we love her for.

Unknown to us at the time, she ended up working with family services in the Church and gave that beautiful girl, Gracie, up for adoption as an infant. It was an open adoption so she knows us and her birth mother. But the people, Mike and Kelli Smith, who adopted Gracie were very good people who had not been able to have children. They wanted a daughter and they were able to adopt Gracie.



Becki after delivering Gracie, with Mike and Kelly Smith, Gracie's adopted parents.

Becki made me and Gail so proud of her! Yes, life is hard. And yes, we make mistakes. Some of them big ones.

But how we react to them and what we do about them says more about us than the mistake itself.

It brings tears to my eyes even as I think about it and write about it. It was what Heavenly Father wanted, and it was right...and Becki made that decision.

The Smith's went on later, miraculously, to have several children. But their daughter Gracie is an angel, and been a blessing to them, and to Becki...and to our family. Even though we don't see her much, we love her, and we are proud she is our granddaughter by blood. More about Gracie with pictures later.

While in Emmett, in addition to my responsibilities as a Dad and a husband, and in addition to my responsibilities and work, I had several "callings" within the Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From being a Sunday school teacher, to leadership in Priesthood Quorums, to Ward Mission leader, etc. For several years, one that I really enjoyed a lot at the time because I enjoyed the outdoors anyway...hunting, camping, hiking...was working with the young men.

This included organizing with them and then going on numerous campouts and outdoor experiences. From winter camps, to white water rafting trips, and Wilderness campouts. Here are some pictures of three of those events with the boys over several years' time. I'll separate each one with a page break.

2002 SNOW CAMP IN THE MOUNTAINS

Our Scout Troop met at 9:30 AM outside Emmett, Idaho to go on this camp out. The Winter Camp for the 2002 Payette District of the Ore-Ida Council was to be held about seven miles above Garden Valley, Idaho on the East Fork of the Payette River where a number of Scout Troops from Emmett, Payette, Cascade, and other local Idaho towns would be meeting together

A few miles past Garden Valley, we turned right onto Alder Creek Road and crossed the river, and then followed the South Fork Road of the Payette River several miles to the camp. The trip up to this Winter Camp is very beautiful and scenic. The pictures make it clear why some of us weather the cold and chose to be up here in this environment, truly a wonderful part of "God's country".





I actually went on several of these winter campouts.

In this part of the country, especially in the mountains, winter can be fun...but it can also be very dangerous.

Teaching young men how to survive in those environments is important.

From teaching how to build fires to teaching how to make snow shelters to sleep in and survive bitter cold...they are skills that can save lives.

And they were fun too.

On one occasion we camped out in the open in a large valley...actually called "Long Valley." We did the first night when it was about ten below zero in a really nice sheep herder's tent with a stove. But you know what? That night the wind blew hard and we were miserable, despite having the stove and really good sleeping bags.

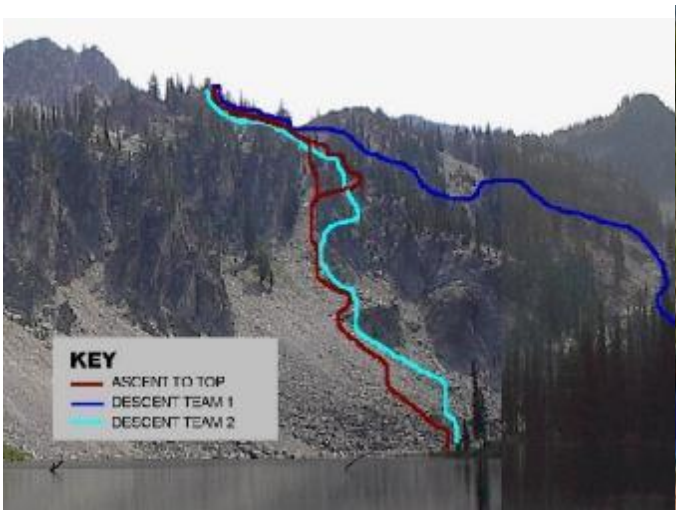
The next day we taught the kids how to build igloos and cover them with snow, and how to dig trench caves.

The next night was downright comfortable in those shelters with our sleeping bags. As I say, such skills can make the difference between life and death.

2003 WILDERNESS CAMP AT SEAFOAM LAKE

Seafoam Lake is next to the River of No Return Wilderness area. The lake itself is right at an elevation of 8,000 feet. Leaving Emmett, Idaho, our scout Troop 328 followed the Payette River from Emmett to Horseshoe Bend and then to Banks, Idaho where we took the South Fork of the Payette and followed it to Garden Valley and then to Lowman, Idaho. We had intended to continue on the main paved highway up over Banner Summit, but a forest fire in that area had the paved road closed so we took the gravel road detour up through Bear Valley, a forty-mile mountainous, dirt road bypass. We then took a fourteen-mile road, which became progressively worse for wear as we went deeper into the wilderness, requiring high four-wheel drive, to the Rapid River. Finally, at the Ranger Station at the Rapid River, we followed the very rough wilderness road another four miles, requiring low four-wheel drive, up to Sea Foam Lake, a final distance of 130 miles from home.





Just like Winter Camps, learning skills to survive in the wilderness is important for anyone who camps in such areas. They are also beautiful and let you get into some of the most scenic beauty in North America...or in the world for that matter. They made for great experiences and memories.

2001 WHITE WATER RAFTING TRIP ON THE PAYETTE RIVER

Our Varsity Scout Troop met at the Emmett Stake Center building of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 8 AM. We were to meet several other Troops on the upper Payette River at Smith's Ferry at around 10:30 AM. These included other troops from Emmett, McCall and the surrounding area.

Since there was a forest fire burning between Horseshoe Bend and Banks, which had the main highway narrowed to one lane traffic and significant delays, we decided to go the "back route" through Sweet and then over Cougar Mountain, through High Valley and then dropping down into Smith's Ferry that way. This was on back roads and a good stretch of gravel, but it avoided the delays and got us there on time.

We stopped at Smith's Ferry there on Highway 55 and we met up with the other scouts and it was off to the "put in" about 15 miles upstream off of the Carbarton road. About 15 miles beyond Smith's Ferry, we turned left on Carbarton Road and took it a few short miles to the put in on the river.

When we arrived there, we some other rafters had already put in ahead of us. Before we put our boats in the water we had a short but well delivered and concise lesson on rafting safety. This was not particularly dangerous white water, but safety is always paramount. Any activity like this can become dangerous and it is important that the boys and the leaders all know what to do.





This particular river run was just plain fun. It was not too dangerous, but anytime you are on the water it is important to learn the safety skills, and learn to respect Mother Nature...in this case, the river.

If you do, you can have a lot of fun, make good memories, and do so safely.

We did with these boys and they are memories we will always have.

Time moved on.

Katie, Rachel and Beck had graduated. Katie and Becki had married.

Before we knew it, it was time for Jeff to graduate!

There is a scripture in the Book of Mormon that I like about life. It is in the Book of Jacob, chapter seven verse 26 where it says, "the time passed away, yea, our lives passed away as it were a dream unto us."

So it is. Jeff, who was born on Christmas Eve 1984, graduated from High School in the spring of 2003.

He had done well and he was preparing to serve a mission (more on that later). But, he graduated from Emmett High School where he had attended both Jr. High and all of High School in one place. A first for our family...because we were staying in one place and making our life there.



Jeff graduates from High school

Jeff was a good boy and has become a good man. He had a good group of friends and that helped him get through school and life, and they do to this day. He worked hard and he tried to do what was right. Oh, like everyone else, he made and makes his mistakes, but he has a testimony of His Savior and knows who to turn to get true forgiveness and go on with life cleansed from the mistake.

He would prove these qualities throughout life, through his mission, his work, his schooling, and his marriage and own family.

This left Jared at home and in school there in Emmett with us and Jared did a LOT of things with me...from making several trips to Klamath and other events I was involved with, to lots of camping trips as well...Father and son's campouts, shooting, etc.

And now I had a job (and had had by that time for several years) where I was at home and very stable with my job so we could look forward to continuing to build our life in Emmett. This was good for both boys in particular because they got to experience it more than any of the rest of us.

I believe though that it helped our whole family.

Sometimes it seems that it is harder for fathers to do the same with their girls as with their sons. I wanted to be involved in things with them...but for the girls there came an age when they just seemed to not want Dad to be involved.

I called it the seven-year itch because between about 14 and 21, it seemed, especially because of their interest

in boys, and the influence of fashion in our times, it was harder. I realize that my own attitudes helped make it harder now. But, I also know that I tried to do things with family trips, birthdays, Christmas, and events we did together, and the girls have all of those memories.

I know it helped some, but I wish I had been able to do more.

28. Gail's Decorating, Gail' Trip to England, Gail helps My Mom 2004-2005

Gail worked at Boise Cascade in Boise for about five years...but the time came when they were downsizing and she decided to leave.

After she did, and as I said before, she began doing something that she REALLY enjoyed and was very talented at. She began planning and decorating events for people. From Weddings, to Receptions, to Get-togethers.

Over time we accumulated a LOT of decorating gear. From tables and chairs to fabric of all types, to settings and decorations. Ultimately, we at one time had three storage sheds full of the material she needed...and she did a GREAT job.

For several years people in the community of Emmett, and then spreading from there were calling to have her decorate their activities.

Here are a few pictures of the types of things she would do:





Now, she has a LOT more, but I wanted to use a few that I had to give a feel for what she was doing.

People paid her well to do this...but she charged a lot less than some of the so-called “professionals” would and so she was in high demand.

We had visions of it turning into a larger operation...perhaps even buying a truck and hiring some people. But, as with so many things in our life, other events came up that caused us to change.

During this time, Katie had started her own photographic business and was doing VERY well with it.

She had had several very good jobs while married to Nathan (who had joined the US Navy and was making a career out of it...which made me so proud because I have always had a special affinity for the Navy and my Dad had served in the Navy).

Well, Katie got an invite to come to England and make a presentation about her self-started, and experience with photography...and she invited Gail to go with her!

It was a GREAT experience for them both and they got to see so many sites. Gail had always wanted to go to England and here was the chance.

I wished we could have afforded for me to go with them...at the same time, it was a special experience for the two of them that they will always remember together.

Here are just a few pictures of her time with her daughter there...the first time Gail had ever been off of the continent of North America:



Katie and Gail in London England seeing the sites



Back to the ongoing history. Gail's decorating business was going great guns...but as I mentioned, life again interceded and we had to make some adjustments. In this case, after my Father's death followed by my brother, Mom lived with Paul and his wife.

But it did not work out. Ultimately Paul got another job and had to move away, and he was having difficulty adjusting to Mom's condition which had clearly become one of dementia.

This is where Gail's life-long angelic qualities came into play once again.

As she had blessed and taken care of me...even when I did not deserve it. As she had taken care of all five of our children through all sorts of experiences, she came through here.

One day she came to me and said that she needed to take care of my Mom. Oh, we had talked about how we could help, but she was simply inspired.

She and I went down there and first brought Mom back to Idaho for a few weeks to break the existing conditions.

Paul would not let her stay at her home...and understandably. She could not live alone.

So, Gail offered to live with her in her home in Texas so she could be happy, and comfortable.

So started a two year period for us where Gail and Mom lived in Texas and every three months I would go down there for a week or so, and then in the alternating three months Gail would bring Mom here to Idaho for two or more weeks.

Amazingly, it helped Mom immensely. That old sparkle came back in her eyes. Gail took her shopping, and to sales...just like she always liked to do.

There were a few hard places where Gail, for example, had to show Mom that she could no longer drive.

Mom did not want to stop...but she could not remember well enough to even know where to go and depended on Gail to show her. One day, after trying again to get her to stop, she made a deal with Mom. If Mom could drive to Denton and back, with no help from Gail, she could keep driving until she could not.

Mom agreed. So, on the next trip to Denton to shop and eat at Luby's Cafeteria (a place our family ate at all of my life), she did not offer Mom any directions.

Mom got lost and they were almost into Oklahoma before Gail finally told her she needed to stop. Mom realized it then too. She did not know where she was, and realized she could not drive.

Now, we did not hold Mom's condition against her in the least. Gail and I agreed from the start that we would treat each time she did something, or retold us something that she had said just a few minutes earlier, that we would treat each time like the first time. We would not remind her about having just said or done something.

It helped her a lot. Over that time period, until about 2007, here are some pictures of Gail and Mom and I (and indeed, the rest of the family too) helping together to make this happen...and you can see how Mom was so comfortable with it.





In our way of thinking, this is how families should care for one another...and our whole family came together to do so. Whenever kids and grandkids were visiting, Mom was a member of the whole family. It was a whole family effort and they all treated Mom with respect and love and I was so proud of everyone.

But she got to live in her home longer. Ultimately, we were able to sell the home to Lee and Brenda, my oldest brother and his wife. Lee was the only one who could afford the house, and he was living in Texas and wanted it...so later, on one of the trips after Mom had come to live with us, we were able to make the deal.

More on that later too.

29. Jeff's mission to France, I pick him up and tour his mission 2005-2006

While Gail was doing her decorating, but before my Mom required the help, Jeff put his papers into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve his mission.

He wanted to share the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with others, and follow the Church's statement that "every young man should serve a mission." Actually, that statement had been made by Spencer W. Kimball many years before, when I was a young man, but had stood ever since. And Jeff was true to it, true to the Lord, and true to his own testimony.

His call came and he was going to France.

This was exciting for us in a number of ways. It was a foreign mission meaning he would need to learn the language. It was a mission that bordered on my own mission in southern Germany, and finally, our family, particularly on my paternal grandmother's side, had significant genealogy that went back into France.

We started by taking Jeff to the Mission Training center.

Since I had served my mission, where I went to Salt Lake city for two weeks at the Salt Lake Mission home, and then foreign missionaries went to Provo to the Language Training Center to have a 3-month intensive course in learning their language, now all missionaries went straight to Provo Utah (and later to other MTCs spread around the world) to spend 2-3 months preparing for their mission.

It was a GREAT experience. We were able to spend the better part of an entire day with Jeff, with talks from leaders of the Church and leaders at the MTC about the mission, culminating in a final meeting where we all sang, "Called to serve," and then your missionary left to go on into the Mission. Lots of tears there at that last meeting. We later learned that this was one of the last times that they had the families spend those hours with their missionaries. In the future, as we would learn with Jared, we simply went into the MTC receiving area and your missionary found his contact for his mission, you had a single meeting, and you parted right there.

Anyhow, we saw Jeff off, and he started his mission. The cities he served in are as follows and I believe these are close to the right order, though I may be a little off:

- Brest, in the far Northwest corner of France
- Cherbourg, a port just west of the Normandy beaches of World War II.
- Orléans a very famous and historical city in central France
- Paris, the capital and largest city in France (and one of the largest in Europe)
- Nantes, in the far west of France well south of France
- Paris...an encore visit
- Auxere, a city to the south and a little East of Paris

Here are pictures from his mission...though I cannot say that they are necessarily in the right order:



Jeff at the Mission Training Center and then here with his first Baptism in France, Monique, in Brest



What follows are some pictures of Jeff with families he worked with, taught, baptized, members, and people he met while they worked.

This is what a mission is most about, meeting, coming to love, and being able to teach people about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jeff has a strong testimony and a strong desire to share it so that others could come to know their Savior and the plan our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ have for the happiness and salvation of their children.

Learning of that plan, choosing it, living it, and trying to help others find it is really what life is all about.



...and of course, pictures with various companions and missionaries he worked with.

The friendships and love that develop with those people you work with on your mission are very special...and can be life long and eternal. Some have said it is similar to people who come to love one another and look out for one another in the military and combat.

I suppose that can be true, because you are engaged in spiritual warfare. A war of good versus evil, of the teachings and Kingdom of God versus that of man. Not filled with anger and violence, but filled with love. My Dad told me that ultimately in the war, the close friendships you develop are also filled with love for those people, so I believe that is why the relationships are in that way similar.

In any case, Jeff came to know and love so many of the people he worked with...and I can understand why based on my own experiences...and it is something his brother, Jared would earn a few years later.



Finally, there is all of the scenery you get to see...particularly of places you have never been before.

This is especially true of foreign missions because you also have a completely new culture you are exposed to and that you learn, perhaps with a new language (like I did with German and Jeff with French). All of it becomes a part of the rich memory of an experience that is so special and remains so for your entire life and into eternity.



But as with all of our life, and referring back to that scripture from Jacob, time marched on, and before we knew it, Jeff's mission was over. Gail returned to Idaho with my Mom and she would be living with us, but she needed someone to watch her. We had both hoped to go and get Jeff at the end of his mission, but Gail was fine with me doing it so she could continue to watch my Mom. I love her so for the many sacrifices she has made, and I wanted so much for her to be able to go...but as it was, I ended up having the great blessing and privilege of going to France and picking Jeff up...and getting to tour his mission with him.

Here are some pictures of that experience, late in 2006.



Jeff at the Mission Home in Paros, and then the next day, December 15, 2007, at Notre Dame with me in Paris



A Cathedral in a small village as we traveled to Auxere, and then the Church building in Orléans where we attended on Dec 17, 2006.



Jeff and I visiting the Fortune Korila Family on Dec 17, 2006 and then at Chateau Chambord, the 2nd largest palace in France, on the 18th.

A word/story about this next picture.

While Jeff was in Paris on his mission, Jeff asked us to move a good sum of money into his account. I wondered about it and asked him by email what it was for...I cannot exactly remember how he contacted us next, either he immediately emailed or called us, but he immediately got in touch and asked us to move the money that day.

We did, but it kind of bothered me and I let it do so, when what I needed to do was to trust my son. He was a grown man now and he had good reasons for what he did. It still bothered me at the time, though by the time I went to get him, I had forgotten about it.

While we were visiting Paris, he had so much planned for us that first day. We saw so many things, like the Notre Dame, places he had been, people he had taught. And that early evening we had one last appointment to eat with a family by the name of Gorsky about 7 PM. Well, at 8:30 PM we had just gotten our small hotel room and I suggested that since we were already over an hour late. Maybe we should reschedule. But Jeff insisted.

I was thinking to myself..."Jeff, I am not as young as I used to be and I am tired." But he was off and I had to really keep up a pace to keep up with him. We used the metro and finally got there about 9:30 PM.

They had dinner waiting. They had kept it warm.

They trusted Jeff would be there, and I believe he had called them as well, to let them know to wait. They loved Jeff so much, and I felt so ashamed of even thinking for an instant that we should have missed them. What a beautiful experience! And what is more, they told me a story of Jeff that I did not know...and which explained a lot and filled me with so much joy, but also taught me another great lesson. Their daughter who was a teen spoke excellent English and she translated.

Br. Gorsky told me had had joined the church in the Ukraine right after the Soviet Union fell. He soon became a branch president. He then met his wife and taught her the gospel. She says, "He saved her", and it was wonderful to see their love for one another.

About four years earlier, she had a dream that they needed to move from the Ukraine to the west. He agreed and they left everything and moved to France. It turned out he had a disease that could not be treated in the Ukraine, but could in France and now he says, "She saved me".

When Jeff was working in the area, they had saved to go to the Temple, but just before they were to leave their car was towed away and they did not enough money to get it out. They were going to miss going to the temple. That same day, Jeff was given a feeling through the spirit that he should help them.

This was the money he wanted transferred and it allowed them to go to the Temple. I am so grateful Jeff listened to the spirit. That family will love him forever as a result. I was so grateful for the time we had with them and I hid a 50 euro note on their table for them and hope it helped offset the cost of the meal. I was very humbled by their spirit and their love, and especially for learning the story. Now I knew...and learned another great lesson. Here is this wonderful family with my son in Paris late in 2006:



Jeff with the Gorsky family on December 15th, 2006

The memory of that experience will stay with me for eternity. And as I recollect it now, the Spirit whispers that my son was simply doing, on a larger scale, what I had taught him myself, on our trip to Texas when helping that older black gentleman who was simply wanting to get home for Thanksgiving. And I am grateful that I taught the right lesson, though I am also confident, knowing Jeff as I do, that he would have listened to and done the right thing though the Spirit in any case.

In those few hours we spent with them, I came to love them too, and I will never forget them.

Catching back up, after seeing Auxerre, Orleans, and Nantes, we traveled to Brest and then Cherbourg and stayed one the night of Dec 19, 2006, with a French missionary and his wife, the Busoes. François had served in the Boise Mission in Idaho! As it turns out, he was one of the Elders who taught the brother of David Blethin in Boise.

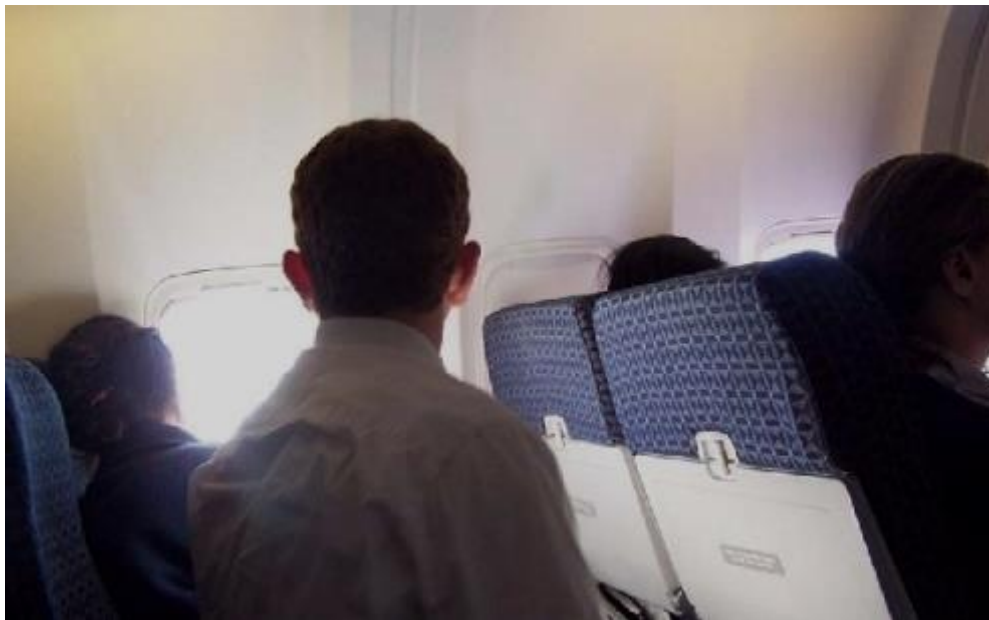
While I was the Ward Mission Leader and Jeff a Ward Missionary before his mission, we taught David Blethin in Emmett, at the same time. Small world! When Jeff served in Brest, on his first Sunday there, he told the members that he came from a small town in Idaho near Boise and François asked him the name of the town. When Jeff said he probably wouldn't know it, François told him to try, and sure enough, he knew exactly where Emmett was.

They served us a wonderful dinner of ham and pasta. It was really delicious, and as always (we probably had five or six meals served to us from people Jeff had met, members and investigators, while on his mission), there was more than enough to eat. Afterwards we talked for several hours about Idaho, missions, and the Church and then the Busoes asked if we would spend the night with them. We told them we didn't want to take advantage of their hospitality, but they said it was okay and they would be honored if we would...so we did.



Visiting Mont St. Michel for several hours and then the Normandy Beaches and Memorial on December 20, 2006.

On the 21st of December, we drove into the Paris International Airport, parked our car, got through security and boarded our aircraft to fly Jeff home to the United States and Idaho. I took this picture just after we lifted off and as we flew away from Paris. It touched my heart:



Jeff watching out the window as we flew away from Paris and France at the end of his mission on Dec 21, 2006.

31. Missy dies, Mom, Jared graduates, Magruder, Jeff marries 2007-2009

We got back to Idaho just in time for Christmas that year, and as you can imagine, with Jeff home and with visits from most of the kids and their families, it was a lot of fun and joyous indeed.

One thing had however occurred before Jeff got home. It was sad because I am convinced she tried to survive until he got home. That was that our family dog, Missy, whom we had gotten almost 16 years earlier while in Cincinnati. She had literally moved across country with us and all of the kids grew up with her. She got some form of cancer or other ailment and got progressively worse. Finally, when she could hardly walk and was obviously in great pain. I took her out to one of the places in the foothills that she loved, and that we all liked to visit, and I put her down myself.

It was very hard. Reminded me of when my Dad put our family dog, Lucky down, when we lived on the ranch because she could not stop chasing and killing chickens. The only solution back then had been to chain her up, and she was so miserable, and my Dad could not see him live that way...so he put him down and buried him out behind out house.

Looking back, I wish I had earlier taken her into a vet. I had been raised that for a pet that was not necessary. I am not sure it would have helped...but I wish now that I had tried.

As it was, she was in such pain, and so terribly off, and she was scared of veterinarian clinics anyway the few times we got her shots and such, that I am also glad if it had to be done that I was the one who did it.

She was a good, faithful dog and pet...and she loved out family and was willing to defend it. I remember once in Dillon when some of the young men there that I worked with once came over and three of them were rough housing with me how ferociously she barked and growled at them when she thought they were trying to harm me. We let her know then that it was in fun and she came to accept and trust those boys...but I remember how she was willing to protect me...and I believe anyone in the family.





Missy with Jared a few years before, and then on the porch a couple of months before she died. She was such a good dog. By the time Jeff got home, Gail had brought Mom to the house to see him that Christmas, and she would soon be staying and living with us permanently.

.We had built out our carport earlier and then finished it with a kitchenette, a living area, and a small bedroom.

As it turned out, she would rather stay in the main house with us and so she ended up living in the bedroom across from our room, and using the guest bathroom that was right there. She felt much more comfortable. As Becki dealt with the issues of her marriage, there were several occasion that she used the converted carport. Later it would come in handy for others who were going to school, working, or between jobs.

But Mom stayed in the main part of the house, and what's more, we had a dollar store, the Idaho Youth Ranch Thrift store, and a McDonald's right there in town so she did not miss a beat. Gail took her to do the things she liked, and we get her furniture from Texas so that her room was furnished just like hers back in Texas.



Our carport closed in and finished

At this point, Jared has started High School and in-between schooling and track, he would work at a place called the Ladder King which was run by a friend of ours in the Church, Mike Gravier. He built specialized orchard ladders and has quite a business doing so. Jeff worked there for several years in High School before his mission, and then he trained Jared on the operation of all of the equipment to build the ladders and Jared began working there too while Jeff was on his mission.

Mike told me on several occasions how impressed he was with Jeff and Jared's work ethic and what a good job they did for him. Both Gail and I were proud of them and knew they had the work ethic, like all three of our daughters, to do a good, honest, and hard day's work for any employee they worked for.



Jared on a large trailer full of Orchard Ladders he had built

Jeff and Jared did hikes together as Jeff started college at BSU. Jeff also did a lot of running. He liked the Emmett annual Triathlon and also the Boise Robie creek half-marathon which was a run over the Boise Mountains from a park near downtown, to the other side of the mountains at Robie creek.



Jeff and Jared on the Little Butte, and Jeff running the Emmett Triathlon

Jared graduated in 2009. He had to do some extra work that summer to finish up, but he got his diploma and was the last of our five children to graduate. Which meant we had three children graduate from Emmett, and Jeff had been there in school from 3rd grade through the rest of his school there.

Quite a wonderful achievement for our family...and we had years more to come!

Soon after his graduation, in 2007, I decided to take a trip on what is known as the Magruder corridor.

It is a wilderness road that runs between the Frank Church Wilderness and the Bitterroot Wilderness across central Idaho. The road itself is 140 miles between two towns that are both well under 2,000 people, with no larger towns within 40-50 miles of them. 140 miles of beautiful rugged terrain...some of the prettiest and most remote country in the Continental United States. If you google Magruder Wilderness Corridor Trail Jeff Head, you can find the site I created about it. It was a great trip, sort of a graduation present, my style, for Jared.











Also during this time, I finally found the perfect pickup truck for me...and kept it for numerous years. I had had a Black Tahoe that I liked for some years, and then my brother Greg left me a Red, Ford Eddie Bower Expedition.

But I wanted a strong engine, deep-throated pickup that was four door, off-road 4-wheel drive with the full package, deer guard, tool box, etc. In short, I wanted an F-150 (at least) Chevy, 4-door, Z71 Pickup. I finally found and got one. She was a beauty.



During this time, I continued to work for the Bureau of Reclamation and had specialized on Security Systems for all of the major Dams in the Snake River Area. I was ultimately promoted to be the Security Officer for the entire Area. The created this position because of the security needs and the ongoing War on Terror. By 2009 I had this responsibility reporting to the Deputy Area Manager, but by 2011 I would report directly to the Area Manager for the Snake River Area. I enjoyed my job with the Bureau a lot.





I made some life-long friends during my time with the Bureau. Hard working men, many of them veterans, and those closest to me were people who would droop whatever they were doing at a moment's notice if they thought you needed their help.

Ralph West became like an older brother to me. He and I worked as two Communication and Instrumentation Mechanic to begin with for many years. We went out together on many occasions in all sorts of weather, sometimes very inclement, and would design, build, install and maintain automated equipment to help the dams be operated automatically and remotely over a communication system we installed across the entire Area from Palisades Lake in Eastern Idaho, clear across the state to Anderson Ranch Dam near Mountain Home, Arrow Rock Dam outside of Boise, up to Deadwood Dam and Cascade Dam in the central Idaho Mountains. We also had responsibilities for Jackson Lake Yellowstone National Park and Owyhee Dam in Oregon, a large concrete dam about 2/3rd the size of Hoover dam in Nevada.

Nick Covert was a young man I helped select and then who became my apprentice for the C&I position I would ultimately leave to become the Area Security Manager/Officer. Other very close friends, whom on occasion we literally put one another's lives into each other's hands included Mark Albl, Fred Dimick and Eric Bru at Anderson Ranch Dam, Rocky Smith, Doug Danzer, Joe, and several others.

As they say, picture paint a thousand words and here are some pictures of those times, events, places and people:





While all of this was going on, Jeff was moving on with his life and doing the things he needed to in order to do so. He was working in Boise and going to school. He got an apartment there and was going to a single adult ward and attending institute, which is a gospel oriented study and activity group for college aged students.



He'd come out and work with us on our home whenever he could, and he'd take trips with us.



While there and singing in the choir, he met a young girl named Jolene Sayer. They dated and it wasn't long before he brought her out to meet us...and then they became engaged.



Jeff and Jolene before their wedding

In March of 2008, they were married in the Boise Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for time and all eternity.



Jeff and Jolene at the Boise Temple after their wedding for time and all eternity

Their wedding was a joyous occasion for all involved. My brother Lee, who had left the Church not long after joining, but who was a good Christian man and who had become much more sympathetic to the church over the years, came and joined us along with as many of the family who could make it to Boise.



My brother Lee and I and the wedding party after the wedding of Jeff and Jolene at the Boise Idaho Temple

30. Jared's Mission, Becky's 2nd marriage, I get Cancer 2010-2012

In April of 2009, Jared got his call for his mission,

We had all been waiting to see where he would go. At the time, Jeff and Jolene, grand mom Head, and Gail and I were there, so we had a great time seeing him open and announce where he was going.



Jared on the day he opened his mission call to the Canadian Edmonton Mission

He got his call to the Canada Edmonton Mission. He was so excited! It was a foreign mission, but it was in North America, and yet it was in an exciting area, and a beautiful area of North America.

In April, he went into the MTC (Mission Training Center), just like Jeff had done in 2006. Gail and I took him down there to deliver him to the mission.

Once again, it was an exciting experience.



Jared with myself and Gail at the MITC in Provo in April 2009

In Canada, Jared served in the following cities:

- Hinton, on the Athabasca River at the edge of the Rocky Mountains, gateway to Jasper National Park
- Witaskawin, south of Edmonton with a many Cree Indians and an Area Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
- Ft. McMurray, a city to the far north of Jared's mission with a large Shale Oil mining industry
- Edmonton, the Headquarters of Jared's mission. The largest city in his mission, about 1 million people.
- Red Deer, a city in the far south of Jared's mission about halfway between Edmonton and Calgary
- Edmonton, back to the largest city in his mission

As with his brother Jeff, and every other missionary who works hard for the Lord, he found the great joy of serving the people of his mission and coming to love them. He had many rich experiences with individuals and families throughout his mission.





The joy of coming to know and love people particularly as they feel the spirit of the Lord and learn of their own relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and what that can mean for them and their family, is one of the sweetest feelings possible. It is little wonder that the missionaries involved together in that experience develop such strong relationships with one another. It was the same for Jared during his two years in Canada.





Finally, once again, in every mission there are beautiful sites to see. It was no different for Jared in Canada, and Canada is a beautiful country with amazing landscape and amazing history.





...and finally, this picture, which I felt epitomized Jared's mission experience.



Jared in a beautiful field, representing the field of God's children he was called to serve

But, as with life, time passed on the wind, and before we knew it, Jared was coming home. In April of 2011, we picked him up at the airport in Boise, home from his "best two years," so far in life.

During Jared's mission, life went on at home too.

One of the major events that occurred while he was on his mission was that his sister, Becki, got married.

After Becki's divorce from her first husband, she continued on with her life, raising her two girls while she worked. And she worked hard.

Becki has been blessed, as I indicated earlier, with a very strong work ethic, an outgoing and engaging personality, and an ability to make friends and good relations with other people. It helped her in her marketing job, and other jobs she had where she interfaced with the public.

She had dated a number of men, but nothing seemed to work out into a serious relationship...that is until she did meet Toni Hagen. They worked together at a local bar and grill and fell in love.

Toni is so good for Becki. Their relationship allowed her to truly love again. Before you knew it, they were engaged to be married and in June 2009 they were married in Boise and it was a wonderful event.

Gail helped a lot with the decorations as she still had all of the material and equipment and the whole family came together to make it happen. The whole family came together, either already being there, are flying in, to help set it up and hold the event.



The day before Becki's wedding, I and all the grandkids together, and a family picture that we sent Jared on his mission. I will never forget the wedding, mainly because I was so happy to see Becki so happy. Here are some pictures from that event:



Toni Hagen and Becki Hagen after their wedding, with Gail and me

That entire day and the get together at the park there in Boise after the wedding was wonderful. I had walked Becki to the spot where she took her vows and afterwards we all danced and ate and just enjoyed the moment.



Walking Becki to the alter, and then later dancing with her during the party/reception.



The happily married couple after taking their vows

After the wedding, life went on.

As mentioned, Jared got home from his mission in April 2009 and I continued working for the Bureau. One day, while on top of Shaffer Butte near Bogus Basin ski resort outside Boise where we had equipment, I slipped and twisted my ankle and sat down very hard on my tail bone. I actually took a picture a few minutes before.



On Shaffer Butte in September 2009

I had to take a week off as the ankle healed, but my back began to really bother me. I went to our Doctor and she referred me to some specialists. No one could find anything wrong with my back. Ultimately, I went to the spine specialists and they could not find anything either. Then, in late November, they decided to do another MRI scan of my very low back and sacral area. Your sacrum is the bone that ties your pelvic area together, tying to both hip bones and the bottom of your back.

I did not know all of that at the time, but was soon to learn all about it. It is five fused vertebrae that control your legs, your bowels and bladder and other functions. Anyhow, the Dr. called me in and said that my back looked fine, but the top of my sacrum was all discolored on the MRI and we needed to look at it.

Ultimately in early December they did what they call a needle biopsy of it. This involves anything but what you are I would call a "needle". It is more like an auger that they screw into the area and then pull a plug out.

The initial results said that it was a very aggressive cancer...but they were not sure and needed to do more tests. In late December I discovered that what I had was a Chordoma. A very rare bone cancer of the back and sacral area. Mine was like 1 in three million.

We went to see the Idaho Cancer Group at the large hospital in Meridian. The Doctor their frankly told us that they had never seen or worked on one of these, and that to their knowledge, no one in Idaho had. To his credit, and a blessing to us, he said that we needed to go someplace where they did work on this and he suggested MD Anderson in Houston.

Gail's brother, who is a Physician's Assistant for the Veteran's Administration, and at a high level within that branch of government had already suggested the same. He said we needed to see Dr. Lawrence Rhines who was a well-known neurosurgeon and who specialized in this cancer.

So, in January, 2010 we went down and spent a week talking to them. I started and put my entire diary of the experience online. I turned out it would define our life for the next several years to this day. Online is here:

<http://www.jeffhead.com/chordoma.htm>

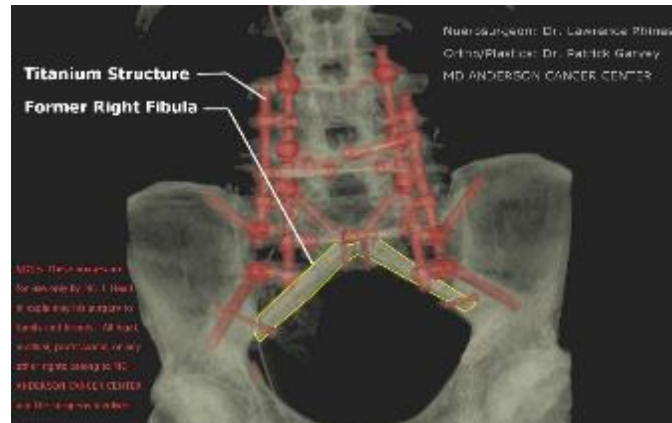
A year after the initial surgeries and rehabilitation, I gave a talk at MD Anderson and you can find that here:

<https://mediaplayer.mdanderson.org/video-full/07C1457E-A61C-11E3-BD50-60D819FC683C>

We went back down to Houston in April. I underwent three very major surgeries, the shortest being ten hours and the longest being almost 18 hours. They took out my entire sacrum, and then used part of my leg bones (the fibula) to tie it all back together. It was very intense and I spent weeks in intensive care between surgeries, and then had to spend two more months after the surgeries in bed, most of the time laying on my side letting the bones heal and get strong enough for me to learn to walk again.

My Dr.s were unbelievably professional. Particularly Dr. Rhines. Also Dr. Garvey who did the bone and work. Dr. Rhines main nurse, Gisela, was also absolutely great and helped me so much through the entire ordeal.

Here's an image of how my back looked after all of that work was done...you can see that the entire sacrum is gone and two struts are supporting my back and tying it to my hips.



An image of how my back looks after all the work they did



Me in my hospital bed during the long hospitalization

When they finally got me up out of bed, they took a week to get me standing, and it was hard. When you have laid on your back for that long your body acclimates and to stand up at once would cause you to faint. So they take it slowly, day by day. Here is a link to a video of when they were getting my up on the angle board to stand:

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=410259679068>

Anyhow, the bottom line was I was released from the hospital and then spent three months in intensive rehab. They were not sure I would walk normally again, but I was blessed with a great PhD in Physical Therapy, Dr. Liebermann who helped me so much. He worked personally with me and became a close, life-long friend.



Dr. Abraham Lieberman and I

Here's a video of my working with Dr. Lieberman.

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=422290409068>>

You can see how much Gail helped me throughout this experience. She was always there for me...for months and months.

By the time we went back to Texas in late September I was walking with a cane...and then by November was walking without a cane.

I went back to work in November and was able to start walking without the use of a cane at all. Here's a video of that:

<https://www.facebook.com/JeffHead/videos/471216024068/>

Even though I could walk and drive, I could not continue the full duties I had, and so they began shifting my duties toward managing the security demands of the area. Ultimately this led to me being promoted to report to the Area Manager as the Snake River Area Security Officers and Manager.

Each year we would go back to MD Anderson for the conferences about my disease, and each year they found that I was on the mend with now new cancer. But they were checking just the area where the cancer had been taken from. Chordoma are so rare that they do not have a large data base on them and they are still learning how to treat them.

In the meantime, our family continued to grow.

I will return to the cancer and how it ultimately has progressed in a later chapter.

Just know that this experience was traumatic, long, and difficult. I could not have made it through without special help from Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

One example of this.

One night while lying in the hospital and worrying about how it was going to turn out and worry especially about Gail and her future, I poured out my heart to Heavenly Father. He blessed me that night with a spiritual manifestation. Not a vision per sey, but a sure knowledge of the following.

Before I came to this earth, I knew that this experience was to be one of the great tests of my life and one of the

great opportunities for me to witness for him. Not only did I know this, but I accepted it as a part of my calling. I KNOW that this is the case. I assented in the council in Heaven to this. Though things have been difficult...and got even more difficult later, I have never worried about how things would turn out again.

I also could never, ever have made it through this experience without my sweetheart Gail.

She has been an angel not only to our whole family, but to me personally. She has been my long-term care provider and her strength and love have helped me weather this storm and come off the better for it.

The entire family has done so.

In June not long before being released from the hospital and near my birthday, Gail went to the airport unknown to me and got Jeff and Jolene who had come to visit me. I was out walking around the nurse's station, practicing walking and had just finished the first time of going around three times when they came around the corner.

I was so surprised, and the events were so emotional that I just cried. I was SO glad to see them. My whole family has helped me through this, and that help means the world to me.

The entire experience has led to special things happening between me and the family and with so many other people. Many people have read my online journal and I have received hundreds of emails, made dear friends, and been able to communicate my testimony to so many others.

I made three close friends at MD Anderson who had gone through similar Chordoma operations and kept in touch with all of them for years, each month. Neil Amy, Mohamed, and Wiley Shaw. One by one they have all passed away now in the last eight years, but they were such a strength to me and we became eternal friends and I know I will see all of them again.

But, even with that experience, time moved on.

31. Mom's and my brother's death, Rachel's wedding, family life 2012-2014

My Mom had to be put in an assisted living care when we went to Houston for my operations. When we returned her condition had deteriorated and I felt so badly because of it. When we were there with her, her memory and her daily activities allowed her to have some sense of normalcy, by while we were gone, we could not do all of those things, and in a place where she did not know anyone, she naturally declined.

We had moved her furniture into the room at that facility and that helped, but it was not the same.

Once we got back, either Gail or I would visit her each day, Gail during the day and I would after work. Gail would still take her out to shop at the Idaho Youth Ranch and the Dollar Store which she loved.

She had to have an operation that we thought would make things much worse, but amazingly she came through it alright. My brother Paul came to visit during that time and between us and the other family members in the area she got lots of visits.

Nonetheless, she was now well into her eighties, and although I would take her out on drives and she particularly liked to go and see flowers, whenever we could...her dementia and her health continued to decline.



Mom getting some flowers, and us “faking” sleep together at her assisted living center



Mom getting to see some flowered areas on some of our drives

On October 4, 2012, we were called over to the assisted living center because she was having a health episode. We stayed with her through it, Gail and I, and her breathing became labored. Just before she passed away, Brenda, Lee's wife, called and she was on the phone with us when Mom passed away.

We made arrangements with the local funeral home to carry her, in her casket, to Texas for her funeral and burial. It was a long trip, and Gail and I filled it with talk about her life. She was (and is) a good parent, good

wife, and a patriotic American. She raised her sons well, and embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ with fervor.

She and my Dad served a mission to Alabama in the 1990s, and they were temple workers in the Dallas Temple for years. We laid her to rest in Bolivar, on October 12, 2012, next to my Dad.



Carrying Mom and her casket to the burial lot, and then her casket there just before burial

At the same time, my brother Lee, who had complete purchasing the ranch and moving he and Brenda into it just a couple of years earlier, was dealing with his own serious health issues.

Surprisingly, in early 2012 they discovered that he had ALS, Lu Gehrig's Disease, which is a degenerative disease of the nervous system and ultimately effects other organs. It is a very rare disease.

We would visit Lee and Brenda every time we went to Texas over the years, and especially each year on our trips to Houston for my cancer. He had come to Houston during my initial operations and stayed while it occurred.



Lee and I next to our Pickup Trucks at his home in Texas

In nine months it progressed rapidly.

Lee and I were close. He was my oldest brother, and even though he fell away from the church, as I have said before, he remained a good, honest, Christian man who loved his family and his country.

As an example, Lee was very well off. He had been an extremely successful water management, and particularly waste water management engineer. He rose in his company to be the principle owner and then sold it to start consulting. He was independently wealthy.

Here's how he typically used his wealth.

Each year he would go, and take Brenda or one of his kids to foreign countries to spend a month or so witnessing to the people for Jesus Christ. He loved his Savior passionately and tried, with the knowledge he had, to share his testimony of Jesus Christ, calling on people to come to Him, and helping people have better lives.

I admired him greatly, and as you can imagine we had many discussions over the years about Jesus, and in time, he came to recognize the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as good Christians (though for a time earlier in his life, due to pastors he had saying contrary, he thought that we did not worship Jesus, but somehow, some other "Christ").

Time and experience with us changed all of that, and I was so happy to see it.

But the disease moved quickly and in early December 2012, the 3rd of December...just less than a month after Mom passed away, my older brother Lee passed away too.

We made arrangements and made another trip to Texas to attend his funeral, laying him to rest in Bolivar Cemetery too, on a plot next to my parents and Greg.



Carrying Lee's casket to the burial plot, and his casket there, waiting to be lowered.

I used my priesthood authority, after each burial, to consecrate their graves to be a safe resting place for their mortal remains until Jesus Christ returns and they are resurrected as He and they return to this earth in the air, as we are taught in the Bible in the New Testament.

I miss Lee, and the calls we would make to each other on some Saturdays during football season when we would both be watching the same games and something exciting would happen. I will miss our discussions about the Savior, and our families, and getting advice from one another as we faced various situations in life.

But as with my Dad, Greg, and Mom, I know we will all be together again...with my cancer and it condition...perhaps soon. I do not rush that day, but I look forward to it.

In the mean time we had done several other things in life.

Also in 2012 we took a trip over to Virginia to visit Gail's brother Denni, and to hold a family celebration for Gail's Mom, Effie Woodmansee's 80th birthday.

It was a great get together. We had held an 80th birthday celebration for my Mom too, in 2005, as explained above, a year after my Dad passed away. Not only was the get together at Denni's wonderful, but Gail and I got to travel around Virginia a bit and ended up being allowed into Norfolk Naval Station on my government ID card.



A bagpipe player plays Scottish music for the celebration and a Woodmansee reunion picture



Gail and I at Norfolk Naval Base, with the Carrier, USS George Bush, CVN-77 behind us

In 2012 we also got really exciting news in our family as we found that Rachel, our 2nd daughter who had lived in North Dakota for so many years, had decided to marry her longtime boyfriend Chad Severance.

Rachel and Chad had visited us several times in Emmett, and we recognized the love they had for one another and what a good man Chad is.

We had prayed that they would get married and “tie the knot,” and now they were.



Chad and Rachel (far left) in one of our family pictures. Everyone is there except Katie and her family and Jared. They had decided to be married in San Diego on the beach.

So we drove down there in April to attend it...and it, like Becki's wedding was a wonderful event.



Rachel and Chad exchanging rings and then later, as we celebrated, I caught this sweet peck, Chad gave her.



The wedding group at Rachel's' wedding on the beach. It was a small, but very sweet and comfortable just like they wanted. So, we had done a LOT of traveling in 2012 and then settled back into normal life, with me working, our annual trips to MD Anderson for checkups, and watching our family continue to grow.

In the next Chapter I will cover each of our grandchildren.

For a good length of time we had everyone but Rachel in the area. Katie and Nathan were in the area as the Navy put him through school to become an officer and a nurse.

He had served aboard nuclear submarines and rapidly advanced in his career. They liked his work and ultimately offered him this wonderful opportunity and he took it. They were able to come to Boise and got to BSU and it was GREAT having them and the three boys, Braedon, Riley, and Cason here in the area.

Jeff and Jolene were also in the area, and they began having their family, first with Rayna and then with Amondine. I made up a middle name for Rayna that I use to this day. I called her "Onya" ...you know, hehehe, Rayna Onya Head! LOL! I am still making corny jokes to this day.

Becki and Toni and Becki's daughters Kyra and Kenna, and then Becki and Toni's daughter Amia, were in the area too, as was Jared working in Emmett, and then in Boise.

We had a lot of joyous get-togethers, taking the kids on rides, going to the Cherry Festival here in Emmett with them, Nathan and Katie taking me to a couple of BSU games, and it was really pleasant and made for great memories. Here are some pictures of all of that type of thing.





But ultimately, Nathan finished school and the Navy transferred him down to San Diego to work in the naval hospital there. He has a ten-year commitment after the schooling and being an officer. Katie also works, having either management jobs at retail stores, or doing marketing for businesses that she finds and are things she really excels at.

Becki and Toni moved to Seattle, where Becki ultimately got a great job with Adobe, and they then moved her to Pennsylvania, where she does marketing work and has to go into New York City periodically to meet at their offices there. She is doing a great job.

Finally, Jeff and Jolene moved to Moscow, Idaho, about 2050 miles north of us, where he had been accepted into a Master's program that would take his current schooling and give him bachelors and a masters in Architecture.

So, within about a year's time near the end of this period, all of them except Jared had moved away.

We were so grateful for those few years when so many were here in the area.

Finally, I wanted to say something about my Church callings since the cancer.

Not long after returning home from the hospital, I was called to teach the 11-12 year old children (boys and girls) in Primary. I did this for six years. In fact, it was the longest calling I have had in the church in my entire life. I know without a doubt that the Lord preserved my life to teach these children.

I believe that children of this age not only can feel the spirit of God, but that in today's world it is essential that they do.

They have been baptized and given the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord does not do so lightly. That gift is an essential ingredient to our ability in life to follow Him and distinguish which paths we should take. It has guided me throughout my life as I hope my history makes plain.

I taught these children this very important fact of life, and would always, always, stop the class when the sweet spirit was in the room and point it out to the kids. How it felt. How being too boisterous or too light hearted would cause its presence to leave.

We had wonderful discussions about life and I explained to them about my cancer and that the Lord had answered my prayer and let me know that having that cancer was a part of my life's calling. We discussed the evils of abortion and immorality. We discussed God's plan for a happy life and the Gospel of Jesus Christ in detail as well as each of the scriptures we studied each year. Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

I was so gratified to see those children feel the spirit and respond to it, and I know that they felt it and learned from it over those years.

Both the boys and girls, and especially me, are all better for it. We learned so much together and I can say that I came to love each and every one of them.

The Gravier kids, the Peterson girls, the Dee children, the Winegar kids, the Warner children, the Garner children, Graniers, the Thornocks, the Lake kids...and so many more. If you are in the Emmett area, and particularly ever visit the Central Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ask about these kids and what they thought of that class. I know they will never forget the experiences and I know that they are all fine young men and women.

I was released in late 2016 and as would have it, my son Jeff, who had moved back into the area (more on that later) with his family, was called to teach the same class when I was released.

I was humbled and grateful for the experience, and as I say, I know that the Lord preserved my life so that I might do so.

32. Our wonderful children and grandchildren 2001-2017

Before I go on and complete the story of my life to this date (October 2017), I wanted to list all of our grandchildren and say a little something about each.

We now have 13 grandchildren, seven girls and six boys who have been born between 2001 and 2017, in a sixteen-year period. I will list them each within their families:

Our daughter Katie and her husband Nathan Trujillo and their three boys



Katie and Nathan were married in 1997 and sealed in the Salt Lake City Temple. As stated, ultimately Nathan joined the U.S. Navy, went active duty serving on a nuclear submarine, and ultimately was made an officer, changed his career path to medical, and is now U.S. Navy nurse in San Diego. Katie has done well also in her jobs, working as management and marketing at several large name brand stores and also on her own.

We love them so much and are proud of them and the family they are raising.

Their current plans are to move back to the Boise rea when Nathan retires in the next few years.

Their three boys were born between 2001 and 2005, and have spent a lot of time in Emmett. Papa has taught all the boys, as they became old enough, to drive his pickup on the back roads. Also, all three boys have worked

with Papa on his model building and are all quite talented.

Braedon Trujillo – 2001





Braedon is our oldest grandchild, and our oldest grandson. He is a fine young man and we have pictures of him throughout his life. He loves computers, computer games, tennis and other sports, learning, and he is just turning sixteen years old and about to get his actual driver's license. He has also recently attended his first actual dance. LOL! He's a good young man, and we are looking forward to his serving a mission in a couple of years and then seeing him get to college and make his life.

Riley Trujillo – 2003



Riley is fun, energetic, and a good boy. He's smart, loves football, building models, and does well in school. He's a couple of years behind Braedon, but has also learned to drive with his papa, and to shoot, as has Braedon. He

is on his way to preparing for a mission, and we're proud of love him. Like his brother, he is very much into video games and they play often with their Dad. Kasen's been known to play a practical joke or two as well!

Kasen Trujillo – 2005



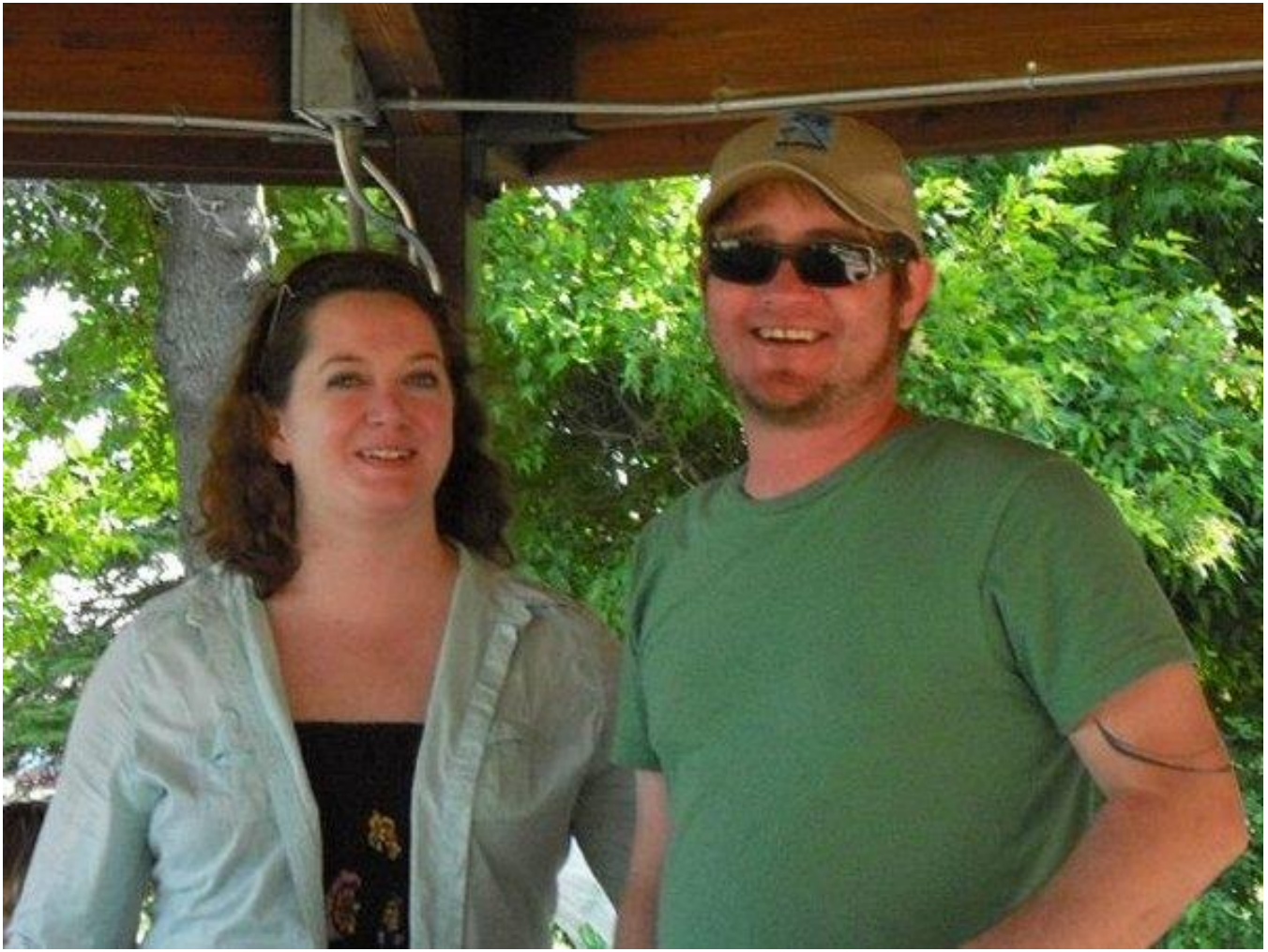


Kasen is the youngest of the three Trujillo boys. He has some good examples in front of him, but he himself is also a good example. He also has liked building model, playing games, and going to Cherry Festivals, carnivals and theme parks. He is doing well in school and will soon be in Jr. High School. We love him and are proud too.

Kasen is a nice, well-mannered young man...but he has a lot of fun too. He has just started the driving with papa on the back roads in Idaho, but he will be doing more as time goes on to prepare him for driving in California. Also, with his mom and dad's blessing, he may soon get to learn to shoot some as well.

All three of these boys are a blessing and a joy to their grandparents and we are proud of them all.

Our daughter Rachel and her husband Chad Severance and their two boys



Rachel and Chad live in Minot, North Dakota, where they met and live to this day. Chad works at the airport there, and Rachel has worked for years for a bar and grille. She recently put in an application that was accepted, with the Transit Authority at the airport. She has not been called up for it yet, but we are hoping she will.

She also has started her own, at home, on-line business doing travel coordination. She loves that and has done it before for companies but now is doing it on her own. She will excel at it and do very well.

For years Rachel was unable to have children. Then, in 2014, she was the victim of an accident where a young man lost control of his vehicle, crashed into a parking lot, and pushed a parked car into Rachel. She was thrown into a wall and suffered many cuts and bruises, and a potentially severe concussion and potential damage to her brain. Miraculously, she had no permanent damage, and she called us a few months later to let us know she was pregnant! What a miracle!

They have now had their second child and we are proud of both of them. They work hard, they love one another deeply, and they love and are raising their children very well. They just purchased their first house which has plenty of room for their family.

We are very proud of them and love the whole family very dearly...we just wish they lived closer!

Myles Severance – 2015



Myles is a precious child...and a BIG boy. He was over ten pounds at birth and has not looked back. But he is also a lovable and adorable little boy. He loves to play, ride his bike, go outside...and he absolutely is enamored with Star Wars too! I am sure his mom and dad will introduce him to camping, hiking and fishing as soon as he is ready. He is a blessing to our whole family and we love him and are so proud of him already, as well as his mom

and dad.

Leon Severance - 2017



Leon is the newest member of our family. He was born just this year and is still a baby. But, like his brother, he is a big boy! And his brother has taken to him too.

Undoubtedly, they are going to be close, and good friends as they grow up and then through school too extending into their adult life. We are so happy for Rachel and Chad, and so proud of them. They prepared well, worked hard, and had the perfect house all ready for these two boys when they were born and came into the

world. Now they are living their dream.

Our daughter Rebecca Gail Head, “Becki” and her 1st husband Jared Doney’s and their two girls



Becky and Jared were married, but had problems (as discussed) very early on. Sadly, Jared was an alcoholic and he was unable to fully admit it, or to overcome it and the problems it caused in their marriage. This caused the majority of the issues and ultimately, they were separated and then divorced.

But their children are beautiful and they love both of their parents.

Since that time, Becki has worked hard to raise her children, and as discussed earlier, has always been willing to work hard, make whatever sacrifice necessary, and do the right thing for her girls. Becki has also always been able to consistently get good paying jobs and provide well for her children.

We are so proud of her, and all of the girls are beautiful, very intelligent, and talented.

Ultimately, she met another man, Toni Hagen, they fell in love, and (as discussed above) were married. But more on that in just a moment.

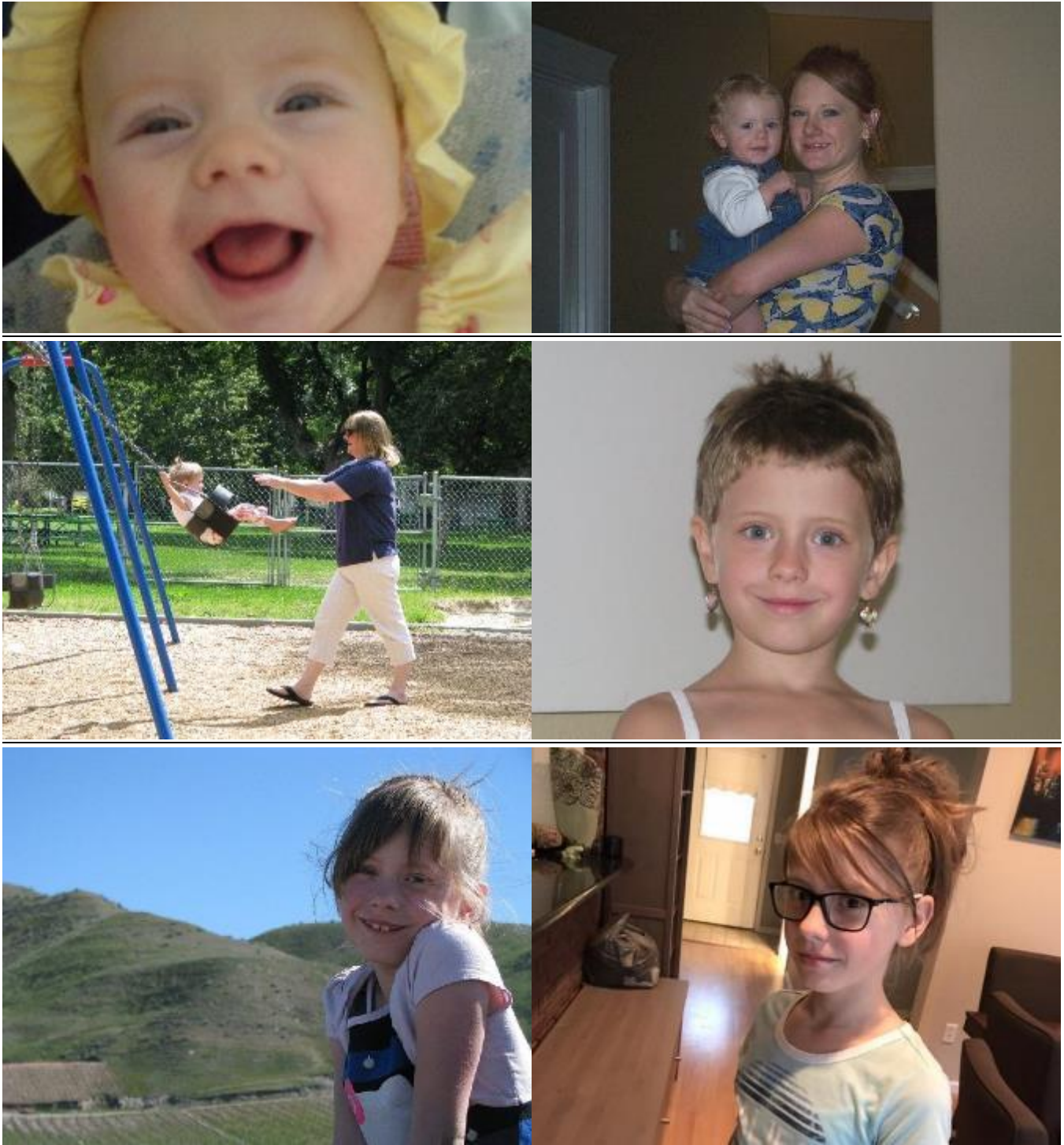
Kyra Doney – 2003



Kyra is a very caring, smart, mature, and beautiful young woman. From an early age she has taken on additional responsibilities in helping her mom with her sisters. She is interested in building things, the sciences, space and astronomy, reading, friends, and lots more. She has also been tutored in her driving on the gravel roads of Idaho with her papa. We love her and are so proud of her. She was our 1st granddaughter and has been a great

example for the others who have followed.

Kenna Doney - 2006



Papa has also worked with Kenna as they have gotten older, helping them learn to drive on the gravel back roads near Emmett. Kenna is very intelligent and as you can see, looks a lot like her mom did at that age. She is a caring and sharing individual and has a strong determination and will. We love her so much and are very proud of her too. Ask Gail to find and show the picture of papa helping her learn to crawl as a baby.

Our daughter Rebecca Gail Head, “Becki”, and Mike and Kelli Smith and their daughter Gracie



Mike and Kelly are a wonderful, loving couple. They have a strong family and they are good Christian people who are also members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When they adopted Gracie, they had been unable to have children to that date. But God in Heaven worked a miracle and now, since adopting Gracie, they have had three other children as you can see. They are working hard to build an eternal family, and from everything we read and see of them, they are achieving that goal through living the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, loving Him and teaching their children to do the same.

We do not get to see them too often. They live in Great Falls, Montana, but we love them and are proud of them nonetheless. We know they are raising Gracie and their other children properly, and we thank our Heavenly Father for that and that and for them.

Beki has made a point of visiting Gracie from time to time and each time the Smiths have welcomed her into their home with loving arms and made the experience special for Becki, for Gracie, and for their entire family.

Gracie Smith (as stated adopted to Mike and Kelly Smith) – 2005



Gracie is a special young woman. She is just entering young women’s at Church and it is clear from keeping track of her and her family on Facebook, that she loves life, loves her family and siblings, and loves the Lord.

We are grateful for the blessing it is to be able to keep track of her and know of her. I am writing this history now in part because of her own expressed desire to know more about this part of her family, and of course, also writing it for all of our children and grandchildren as I deal with my terminal cancer and the desire to finish this

history while I am still here on earth.

Our daughter Rebecca Gail Head, “Becki” and her husband Toni Hagen and their daughter, Amiia



Becki and Toni are a match made in Heaven “as it were.” Toni is a hard worker, has strong work and parental ethics, and is a quite talented artist as well. He has always treated Becki with love and respect, and been willing to help her and support her in the wonderful job opportunities she has been blessed with.

They are both living in Pennsylvania now where Becki works in high level, large account marketing for Adobe.

They had a beautiful daughter, Amiia in 2011, so they are now raising three daughters.

We love them so much and are proud of them and the decisions they are making for their daughters, and the responsibility they have taken and shown in making the decisions that are best for their family and their children. We only wish they lived closer as well...but as I said earlier, we did have several years where all of them lived close and are forever grateful for those years, and they do visit us as often as possible for family reunions and on vacations that they take out west.

We recently enjoyed one of those visits when the Woodmansee Family reunion (Gail’s parent’s family) was held in Boise.

Amiia Hagen - 2011



Amiia is growing up so fast. It is hard to believe that she is as old and big as she is. But she is a very bright young lady and loves her family. She is excited about doing things, seeing things, and learning things.

We are grateful to Father in Heaven that she's a part of our family and that Becki and Toni were blessed with her

as their daughter. We are proud of her, and of them and the love that they have within their family.

Our son Jeffrey Lynn Head Jr. and his wife, Jolene Sayer's and their three girls and son



Jeff and his wife were married in the Boise Temple (as shown above) and then Jeff continued his schooling while also working. He and Jolene have been willing to work very hard at both getting Jeff through school, and working to provide for their growing family.

Jeff ultimately was accepted into a Master of Architecture program at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, where they moved and Jeff completed his Masters of Architecture. He got a job with a company there in the area while still in school, who made him an offer and kept him on board after his graduation.

When learning of my terminal diagnosis with cancer, he talked to his company about telecommuting and moving back to Emmett. They accepted and set him up to do so. This speaks very strongly to their trust in him, and their desire to keep him on board for their company.

He and Jolene are raising their four children in a loving and very responsible way and we are very proud of both of them both. Gail is very close friends with Jolene's mother, who lives over in Boise, and Jolene is close to and loves her family in Boise.

We are thankful for their living here near us, and love all of them dearly.

Kyra Head - 2011





Kyra is a special girl. She is very bright, loves school, likes to do models with Papa, wants to help her Mom and is already helping with the younger kids. She's in first grade now, and she has a good knowledge of her Savior and wants to be able to pray when we are together as a family. Here's a precious video of her helping me when she was 21 months old with modeling: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffHead/videos/10151168692914069/> . Kyra is also very good at drawing things, and produces pictures for her Nana and Papa all the time.

Amondine Head - 2012



Amondine is also a very smart and intelligent girl, and she can go a mile a minute. I believe she is going to do well in sports or some other physical activity, be it dancing, clogging, or gymnastics. She has a real can-do attitude about things when she really wants something. She is in kindergarten and is doing very well. She likes to draw too and does a very good job at it for her age. Amondine also likes to pray with the family and does a

very good job of it too. She is being taught well and has a good heart about her.

Melina Head - 2014



Melina is the third daughter Jeff and Jolene have had. She is of course competing for attention with her older sisters, both of whom are good examples for her...but such things are common with any family, especially when the kids are pretty close. All the same, as with her sisters, Melina is a beautiful little girl, who is excited and happy about life. She is in primary now at church and meeting other children and doing well. We are proud of her and love her so much. She likes to call my Pappy! LOL!

Cory Head – 2017



Cory is Jeff and Jolene's 4th child, and as you can see, he's a little boy...although "little" is hardly the word for a child who came to this earth weighing well over nine pounds! LOL! However, he's not quite so large as his cousins, Myles and Leon, but who knows what time will bring. One thing is for sure, the entire family loves their little boy. He has such a "knowing" look about him. I have no doubts that he was well prepared and taught before coming here. You might call it the musings of a grand pa, but I believe it so none the less.

Our son Benjamin Jared Head, “Jared” and his fiancée, Ann Tiara Bardsley



Jared and his fiancée are a wonderful couple. They have known each other for years, but lately that relationship took a turn towards romance and love and now they plan to be married in December of this year, 2017. Only two months away now!

Jared works very hard and is well respected in the landscaping business he has worked for the last several years. He has stuck with the job and progressed steadily through a team leader, into managing their trimming and now some of their major accounts. He is working on getting his arborist license and his company may consider helping him finish his schooling and getting a landscape architecture degree.

He knew Anne in High School in Emmett, so in terms of their being acquaintances and friends, they have had a relationship of that order that is probably upwards of fifteen years long...or perhaps more. But, as I say, their actual dating relationship began much more recently only a few months ago.

Anne works in the medical field and recently went through training for the US Air Force National Guard in Idaho. She completed her training and her specialty courses at or near the top of her classes and she will be doing EMT work in the Boise area, as well as continuing her career in the Guard. We are proud of her and her service to this nation.



When she completed her training, she graduated on the Dean's list and has a promising career as an EMT in Idaho Air National Guard. She hopes to be able to extend her medical career in time as well.

They both love the outdoors...a lot, which is not surprising.



We are very proud of them both, and know they will not only make a wonderful and very responsible and loving couple, but that they ultimately will have a very loving and wonderful family. They live in Boise and we are happy that we can have them nearby.

So, there you have all thirteen grandchildren to date, and all of our children and their spouses (or soon to be in Jared's case). Right now, when you consider Gail and I, our five children and their spouses, and the thirteen grandchildren, our family has blossomed to include twenty-five of us altogether.

It is amazing, and it is a blessing. I thank my Father in Heaven for each and every one that is a part of our family.

But we are not finished. I believe that Jeff and Jolene will have perhaps one more child...and perhaps they will maintain the composition that Gail and I did. So far, they have, and one more boy will keep that tendency in place. In addition, so far, they are the only ones to have both boys and girls. Katie had three boys Rachel had two boys. Becki had four girls. Now Jeff has had three girls and one boy.

But, Jared and Ann are waiting in the wings when it comes to family too and they may have children of their own. I figure we may end up with 16 grandchildren...but that will end up being in their hands and in God's hands. I am completely at ease with what the Lord has blessed us with thus far.

We have been richly blessed with wonderful, hardworking, and responsible children, and now thirteen wonderful grandchildren. And that is exactly how we consider it, as blessings from God in Heaven and we are happy and humbled to have been selected by God...and them too in all probability...to be able to raise them, to be their parents, to be taught by them, and to love them.

In addition to my relationship to them as father and grandfather, I consider all of them my friends...and trust them and their advice as well as the manner in which they each, in their own way, are going through life.

I pray God's richest blessings on each and every one of them, and use my own Priesthood, as a High Priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ to invoke a blessing on them.

That they will continue in their responsibilities and their love for one another, and that they will be blessed with opportunity and experiences...and some of them may be difficulty...but that ALL of them will enhance their love for one another, their lives on this earth, and ultimately a love for God in Heaven and trust in Him and His Son.

33. Latest surgery and radiation, call to Genealogy, wrapping up 2016-2017

Getting back to my story, in 2016 I had been having a lot more pain in my back.

We had our annual trip planned for the fall, but we determined that we needed to go down to Houston earlier that year for a week and find out from Dr. Rhines what was going on.

We went down and had our normal MRI, CT Scans, and blood work and then our consultation with Dr. Rhines.

He informed me that the cancer had spread significantly throughout my spine and that there were a couple of places that needed attention immediately...tumors that were about to break through into my spinal cord and render me paralyzed or worse.

So, our week-long stay turned into another three months.

I had more spinal surgery, this time up higher in my back where three more screws and rods were placed on each side of 3-4 vertebrae and the cancerous material cut out.

Perhaps it is because I am older. Perhaps it is because I am not as strong as I was in 2010...but the surgery and recovery was very hard for me.

After the surgery, Dr. Rhines and my radiation Dr., Dr. Maclear, wanted me to wait until I gained my strength and then have some more ion radiation treatment. It is a special radiation using different isotopes because normal radiation does not really affect Chordoma. But Photon beam therapy can. It allows them to converge up to six or eight beams of this radiation in one spot very accurately.

They have to put you into a cast material and do a test run so that you do not move...even a millimeter, when the actual radiation treatment is given.

Then they take the material they used to set you up, harden it, and you lie in it and they put some thick Mylar type material over you and pull all of the air out of it so that you are sucked into a very rigid position.

Because of my already weak and painful back, they had to sedate me each time.

I had had this before, a couple of years after my initial surgery and it had proved successful.

I believe I am going to attach the text of my entire cancer journal at the end of this book as a reference or appendix so that anyone who wants to can read it. It is also online...but more on that later.

This procedure allows them to deliver very high doses of radiation to a very exacting area. I had 3-5 treatments in order to cover all of the tumors they felt needed covering.

I got VERY sick during it and ended up on one occasion in the emergency room. It was a difficult experience...but ultimately it ended and the Dr.s were satisfied they had done all they could.

We drove back home and arrived in August, having started down in early April.

During all of this one of the places they had discovered that the cancer had spread was to my liver.

They also wanted me to try some experimental chemo treatment and proscribed it.

After a lot of thought and prayer, I decided, with Gail's input and blessing, not to try it. I had friends who had and it did not help them. It was not designed for Chordoma, but they felt it had some chance to shrink

tumors...at the risk of severe sickness...and with only a maximum benefit of nine months.

With this in mind, we decided not to do it.

As a result, my condition was changed to “terminal.” This means that the cancer, as far as the medical profession is concerned, is in its final stages and will definitely be fatal.

So, with this in mind, I then went to my management at work and we set up and I was granted a medical retirement from work.

All of that occurred by September of 2016. They expected the tumor in the liver to take off and become very aggressive. My own experience with friends had been that once it was in the soft tissue like that, that folks usually lasted only a few months.

Gail and I did all the financial planning and preparation for that eventuality.

I was released from my calling in the Primary as well.

By this point, as I mentioned, Jeff had talked with his own management at work and they allowed him to telecommute between Emmett and Moscow, Idaho so he and his family could be closer to us.

What a blessing that has been to have them and those grandchildren near.

During this time, we also moved Gail’s parents over to live with us. Grandpa Woodmansee was not doing well and so we were able to build out our addition, where Gail’s decorating equipment and business had been, into a 1,200 sq. foot apartment. The whole family helped, and we received tremendous help from our friends here in the Church. We could not have done it without that help.

Grandpa Woodmansee passed away early in 2017, and so now grand mom Woodmansee lives with us in her apartment. We are glad she is nearby. Both of them, Effie and Ralph, have been an inspiration to me, great in-laws, and people I have come to love and respect so much.

As with my own parents, and brothers, we will wait in the Lord’s time and be all reunited in His Kingdom. We miss them all...but we know the truth and look forward to the day we are reunited.

On another note. All of the men I came to know by going to MD Anderson and having those conferences, and getting to know people who were having the same experiences...Neal Aimee, Mohammed, Wiley Shaw, and others...all of them have now passed on.

I miss them because we would call and talk to each other regularly and it helped to be able to talk to people...and it allowed me to bear my testimony to them...and them to me because each of them had an abiding faith in God. One remains however, Alan Silverberg, in Canada. He got to know me by finding my journal online when he got Chordoma cancer about four years ago. We now keep in touch regularly so the Lord has blessed us with that friendship, and that special and important form of therapy.

We have also become close friends. He is orthodox Jewish, like Abraham Lieberman and this experience has helped turn him back to God in Heaven, Like Abe, he loves the Messiah and we talk about how we love the same person, for the Messiah he worships and loves is none other than Jesus Christ. I tell them the only difference is we understand He already came once and will return, while they believe He has yet to come. But the love for our healer and atoner is the same, and we will both wash His feet with our tears when He comes...and they agree with me on that.

Despite my terminal condition, apparently the good Lord has more in store for me.

I worry about it sometimes because I do not want to be a burden on others, and particularly not on Gail.

She has been an angel of devotion and caring through all of this...yet I know there are things she would like to do (like perhaps a mission) and I want her to be able to do those things...and to be able to travel more to see the other grandkids.

However, as with all things...that is in our Father in Heaven's Hands. He knows us and He knows our needs and plans. As I said earlier in this history, He let me know that this was part of the path and assignment I had chosen before this life...and it is going according to His Plan.

A critical part of life is coming to know and accept God's will for us, and then to gladly and with faith take it up.

They called me to be a Family Research specialist at church and to work with Genealogy.

We have a Genealogy Library attached to our church building that is open five days a week. And I have been working there now for over six months.



The Family History Center at our Church in Emmett

However, I have been able to get a lot of help and faith promoting experience as I have worked with our ancestors and those who passed on.

In the Bible, Paul taught about Baptism for the dead. It is an ordinance where a person on earth does a proxy baptism for those who have passed on but who either did not hear of the gospel in this life, or did not fully understand it. They then, on the other side of the veil, in the spirit world, have the chance to be taught there and accept the baptism. This allows all of mankind...every soul who has ever walked the earth no matter when or where...to hear of the gospel and accept it if they so desire before the judgement.

So, I have been doing that work, and I can testify to everyone reading this, that the veil is very thin between us and them. I have had several experiences where I have literally been guided to those people who I know want this work done for them...and it includes all of the temple work including baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, endowments,, and the sealing for families for time and eternity.

I will give two examples.

On one occasion, I woke up one morning knowing that I needed to look at my great grandparent's family on the Darden side. I wondered why I would have such a feeling because I knew that all that work had been done by my parent years ago.

Well, I found, after some research, that there was a cousin in one of the family members of the family, who had been born according to the census data back in the mid to late 1800s, who had never been recorded or

included...and I was able to find them. She had gotten married and had kids. Her spouse had parents and other siblings. Their kids had spouses and children led me to over 200 people whose work had never been done in my own family! I know without doubt that that impression as given to me from the Lord, and that they wanted their work done

On another occasion, I had a dream one night of looking at an 1880 census with the name of Dora Kaufmann and her husband, Saul. I woke up and wrote it off to just being my mind, which is so busy with this work, now dreaming of it. Later that morning, at 5 AM when I have to take some medication, I woke up having had the exact same dream. I went back to sleep and then woke up at 7:30, when I normally wake up, having had that same dream a 3rd time.

So that day I looked it up, and sure enough, found a Dora Kaufmann married to a Solomon, also known as "Sol", Kaufmann. They had five children. Again, their work had never been done and it led to perhaps 150 names whose work has all been set up to be done now at the temple...and these folks were not even distantly related to me to my knowledge.

Altogether now I have added over 3,000 names to the Temple lists for saving ordinance work to be done for those who have passed on and did not get the chance to hear it hear. Now...they have to accept it up there...but part of the plan has always been to give them all the chance. That's what we are doing.

I do not boast...I am extremely and completely humbled by it and know without doubt that the Lord has arranged my life and affairs to be in a position to do this if I so choose...and I do so choose. I know it is God in Heaven's will and I know these people live on and are, just like all of us, wanting to be happy and find God's plan for them.

So, I can testify that there are many souls up above, who want their work done, and if we become engaged, Heavenly Father will guide us to them.

34. Epilog – Farewell October 2017

I have thoroughly enjoyed writing this history.

Let me say something about the writing.

We are all individual children of God. We all have our experiences in life and hopefully, we learn from them...both good and difficult times...and become better people. I know I have had a lot to learn.

I also know that there may be parts of this that others may have a different opinion or feeling about as I have written about all sorts of things that happened...both the good and the difficult. I hope no one is offended by what I have written. I wrote it from my perspective and so you have a good, honest measure of what I experienced and felt throughout my life.

If anyone differs in their impression or feelings of some of the same events, I respect that and will not discount it. In the end, it is how we learn and grow from the experiences, and how we become better as a result of them that counts.

I know my life and all of these experiences has helped make me be a better person...and as I say, I also know I had a lot to learn and I am glad that Heavenly Father sent the people into my life, grandparents, parents, other relatives, my eternal sweetheart Gail, each of our children and grandchildren and friends and neighbors to help me through it all.

Now, given the nature of my health condition, I do not know how much time I have left in this life, and getting this history done will benefit the coming generations for decades to come and more.

I do know that I have whatever time the Lord will allow.

My pain levels continue to increase and I know that the disease I have continues to spread. Ultimately it, or some other ailment will bring me home to God in Heaven.

I know this...and I am okay with it. It will occur in the Lord's time. When it does, I know where I am going and I know He will have work above for me to do.

I have felt the presence of my Dad from time to time over the last years as I have one through my sickness. I know he is there doing the same work, and he is aware of and helping me too.

I will not rush it...it is in God's hands. I will miss my dear wife and my wonderful children and grandchildren when that time comes.

I wanted to add a few names of people here, in Emmett, over the last twenty years, who have been such a help and influence on our family. People who have shown us Christ's love. Emmett has been a place where Gail and I were blessed to learn what we both needed to learn, and particularly me, to enable our marriage and love for one another to blossom into the true eternal love we have always wanted. I am grateful we both desired it, worked hard for it, and were able to obtain it. Most of that thanks goes to Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ and the gospel...and then to Gail.

But in addition to our own children and grandchildren, my other family members and friends I have already listed, I need to list some others here who have been friends and helpful to us here in Emmett. I already listed several people from work and others who were dear friends during that period, but we have neighbors and friends within our ward and the Church here too whom I need to mention.

So, these families and individuals come to mind...I know there are many more and hope not to offend by leaving some out. If I do, write it off as a 62 year-old man who has terminal cancer, and know we love you all.

Chris and Lavon Dresen, Arlie and Clella Styles, Don and Renae Walker, Martin and Laura Walker, Barry Smith, Gary Thomas and his family, Richard Winegar and his entire family, the Whitelys, Tom and Ida Buck and their family, Robert and Kathy Adams and their son Kevin, Rick and Diane Harris, James and Janet Hines, Clark and Connie Jaques, Rex and Sharla Johns, Kevin and Kathy Lorentz, Tom and Carol Morgan, Terry and Mary Walker, Tim and Sylvia Walker, Steve and Linda Savage, our wonderful neighbors the Tieters, Mike Gravier and his family, the Steve Gravier family, Pete Jubitz, Karl and Andrea Peterson, the Warners, Steve and Rachel Crawford, Ralph and Lori Gurney. My goodness...there are so many and I could continue to list names and fill up pages!

But these folks and any others who have helped our family through life here in Emmett...and that means all the ones I may have not had come to mind here as I sit and write this...I thank you with all of my heart and pray God's richest blessings on each and every one of you.

I know we will all be reunited as well...and I look forward to seeing again all of those relatives I talked of at the beginning of my history.

I do not fear going there, and in God's time, when it is His will, I look forward to it.

I know if it is before the Savior returns to this earth, and at this point I suspect it will, that I will return with Him in the air for His millennial reign, when the earth will be cleansed and He will reign in joy and happiness.

I testify to all that read this that these things are all true.

God is our Father in Heaven. We have a family in Heaven and have been sent to this earth to learn of Him and to do so in an environment where we can develop faith and gain a mortal body.

Jesus Christ is our Savior and He died and took all of our failings and all of our pain on himself so that we could overcome it.

I testify that He has always worked with mankind and that He has established and restored His Church to this earth for all mankind and to prepare for His return.

That restoration occurred in the United States of America because He himself inspired the men who wrote the constitution, and with whatever failings, established a land of freedom here where that restoration could occur and where that freedom could exist as was promised for this land in the Book of Mormon. That book is a second witness for Jesus Christ that goes hand in hand with the Bible to testify of His divinity.

My love for America and its constitution is strong for me for these reasons and because of this knowledge. It is a blessed land, with a rich heritage and marvelous future.

That does not mean that the people are any better than anywhere else...it just means that God took a hand in preparing things for his restoration and the eventual return of His Son.

I leave this history with you as a testimony of all of these things, and a record of my own life and that of my family, this 11th day of October of the year 2017.

I will include as closing a couple of pictures of my family...the real reason we are on this earth.

I will also add the entire written journal of my cancer experience, as well as include a few of the essays I have written over the years about liberty. Finally, I will add a section on my model building. I have spoken of it a number of times and you have seen some pictures of my grandchildren helping me. And a few awards I have received in life.

All of it, especially the history and my own testimony of our Father in Heaven, His Son, Jesus Christ, and their plan of salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ I leave all of this with you, the reader, and especially with my family in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

In parting, here' some pics of me and the grandkids over a few years time:



You have to love those grand children...they are so special and bring such joy. They also grow up quickly, it seems even faster than our own kids.

Now for some pictures of the whole family over time:





...and finally, one last picture, showing the family fairly recently, before grand pa Woodmansee passed away.



This is what life is about. Our families and the love we should all feel...an eternal love...for them, as well as for friends and other relatives.

Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ this is possible, and in fact, it is God's desire and plan for us all.

Appendix - 1 – My Journal of my experience with Sacral Chordoma Cancer

JOURNAL OF JEFF HEAD'S BONE CANCER EXPERIENCE (Sacral Chordoma)

I am keeping a blog/journal on Facebook of this experience where my family and friends are interacting with me. That is located at : Jeff's Sacral Chordoma - http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=237757632493 (Entries 1-15), and here: Jeff's Sacral Chordoma II - http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=315923537493 (Entries 16 to 28) and Jeff's Sacral Chordoma III - http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=459192742493&id=755469068 (Entries 29 on).

I have had numerous requests from people who do not have, or do not desire access to Facebook asking me if there was any way they could also keep up with events regarding this. As a result, I have created this page and will update it with the same information. There is also a prayer thread at Free Republic, where our many, many patriotic, God-fearing, conservative friends are uniting in faith and prayer on our behalf. This is the link to that thread for anyone interested.

1st Entry - December 21, 2009 9:00 AM - Initial circumstances, pain and trying to discover what is wrong

In an effort to make everyone aware of my condition, I thought I would write down a brief summary of what is going on for family and friends. I will use this as a blog and update this note with new entries at the bottom as I know more.

It is indeed a pivotal time in life.

As many of you may be aware, I have been battling some back pain for the last couple of years.

To begin with, it seemed like the pain in my lower back and abdomen was associated with my colon or lower digestive track. I had rather severe pain, including pressure around my rectum. As a result, I went to see a Gastroenterologist here in the Boise area. At my age (well past 50) the Dr. immediately suggested a colonoscopy. We did that and the Dr. indicated that there was a mild case of Diverticulitis, which is a fold in the colon wall where material collects and becomes irritated or infected. I was put on some special antibiotics and treated for this for 4-6 weeks. At the end of that time, the Dr. was convinced that my Diverticulitis had been successfully treated and my symptoms seemed to improve significantly.

But, within a few weeks they began to return.

I took more medication, but it did not help and when the pains became severe enough, I actually went into the emergency room at St. Luke's hospital. They did several things, including a rectal contrast CT scan. Ultimately, the Dr. did another colonoscopy and announced that my colon and lower digestive track were not the source of my pains.

At this point almost a year and a half had gone by and I was getting fairly frustrated, and was tired of the chronic, severe pain, which had expanded to include deep pains in my left hip (not the joint...more like muscle or vascular pain) running down my left leg, and burning pains and numbing around my rectum and scrotum.

As I was contemplating what type of new specialist to see, Gail and Becky indicated that the pains, particularly the burning and numbing, sounded like my sciatic nerve was either injured or being crimped and that maybe I

should see a back/spine specialist.

In mid-August this was punctuated when a friend from work, who worked at one of the hydroelectric dams where I* develop and maintain electronics for the US government, explained to me his situation. The year before he had missed several weeks of work with a back injury that I had presumed was to his bone structure. As it turned out, it was vertebrae and disc problems that had pinched his sciatic nerve and produced pains very similar to what I was experiencing.

I determined to go in and see a specialist, but before I could, on August 31st, while on a call-out on top of a mountain working on some communication equipment, I stepped badly and blew out my left ankle. This was very painful and required some significant pain medication, time off work, crutches and a splint/stability boot that I wore until the 1st of November. This injury overshadowed my back pain and the pain pills served both purposes and so addressing my back problem was delayed as a result...which was probably a mistake, but at the time we did not realize the full extent of the problem.

Anyhow, as the ankle got better, the back pain began to re-assert itself and I ultimately went into the Spine Institute here in Idaho in early November.

Based on the symptoms, this led to significant x-rays of the back. When those were analyzed they did not show the problem, so the Dr. ordered a couple of MRIs. Those MRIs were painful because I had to lay still on my back for about 45 minutes for each on a hard, stiff surface, that happened to coincide with the pains in my back...but I ultimately got through it.

A few days later the Dr. had me in to review the MRI. He said the good news was that my spine, spinal cord, and vertebrae all looked good. He couldn't see there any reason for a pinching or damage to my nerves. But, then, he said, here is the bad news. He pointed to a bone on the lower end of my back called the sacrum and indicated that it was discolored and not showing the right density of normal bone structure.

As a result of that, and another week of scheduling, last Thursday I was given what is called a CT directed biopsy of my sacrum. This involved taking multiple CT scans which guided the Doctor performing the procedure in where to use large needles (that look like bone screws) so he can take biopsies of the effected bone. He took about ten samples, and on several occasions had to tap the device with a hammer-looking device in order to get it into the bone where he wanted to take the sample.

Before performing this procedure, this Dr. came in and spoke to us. He let us know that he had reviewed the MRI and that based on his 30 years' experience that my condition looked very troubling and probably indicated some form of malignant bone tumor or tumors, perhaps a condition called multiple myeloma. He wanted us to know that the pathological report would either confirm or dispel that, but that we should know where could very well lead. I appreciated his candor.

After the procedure, Gail took me home. We were told that the results would be back on either Monday (today, the 21st of December) or Tuesday (the 22nd).

Upon arriving home, after the sedative wore off, I experienced immediate and very severe pains in my lower back, left hip area, behind my leg, my rectum and around my scrotum. The most severe pain so far. I am grateful Gail was with me. She helped me into the house and got me into as comfortable a position as possible. We had some hydro codon and some Endocet pain pills left from my ankle injury. The hydro codon did not do the trick and I quickly began using the Endocet.

I called the Dr.s office and left a message and also called Dr. Barry Smith, who is a good friend, and was our local

GP for many years until he retired. He indicated, upon hearing all of this that he would work with me, which I greatly appreciate because we know and emphatically trust Barry, who is also a Colonel in the Army Reserve.

That got me through the weekend and this morning we have received a call from the spine institute and are heading in there to get more powerful pain medication (Percocet) and to hopefully get the results of the pathology so we have a final diagnosis and can start treating this.

Please remember us in your prayers, particularly my family...wife (Gail has been an absolute trooper and rock in this for me), our kids and grandkids, brothers and their families, in-laws, etc. as we face this new chapter in life.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

2nd Entry December 21, 2009 6:00 PM - Diagnosis Sacral Chordoma

Diagnosis is in. Malignant, Sacral Chordoma.

Not good news, but not as bad as feared with multiple myeloma.

Chordomas are slower growing, do not spread as easily. They are not too responsive to chemo or radiation and the primary treatment appears to be to remove it.

Being on the sacrum, that can be very tricky, particularly depending on size.

Also, there is another similar tumor that makes it important and (IMHO) imperative to get a second opinion, one experienced with these types of tumors. Same goes for the surgical team that ultimately goes in. i.e. it would be much better to spend the time and money to go somewhere where they are very experienced in treating these than to use a team not very experienced, or at all, with this specific type tumor.

I will be referred within a day or so to an oncologist and my guess is they will want to prepare for surgery ASAP...but will know more tomorrow, and will also speak forthrightly with them about the need for second opinions regarding the specific type tumor and for an experienced surgical team.

Gail's brother, who is a high level technical advisor (and a PA) in the VA, indicates that the best place for this specific type of cancer and its treatment is at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX. We will contact them tomorrow too.

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers, I will continue to update this note as we know more.

Love, and in Christ,

Jeff

3rd Entry December 22, 2009 10:30 PM - Contacting MD Anderson in Houston, Texas

Things have moved rapidly today.

I sent in a "self-referral" to the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston last night on their web site about 11:30 PM last night. This morning at 7 AM I had an email reply.

I called and talked to them and they were very helpful and understanding...and interested!

By noon, one of their specialists (not a Dr., but a case specialists) had called and let me know what all I had to do to get my MRI, biopsy, and pathology information down to them, and checked into the insurance situation.

I have been very impressed with them. In a few hours, through advice from friends and use of the web, I have found the best free market solution, which will provide the absolute best care available, and they are completely open and working with me to schedule treatment. They will take my insurance...they would take direct pay from my account or cashing in assets if necessary (which I would be willing to do if necessary), or they will take payments if you have any income at all, over a long period.

In addition, Gail and I found a site on the web that has been very informative to us, The Chordoma Foundation which is helping us understand more about this disease and treatments for it.

Today I had also called work and got a good handle on my leave situation, my insurance info, potential disability benefits if necessary, etc.

Also, the Spine Institute of Idaho had contacted me and we talked about the event of transferring me down to Texas to the MD Anderson Center where they have the best treatment for this condition in the US, or in the world. They are happy to help.

Tomorrow morning, they have scheduled with St. Luke's cancer center to have me sit down with a neurosurgeon in Boise, a Dr. Zuckerman. He is very anxious to speak to Gail and I and get the ball rolling on a treatment plan immediately, whether here or in Texas, because with this tumor, time is of the essence...along with exactness of course.

The Spine Institute, St' Luke's and this Dr. seem committed to putting together a plan that will get me the best care we can as soon as possible. I am grateful for that...it is literally an answer to prayer.

So, hopefully tomorrow, we will have a plan in place and my info will be expressed down to Texas where they will accept my (and St. Luke's) referral and get me headed down there within a couple of more days.

I will continue to update here as I can.

Thanks to everyone for your care, you're well wishes, and particularly your prayers and faith. Sincere prayers and acts of simple but direct faith have great power, and I believe God hears and answers every one of them according to His will.

In Christ,

Jeff

4th Entry December 23, 2009 10:15 PM - Meeting with Boise, Idaho cancer Doctors

More happenings today.

Had an 8:30 AM meeting with Dr. Zuckerman over at St. Luke's Meridian, outside of Boise.

He's the oncologist they assigned to speak with us and he was very professional, very courteous, and very

helpful. Probably the fastest I have ever gotten in to speak directly to a Dr. We were less than five minutes from arriving, through waiting room, through Patient welcome, to the examine room, to the Dr. coming in to speak to Gail and I.

He reiterated how rare the tumor is that I have, that there wasn't a great deal of experience regarding it here in Boise, and I had I thought about where to get it treated. We indicated we had and already had a line on the MD Anderson facility in Houston.

He was ecstatic. Turns out he worked there early in his career in the mid-70s and still knows a number of folks there. He indicated he would be happy to help refer us, and would do all he could to facilitate transferring me there and getting my info there to them.

And he did. His assistant and the people at St. Luke's MSTI (Mountain States Tumor Institute) immediately began using the contact points we gave them at MD Anderson from yesterday.

Towards the end of the day the Medical Assistant at the Spine Institute and the Patient services lady from MSTI called me and let me know all my information would be going out FedEx to Houston today. The contact at MD Anderson in Houston also called and let us know that they expected to have all of that info in hand by Monday and we might get a call Monday setting up an appointment...maybe for the end of next week (i.e. Thursday).

I have been amazed, and humbled at the professionalism, expediency, and care shown myself and Gail and the family by these medical professionals. No place on earth (IMHO) could someone like me have received such help, so quickly, and as directly as I have here in the United States with our existing health care. Not one government bureaucrat to interfere or make decisions. Just us and our medical professionals, and getting me to a facility, 1800 miles distant where the best help exists for this ailment.

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers.

We shall now be much more comfortable (particularly with the pain medication they have prescribed for me) and with far less worry over the Christmas Holiday, and giving thanks for the help afforded us by many friends and families, and our Father in Heaven and Savior, Jesus Christ, in our hour of need.

There is no guarantee on the outcome and we know this. We are ready and willing to put that in the capable hands of our God, who knows all, loves all, and has prepared the way for us to return to Him and witness of Him in the process...either way.

I will post more as I learn more...perhaps not until Monday, but before that should something new transpire or come up.

Sincerely, and in the love, and hands of our mighty Savior, of whom I testify,

Jeff

5th Entry December 26, 2009 4:00 AM - Articles about Chordoma

Here's a link to a very good article published in the UK about Sacral Chordoma.

Sacral Chordoma - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2269011/>

It is a short, but concise description of the disease, its symptoms and treatment.

Especially because of the need to identify and diagnose the real cause of these symptoms early, I believe it is a very worthwhile read, as well as for family and friends to understand my own condition.

Finally, we are finding out more and more about the surgery required to take out this tumor. It is very major and would last 10-12 hours...and they may have to perform several surgeries.

Here are some sites regarding it. Be forewarned, it is very major, and the sites and any images associated with it (if you get into detail) are not for the faint hearted.

Review of current treatment of sacral Chordoma (Latest, most up-to-date article)

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122522894/PDFSTART>

Surgical Techniques for Sacrectomy

http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/461096_5

Rehabilitation after Total Sacrectomy

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3946/is_200501/ai_n15348089/

Love, and again, as always, in Christ,

Jeff

6th Entry December 28, 2009 10:00 PM - MD Anderson gets MRI data

Not too much to report today.

MD Anderson in Houston, TX, did get my MRI and pathology info from the diagnosis along with the clinical notes from the doctors here in Idaho. But it came in too late for them to review completely.

They told me to expect to hear tomorrow.

Gail and I are packed and ready to go.

The tumor is painful, but I do have pain medications to help with that.

Once again, we appreciate beyond words and are grateful for every prayer and everyone's faith on our behalf.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

7th Entry December 30, 2009 11:00 PM - Planning trip to MD Anderson in Houston

Well, the last day and a half have seen us waiting for the review board at MD Anderson to finish looking at my info.

I have been told that they got it on Tuesday afternoon and it was still with them today. My guess is that they are

going through various stages of review and probably have several cases before them.

Today we were told we may hear back tomorrow, but since it was coming up on the New Year's holiday, that we might not hear until Monday...but then they would set up an appointment in either case very quickly thereafter.

So, Gail and I have determined to head on down to Houston. We'll talk to MD Anderson Cancer clinic tomorrow morning, and then head south. We hope to get to Denton, TX late on Saturday, and then go on down to Houston early Monday morning.

Once there, we will be able to immediately go into our appointment, hopefully early next week and not lose 2-3 days in travel.

As always, thanks for everyone's prayers and faith on our behalf. It is a humbling experience, and we are grateful to each beyond words.

As you can imagine we have had a lot of time to think about life and our outlook, and our faith. I have had some serious contemplations myself in particular.

For me, I believe our Father in Heaven, God above, and His Son, Jesus Christ know each of us individually. I know they love us perfectly. Our lives are a gift to each of us from them, wherein we are given the experiences and time we need in life to make our free will choices...particularly our free will choice to choose to accept and follow our Savior.

Beyond that, what happens in our lives, though we certainly do not understand it because of our mortal condition, and though we certainly have our own desires, will, and preferences (hopefully all good), is established to ultimately make us happy and bring us back to our Father in Heaven and our Savior.

I know this to be true.

The poem, "The touch of the Master's hand," comes to mind.
(<http://www.ehhs.cmich.edu/~tbushey/quote.html>)

What we are dealt in life in that regard is what they, out of perfect love for us, send our way. With each experience, we have something to learn, and others may also learn from observing our experiences, how we react to them, and interacting with us in the process. Ours is to be as best a witness of God's love, of His will and His plan in our lives as we can...no matter what cards we are dealt...and making His will for us, our will for us.

I testify that this is so, and I am determined to be, through this experience, however it turns out, as best a witness for my Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ as I can.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

8th Entry December 31, 2009 1:00 PM - MD Anderson schedules appointments and consultation

We have heard back from MD Anderson Cancer Center today. They will be taking me and are setting up an appointment for either Monday or Tuesday (January 4th or 5th, 2009) of next week in Houston, we should know late today, or on Monday once we are down there.

They wanted to know if I wanted the appointment with Dr. Benjamin, who is the head of the Sarcoma department, but he does not get back into town until Tuesday and then they would have to fit me into his schedule after that. I indicated that I would take the first available doctor for the appointment and we could work out details for any surgery later.

All of the Doctors there are first rate and in this department, all of them are experts in this field. Any of them will be very capable of diagnosis, treatment recommendations, etc. I will just let them know that when it comes to surgery, if it can be scheduled in a reasonable time, I want whoever the absolute best is doing the surgery. They indicated all of that could be worked out once we are down there.

So, we are going to leave this afternoon and hopefully get out a little ahead of this next snow that is coming in.

That's the status and I will update along the way of necessary, but probably not until next Monday after we have seen the folks at MD Anderson.

Once again, thanks for all of your prayers and faith...God's richest blessings on each of you for doing so in our behalf.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

PS: Later note. Winter Storm blew in here in SW Idaho earlier than anticipated (we were hoping to get out in front of it). So we will leave tomorrow morning. Forecast calls for warmer air coming behind this snow, so that it changes over to rain early tomorrow.

9th Entry January 4, 2010 11:30 PM - In Route to Houston, stopping at my brother, Lee's house

We are now here at my brother, Lee's, home in Denton, Texas. They have graciously and lovingly taken us in while we wait to travel on down to Houston and the MD Anderson Cancer Center.

We had a long trip down by driving from Boise. 1650 miles here to Denton and about 300 more to go.

After some poignant and emotional good byes to children and grandchildren in the Boise area (we stopped at Becki's to see her and our two grand-daughters, Kyra and Kenna, and then we stopped at Jeff and Jolene's...the good-bye hugs and embraces are very meaningful when you realize they may be the last you give in this mortal life), For my part, it was hard to contain the emotions. I gave Becki three very long and emotional hugs, and then gave Jeff two. Later, when I could compose myself and talk about it, I called them each on the cell phone and let them know that the extra hugs were for my other two daughters, Katie and Rachel, and my other son, Jared, should Becki and Jeff need to pass them on later.

Anyhow, we ran across some significant winter weather (some pretty heavy snow) on the first day of the trip, Friday, January 1st, 2009, from the I-86, I-84 interchange east of Burley, Idaho, over Sweetzer Summit, down through Snowville, Utah, and past Tremonton, Utah on I-15. We were concerned that I-80 across Wyoming would be very bad and wanted to get as far as we could. After filling up with gas at Ogden, Utah. We got took I-84 to I-80 and up into Wyoming. We were blessed with dry roads and mild temperatures (by Wyoming standards) and spent the 1st night at Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Next day, Saturday, January 2nd, 2009, we drove across Wyoming and had dry roads, and most of the way at or just above freezing. We cut down through Colorado, taking US 287 from Laramie, Wyoming to Ft. Collins,

Colorado, and then got on I-25 and drove all the way south through Colorado. We ran into some heavy corn ball snow near Castle Rock, and then again at Pueblo, but the temperature remained above freezing and the roads were dry.

We took US 87 and 64 east from Raton, New Mexico towards Texas and spent the second night at Clayton, New Mexico, about 10 miles from the Texas state line.

Sunday, January 3rd, we drove on into Lee and Brenda's home here in Denton, Texas. We got there in time to join them as they watched the Dallas Cowboys play a tremendous game and beat the Philadelphia Eagles, who had been the hottest team in the NFC and atop the NFC East Division, and win the NFC East division for the playoffs that start next week. Here's a map of the trip:

Today, January 4th, has been Gail's birthday and I wish so that I could have done more for her. She is an absolute angel to me, sent from Heaven, as evidenced by her patience & love towards me these last 32 years! I wish I had words that could adequately express my thanks, gratitude, and love to her and a merciful God who brought her into my life, but since there aren't any adequate to the task, I pray that these, however inadequate, along with my own actions will suffice in wishing her a happy birthday with all my heart!

Today we also heard back from MD Anderson and the initial appointment is now set for next week. I was somewhat disappointed, but then realized that getting into this facility within three weeks of being diagnosed is a miracle and answer to prayer in and of itself, and am grateful for the opportunity. MD Anderson also indicated that they are trying to get me in earlier because of the pain I am experiencing. They hope to call us tomorrow with an earlier appointment, if possible, that could still get us there this week.

The Tumor is obvious to me pretty much all the time now, and especially when I sit or lay down. The pain is strong. Both bone pain, and also neurological pain associated with nerves that are being impacted. The Percocet pain medications help completely with the bone pain, and take the edge of the nerve pain when absolutely necessary...though I do not like taking them.

The trip was long, and I ended up doing the driving. I did not think I would, and Gail was more than ready to drive for me the whole way, but I found that driving took my mind off of the pain and allowed me to get here without taking pain meds...though the last couple of days here the pain has now increased again and I am taking them to get through the night and be able to sleep. Also, on the trip, Gail read me one of the Jane Austin, "Pride and Prejudice" offshoot novels, one about the entire story from Darcy's perspective. It helped a lot too and was an interesting story. As I said, she is an angel for which I am most grateful in my life next to my witness of Jesus Christ. Again, thanks to everyone for your faith and prayers, and for your responses to me by email, here on Facebook, on Free Republic where a marvelous prayer thread has been started, and by phone. It is humbling and words cannot adequately express my gratitude, or that of my family. Faith and sincere prayer have great, and real power. Power to the revealing of God's will in our life...whatever that will may be.

As I have stated, and reaffirm here, I have faith in God in Heaven and His son Jesus Christ. I know that they know me personally and have planned a life that is best for me, my loved ones, and those I come in contact with...indeed, for all people. It is ours to come to know them, to accept the gift of the atonement of our Savior which opens the door back to God, and to thus come to know their will for us in this life.

And then, coming to know that will, to accept it, to make it our own, and then be a strong witness for them to all around us.

I am committed to being a good witness of God's will in my life, whatever it may be, to those around me, my wife, my children, my grandchildren, my brothers, family, relatives, friends and neighbors.

Here's one of my favorite Hymns, "How Firm a Foundation:"

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said—
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

In every condition, In Sickness, in Health
In poverty's veil, or abounding in wealth;
At home or abroad, on the Land or the Sea
As thy days may demand, so thy succor shall be

Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee thy trouble to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not harm thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

Even down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sovereign, Eternal, Unchangeable Love;
And when hoary hairs, shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

These sentiments and principles are critical to all of us as individuals, and they are also critical to us as a people and nation, and will help lead our nation back to its roots, its fundamental principled roots, and restore our Constitution and Republic. Here is an essay I wrote in that regard: [Why America has prospered and is Free](#). To whatever extent I can help in that restoration effort, I am, and always have been committed.

On Facebook I am keeping a journal/blog of this experience: [HERE](#).

For anyone not on Facebook wishing to keep up with this experience in my life, I have created another site on the web: [HERE](#), which, along with this FB site, I will keep up to date.

The Free Republic prayer thread for myself and my family is located: [HERE](#) on Free Republic.

Once again, God's choicest blessings and speed to all, and may your prayers, faith, and good wishes on my behalf be returned by Him to each of you and yours tenfold.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

PS: We also were able to watch the Fiesta Bowl tonight here at my brothers with Gail and I, Lee and his wife, Brenda, and one of Brenda's sisters and her husband. Way to go Broncos! Helped generate some respect for the BSU football program and make some believers out of TCU fans here in my old stomping grounds.

10th Entry January 9, 2010 6:00 AM - Appointments set with initial consultation at MD Anderson

We now have all the info for our appointment at MD Anderson. It is next Thursday, January 14th, at 8 AM. Our initial consultation will be with Dr. Araujo, a physician there who is in the Sarcoma department that deals specifically with these types of tumors. We will leave the Denton, Texas, area (and the wonderful hospitality of my brother Lee and his wife Brenda) Wednesday to take the 4-5-hour drive down there.

We have been told to expect that that 1st meeting will be to inform us of MD Anderson's take on all of our current information including the clinical notes, the MRI, and the pathology from the biopsy which were all done in Idaho. Then, they will outline a series of tests that MD Anderson itself will want to do in order to further and more fully clarify the nature, location and size of the tumor. This will probably include more MRI and CT work.

At the end of that process which we are told will take 5-7 days itself, depending on what they find, they will then develop a treatment plan and present the options for treatment to us.

We are grateful to be able to have the opportunity to be treated at MD Anderson. The more we read and the more others talk to us who have either themselves been treated down there, or know others who have, the more we realize how blessed we are to be availed of the Doctors and facilities.

I am anxious to get started. The pain is pretty strong and the neurological complications are mounting. I do not like to take the pain medication because of the way it makes me feel and its own complications, but am grateful to have them because as time goes on I find that those concerns are less and less consequential than the effect of not taking them.

Oh well, as I say, I am anxious to get the ball rolling.

Gail is looking for and finding places for us to stay through the first week or so, and then for the longer term once they decide the course for the treatment. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for her companionship, love, and comfort. I look back on the 32 years of our marriage and all we have experienced and shared together and I know that the good Lord and my Father in Heaven has blessed me in this regard beyond my capacity to receive or fully understand the blessing. Yet, I am grateful for the understanding I do have, and the ever-growing knowledge (a growth that will extend into the eternities I am sure) of what that love means and how much of a reflection of our Savior's and Father's love it really is...and I am committed to more fully emulating it.

We are both grateful beyond words for all of the help, kind words, wishes, and thoughts of all of our family, relatives and friends. Many of whom have contacted us on Facebook, on Free Republic, elsewhere on the web, via email, phones, notes, even their own journals of their own history with various forms of cancer. All have been helpful, all have buoyed our hearts and spirits.

Most especially we are grateful for faith and prayers and the power that is within them. A power to help us each more fully understand and know God's will for us, to accept it and testify in faith of it to others.

So, we are several days away from that first meeting at MD Anderson. Unless something develops between now and then, I expect my next entry in this journal/blog will be after we receive that initial consultation.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

11th Entry January 13, 2010 8:30 AM - driving down to Houston from Denton for appointments

Well, we are on our way this morning to Houston. We have my first appointment tomorrow morning at 8 AM at MD Anderson which is a registration and orientation meeting, followed at 9 AM by a longer meeting with one of their sarcoma physicians. We then have another meeting at 2 PM.

By the end of tomorrow, we should have a much better idea of what the immediate future holds, though we suppose they will let us know their thoughts and diagnosis based on the clinical, MRI, and pathological data from Idaho, followed by several days of their own tests, scans, etc. But we shall see and I will record it here, on my site, and on Free Republic.

I also wanted to link to a wonderful journal from another Chordoma patient from some wonderful people up in the northeast (Jim and Nanny Forte) who have been going through a similar set of circumstances. So, having first obtained their permission, here is a link to it in Microsoft Word format.

<http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/chordoma/LeapofFaith.doc>

It will open in Microsoft Word if you have that software on your computer.

Thank you James and Nancy for contacting me, for sharing your information, for your faith and prayers, and for being willing to help us, fellow sojourners, on our path.

Also, we are finding several other doors and blessings opening for us that I will be able to discuss later once we are there. Surely the Lord God is showering us with blessings as a result of the faith and prayers of so many on our behalf.

The least of which has not been my brother Lee and his wife Brenda. Thank you, Lee and Brenda, my wonderful older brother, from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity and graciousness...and more importantly, for your faith and prayers on our behalf as we were blessed and privileged to stay with you in your home these last 10 days.

For you, and for all who exercise faith and kindness on our behalf, I can only pray that the blessings be returned to you many fold from that same God in Heaven, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Having witnessed first-hand how He works, I know He will do so in His time.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

12th Entry January 14, 2010 9:00 PM - Initial appointments, detail of tumor, the road ahead.

We have spent our first day at MD Anderson here in Houston. What an unbelievably marvelous facility. It is a huge facility that is surrounded by numerous other hospitals and medical facilities and is really a wonder of the blessing of knowledge and technology that God in Heaven has showered on His children in our time to help so many thousands and tens of thousands of people who are suffering.

And there were thousands, literally thousands of people at MD Anderson who have come here from all over the world seeking the help available here for cancers of all types, particularly for rare cancers.

We have gained more information on my condition, the specifics of it, and the road ahead.

Sadly, for us, the news is not good. Dr. Araujo showed us the tumor in great detail from the MRI we had in Idaho. We had hoped that perhaps the tumor was still relatively small and could be removed from my sacrum with as little impact to the structure and nerves as possible. Alas, at this time, barring an out and miracle from God in Heaven (which I will not discount), it is not so. The tumor extends on both sides of the sacrum in many of the various frames which represent digital imaging from different levels through the sacrum. Only a few showed where the left side of the sacrum was all that was involved. In more than a majority of them, the sacrum was almost completely involved on both sides with only the far upper right "wing" not affected and invaded by the Chordoma.

This means that the surgery to remove it will involve a complete dissection, or removal of the sacrum. Very, very major surgery that is very complicated and very dangerous with significant rehabilitation required afterwards.

One of the first things Dr. Araujo did for me on hearing of our experiences was to order new pain medication for me. She indicated that Percocet was not strong enough to alleviate both the bone pain and neurological pain I was experiencing. I have to admit I had been experiencing some pretty strong pain. She now has me on morphine, both delayed, and long release pills, and immediate release pills as needed when it gets really bad. It was good news and very helpful in the sense that it helps with the pain...not so good news that it is necessary. But that's where I am at.

Dr. Araujo also indicated that as a medical oncologist, the necessary surgery treatment would not be her specialty and that I needed a very experienced neuro-surgeon. She indicated that Dr. Laurence Rhines there at MD Anderson has seen my information and had requested that the case be transferred to him. This news is actually good, because he is recognized as a major leader, if not the foremost neuro-surgeon and researcher in this type of cancer and surgical procedure in the world. We definitely want him and his team addressing the issue and are unbelievably blessed to be able to work with him. He is the precise person that my brother-in-law, Denni Woodmansee, who is a very experienced and high level PA at the veteran's administration, had recommended we see if at all possible three weeks ago when we were diagnosed. To me, coming down here from Idaho, is a miracle that within three to four weeks we will be seeing one of the world's foremost neuro-surgeons in this type of procedure and I humbly and willing confess God's Hand in the road that led us here with so many people praying for us and being personally involved in helping us along that path.

We will be meeting with him a week from today. I expect at that time, our understanding of the procedure itself, all of the risks, the ramification, and the road to recovery with its adherent rehabilitation will be clearer to us.

Gail, my beloved and dear wife, companion, and best friend is helping in that regard. For those so interested, here are a couple of articles she has already researched about the surgery itself and the recovery and rehabilitation from it:

Total Sacrectomy (sacral removal) and reconstruction process

That article goes into detail about the procedure and includes the following step by step image of the reconstruction process (image A showing the sacrum itself before removal):

Artist's illustrations of the stepwise reconstruction of the lumbosacral junction. A: Dorsal view of the lumbosacropelvic junction. The hatched area will be resected. B: The Sacrectomy is complete. C: A K-wire passes through the left ilium in the resected region of S-1. D: A K-wire passes through the cage and the right ilium. E: The reamer is passed over the guidewire. F: A 0.25-in titanium rod passes through the left ilium, the cage, and the right ilium. G: Lumbar pedicle screws, Farsi screws, and the side-tighting bolts at either end of the rod are placed. H: Pedicle screws are attached to the screws by using rods. This is the final stage of lumbopelvic fixation.

Rehabilitation after total Sacrectomy

For anyone (including us) wanting to understand the intricate, involved, and complex nature of this major surgery, these links are invaluable, and will help us in our decision process, and in understanding much more fully what Dr. Rhines will be telling us next week.

So, since it is a week before we will be seeing Dr. Rhines...and then another week after that before we have our next tests and really start in the preparation of treatment, we have decided to travel back up to Denton between these visits. We spoke with Lee, and will stay at the property and ranch my Dad and Mom bought all those years ago when they wanted to move their boys to to the country and where I spent my formative years just before and throughout my teen years. It is peaceful up there, and Gail and I will have a good place to think, pray, consider, and prepare. I look forward to walks in the country and fields of my youth in order to do this.

Before I close for this entry, I have to personally thank a few more people. Certainly my dear wife who has been with me through every second of this. Who is supporting me, loving me, and helping me prepare for this coming challenge. She is an angel and I thank God in Heaven for her and His bringing us together those 32 years ago. Through my own experience in observing her with our family, with our children, with others, and with myself, I know of no one on this earth more uniquely qualified, more disposition oriented, or more willing to help me face this than her. And I know that was no accident. God in Heaven and our Savior have foreknowledge of all of we face in life and have been preparing us for it these many years.

I have to thank my children for their concern, their love, their advice, their support their care and their help through this to this point. I know today's news is not good news, but I also know and trust my God and my Savior and their wisdom and planning of events and impacts that I cannot fathom or comprehend at this time, but will make themselves manifest in their time. So, in the end, I willingly submit myself to their will and know, with all my heart, despite the hardship, despite it not being what we wanted or hoped to hear, that it will all work for the good...for us and for many others as we live out our witness and testimony of their love in all things.

I thank my brothers and their wives for their love and support. For standing for and with me...for giving me every help they possibly can through these times, and most importantly for their prayers and faith.

I thank the members of my church...my Bishop and others who are assisting us and helping watch over my mom while we are away. For Jeff and Jolene who are doing this two and more times a week, driving out to Emmett and seeing her, comforting her, caring for her. This is true religion, the visit and care for the widows and fatherless. For friends near and far, who have heard of our situation and who are praying for us and exercising their faith on our behalf.

I thank my co-workers at my job for their prayers and concern. Particularly for my boss for his understanding, support, and his singular efforts to find good, productive work for me to accomplish remotely over the computer

(my laptop in this case) whenever practicable and possible on this trip and thereby helping to save more of my leave for future needs, which as you can see, will definitely be forthcoming.

I must also specifically thank the Glass family, Kathy and Tom, for opening their home to us here in Houston and providing us a safe haven and for their prayers and faith on our behalf. They are American patriots, and they are fine people who are showing us their care in deed when we are in need...living out Christ's injunction to take others in.

Heartfelt and sincere thanks to Stacie McDavid, for her reaching out to me as soon as she heard of these circumstances...from across the years and our graduation from Denton High School in 1974...and helping facilitate things for us here at MD Anderson through judicious and caring use of her own influence. For Cynthia Coffman at MD Anderson, for responding to Stacie's call and personally coming down to our waiting lounge and introducing herself and acting as an additional advocate for us here.

Indeed for all the medical personnel from Idaho to Houston who have been nothing but professional, personable, caring, and kind to us through this experience, God bless you each and every one for your commitment to your profession, to medicine, and to helping others. You are each involved in God's work of helping His children from all over this earth, and that service will not go unrewarded by He who sees all and knows the heart.

I will write more next week after we have had our discussion with Dr. Rhines and know more. I expect we will go through 2-3 weeks of testing and other preparations and then develop a schedule for surgery. It may be anywhere from a couple of weeks to 8 or 10 weeks before we have surgery. We will just have to see how that works out. If it turns out to be a longer period of time we will travel back to Idaho to get as much work in and prepare for that experience and its aftermath rehabilitation, whatever it may entail.

Again, thanks to all who are praying for us and exercising their faith on our behalf. As I have said before. My prayer is that our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, will return those blessings to you and yours tenfold.

As always, sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

13th Entry January 20, 2010 7:30 AM - Finally set up a meeting with Dr. Rhines and Gisela and his staff.

Yesterday was an eventful day. We left the place west of Bolivar right at 6 AM and arrived in the Houston area, on the northwest side about 11:30 AM having traveled down I-35W through Ft. Worth, connecting to I-35 at Hillsboro, and then taking I-35 to Waco. At Waco we cut off on Highway 6 and drove down through Bryan and College Station, connected to US 290 at Hempstead, and then on into Houston.

We got a Hotel off of 290 at FM 1960 and then proceeded to MD Anderson, arriving there about 12:30 PM.

I had a CT scan of my chest scheduled at 3 PM with a check-in at 2:30. We arrived at the CT Imaging Center at 2:30 and signed in, discovering they were running about 90 minutes behind. We had a really pleasant wait in their waiting area, and then I had my scan (where the inject iodine into your blood system for a contrast) about 4 PM.

After this, we were done at MD Anderson until next week (Friday, January 30th) when I get my MRI, which will be followed by the meeting with Dr. Rhines on Monday February 1st.

We then left MD Anderson and went to my Aunt Esther's house for dinner. She is the only surviving member of my mother's family outside of my Mom, who is in a rehab center up in Idaho while we are on this journey.

We had a great time with her, a couple of my cousins (Joey and Cynthia) who are two of Esther's children, and Joey's wife and Cynthia's daughter who were also there. We thank them for their love for us and their hospitality and the hard work they went through putting that very wonderful and tasty meal together for us.

However, shortly into the meal, I began to feel extremely poorly and had to excuse myself to sit on their sofa. Very sick headache, lightheaded, and weakness feelings, with nausea. It increased to the point where I was on the verge of asking Gail to take me to the hospital. I almost keeled over a couple of times. But, then it lessened and we were able to finish our visit with our relatives and then come on back to the hotel last night...where I am sitting now writing this.

Thankfully, I got a good night's rest.

I do not know whether it was my morphine medication (which we had increased that day), some kind of reaction to the iodine (which I have never had before) or just a natural part of my condition. It seems to have passed now, but has left me weak, though my strength is coming back and I certainly feel much, much better than I did last night about 7 PM.

Our plan now is to go back out to the house west of Sanger and Bolivar and continue to make that our base of operations until we go back to Houston for our next visit, leaving a week from tomorrow.

The next visit, which will complete our new MRI and allow the Dr. to review it and this latest CT scan, should be the meeting where we can decide more clearly on the treatment plan before us. We will keep everyone appraised through our Facebook sit, on the Free Republic prayer thread, and my own web site where I am keeping this journal. (See the top of the blog for web URL addresses to all).

Again, thanks to everyone for your prayers and faith on our behalf. We are grateful for them beyond our ability to express.

As an example of what can happen in these instances, we were contacted by a relative who had related to a friend what was happening in our life. Their friend, concerned, sincerely asked what our relative felt about life after death and the existence of God. Our relative was provided with a wonderful opportunity to bear witness to their friend about our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ and their plan for us and how our life's experiences, particularly in coming to know them, prepares us for that life hereafter, which is very real.

Those opportunities, and the impact they have not only on people's mortal outlook, but on their immortal souls are what is truly important in life. From our family, to our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other acquaintances, we get such opportunities probably more than we know. Therefore the importance of not only availing ourselves of those opportunities, but providing an environment of freedom and liberty where we are free to do so.

As anyone who is familiar with me is aware, I have tried, in my own way, to commit my life to both.

We pray God's wonderful blessings in this regard on all who may read of our experiences with my Sacral Chordoma bone cancer, of our feelings about our wonderful and beloved Republic here in these United States, and most importantly, of our own commitment to our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, and their will in our life.

Sincerely,

Jeff

14th Entry January 29th, 2010, 9:30 PM - Scans and preparations for Dr. Rhine's consultation

Sorry it has taken a while to update this. There have been a number of developments. However, I have also been quite sick and was unable, literally to update the internet as a result of that sickness like I would have liked.

After the CT scan last week, and my illness that evening at eating, I never really got any better. Became very nauseous very easily and had to lay down for long bouts for it to go away. Also very light headed and fatigued.

We did get a call the next day, telling us that the MRI had been moved up and scheduled for the next Friday, January 23rd (which was a week early) two days away, so off back to Houston we went. We drove down there that morning, Gail driving the whole way and me trying to be comfortable. They were an hour and a half behind on the MRI's, but got us in around 6 PM and then about 7:30 we started back. I took an extra morphine pill so I could lie down for the MRI the whole time I was "in the tube".

We then drove back to Sanger that night and arrived after midnight. I felt really bad, but was able to sleep after getting home and felt a little better...but spent pretty much the entire weekend in bed.

Then, on Tuesday of this week we drove off again, and stopped in Bryan, Texas and spent the night. We drove on into Houston the next morning for my meeting with the medical oncologists, Dr. Arujo. I was so sick by the time we got in there I really do not remember much of the interview. Thank God in Heaven for Gail, who took good notes. The Dr.s were very concerned about my immediate health, but also reviewed the results of the CT and MRI. They then immediately took me off of the morphine, deciding I was not reacting well to the constant amount in my blood. They gave me some anti-nausea pills, put me on a Fentanyl patch, with some break through meds.

This has seemed to help. We stayed the night that night right down the street from the MD Anderson Medical Center in the Holiday Inn. They made us a great deal on an entire suite when they were informed of my condition, so I could be close enough to get the meds changed if necessary.

This morning we came home and this evening I am feeling much better...though not by any means all the way there. Still getting morphine out of my system and the fentanyl has its own side effects.

As to my cancer, the news on the CT scan of the lungs was good. No spreading to the lungs. The news on the pelvis MRI was not as good. Several of the spots there from the 1st MRI are definitely not cancer, but one spot, on my right Ilium, definitely is cancer, so there was already spreading before we ever left Idaho.

We now meet with the neurosurgeon, Dr. Rhines, on Monday morning, February 1st, to discuss our options, which will definitely include considering the major, life-altering surgery to remove my sacrum (and now this other area on my hip) as probably the best chance to actually treat the cancer and remain non-palliative regarding it. There is also, in addition to the proton radiation, some carbon ion radial therapy that may help with the surgery. We shall just have to find out.

We are blessed to be meeting with one of the absolute world experts on this cancer, in one of the best places on earth to get it treated.

We continue to thank everyone for their prayers and faith on our behalf. I cannot tell you how much strength and help they have been...particularly the last 10 days when I have felt so miserable, wondering at times if I was not near death. God bless you each and my prayer continues that he will return the blessings on each of you many fold.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

15th Entry February 1st, 2010, 8:30 PM

Meeting with Dr. Rhines. Difficult options to treat. Radical full Sacrectomy.

Well, today was the eventful and much anticipated day when we finally had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Dr. Rhines at MD Anderson, a very well-known and reputable neurosurgeon, the Director of the Spine Program at MD Anderson, and one of the world's experts on Chordomas.

We went in at 8:30 AM arriving earlier and signed in. We had been forewarned that it may be several hours before he could see us because of his schedule and many responsibilities. But, about 9:00 we were called back and by about 9:20 Dr. Rhines was visiting with us, along with his RN and Advanced Practice Nurse, Gisela. She had come in a few minutes before and was going through my history when Dr. Rhines came in. They were both extremely professional, extremely knowledgeable, very articulate, and very personable. Dr. Rhines reviewed my history with me and then gave us an in-depth explanation of Chordomas and my specific case while covering all of the various alternatives. He at one point early on indicated he knew that we had probably been out on the web and could probably even perhaps lecture him on my condition, but if we would let him go through his presentation, it would probably answer the bulk of our questions.

And it did. The only really departure in terms of questions that I had was concerning Carbon Ion Radiation (CIR) treatment that has been developed and used in Japan and now Germany that shows some promise of avoiding surgery. I'll go into that later, but Dr. Rhines, very graciously indicated he would contact and talk about my case specifically with associates he had in Japan and ask what they thought.

That method is not approved for use in America, so as far as what Dr. Rhines can do, the surgery which techniques he is very experienced with and an expert at is the method we are heading towards. I accept this. For me, even though there are already a couple of small cancer points that have cropped up on my hip (which means there is a stronger chance that it is already spreading elsewhere, the surgery provides the best opportunity to prevent further spread from the primary site, and to avoid the primary site ultimately destroying my sacrum and spreading to other nerve endings and debilitating me to a much more severe extent.

I cannot tell you how appreciative Gail and I were of Dr. Rhine's open and forthright manner, his willingness to listen to our concern and questions and address them, and his and Gisela's attitude towards us and our circumstance. He spent over two hours with us and when we had discussed it all, we agreed that he would contact us next week with the results of his own activities (including contacting Japan) and make a final decision to go forward with the surgery, which he indicated would follow about 3 weeks after that.

So, barring some miracle regarding CIR from Japan, it looks like we will be going through the surgery in Houston sometime early in March. That will entail very major surgery which is itself life-threatening. He believes that because of my health history, no-smoking, no-drinking, no major problems, my strength, etc., that in his professional opinion I will come through the surgery and avoid infection...though he was sure to point out there can be no guarantee. Then, there are four weeks after surgery in the hospital going through recovery and rehab. For ten days you cannot lift yourself, sit, stand, or get out of bed while the new "hardware" fuses and heals to

your body. Then they teach you how to begin to move, roll over, sit back up, and ultimately get up and walk over the next 15-20 days...as well as how to handle your own bodily functions in terms of bowels and bladder that will be impaired as a result of the surgery. One good point there...at MD Anderson they do not by default perform a colostomy or create a permanent catheter. All of your plumbing is there, you are just numb, and they give you rehab to teach you how to self-catheter and yourself get your colon to empty its contents.

With the colon it involves a dietary regiment that regulates you and creates a consistency that is compatible with doing this. That going to be a lot more healthy diet anyway...and I like this approach.

Probably more detail than you wanted, eh?

After four weeks, you are released but then, in all likelihood remain around MD Anderson for another four weeks while proton radiation is applied to the area of the operation. 40+ treatments over four weeks.

After that you go home, but then, the Dr. made sure to point out that most patients require another four weeks of transition from home and their new life-style, back to work.

That, is the path we are on.

One aside. During the conversation I indicated to the Dr. that I had what might be a personal question for him. I indicated that since he would undoubtedly through this process get to know me personally, inside and out, and particularly anatomically, better than almost anyone I know, I had a question for him. He told me to go ahead and so I asked him if he was a man of faith who believed in God. He said he was. I indicated I didn't mean to offend, but just as he had indicated to us that our positive mental attitude would be critical in getting through the surgery and the rehabilitation, that our joint positive faith in God, when exercised by believers together, both those praying for those in harm's way and for those put there to help them, that faith works best when we are united in it. I told him there were hundreds not only praying for me, but for him too, as my Dr. and I wanted him to know it, and join with us in our faith in God's will. He thanked me. I asked him if he had heard of Ananias (of Damascus) in the Bible. He was not familiar with the story. I told him that in the New Testament one of God's servants (in this case Paul) was sent to Ananias (and Ananias to him) to find what it was he (Paul) was to do. And Ananias gave him the direction. Ananias was respected, knowledgeable in the things of God and wise and Paul did as he said (and oh yes, Paul's sight was also restored in the process). I indicated that I do not want to imply that I, Jeff Head, in any way am like that servant of God, or that he, Dr. Rhines was Ananias other than that I had faith that God in Heaven had led my footsteps to Dr. Rhines for whatever reason, and that I needed to listen to him as regards this medical circumstance. He, Dr. Rhines is very well respected. He is very knowledgeable, and that he is also a man of faith...and that was my faith and thoughts on the matter. He again thanked me.

As to the CIR treatment in Japan...it shows very good signs of great results with non-surgical treatment of this cancer that is not only successful in killing the tumor, but also very good at avoiding any further neurological side effect to the bowels, bladder, etc. Problem is, it is in Japan (and also Germany) and has not been approved in the USA and so is not covered by insurance...and the US community does not feel there is a large enough body of data to indicate it is the way to go yet and that we should be more cautious. Based on what I have read, if I had that type of money available, I would consider spending it to try and pay for such treatment in the hopes it would work as it has for many people in those countries since 1997. If it did...great! If not, I feel that soon enough thereafter, I would proceed with the regiment here in America.

But I would not sacrifice the opportunity at MD Anderson to pursue this either. Dr. Rhines is going to share my data with his compatriots, and if the door is opened to do such a thing, we will consider it then.

We are going to go to a meeting Dr. Rhines is holding on Wednesday which is a seminar on what to expect for

this type of surgery and how to prepare for and handle it. Then, we will head back to Denton, TX and Sanger, TX to gather our things, visit Lee and his family, and then on Friday head back home to Idaho. My pain meds are working much better, though still being adjusted. I hope to minimize the side-effects of the patch and maximize the pain control through to surgery at this point.

A week from now we will make the final decision, and quite likely then, three weeks later based on what Dr. Rhines schedules, we will be back in Houston early in March for this surgery.

If there is more info, I will update on Wednesday.

Pardon this long update...but I know many people have been waiting.

Again, thanks to all for your faith and prayers on our behalf, The Lord's Hand is in this and His love and support are with us, and we thank all who have prayed that it be such to this point, because those prayers are being answered.

Sincerely, in love and in Christ,

Jeff

16th Entry February 6th, 2010, 9:30 AM - Waiting for Dr. Rhines to present my case to the tumor board.

We spoke to Dr. Rhine's advanced practice nurse, Gisela, last night.

She indicated that my Chordoma was not able to be presented to the MD Anderson sarcoma tumor board on Thursday, Dr. Rhine's had to be in surgery all that day, and that it would be presented on Tuesday. He will call us a couple of days later as a result, with our schedule for March, looking for a decision to go ahead. She took quite a bit of time with us (it was after 8 PM her time) and answered our questions and gave us very good information. We were very appreciative of it.

We are now back home in Idaho. Drove through some pretty good snow in Kansas as we tried to skirt the big storm to the north that started in New Mexico, moved across the Texas Panhandle (where we would have driven straight through it if we had gone our normal route) and is now pounding the mid-Atlantic and Washington, DC. We ran into some more snow on the boarder of Idaho and Utah. But it was only fifty or so miles and not too bad. Here's a map of the trip home:

Arriving home, I was led to exclaim:

""tis good to be home...even for a few weeks!"

A scripture from the New Testament came to mind. Direction the Lord gave to an individual He had healed:

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Luke 5:19

The Lord has truly been good to us in this set of circumstances and has guided our footsteps. We have felt His love and guidance, and the love and faith of our friends. Despite whatever hardship, that knowledge and feeling is priceless, now and for the eternities.

And now, we have a short respite. A time to prepare, get things in order, and visit with our family and friends.

At home, someone put a large banner on the front of our house that says, "Welcome home. We love you!"

Thank you, good souls, whomever did that. It has warmed our heart and gives us all the more strength to prepare for the upcoming, major surgery and the life style changes and impact it will bring. We are grateful for the chance to have the procedure available to address this rare cancer, in spite of those hardships.

We are still examining the Carbon Ion Radiation treatment being done in Japan and also Germany we found. The two issues it presents...in spite of the fact that their data shows that it has every possibility of being equally effective to surgery without the disabilities thereafter, are these:

1) The US has not approved it and so our insurance (which is very good) would not cover it. The cost of the procedure and everything associated with it would have to be born from our retirement savings and any other means we could pull together. I am committed to providing for my wife and family in any event I may face, so I am very reluctant to consider it given the risks in any event.

2) It is not clear to me how long it takes after the CIR treatment for the medical community to know that the irradiated tumor is incapable of any further spreading. In my case, there has already been spreading, so statistically I am behind that eight ball anyway. I know a tumor that has been removed (if they get it all) cannot itself spread any more. I am not so sure about a CIR treated tumor which begins to slowly regress after treatment.

On one side if we tried it and it did not work, then we could move towards surgery anyway. On the other, since mine has already spread, time is of the essence to catch it before it spreads to any organs. Thus far, it has only spread in two small places to bone...which is very slow to grow and spread like the original tumor.

So, those are the types of decisions we are faced with. I will speak more of it with the Dr. when he calls later this week. My own thoughts at this time are, that given the risks, it is most likely we will proceed with the surgery at the earliest date, barring some miracle regarding the CIR.

Again, our eternal and continuing thanks to all of those who are praying for us and exercising their faith and love on our behalf. I have felt the strength it brings in very trying hours. I also must say, that next to the guidance and direction and love of my Savior and my Father in Heaven, I must hold up and thank my dear wife, Gail, for her help, comfort, strength, and love and faith through this. She has been and remains an angel to me and me thank God in Heaven for her as my wife, my friend, my sweetheart, and the mother of my children and grandmother of our grandkids.

After hoping, praying, and wishing to see each of them following their Savior and partake of His Atonement, I could wish no greater blessing on my daughters and grand-daughters than that they seek to emulate her...or wish no greater blessing on my sons and grandsons than that find and have a woman like her for their own wife and eternal companion.

I pray that my expression of these feelings does not embarrass anyone, or are not thought improper or inappropriate. It's just, that at times like these, times that sooner or later we all must face to one degree or another, as a husband, as a father, and as a grandfather, I cannot forebear.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

17th Entry February 20th, 2010, 9:00 AM - Tumor board not sure that big surgeries are worth the effort.

Well, I wish I did not have to write this update, but the situation is as it is and I need to document it.

I had been waiting a few days to write it, hoping that the news might improve, but it does not appear to be going to do so.

We were informed earlier in the week from MD Anderson, by the Advanced Practice Nurse for Dr. Rhines that the tumor board had raised issues and bordered on the consensus that the surgery would not benefit me. This is a significant departure from what we were preparing for.

The essence of that message is that many on the board feel it is too late for the surgery. Since the cancer has already spread to my ilium, the feeling is that it has already started mediatizing into a more aggressive form which is precisely what the major surgery is meant to prevent.

My feeling and hope was that since it had not spread to any organs or soft tissue, that the spread to the bone could be controlled. But these individuals are the professionals who do this for a living and who have seen and dealt with many, many such cases. I have to respect what they are saying, knowing it is not the message they want to deliver either.

So, we are now waiting to see what other options (including palliative which is a treatment regimen that is geared towards trying to slow future spread and make me as comfortable as possible) for treatment are available. There is a chance that the surgery could still be done, but it appears remote at this point.

In addition, I now intend to personally go all out (as I feel up to it) to trying to contact Japan and Germany about the Carbon Ion Radiation treatment they have developed and are using. I also want to present to MD Anderson the idea to use me as a research project. I am an individual with a sacral Chordoma that they do not feel the principle US treatment of resection can benefit. I have had no other direct treatment. What better subject for a baseline than that to send over and try the Carbon Ion Radiation treatment that the Japanese and Germans are using that is not yet approved here in America? I know these institutions in the US are aware of it, and it is certainly not a "lark" or "quack" treatment since the accelerators used in Japan and Germany (each nation now has two of them) cost well over 200 million dollars each.

So, those appear to be my choices at this point. We hope to be in further contact with MD Anderson next week.

In the mean time I have been back at work and will continue to do so as long as I can and according to whatever treatment plan they now come up with.

Added to this, I had my Fentanyl patches increased this last week on Wednesday to 37 mgr per hour. On Friday I was very sick and so decided to go back to 25 mgr per hour (simply by not adding the 2nd patch Friday night when I was due for a change). This morning I feel a little better, but am still very fatigued, weak, short of breath, and a little sick.

Again, thanks so much to all who are exerting their faith on our behalf and praying for us. Those prayers and that faith mean more than I can say...on a very real and daily basis. Thank you!

This is, and always has been, in the good Lord's Hands.

I will write again as I can.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

18th Entry February 22nd, 2010, 8:00 AM - Dr. Rhines prevails, we will go through the surgery

What a difference a few days can make...along with a few answers to prayer.

Yesterday I received a call from Dr. Rhines first thing in the morning. He spent about an hour on the phone with me detailing all that he had been doing these last four weeks. Although I had heard from his office and Advanced Practice Nurse, Gisela, on several occasions, where lots of good info had been communicated, this was the first time Dr. Rhines and I had spoken directly since we met him for the long 2+ hour meeting in Houston.

He apologized for the delay, indicating that he had been out of town and had contacted a lot of people about me and my case and that he did not want to have such a conversation on his cell phone while traveling. I thanked him for calling and indicated that there was no need for apology. He was very busy, and in addition to his research and being the head of his department at MD Anderson, he has many patients, all of whom have difficulties and are in at least as dire straits as I.

Anyhow, the jest was that despite the feelings of many people (Dr.s) he had spoken with regarding my case over the fact that my tumor has already spread to my Ilium from my sacrum and could mean that it was too late for the type of surgery necessary to remove the principle tumor...concerns that he shares...that he had determined that there are still two options for treatment I should consider and make a decision on.

The first choice remains the major surgery to take my sacrum that has been described in detail on this journal in the past. The down side of this decision would be if the cancer has already spread to soft tissue and organs, than I will go through a very difficult and painful surgical procedure (what he termed as "big as it gets"), and long recovery procedure with no lasting benefit (that is, if we discovered soon thereafter that the cancer had in fact already spread). The upside of this surgery is that it is the only medical path available in the US to potentially cure my condition, if the cancer has not spread to those other areas yet.

Has it spread? The Dr. indicated that at this stage we just don't know. They cannot see it. The pathology indicates it may not have...but since there are those two other small spots in bone material, they cannot rule it out.

The second option is to treat the sacrum and the entire tumor with proton radiation upfront. This will not kill or completely stop it...but it would retard it and slow it down. Then wait 6-9 months and take a look again. If the cancer is not spreading to the other areas, then do the surgery at that point with a better feeling that it has not and is not about to spread. The downside of this choice is that if it has not already spread, we add 6-9 months of time where it would have the additional opportunity to do so. The upside is that this method would preserve my neurological function (bowel and bladder) for a longer period and not have me undergo that painful, difficult major surgery that would take those functions if the cancer had indeed already spread.

My own view is that the first option is the decision we in essence already made and that it is the only option that is directed immediately towards a potential curative solution (even if the odds are not great) that is available. The second option is already starting down the palliative path and almost presumes that the cancer has spread and that the hope for a curative treatment is past.

We are going to pray about this and decide within the next day which way to go. We ask for your thoughts and

prayers on our behalf and thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts for your acts of faith and prayer to date. They have most certainly helped and given us additional strength to face this difficulty.

In conjunction with this, let me share a faith promoting experience associated with events leading up to the call.

In our faith, we believe that Jesus Christ remains a God of miracles, both body and soul. We believe in administering to the sick and afflicted. This last weekend I was pretty sick trying to get back into "sync" with my pain meds as I explained in the last entry. In the midst of that, I was also low in spirits because of the news from last week that so many Dr.s were thinking that my condition did not warrant surgery and may be too late for that.

On Sunday, at the suggestion of my wife and friends, I asked to be administered to and blessed by priesthood holders in our church. It is a "lay" priesthood, but we believe through faith that we can call on God, in Jesus Christ name, for the help, strength, and even healing we need, according to His will. Two brethren came over, one what we call our "home teacher". In our faith we have two men and two women who are assigned to several families within our congregation to minister to their needs as best they can. All families and individuals are covered. I myself have several families that I try and help.

Anyhow, I was anointed with oil, hands were laid on my head, and in the name of Jesus Christ I received a blessing. It was in the quiet and peace of our home. It was not dramatic, loud, or earth shattering. I was not told to rise up and walk that I had been cured (though with God in Heaven, that is certainly possible). Words of comfort were spoken to me. That through my faith I would see the path ahead. Very specifically, I was told that my Dr. would contact me and give me the details I needed to make the right decisions according to God's will.

At that point, I had not heard from Dr. Rhines in 4 weeks, and based on the info coming to us, I did not necessarily expect to hear from him. I figured that since so many were thinking this was too late for surgery that I would be referred back to a medical oncologist for palliative treatment to make me comfortable and try and fight the cancer once it did spread.

I was wrong. Dr. Rhines had been working hard the whole time on my account, doing research, gathering info, talking to Dr.s all over the country and world, and was gathering information so he and Gail and I could make the most informed and best decision possible. The Lord honored that blessing. The next day after my blessing, at the earliest hour possible while at work, Dr. Rhines called and did exactly what I had been told he would do.

Now, God in Heaven knew that was going to happen. He knows Dr. Rhines heart just like He knows all of us. He simply let that act of faith communicate it to me and help comfort me at a time this weekend when I needed it.

Now, I cannot say where this leads at this point, other than to know that God in Heaven's hand is in it and it will work towards His will. I pray I can stay strong and be a good witness of His will, whatever it holds for me. I know God in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ are aware of each of us and our needs, and I know they will make known to us that concern and love as we seek them out.

That doesn't mean things will be easy...or everything solved exactly as we would desire at that moment. It does mean that things and events will work out according to His will and what is in the long term best interests for us and our loved ones.

This is a life-threatening, very difficult disease and time in my life. The pain is still there. Anxiety is still there. The upcoming surgery, should we in fact choose that route, will be as difficult and painful physically as anything I have experienced in life. The surgery itself or infection afterwards could take my life.

In the end, the surgery offers medical hope. But whether that hope turns into the reality of a long term cure or not, the Hope of Life Eternal through Christ Jesus will stand through any malady, disease, hardship, or difficulty. It is up to us to accept His gift in our life, and His name in our heart, and then stand firm and true to that decision as it changes our life and the way we live it. May His will be done in each of our life's and may we each seek to know, understand, and accept that will and then witness to one another and others in an effort to strengthen and help those around us.

I will make an entry in the journal tomorrow or the next day as soon as we make our decision and inform Dr. Rhines and MD Anderson. Either option will see us back in Houston towards the end of March to start the respective treatment.

As a side note. Dr. Rhines did look deeper into the Carbon Ion Radiation treatment being conducted in Japan and Germany. He indicated that with the massive amounts of radiation that they can deliver so accurately that there is great hope with that procedure. He also indicated that since my tumor has already surrounded several nerve roots critical to my bowel and bladder function, that in order to treat the entire tumor, that radiation would almost certainly destroy those nerve roots as surely as if he cut them out. The upside then would be that I could undergo that with no major incisions and the difficulty and recovery major surgery brings. The downsides are pretty significant. In addition to its cost and my US insurance not covering it, there is not enough data to say that if that treatment were conducted, that while the tumor stopped growing and slowly regressed, that it could not spread afterwards...which is a big risk to take after the fact.

The best chance for keeping it from spreading...if it hasn't already done so in which case neither surgery nor CIR will work anyway...is to remove the tumor. And now, that door, which I had thought was closed, is open again for us to consider.

Sincerely and with love in Christ,

Jeff Head

19th Entry February 24th, 2010, 8:00 PM - I officially write in and accept the treatment and major surgeries

Well, we talked to a lot of family and friends, studied it out, spoke to each other at length, and prayed to our Father in Heaven and have made our decision and communicated it to Dr. Rhines and MD Anderson.

We will be doing the surgery, probably the third or fourth week in March.

As I wrote to Dr. Rhines,

"Simply stated, despite the risks, and based upon what we know at this point, surgery remains the best chance for any curative outcome for my condition, and, barring a cure, the option that gives the best chance to maximize prolonged life.

Even though there are significant concerns regarding the chance that the cancer may have already spread to my soft tissue and internal organs, there is no definitive indication of that yet, either from the imagery or the pathology. We understand that this does not necessarily mean it has not happened, but there remains the chance that outside of the spread to the ilium, that the spread may still be contained only in bone. So, in order to maximize the chances for the most positive, long-term outcome as soon as possible, we have decided for me to have the surgery."

It will be a huge, difficult procedure, with a very difficult and protracted recovery and rehabilitation. If that goes alright, then we will have the best chance of avoiding recurrence...even though there is a risk it has already

moved. But that is in God's hands...indeed all of it is and always has been. He knows what is best...we can but do our best and seek to understand and conform ourselves to His will, knowing of His matchless love and that of His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, for each of us.

I'll share just a quick experience that helped me in this decision.

On Sunday, before I had received the blessing I mentioned in the last update, my dear wife Gail read me a story out of one of our Church magazines, the New Era.

It was about a young teenage girl who discovered she had a severe case of scoliosis, or abnormal curvature of the spine. She was at a level three and would require surgery...but worked with Dr.s to try and use braces and other procedures to reduce it to level two and avoid the surgery.

She had a strong faith and relationship with God, and her Savior. She felt if she followed Him, obeyed His commandments, treated others with His love, and lived a Christ-like life that He would bless her with a miracle and be healed.

At every turn she faced disappointment. The curvature kept getting worse. The brace hurt terribly. She received a blessing and felt that the Lord would work a miracle in her life, this young teenage girl, through her faith.

They chose another Dr. and the results through x-ray were the same...even worse. The Dr. asked her if she had expected a miracle in this imagery and she said she did. She was disappointed but yet full of faith.

Then the Dr. said to her, "the surgery is the miracle."

She immediately felt the Holy Spirit inspire her that in fact, the God in Heaven could use others and work the miracle through them and the knowledge He had endowed upon mankind.

I remember, when Gail read that to me, and based on the discouraging news I had received earlier in the week, that that particular type of miracle had passed me by...and I voiced it to Gail, saying, "that miracle is one that apparently is not open to me any longer."

The girl went ahead and had her major spinal surgery, and though the path was hard, she overcame the condition. Her story closed by saying,

"Surgery may not have been the miracle I was expecting, or even hoping for, but it was the one I needed. It was the one I learned the most from. Words can't describe the pain, the heartache, or the daily challenges. Most of all words can't describe the closeness I felt to my Savior. Thinking of my Savior is what got me through my hardship."

Those words touched my heart.

Now, I do not know if this surgery will "cure" me physically. I do know, that the Lord answered our prayer and according to the blessing I received, the Dr. called the next day and opened that door back up to me.

I know, according to His will, that this is the path I need to take. It is the one He has marked out for me according to His grand design...the one I will learn the most from and draw nearest to Him through...and the one that He will use to touch the hearts of many others through, and bring them to Him and His Son.

My soul has already been cured through my Savior. My body is His instrument. I will follow Him, do His will, and try and be the best witness for His will, for His love, and for His good in my life on the path He has set me on.

Again, thanks to all...so many hundreds...even thousands of people who continue to pray and exert faith and love on behalf of me and my family. It is one of the most humbling experiences I have ever had and I thank you each from the bottom of my heart for it. Words cannot express adequately the thanks I feel, or the help it has already been.

I will continue to update as long as I can as we prepare, and particularly once we have specific dates.

I will ask one of my children or other family member to keep this update going once I go into the hospital.

Sincerely,

In Christ, Jesus,

Jeff

20th Entry March 5th, 2010, 4:30 PM - Leave share program at work. I may miss 6-7 months if things go well.

There have been a few developments in the last couple of days I wanted to mention for family and friends who are keeping up with our progress and experiences with the Chordoma bone cancer in my sacrum,

1st, MD Anderson completed a batch of paperwork that has enabled me to become eligible for a leave share program where I work.

Let me say a couple of things about where I work. I work for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in the western United States. The BOR is an agency in the Department of the Interior. We deal with the large dams and reservoirs in the western United States. Specifically, I work with electronics and communications that allow the dams to operate and deliver the much needed irrigation water, water storage, and hydro-electric power we derive from them.

I am very proud of this work and take it seriously. The people I work with are producers who help produce much needed water and electricity for our nation.

Anyhow, the Department of Interior (and the federal government in general) has a leave share program where any employee facing a major health crisis can qualify for leave share from other employees. In my case, the surgery, the time in the hospital, the radiation treatment, and then the rehab are going to utilize much more time than I have available on my own, and this program allows other employees, if they so desire, to share a few hours with me and help me get through.

Here's the wording of the announcement that went out to our Agency regarding me:

"Subject: Active Leave Transfer Recipient

Jeffrey L. Head, Comm. & Inst. Mech. (M) at the Black Canyon Field Office, is an approved Leave Share Recipient under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program and is in need of leave.

Jeff was diagnosed with malignant bone cancer and must undergo major surgery and long rehabilitation to treat his condition. The physician estimates that surgery and recovery will take several months, approximately late July. Jeffrey does not possess enough leave to cover this entire period of time.

If you would like to donate leave to Jeffrey L. Head, please fill out the attached donation form (OPM-630A) and

send to:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
Attn: Voluntary Leave Transfer Program Coordinator, PN-7425
1150 N. Curtis Road, Suite 100
Boise, ID 83706-1234"

This allows employees to share leave with other employees who are in need.

It is a humbling thing, not one I would have ever sought out, to seek help in this manner. But for the sake and welfare of my wife and family, I have to humble myself and do so.

If there are any employees of the Department of the Interior reading this, and particularly if you envision yourself being in a "Use it or lose it" situation toward the end of this year, then any consideration, even just a few hours, in leave sharing that you would have towards me would be appreciated beyond my ability to express. God bless each and every one for even considering it. Here is a link to the OPM-630A form you would need to fill out and mail in:

In Agency (Department of Interior) Leave Transfer Form
<http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/chordoma/opm630a.pdf>

If there are employees of other agencies of the Federal Government reading this (meaning outside of the Department of the Interior) and particularly if you envision yourself being in a "Use it or lose it" situation toward the end of this year, then any consideration, even just a few hours, in leave sharing that you would have towards me would also be appreciated beyond my ability to express. Again, God bless each and every one for even considering it. Here is a link to the OPM-630B form you would need to fill out and mail in (making sure to provide the contact point within your agency requested at the bottom of the form):

Outside of Agency (outside of the Department of Interior) Leave Transfer Form
<http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/chordoma/opm630b.pdf>

Again, the address to send those filled out forms to is:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Regional Office
Attn: Voluntary Leave Transfer Program Coordinator, PN-7425
1150 N. Curtis Road, Suite 100
Boise, ID 83706-1234

I can only use this leave for my medical emergency, and it can only last for the duration of the emergency (which currently runs, barring any complications, through the end of my rehabilitation period).

So, that is one of the major happenings and considerations I am facing.

Another was the news that the MD Anderson team is going to split my surgery into two procedures, which will occur a few days apart. We still do not have a specific date, but it appears likely that it will start either the last week of this month (March 2010) or the first week of April 2010.

The first procedure will involve an entry from the front and will prepare internal organs, vessels, nerves, initial bone cuts, and retrieving some soft tissue from the abdomen wall to be used to reconstruct the sacral area during the second procedure.

The second procedure will involve entry from the back and is for removal of my sacrum (and the tumor) and

reconstruction for spinal stabilization.

Both are daunting. I must say, that I am not "looking forward" to it, but now knowing what the treatment path is, I am nonetheless anxious to be about it and get started. If they called me tomorrow and indicated they needed me there next Monday, I would most certainly do so.

Waiting and dealing with the pain meds and their side effects take their toll. Mornings are pretty difficult most days, but I improve as the day goes on. Being able to get to work each day and having my mind engaged on those endeavors also helps a lot.

Also, based on Gail's suggestion, I have found that if I eat a little bit throughout the day, as opposed to three major meals, that it also helps how I feel. Sort of like having five or six "mini-meals", one every 2-3 hours or so.

Now, I know that what I will have to deal with as a result of the major surgeries and rehab will be worse than what I am dealing with now. But I also know that, that is the path that lays before me, and that offers, from the medical community perspective, the chance for survival and as much disease free life as possible. As such, it is the path I am ready to put my foot to as soon as possible.

Again, I want to express my thanks...my undying thanks to everyone who has offered a prayer on my behalf or that of my family, a kind word of encouragement, or who has exercised their faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ on my behalf and that of my family. I cannot express my gratitude and feeling in mere words...but I can tell you that every bit of it helps. I also continually pray that God in Heaven and His Son will return those kindnesses and blessings to all of those who express them many fold.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff Head

21st Entry March 16th, 2010, 9:30 PM - Final scheduling for surgery dates in April

Well, we are now zeroing in on a date (or dates) for my surgery and the schedule associated with it.

Dr. Rhines and the other surgeons have definitely decided it will be split into two surgeries and the preliminary dates are April 27th and April 30th.

That's several weeks later than we had anticipated, but since the surgery is going to occur in two parts and since several of the surgeons needed to be available for both dates, it made scheduling more difficult. These individuals are the professionals at what they do, and they are the experts in this form of cancer and surgery.

As I stated early on, the good Lord has guided me to them in my circumstance and need, and I will trust their professional judgement and opinions.

So, we are now planning to leave Idaho sometime late in the week of April 5th, probably the 9th or so. Dr. Rhines wants us down there about 10 days before surgery. We will meet individually with each of the surgical teams and in addition to answering our questions, there is going to be a lot of prep and training for me in preparation for the surgery and the aftermath. In addition, they are planning to conduct more MRIs, CTR Scans, and other tests before surgery.

One thing we have also decided is to get a corporate/medical type apartment near MD Anderson. We will probably be in there 3 or more months. Given the amount of time Gail will spend at the hospital to begin with,

given the amount of time in rehab and radiation after surgery and the types of treatment and what it will take for me, we have decided that this will be best. I need to be close, and I need to be in a position, if I can, where Gail can help me and we can do it with as little impact to our friends and loved ones as possible...while being very close to the hospital and the Dr., particularly for the first several weeks out of the hospital.

It is going to be expensive, but we are going to just have to tap our resources to make it happen. We looked at a number of places on line and looked at comments from other MD Anderson and other medical patients who stayed at the various places. One thing is clear...in that area, and with my type of circumstance we are going to want a gated community with very good security (I read of several people who were not in gated communities with good security who were actually held up near their apartments...patients to the various medical centers and I just cannot have that to worry about while I am in the hospital and Gail is coming and going).

So, these are some more of the decisions we are making in preparation for my 3-4 month stay in Houston for surgery, recovery, rehab, and radiation treatments.

I must humbly thank...with gratitude again beyond my ability to express in words, all of those who are sharing leave with me, from my own agency (the Bureau of Reclamation) and from other agencies, to help us through this next period. It is a literal blessing from above as folks share as He would share...from the heart. I simply cannot express our gratitude adequately, but I can thank each individual from the bottom of my heart, and pray God in Heaven's richest blessings on each and every one, through His Son Jesus Christ. I can only strive to help others as I have been helped...which is exactly what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about, because all of us have been helped by Him beyond our ability to repay...except in service to Him and His children as He would do.

Also, continued thanks in exactly the same manner for all of those who are exercising their faith in God on our behalf through prayer, blessings, kindness, encouragement and love towards Gail and I and our family. Again, God bless each and every one of you as well.

Once these dates are finalized I will update every one again.

On Friday I upped my Fentanyl pain meds to 37 mg/hr. I was concerned and anxious because last time I tried to go there, I got pretty sick. My brother-in-law, my local Dr., as well as Dr. Rhine's nurse Gisela, indicated that I may do better this time because my body had acclimated to the med. In addition, I have learned a LOT since then on how to eat and my own life style with the meds. The outcome was that I was able to do so without any significant impact. That is an answer to prayer. I am able to continue working and preparing and I am grateful for that.

Our journey continues. The picture and path ahead into the surgery and the general impact (if all goes well) is much clearer now.

We will go forward with faith, putting it in the hands of these professional and good Dr.s, and most importantly, putting it in God's Hands...where it has always been in any case for each and every one of us.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

22nd Entry March 19th, 2010, 9:00 AM - Financial fund set up to help

Our journey and fight continues.

I was very reluctant to consider setting up a Fund for donations to us. I felt that we could probably handle this ourselves financially. With good insurance and with people being so generous to us with the leave share program at work (see entry 20 in this journal), As a result of that, at the rate people are donating, if it continues it looks like we will be able to continue on leave through most, if not all of our time in Houston for the surgery, recovery and rehabilitation. That amounts to almost four months of time. I cannot express my gratitude for the people who are donating there...they have been a literal answer to prayer and their compassion and generosity, and Christ-like help are beyond my ability to thank in words.

Financially, we were in a position to handle a few hundred extra a month to cover living expenses in Houston while we continue to make our mortgage and other expense payments in Idaho.

But then we found what out it would actually cost to get anything close to MD Anderson (which the medical team recommends) that would have adequate security, particularly while Gail was alone when I was in the hospital. I looked at many corporate, short term to medium term rentals, and anything in our affordability range of up to 900 a month, had comments in the realty review areas from other medical patients that were very disheartening and not something I could have Gail alone at. So, the cost had to increase by two and three times in order to find anything we could be comfortable with in terms of simple security.

In addition, my rehab is going to be a major issue and the details of it for me personally, dealing with learning to use my bladder and bowels in the condition I will be in, was not something we felt at all comfortable with putting on someone else in their home if we could avoid it. This also has impact on the type of living space we could use once I was released from the hospital.

So, after many requests from friends on Facebook, free republic, email, and other avenues, and after gentle encouragement and advice, we have set up a fund to try and help cover these expenses. We humbly ask, if anyone is in a position to do so...and particularly if it will create no hardship on you and yours, to please consider any donation to:

THE JEFF HEAD CHORDOMA CANCER FUND

It has been set-up to allow donations through PayPal, Credit Cards, or by Check mailed into our bank where the fund is being maintained.

This is extremely humbling. I can only thank people from the bottom of my heart for their willingness to help us, and their compassion and show of Christ-like love. I do not have words and it literally brings tears to my eyes when I consider it. I look forward to the time, if I can survive this and recover, when we are once again in a position to help others as we have been helped.

As to my own progress and condition. As anyone who has either experienced this type of medical condition, or had friends or loved ones who have...there are good days and not so good days.

The last couple of days have been "not so good." I do not know if it is the pain meds, are just my generally deteriorating condition while under their influence, but I am fighting hard to get through the next three weeks when we can leave for Houston, and then the following ten days until we can get into the hospital and undergo the procedures that will give me a medical chance to halt this and recover from it as best as I am able.

I know the Dr.s are doing all they can to prepare for that. I know I am doing all I can. My wife has been an angel and is doing more than I could ever imagine in preparation and in her help to me. I know my family and friends are doing all they can and I am humbled by it.

The rest is in the hands of a merciful Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ and their will. I pray I can always

be a good and strong witness for their will and for salvation in Christ Jesus.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

23rd Entry. Saturday March 26th, 2010, 1:30 PM - Two surgeries scheduled. May require a third

Nurse Sanchez from Dr. Rhine's office contacted us late Friday. We are definitely on for the two surgeries on Tuesday, April 27th, and Friday April 30th.

They are now scheduling us to have individual meetings with each of the four surgical team that will be involved with the surgeries, as well as additional CT and MRI scans. They would like us to be in Houston prepared to start those appointments on April 12th.

So, Gail and I will be leaving early on April 9th and driving down to Houston. We may leave on April 8th, depending on the weather and how many miles of travel I can handle each day. I find that generally the day or two after changing my Fentanyl pain patches I fare better than the last day and a half or so between them.

Now the time for the surgery is coming quickly...even though I wish it did not have to be so, and am certainly not "looking forward" to it but I am ready for it to arrive. It is a daunting and challenging time that lies ahead, and I know that during the recovery and rehab my situation and condition will probably be worse than anything I have experienced thus far. But, I will at least know from a medical perspective that I am on a course that gives me the hope for progress and recovery, whereas current conditions hold only the promise for continually, steadily decreasing health and conditions as the cancer grows.

I know the good Lord has led me to the most capable medical hands available to treat this condition, and I know He is leading many people to He and His Son as a result of it. I am grateful for that knowledge beyond words, and equally grateful for all of the compassion, help, prayers, faith, encouragement, and Christ-like things that have been done for myself and my family by so many caring, good souls all across this nation.

I thank each of you from the bottom of my heart and continue to witness of God and His will, and His Son, Jesus Christ. A love of God and His Son and an understanding and acceptance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ for each of us is the sure path to happiness and healing that exists for any person. Irrespective of circumstance, of hardship, of travail, mistakes, errors, sin, and sickness...whatever ails your body, heart or soul. I am grateful for that knowledge and share it freely with all who read.

Please continue to remember us in your thoughts and prayers as we approach this very difficult experience and the four months, God-willing, of recovery and rehab that follow it.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

24th Entry Saturday, April 17, 2010, 10:30 PM - Back in Houston finding a place to stay.

Well, here we are back in Houston.

It was a real struggle getting down here. The day before we left I had to go into the hospital in Boise with a severe sickness...they think it was either a severe case of stomach flu or some type of infection. It really threw

me off my mark. I wondered whether I was going to be able to make it down to Houston at all. On Sunday (last, 4/11) I felt a little better and we scheduled to leave Monday after they released me...but then Monday morning I felt much worse again. Hot and cold...sweating one moment freezing the next. Couldn't eat. I finally had to tell the Dr. I didn't think I could be released Monday and that was a real blow. So much time and effort had been put into the upcoming surgery schedule and medically, that surgery was the path to a potential medical treatment that could alleviate this cancer.

But as always, everything is in God's Hands. We do our best and then wait upon His will to be revealed and it is up to us to acknowledge that will and its goodness.

But then, a thought from above, came into my mind to remember the lesson I learned earlier in this entire episode about anxiety and depression and I asked the Dr. about it. He indicated he supposed some of my latest symptoms could be related to that and so he called one of the oncologists and talked to him about my tumor and its impact. It was Dr. Zuckerman whom we had originally talked to in Idaho there in Meridian, St. Luke's. He agreed.

So, they proscribed some concoction to address the anxiety and within the hour I felt MUCH better. They kept me around for 2-3 more hours and then released me. Gail and I left that afternoon.

We drove all the way across America again. The last day I felt pretty bad and Gail; drove...but it was miraculous that we were able to get away that Monday and ultimately arrive here in Houston.

We had been and continue to concern ourselves with finances. What we have taken from savings, borrowed, and what has been sent to us (and thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your kindness and generosity), did not seem like it would cover the types of needs I would be having after the surgery during the long rehab.

We were going to start just staying in the hotel across from MD Anderson but did not think we would have the funds for that entire time. Then, literally, as we drove into the Houston City Limits, we got a call from a place we had put ourselves on several months ago for a waiting list. Faith Lutheran Church has a ministry outreach to cancer patients at MD Anderson. They maintain a house with six rooms that share common eating and common areas with individual rooms and bathrooms. We did not feel too good about that particular arrangement, particularly when I would be in the hospital and Gail alone for that month, and then also for the type of facilities I will need after surgery.

But they also have two complete apartments, ground level, fully-handicapped outfitted and secure entries within their own church parking only 3 1/2 miles from MD Anderson. That was what we had hoped for when putting in on that list...but there are only two of them and they are so needed by so many. Well, as we drove into Houston, one of those very apartments had come up and was available. We literally drove there, signed the paper work and are now in one of those at an unbelievably reasonable rate.

I am humbled beyond words...the Lord's Hand is in this, for His purposes, and I confess it to all...to show His hand in each of our lives is enough.

We hope to be able to stay here the whole time but will have to see. As it is the good Lord answered our prayers and the prayers of so many others in this travail.

Now we have a VERY busy week full of tests meetings, scans, etc. By Wednesday or Thursday we should know if any other cancer has developed. As you can imagine we are anxious about that...but also know that it is in the hands of our loving Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. If none has developed, then a week from Tuesday

I will embark on the daunting course of the major surgeries, long recovery, long rehab, and proton radiation in an effort to medically treat and halt the cancer.

I will try, as I am feeling up to it, to get back on these updates later in the week and then just before surgery once again.

And...once again, our heartfelt thanks to all who are praying for us, encouraging us, helping us, and exerting their faith on our behalf. Our words cannot express our feelings, but our hearts can and we love you as brothers and sisters in Christ and children of our mutual Father in Heaven.

In Christ,

Jeff

25th Entry Thursday, April 22, 2010, 9:30 PM - Five days before first surgery. Plans and prayers.

We have now visited with the surgical teams that will be involved in our upcoming surgery, and have conducted and been through all of the CT scans and MRI tests. It has been a whirlwind of activity and I have to tell you, when you are feeling the tumor's effect on you, and feeling the side effects of the pain meds and other meds they have you on it is not an easy thing to go through.

But, we have done so and today we got the word back from Dr. Rhines.

No new cancer at this point! And the cancer that is there in my sacrum and the small spots in the ilium has not grown appreciably, certainly no more than they would expect.

This is good news from our perspective and we are grateful that the Lord God, in His Mercy, established His will accordingly. It means that our surgery can go forward with the best prospect available for slowing, or potentially even stopping the disease.

In the past two days I have signed away my consent for every way imaginable that my life might be ended or severely effected by these procedures imaginable. The Drs., each of them have now explained in exquisite detail what they will be doing. Again, I say, it is a miracle in and of itself what they can attempt through modern medicine these days. Such truths as they have gathered, in my faith, comes from God. All truth comes forth to mankind from God through His Holy Spirit for our benefit. These dedicated professionals, who are dedicated to serving, saving, and helping their fellowman (which in and of itself is God's work), have been richly blessed with a great measure of truth which they apply to the good of others. There is a special, Christ-like spirit about it that radiates from their Christ-like desire to help others and I thank God in Heaven for it.

As it is now, I have a sigmoidoscopy tomorrow morning. This will take several hours and will help determine the shape and functioning and position of my rectum for the surgery. Saur dray and Sunday we have free, but then Monday morning we are preadmitted and then screened for the proper anesthesia for the surgery. This will be another critical process to determine what anesthesia to give me so my body will react well to it. Given what all they intend, it is important that we do not have an adverse reaction.

Then, about 5:30 AM on Tuesday (April 27th) I will be admitted and my 1st surgery will occur around noon. It will be 6-8 hours and will position my veins and vascular components where they are least vulnerable, and most accessible as needed for the second surgery. They will also take one set of my abs (one of my three packs) with all three muscles, its meat and tissue and set them aside with their own natural blood-supply to be used later in the 2nd operation to fill the gap left by the removed sacrum. Dr. Rhines and Dr. Garvey (the plastic surgeon) has

proven that this procedure significantly lessens infection, blood clots, and rejection. They will also take one of my tibia bones from a leg and prepare it to be structure that will back-up and fuse the metal they will put in during the 2nd surgery. That bone will need its own blood supply too, so they will strip a major vein from my ankle up to my thigh to be used for that purpose. Ultimately this will provide the needed structure...my own bone and tissue fed by my blood, to fuse and strengthen the titanium that otherwise, over a period of years, would come lose. Finally, they position cutting saws in precise place from the anterior so they can get at them in the 2nd surgery to make the cuts to the sacrum

Then, three days later (the 30th), they perform the second surgery from the posterior. After opening me up, they clear the area around the sacrum and then make the cuts...delicately working with whatever nerve roots and endings they can preserve. Once the cuts are made and the sacrum removed, they then fill the void with the flap created from my one set of abs, and then create the titanium/bone structure to rebuild the structural component to carry my weight. This operation can take over 12 hours and if it looks to be going too long to the point of causing any fatigue with the team...then they would finish it in a 3rd surgery three days later.

So this is my path. I know it the path the Lord has set me on...a path to bolster my faith and for me to witness His goodness in ALL things, that His Will is best for me, for my family, for my friends...in short, His will is best for us all because it allows hearts to be touched and minds to be swayed, of their own free will, towards Him and to salvation in His Son Jesus Christ.

I hope to be able to write more before these surgeries...but if not, know I go in with my eyes wide open, and I do so praising my Father in Heaven and His Son. I know their paths lead to good. I know their paths lead to happiness and eternal joy and salvation in Jesus Christ.

"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy way acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Proverbs 3: 5-8

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me." Phil 4:13

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Isaiah 26:3

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 12:28-30

I testify to all...particularly to my own children and grand-children, that these things are true. They are the fundamental truths of the ages, the boon to individuals, pillars to families, and strength to nations...including the liberty of nations. Hold fast to them and be strong and be free...depart from them and fall into bondage, either personal or to tyrants, it is the same.

Once again my eternal thanks and gratitude to all who have helped my family and myself as we have faced this difficulty. There are so many to name...and the crisis and its impact if far from over. In fact, in many ways, it is just now, at this date, finally getting started.

Just the same. It has been so humbling and at the same time so inspiring. We live in a good land, full of good people. The path has not been lost. Have faith in your fellow man, and in your fellow Americans! May God in Heaven bless you each for helping us, may He pour at the blessings tenfold on you and yours. I know He will...it is how He blesses His Children. I look forward to the day, not terribly distant in this life, if He so wills it, when I can again return to helping others in this same manner again, as I have been helped.

...and if not, then so be it. I will greet you in the clouds when I return with my Savior. For as surely as I breathe, the great Redeemer, full of mercy, love, and charity will return to this earth one day and cleanse it of all hurt, heartache, misery and sin. I look forward to that day, whether I see Him come in the air, or whether I am there with Him.

I will write again as soon as I am able. Watch for updates from my dear, wonderful wife...the love of my life, Gail, or from others.

Sincerely, in humility, and in liberty and Christ,

Jeff Head It will probably sometime before I can write again...but I wanted to get this out to everyone before I go under the knife tomorrow morning:

26th Entry Monday, April 26, 2010, 2:00 PM - Just before Surgeries begin - letter to my family

Gail, Katie, Nathan, Rachel, Chad, Becki, Toni, Jeff, Jolene, Jared, and Braedon, Riley, Kasen, Kyra, Kenna, and Gracie (and Mike and Kelly), Lee and Brenda and Family, Paul and Adolis and Family...and all who have prayed for, encouraged us, and lent us your faith,

Several years ago when I had what I thought was major surgery, I wrote individual letters to each of my children.

As it turned out, that colonoscopy surgery was not nearly as dangerous or serious as it could have been, and certainly not as serious as what I face now.

Most of you (older folks anyhow) know the details of this condition I face now from my journal. It is out there on Facebook, on my own site, and on Free Republic for others to read later (Just google "My Sacral Chordoma"). But, suffice it to say that over the next few weeks, starting tomorrow, I am facing very serious life threatening surgery to remove a malignant cancer tumor in my sacrum. Even if completely successful, for which we hope and pray, it will be life-altering.

Many prayers, a lot of faith, and wonderful encouragement and generous help has helped us reach this point. I am so grateful, beyond my ability to express it for that help, encouragement, and particularly the prayers and faith. They have sustained us and gotten us here now to where I can enter the arena of this trial and have the real fight for my life begin.

My 1st surgery will be tomorrow around 7 or 8 AM and will last 8-10 hours. Then on Friday, April 30th, they will conduct the 2nd part, where they actually remove the Chordoma. If necessary, if that takes too long, they now tell me they may split that into two parts...but they hope to be done sometime late Friday afternoon or early evening. Then comes the long recovery, rehabilitation, and then followed by special proton radiation treatments.

I want each of you to know in so doing, how much I love you.

Gail and I have been married 32 years yesterday. I count my relationship with her, next to my relationship with my Savior and Father in Heaven as the most beautiful blessing and gift, the greatest honor and privilege of my life. I cannot put into words how much I love her, how much she has taught me, and how grateful I am for her love. Simple stated, she is the love of my life and the one, as our Father commanded, to whom I cleave, and none else.

Those same type of feeling extend in love to all of you throughout my family. First through my parents and siblings who all helped form my life and thinking, but then very importantly to my children ALL of whom have taught me far more about life than I believe I have taught them. My love for each of you, despite whatever differences we may have ever had, is eternal, and I look forward to the day we are all gathered, in God's time, in the eternities together where we can share one another's company and joy. My darling princess, my precious angel, my bay pony, my 1st born son, and my go getter, Jared...and now all six grandkids

Please please, I plead with each of you, to do whatever it takes to make that same love possible in this life for each of you. That blessing, made possible by the love and atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ, is the great gift to mankind and the pearl of great price we should all strive for.

There is no ill, there is no mistake, there is no wall, there is no boundary, there is no weakness we cannot overcome with His help in order to make that eternity of joy possible. He has broken them all...all bands of hate, misunderstanding, even of death on our behalf and I pray each of you, from oldest to youngest, will simply study His life, His teachings for how to live life, and then try it. Make His life your own. Come to Him, seek His forgiveness and the efficacy of His gift, and then do all you can to live like He would live...helping others wherever you can

He said,

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

I testify to each of you, I promise you each, that this is true. No matter how dire the circumstance, no matter what we face, we can overcome it through Christ. Individually as we work ourselves, together as couples and families if we all work together.

I have seen it...I have experienced it myself. At this hour I have no reason but to speak the truth to you out of my love for you each and the importance of these truths...and I so speak, I so testify, and I so witness now.

Now, we hope that the surgery goes fine. I have asked all of the Dr.s if they believe in God. I am asking them to look for miracles in their work and let God in Heaven guide their hands. If they do, His will shall be done. And whatever that will is will be what is right. That is another critical part of life...understanding whose will we should seek, and then making His will our own...and doing it of our own free will so it is in fact our will as well. I know that this principle in life leads to happiness and joy. It allows us to weather any storm, and come through into the sunshine and clam on the far side.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I close. Looking forward to that calm weather on the far side. Whether the far side of this immediate travail and years of living with each of you on this earth with Gail, visiting grand-kids, serving missions, etc...or, awaiting for you over yonder, on the far side of life, where my Dear Father and other loved ones wait even now.

I pray it will be the former...but know that if it is the latter that the time will pass quickly in the Lord's service.

All you grandkids...I long to sing to you once again in the evening as I put you to sleep. Remember the words.

"Jesus said love every one, treat them kindly too. If your heart is filled with love, others will love you."

"Cause Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world."

"Jesus loves me this I know, for the scriptures tell me so. Little ones to Him belong, they are weak, but He is strong. "Yes Jesus loves me, Yes Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me.... "My papa tells me so...and Nanna tells me so, they both they love me so."

Continue to pray for us, particularly for Gail (for Nanna). She has been my great strength and friend in this, after our Savior. In fact, she has exemplified the Savior to me though all of this and I am so humbled by it. For all those praying for us, once again I say, I pray, in turn, that the good Lord returns the blessing on your head 100 fold. He shall. I know that He is always true to us...always. All of His plans and activities in our life build us up, build up His kingdom of love and joy, and bring men and women to Him forever if they will but respond to His call.

These same truths are what gives us everything that is good in life...including our liberty. Principles that move a person away from these truths, of sanctity for life, of love of family, of the essential nature of fundamental moral principle and Christian faith in our society...askew. They will destroy liberty and hurt the family, life, and many of the greatest gifts and joys our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ desire for us.

I love you all, and long to be in your company again. The good Lord willing, we shall, and soon...and if not, then as surely as the sun rises in the east, we will be together again in the hereafter.

Your husband, father, brother, friend, grandfather, and fellow-laborer and servant in Christ and in liberty,

Jeff Head

27th Entry June 30, 2010, 10:00 PM -Surgeries Completed Successfully

I cannot begin to explain all that has happened these last many weeks. The miraculous apartment we got from the Lutheran Faith House literally as we drove into Houston, the three major surgeries with the second being 18 hours and going through 46 units of blood and almost bleeding to death, there on the operating table and the miracle that prevented it, the three weeks in the ICU and the pain, hallucinations, fatigue...but also Gail's angelic care staying with me that whole time, sleeping on small chairs and pull out sleepers. The weeks in normal hospital rooms discovering my disabilities and what a long hard road back I had...and Gail's continued angelic care, every day for 10-12 hours.

The many prayers offered up and answered. The great surprise of Jeff and Jolene visiting me by surprise for my birthday and father's day (something I shall never forget). Learning great patience as I took baby steps learning to use a walker.

The many great cards and messages of encouragement and love and support (all of which Gail hung and stuck to the walls all over my room), the thousands of prayers lifting me up and sustaining me. The unbelievably professional, knowledgeable, kind and compassionate and understanding staff, nurses, aides, doctors, and others at MD Anderson, and now...

Great news.

My hospital release is tomorrow! Followed by out-patient therapy at Tirr, one of the top rehab facilities in the nation! The rehab Dr. here at MD Anderson did his residency there & our friend, Dustin Morgan, who is also a nurse here in the ICU, suggested it. He was guided by the Spirit to do so, because the Dr. here immediately latched onto the idea, and got it set up within hours.

They'll focus up to 5 days a week & 4 hours a day on my specific needs and the insurance has already approved

up to 50 visits at this very prestigious and hard to get into facility. My initial review with them is Friday w/rehab starting early next week. Although my co-pay for these visits is rather high at \$75.00, I believe we have it covered enough to take advantage of this up to 6 weeks before coming home to Idaho.

What a blessing. Thank you all for your continued prayers because they continue to miraculously reveal God's Hand in this for His own purposes. I'm just glad I'll get to spend more time with my dear wife, my kids, & those precious grandkids.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

28th Entry July 27th, 2010, 10:00 PM - Release from hospital. Progress on bone grafts, learning to walk, etc.

This update lists diary entries I have made since the first of the month, which I also posted to my Facebook page/wall.

Today we met with Dr. Fu, the rehab Dr. from MD Anderson who referred us to TIRR and our aftercare contact. We also met with the Pain Management Dr. and all were amazed at our progress. It seems the miracles of this procedure and how it has turned out to this point simply keep coming.

At some point, I will have a link to some of the MRI images of my skeletal area around my lower back showing all the hardware and my Fibula from my right leg now in place in my back. Dr. Fu showed us these today. It is amazing, the titanium cage they built around my lower 3-4 vertebrae and the pins mounted into those vertebrae, into my back bone, into each of my hips and into that fibula to hold it all together.

Here are the journal entries:

7-5: Took five baby steps today on my own, without the walker, though it was in front of me to grab onto if I needed it. It may not seem like much...but I'm very happy with it and on my way!

7-7: 12 baby steps yesterday and waiting for TIRR to call with my rehab schedule. I hope they call today. As it is, we continue here. Gail is about to take me out for a morning (but muggy) walk with my walker. She follows behind with a wheel chair so I can sit and rest when necessary.

7-9: TIRR, the rehab facility I will be using (one of the top four in the country) called early this morning and my first rehab sessions are today from 1-3! Then 5 days per week thereafter! I am so grateful and feel this will help me make rapid progress. I did my sit down shower...except today, using the handrails I was able to stand in the shower for a... couple of minutes. Oh the things we take for granted!

Also, I have a video of me on the "Tilt" table. It's a device they use to get you up from the bed when you have been down for weeks. In my case 8-9 weeks after 3 major surgeries.

That whole experience was not easy...but it was necessary to get me off the bed and used to standing again. I was too weak to stand on my own without their help and that strap at the time.

But my own ...angel, Gail, encouraged me thru it all.

7-11: New day, new week coming, and time to be about serious rehab. All five days this week, and I can already feel myself getting a little stronger each day.

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in Him." Nahum 1:7 KJV

7-15: I took a video of myself while Gail was out shopping. It shows me using the walker in my apartment, and taking a few, halting baby steps on my own. When compared to the video of 6-11-2010, when I was still in the hospital just a month ago, the progress is very significant and obvious. I hope the next month brings similar progress.

Rehabs been eating me alive this week. Tired and painful. So many nerves, muscles, tendons, etc. were injured in the surgeries that removed the tumor and saved my life...now it's the long hard road back helping them repair and get strong again.

7-20: Today, for the 2nd time, I walked backwards using walking sticks in rehab. It looks easy, but it is a LOT of work for me. Yesterday I did 286 ft. with two rest stops, today I did almost 350 ft. with one rest. Gail, my sweetheart, took the video.

This exercise really strengthens the hips and the muscles associated with walking.

VIDEO LINKS:

Jeff in hospital on tilt table, 1st time at 90 degrees (6/8/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=410259679068>

Jeff in apt w/walker, & taking some baby steps (7/15/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=412334544068>

Jeff with walking sticks, walking backwards (7/20/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=413951974068>

Jeff at TIRR Gym walking (7/24/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415145899068>

Jeff at store in scooter cart (7/24/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415148619068>

Jeff gets to drive his own truck for the 1st time (7/26/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415809724068>

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

29th Entry August 23rd, 2010, 10:00 PM - Intensive rehabilitation continues. Dr. Lieberman a great help

Time continues to pass since the surgeries and the hospital. I have now been out of the hospital about 7 weeks and in rehab for over five weeks. It's been over three months since my last surgery on May 11th.

We are staying here in Houston a little longer than we had planned. The therapist I am working with at TIRR felt, and we felt that I would benefit significantly from continuing to work with him. He is a PHD level physical therapist and is helping me tremendously.

My difficulties arise not just from the atrophy of the muscles while in the hospital, but even more from the

injuries they sustained while being cut through to accomplish the surgical removal of my entire sacrum and then the rebuild of my sacral area with titanium and my own fibula bone. Virtually every muscle in my lower back and hips were cut through. The attachment points for the glutes on the sacrum no longer exist so there will always be some inherent weakness due to it. This is why my rehab, especially for walking is so slow and hard and painful.

I am having to figure out how to use those muscles again, ones we take for granted in our normal life...and a bunch I didn't even know I had!

Here is a picture of the rebuilt area, so you can tell how extensive it was. They basically built a support structure around my lower three vertebrae and fused them with it, then extended it down into the sacral area and tied it to the new bone and the hips:

JEFF'S SACRAL REBUILD

Anyhow, the Dr.s agreed, we got approval for the extension at work, and the good Christian people, my brothers and sisters here at Faith Lutheran are allowing us to stay longer than the four month limit they normally impose. What a blessing and answer to prayer. I marvel at how doors have opened and things fallen into place for us and know it is due to the faith, prayers, love, and work of so many good people...and most of all, my Father in Heaven and Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So, we will leave Houston now on September 25th, drive to Denton that day and go to Church that weekend there...then Monday morning the 27th leave for Idaho. We hope to take four days and arrive home on the 30th of September, and then I would go back to work on October 4th, a Monday.

Lots stands between then and now, but I am making progress in my rehab. It has been difficult...and painful...but I am slowly coming forward. They have me walking with a cane and I am having to start all over at making progress in terms of distance and stamina, though I already have more than I had when I left the hospital for sure.

Here is a list of all the videos I have made to date since the hospital. They are on Facebook:

Jeff in hospital on tilt table, 1st time at 90 degrees (6/8/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=410259679068>

Jeff in apt w/walker, & taking some baby steps (7/15/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=412334544068>

Jeff with walking sticks, walking backwards (7/20/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=413951974068>

Jeff at TIRR Gym walking (7/24/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415145899068>

Jeff at store in scooter cart (7/24/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415148619068>

Jeff gets to drive his own truck for the 1st time (7/26/2010)
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=415809724068>

Jeff working in rehab without the walker (hard work this) (8/6/2010)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=419079244068>

Jeff's hardware from his surgical rebuild. Amazing! (Posted 8/8/2010)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=420202109068>

Jeff walking on his own in the apartment. Short distance, but gratifying. (8/10/2010)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=420649599068>

Jeff using various canes and assists in Rehab, ready to move away from the walker. (8/12/2010)

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=422290409068>>

I know I have listed some of these before, but I wanted to get them all in one place for those reading.

We had our first three month review last week with MRIs, CT Scans, blood work, etc. We had a follow-up visit today. Everything looks good in the surgery area. The bones are beginning to fuse and the hardware is doing fine. No new cancer down there, but at six months they will do a more thorough check in other areas of my body. Dr. Rhines is an unbelievably talented neurosurgeon and a fine man...as is Dr. Garvey, the plastics/bone rebuild surgeon. Dr. Rhines did a phenomenal job with my nerves that has allowed me to walk, drive, etc.

There is still a lot of nerve related pain, and bone pain, and some of it will probably always be there. There is also the entire issue of bowel and bladder management.

In my case, the valve on the bladder has been left open. When any appreciable amount gets in there, it just leaks out. This means we have to take extra measures to catch it...and we do, but it also means every couple of hours if I use my muscles, I can force it out and not have to catheter at all, which is a great blessing because otherwise I would have to self-catheter 3-4 times a day.

Bowel management is difficult. We are trying the proscribed routine with mixed results. It's something you just live with and be prepared for. It's not what we imagined for life in these years...but it is life. I will be able to spend time with my wife, my kids and their kids. Jeff and Jolene (our number four child and eldest son and his wife) just announced their first child coming in February 2011. I am grateful I will be here for it.

Jared (our youngest child, who just turned 21) will come home from his mission for our church (LDS 2 Year Mission) in April and I will be here for that. I am so grateful, despite the disabilities, that I will be here for those types of things and be available to help, to experience, and enjoy them with my family for however long the good Lord sees fit, because it is, and always has been in His hands.

As I have said so often, I have so many people to thank and could never adequately thank them for their help, encouragement, faith and prayers. My wife has been an angel and I am so grateful, humbled to tears, and in love with her. Being raised in Texas, there is a saying that you should "Marry up." Well, I married up...way up, and I thank God for it. The best I can do, with any of this gratitude, is to stand to and help others as I have been helped...just as the golden rule teaches us all.

I thank my Father in Heaven and His Son most of all, for all of these things. I am so grateful to partake of Christ's sacrament again each Sunday and renew the promise and covenants I have made with them. I urge all people everywhere, whoever may read this account, to turn to them in your life, at all times. If you will, you will find that in times of hardship and difficulty they are there for you. As you see, that does not mean the hardship and difficulty will not come...it does mean you will be empowered, whatever happens, through their matchless power and love, love, to have the strength and ability to get through it according to their will, and either

continue here, or return to them there...both of which are blessings. Maybe just barely, you will get through...but to get through nonetheless, and to thank God for it on the other side.

I will provide more updates as I make progress and experience things related to my recovery that may help others, either who are going through similar experiences, are to understand those who do.

Sincerely, and as always, in Christ,

Jeff

30th Entry October 5th, 2010 3 PM - Back home and back to work

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped, prayed, encouraged and exercised their faith on our behalf.

The healing is progressing amazingly. I am walking using a cane and can take dozens of steps without a cane at all now. My heart is filled to overflowing.

Today was my first day back at work. I will work half days and build up to full days over a 3-4 week period.

It felt good to be there.

Though I still have a long ways to go in walking normally, and though I have handicaps that I will live with the rest of my life, I am amazed at the goodness and merci of a loving Savior and Father in Heaven who have lightened my load and burden and buoyed me up and carried me along for their purposes.

I am led to exclaim, as Job of old, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

In either case there is the blessing and their will if we will have faith and look for it and then recognize, profess and live it.

We arrived back in Idaho and home on Thursday, September 30th after taking five days to drive from Houston.

I have a photo album online on Facebook here of that drive home, and have several videos I posted of our progress which I will also link too.

TRIP HOME TO IDAHO

Video: Clayton, NM and Capulin National Monument - 2010-0928

Video: Entering Idaho - 2010-0929

Video: Homecoming in Idaho - 2010-0930

This last pic says a lot of how I feel and forward I looked to getting home. I believe grand parents have a special calling to witness to and influence their grandkids...through love and gentle persuasion. I intend to do that my life long...however long the good Lord keeps me here, as well as to the rest of my family and friends...as well as do all I can to help our Republic restore all that has been lost and taken away by the wiles of evil and conspiring individuals.

The miracle worked for me medically is amazing and due to the will of the Lord and the faith and prayers of so many. But the miracles of faith and spiritual healing that the Lord is working on so many through this and other similar experiences are the true miracle and everlasting.

Sincerely, and yours in Christ, Jesus,

Jeff

31st Entry December 21, 2010 10 PM - One year since diagnosis

A year ago today I was diagnosed with a sacral Chordoma. It is a very rare, very serious, malignant bone cancer tumor. In my case it required the complete removal of my sacrum bone (that attaches your hip bones to your spine) and a rebuild of my pelvic area down in Houston, Texas, at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. That was accomplished in late April and early May through three major surgeries. I was released from the hospital around July 1st in Houston, and then stayed on in Houston in fairly intensive rehabilitation through September, 2010. I returned home on September 30th and started back to work on October 5th. I am now working full time.

The last year has been life altering to say the least.

I wanted to sincerely, and from the bottom of my heart thank everyone who has encouraged us (me, my wife Gail and our family), prayed for us, helped us (with shared leave, funds, or in any other way), and exercised their faith on our behalf.

To date, the good Lord has determined that I should stick around a little longer on this earth, and I am back at work full-time, walking less and less with the cane (and it is significant that I can even walk at all) and moving forward with life. In the end, I give all credit to God above, but must also thank so many others who have had a hand in it, especially my dear wife who has been angelic to me throughout this entire experience. I am one of those individuals very, very blessed to have married "up"...far beyond anything I could have imagined.

Here are a couple of videos of me walking without my cane recently that I thought those who have been following this might be interested in:

2010-1207 walking at work without the cane

http://www.facebook.com/JeffHead?v=app_2392950137#!/video/video.php?v=471216024068

2010-1217 walking into our Area Office to a meeting without the cane

http://www.facebook.com/JeffHead?v=app_2392950137#!/video/video.php?v=471216024068

The recovery and rehabilitation process has been long and difficult and it continues to this day. In addition to the pure physical difficulty, there are emotional difficulties as well that I have become so familiar with, which troubles I had never experienced with respect to such worry and concern over my ability to provide for my family and progress and recover to be able to do that fully. As time goes on, and it becomes apparent that though you are recovering, and that that recovery has been miraculous...there are things that will never be the same and that will have to be lived with throughout the remainder of your life, there is an emotional impact.

I want everyone to know that that emotional pain is real, and at times it can be debilitating...just as debilitating as the physical injuries.

I am blessed with a lot of help in this regard, both from family and friends, and spiritual. It has helped buoy me up through these experiences...but I want to make sure and note for all, and without any shame in doing so, that

the emotional struggle to come to grips with a new life is real and it is a deep, hard struggle. Please, please, never take it for granted and never forget it when you see people or know people who have gone through such trauma. If they have something to do (like a job), if they have something to focus on (like family, faith, hobbies etc.), if they have love in their lives (knowing of God's and Christ's love for you, family, friends...a pet for example), then they can be helped significantly in making progress and ultimately recovering from those scars as well.

I needed to say that...it is a part of this I have not talked a lot about, but a part that is real and important to understand.

One of the areas that helps is (as I said) support from family and friends, and having love in your life. One of the sweetest parts of remaining here in life at this time, as I go through this recovery, is being able to sit with, talk with, play with, and influence my grandkids for the good. I literally held onto and looked forward to that...and now we are living it. We have six grandkids now and two more on the way by spring, so I will get to see those two as well...and hopefully more as the years go by.

Anyhow, on this "anniversary", thanks to each and every one who has helped, encouraged, and in any way thought and wished the best for us. Particularly the prayers...I can tell you that they all helped through some very difficult hours, days, weeks, and months. I cannot adequately express or repay...but I can do all in my power, as I am able, to express my gratitude and try to help others.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

32nd Entry March 3, 2011 12 PM Progress at home

A little time has passed between this entry and my last one. During that time I have continued to make progress in my rehabilitation, and to continue to mentally and emotionally come to terms with my new life and condition.

As to my rehab, I am walking pretty much all the time now without any assisted device, including my cane. I am finding that I am getting more and more stamina as the weeks pass as to how long and how far I can walk, but progress and improvement are definitely being made, however slowly. I still have a bit of a hitch in my left hip as I walk, and it drops down when I take a step because there is continued weakness in that joint. There may always be. As time goes on and those muscles slowly build, it will improve. In addition, on my right side, my foot itself has a greater loss of sensation than my left and my calf muscle is weaker there. Getting up on tip toes still alludes me, but I am working with that every day as I go up and down the long stairs at work and again, making slow progress.

Here's links to a couple of videos of me walking in February without the cane around town:

Jeff walking without the cane at the Post Office in Emmett, ID

Jeff walking their new dog at the vet's office in Emmett, ID

It's really heartening for me to see these videos and then compare them to my progress last June and July (of 2010) as I came out of the hospital. Whenever I am frustrated or think the progress is too slow, I just compare the videos to see how far I have come.

One of the most important reasons for this update was because last week we went to Houston and MD Anderson Cancer Center for our next big checkup.

The flight down and sitting in airports and on the plane on those seats was not too comfortable for me, and I had quite a bit of anxiety...more about the trip itself and dealing with my disabilities, particularly bladder and bowel function, away from home and in the hotel. But we did it, and my wonderful, dear, lovely wife, Gail was there for me, as she has unfailingly been throughout this entire process...along with the prayers, faith and love of so many friends, and I was able to get through all of that.

The MRIs, CT Scans, blood work and consultations all went GREAT! On Thursday, February 24th, we met with Dr. Rhines.

He was almost ecstatic and very excited as he explained to us, and then showed us on the computer the progress my bone fusions are making. The bone fusions are ahead of schedule and doing better than expected.

There was no new cancer in the surgical area or the soft tissue and this was a hugely positive and good report as you can imagine. I still have three very small areas of Chordoma cancer in my hip bones (ilium) but they were there when they discovered and removed the large tumor in my entire sacrum. The Dr. is not too worried about those, and did in fact see another very small spot on my ilium that is similar. But they are all growing, if anything, slower than expected and are very slow growing to begin with...as in years.

In September, at the next checkup, we will determine how to treat those. If there are no more that arise, we will use stereo-tactical radiation, which is a very high dosage, focused very tightly and accurately at a very small area. That process can be done in a day or two once they get everything programmed and set up and has proven effective. If a bunch more show up, we would use the general proton radiation, which is much broader and a longer term (7 weeks of treatment, twice a day, and five days a week for seven weeks). It has also shown itself to be effective, particularly in retarding growth. We hope that is not necessary because there is risk of complications from it, particularly in weakening the bone.

Dr. Rhines and Gisela were very excited to see me walking and feel I am making very good progress there as well.

All in all it was a VERY positive report and trip. We went out and ate at Luby's Cafeteria in celebration and it was very good. We returned home on Friday, February 25th, 2011.

So, we are thankful to our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, for their tender mercies to us in these circumstances. It is not what I would have picked...but it has been for the best. Our love and faith and the faith of so many others has grown and that is one of the most important things that can happen in life...a price cannot be placed upon it.

Every circumstance we face, particularly the difficult ones, gives us the opportunity to grow more, to love more, and to develop our faith. It is what God intends for us and is what life is all about. I am thankful for that knowledge and am secure in my faith of Jesus Christ and know that one day, in His time, we will all experience a glorious resurrection where the ills and sicknesses and ails of this world will be behind us, and we will benefit from the love, faith, and experiences we have had and that benefit will be forever.

In the meantime, I will continue to document this experience to all who will read it. Ultimately, perhaps starting soon, I intend to turn it into a book. I believe a book about all of this will benefit others as much as, and perhaps even more than these blogs. At any rate, that is my thinking at this point. It is called, "An Unforgiving Temper,"

by Gail Head. Here's the link:

AN UNFORGIVING TEMPER, by Gail Head

God bless you all, and again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you all for your encouragement, your faith, your prayers, and your love.

Sincerely,

Jeff

33rd Entry June 19th, 2011 8:30 AM - A year since surgeries completed...doing well despite disabilities.

I thought it time to make another entry into my Chordoma Journal.

Time passes quickly, particularly as we are involved in our daily routines of life. It is no different after such major events and crisis like what I have experienced.

Yet, things are not the same. Life has changed for me and my family and we continue to deal with it as best we can with each other's help and support and the tender mercies of a loving Father in Heaven and His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. The faith and outlook we have on the future...and indeed towards one another and those around us, guide us in these circumstances like they do in all others.

A year ago today I was still in the hospital at MD Anderson. Having completed all three of my surgeries between April 27th and May 9th. I had been in the ICU for several weeks but ultimately was given a normal, private room. June 19th found me in that room, having started my in-hospital physical and occupation therapy. I had been through the tilt board that took a week or so to get me to a 90 degree standing position and had finally started slowly, painstakingly walking with a walker and the help of my therapists. June 18th, the day before today a year ago, was also the day before my birthday.

I remember it very well. I was walking around the nurse's station...the first time I had gone around it more than once.

In such situations your perspective of time and distance changes. It could only have been about 50-60 feet around that nurse's station...but oh it seemed so much further! I would take little rests as needed and as I came around for the second time, about to start a third...I was so proud of myself and so grateful. Gail was not there and I was a little sad. She had indicated she needed to go out and send something to her father for Father's Day.

Little did I know!

Next thing I knew, someone was standing behind me and said, "Hello Pops," I turned around and could not believe my eyes. There was my son, Jeff and his wife, Jolene. They had flown to Houston to surprise me for my birthday and Father's Day. I literally broke down and wept. What a surprise and how grateful I was.

I shared with them my great accomplishment as I went around the third time.

Now, here I am at home, about to celebrate another birthday and Father's Day today. My 55th birthday.

Today we will have four of our five children here, three of them with their spouses and we'll have seven of our eight grandchildren here. What a blessing! Katie and her husband, Nathan, and their three boys moved back into the Boise area yesterday. We helped them move in (actually I did not do much more than lend moral support

and carry a couple of light things). How happy we are. Just need to get Rachel over here now. As it is, we have four of five living nearby. I love my family so. And how grateful I am to be able to see them all...for however long the good Lord deems it here on this earth.

I have made progress and walk now everywhere without a cane. My leg, and particularly hip strength in my left leg is still not what it should be...I do not believe it will ever be what it was.

My bowel and bladder management (and I have to do this daily, painstakingly because of the nerves that were cut to take out my sacrum), is doing very well as these things go. It is still one of the hardest things for me and a source of constant worry, despite the fact that it is going so well as these things go.

I find that worries and concerns get to me much easier than they did before this experience. I suppose my body chemistry has changed. I am so thankful for a loving wife, who cares so well for me and about me and helps me get through these minor crisis...and family that does the same...and particularly, as stated above, for a loving Father in Heaven and His Son, whose plan of atonement salvation helps me understand that it really will be okay, and that I have important things to do and can carry on. I know one of the reasons I have been preserved is to witness to others, particularly going through such difficulties that there is help...there is comfort...there is relief to the soul. I intend to do that every chance I get...like now.

We will be going back to MD Anderson in September for my next "checkup." They will check for any new cancer near the site of the surgery or in my soft tissue. We are very hopeful in that regard...but things will be according to God's will and we will face whatever challenge when the time comes. We will also decide what to do about the three small tumors in my hip bones. They are Chordomas like the one that was taken out, but they are very small and very slow growing. If there aren't more of them, we will probably handle it with what they call stereotactical radiation using protons. This would be a 2-3 day affair where each one is zapped with a very precise, very heavy dose, precisely onto the tumor.

Amazing technology.

If there are several more of these small tumors, or if some cancer develops in my soft tissue, we would probably use the broader proton radiation which lasts 6 weeks, five days a week, and involves thirty treatments. We hope to avoid that. Because of the dosages and the more broad nature of it, you can only do it once in a life time. It also has potential significant side effects. We hope to avoid that.

While in Houston in September, I have been asked to make a presentation at "Chordoma Day," and annual event they have for all of their Chordoma patients. A lot of folks will be there and they discuss and bring out so much new info. I will be presenting with two very distinguished men, that I respect so much. Dr. Lieberman, the PhD Therapist from TIRR who worked with me, and Dr. Rhines, my neurosurgeon who did my surgery and who is the head of the Spine Department at MD Anderson. They will present first, about my case, the surgery and the therapy necessary...and then I will speak as a patient and what it was like and what one can and should do to prepare and then cope with the results and the blessings of survival. See...another opportunity to help and I know if I am humble and seek the help of the Lord, he will bless me with His Spirit so that presentation can touch and help others.

In the meantime...tomorrow I am back to work. Another great blessing. Since getting back last October 1st, three months after release from the MD Anderson and at the conclusion of my intensive therapy at TIRR in Houston, I have been blessed to work full time. It has not always been easy at all...but it has been a blessing. Both for our finances and for me, keeping me involved and focused...which is very important. Again, thank you to all who have prayed, given comfort, encouraged, helped, thought about us and called or visited. Every one of those things and so many more have helped more than I can explain. I pray I can help others similarly.

Again, thanks mostly to my dear, wonderful wife and children, and those wonderful grand-children who are a great light to us...and thank you to my Father in Heaven and His Son, my Savior and friend, for helping me...for teaching me. I pray I can pass those blessings on always.

Happy Father's Day all!

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff

34th Entry September 9th, 2011 - Preparing for 1st annual checkup in Houston

Well, it's been some time since my last update. Gail and I are headed to Houston on Saturday for my next checkup at MD Anderson which will take place next week. On Monday we have an all-day battery of MRIs, CT Scans, blood tests, meetings, etc.

We will know by Tuesday the results and are hoping that no new cancer has developed.

On Wednesday they have a large Chordoma Cancer Awareness Day. They have this each year and we were privileged to attend last year just before we left Houston. Yes, it's been a year ago that we were completing rehab and leaving Houston to return home.

This year, they have asked me to take part and be a part of a threesome presentation specifically about my condition. Dr. Rhines, who is known world-wide as an extremely talented neurosurgeon specializing in the back and an expert on Chordomas, and who is the head of the Spinal Neurosurgery department at MD Anderson, will give on part of the presentation. Dr. Abraham Lieberman, the PHD Rehab doctor from TIRR Rehab in Houston (the same facility that treated the congresswoman from Arizona who was shot), will give another part of the presentation, and then I will be giving a portion from the patient's perspective.

I am grateful and happy to take part. I know the good Lord preserved my life to witness for Him and His Son, and to try and help others, which I believe I can do with this presentation. Some of the greatest help I have received, outside of the love and faith of my wife, family and friends, has come from individuals who have been through this ordeal who befriended me and helped me know what to expect. Anything I can give back in that regard will be great, and a blessing I hope to others facing the same or similar circumstances.

As for as how I am doing...I find that I am still making slow, measured progress in some areas. Have plateaued more or less in others. I am healthy and not in a lot of pain, but still on the medications. My strength has slowly increased, but it would take several months of pretty relentless rehab and exercising to continue improving beyond where I am. I am not walking at all with a cane, but still have a hitch and weakness in my hips and abductors. Thing is, after a 10 hour work day, I am generally pretty worn out and just am not up to exercising...hopefully, in time I can work it into my schedule to continue the improvements.

The bladder and bowel regiment has worked fairly well for me. No major difficulties...but the whole thing is still something I am dealing with, and struggle with because of concerns of what might happen if I have difficulties (either infections, blockages, etc.) I am grateful for how I have been blessed though, because I have been a year and three four months since the surgeries and have not had any major difficulties.

Beyond that, here are a few more recent videos of me. One is me doing a short little jog, inside, and the other is when I attended the Cancer Society's "Walk for Life" in our community in Emmett. That was a lot of fun and is

something that is humbling as so many people, who themselves may not have had cancer, but whose life has been touched by it on one way or another, get together and help those of who have it now, or others who will contract it in the future.

Jeff walking from his truck to the house in May

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150180730069069>

Jeff doing a Jog in June 2011

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150286269609069>

Jeff mowing the lawn with his riding mower in July 2011

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150289050359069>

Jeff during the Walk for Life in Emmett, ID in August 2011

<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=10150289066929069>

I will make another update after we get back from Houston to let people know what we find out.

until then, once again, my sincere and humble thanks to so many who have exerted their faith in God on our behalf, prayed for us, encouraged us, or in any way helped us through these difficulties. May He who is mighty to save return the blessing to you and yours tenfold.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff Head

September 9, 2011

35th Entry September 17th, 2011 - Back from latest checkup in Houston. No new cancer. Good news.

Wow, what a whirlwind trip down to Houston and back and so many experiences.

First of all, let me say that all of my tests came back in good shape. The CT Scans showed the bone fusions have grown even stronger around my last four fused vertebra and where my former fibula now attaches to the base of my spine and to my hips. Of extreme importance, the MRIs showed no new cancer in my soft tissue, and showed that the very small spots on my hips had grown very negligibly or not at all. This is all very good news. With no new spots on my hips and with very slow growth, they seem to be Chordomas as well (as thought, though we have not had a biopsy and would prefer not to "bother" them) and this leads us to probably using the stereotactical radiation to treat them next time we go to Houston.

The plan now calls for them to give me an MRI here in Boise a few weeks before we travel to Houston and then go there with a plan, if things are similar as now, to get that done while there. It is a process that once set up will require one or two outpatient visits during the 4-5 days we are down there.

Once again, our eternal thanks to all of those who have prayed and exerted their faith on our behalf in this journey.

The trip down was something. We flew out of Boise at about 2 PM on Saturday, September 10th, with a 90 minute layover in Minneapolis. In Minneapolis, our flight was delayed...and delayed...and delayed. We left there four hours or more late. This is worse for me because 1st, those airport chairs are not the most comfortable when you have no sacrum (or tail bone) to sit on. Second, because it really disrupts my schedule for eating and

taking care of myself and tends to cause significant anxiety as well as potential problems with my diet and schedule. As it was, we finally got to our hotel room near MD Anderson at 2:00 AM on Sunday morning. We slept until noon!

That day we visited my dear Aunt Esther who is my mother's sister and the only other surviving member of that wonderful family. She and her daughter, my cousin, Cynthia, live together in their home and we had a wonderful visit with them.

Monday I had my tests as well as the initial consultation with Dr. Rhines. We started at 6:30 AM at MD Anderson. Since I had a CT scan, two x-rays and an MRI scheduled, I just left the hospital clothes (blue shirt and pants) on all day instead of changing in and out of them four times. Everything went well. We had a wonderful visit with Dr. Rhines and Gisela, his chief nurse practitioner. As always they are so personable and gracious. Since we had not had the MRI yet, we could not find out about the cancer, but the CT scan looked great. I showed Dr. Rhines my "jogging" there in the hallway and he was ecstatic.

We met with the radiation oncologist and talked about potential course of action as outlined above. We then went for the MRI at 5 PM. Again, interminable delays. We did not get done with the MRI until well after 9 PM. That was a busy day. I have to say I was pretty worn out after the Saturday trip and the Monday tests. Gail as always, took great care of me and helped me through. She is my eternal angel.

On Tuesday we took it easy. Slept late again. Then, late in the day, we met with friends at their hotel who had come in for their tests and the large Spine Tumor Convention the next day which we were staying for and which I was presenting at. These friends, Wiley and Sharon Shaw, and another couple, Steve and Linda, were folks we had met while I was in the hospital last year who also (Wiley and Steve) had had sacral Chordomas and also had to have parts of their sacrum removed. We have grown good relationships and call and network with one another regarding our conditions and issues we face. I am so grateful for them...just another of God's tender mercies to us.

On Wednesday we met all day at MD Anderson. Started at 7:30 AM with breakfast and then had meetings and presentations all day, with dinner from 5:30 to 7 PM. I enjoyed the day immensely. They had very comfortable chairs for us. My Physical Therapist, Dr. Abraham Lieberman gave the first presentation. He was a God send to us last year and helped me so much. We patients refer to PT, instead of as Physical Therapy, as "Physical Terror." It hurts so much! But it has to and though we jokingly say that, we are so grateful for what it does for us. Dr. Lieberman was and is unbelievably knowledgeable, and so very personable. I thank God in Heaven for Him and his help and we have become good friends.

Then I gave my presentation about my journey. Our life as we knew it before, discovering I had a problem and ultimately getting it diagnosed. The surprise and difficulty of dealing with that diagnosis (as described in this journal), getting with MD Anderson, preparing, going through the dramatic surgeries, getting through the hospitalization and then the rehab...and finally coming home and coming to terms with our new reality. The faith that has seen us through and which we try and share with others in similar circumstances. I am so thankful for the opportunity to try and help others.

After me, Dr. Rhines gave his presentation about spinal, brain, and sacral tumors and focused on my case. He is a very smart man...really, a genius, and in addition to being a renowned neurosurgeon, he is as personable a man as you will meet...and a GREAT engineer as well given the structure he designed that now resides in my back. It was a great presentation. We later were able to meet with him after he saw my MRI and gave us the good news about that outcome. No new cancer and little or negligible growth in the very small (pin head sized) spots on my hips.

Later in the day, Dr. Patrick Garvey presented the challenges of plastic surgery as it relates to designing structures and using bone and tissue to help in these very massive and complex surgeries. It was amazing. He was the one who took one of my abdominal muscles and skin tissue covering it, and used it as a patch for the huge wound in my back from the removal of the malignant sacrum. He is also the one who took my fibula from my right leg and the new blood supply (veins) for it from my left leg, and inserted that bone as a strut in my back. That's why the bone fusion is so critical. Ultimately that bone fusion around those bones and around my fused vertebra will be what holds me together. Otherwise, even the titanium will wear out and ultimately fail without it. He and his team did a great job on me and he also focused on my case...showing some pictures we had not seen of the procedure. Another great, personable, intelligent man who was there when we needed it most.

For those who have not seen it, this is a picture of how my back looked a few weeks after surgery with all the new hardware and bones. Now, around the hardware and the fibula, new bone has grown and fused, making it all much stronger:

The last presentation was from a young woman who had discovered she had a bone tumor that took a large part of one of her hips and part of her sacrum. She discovered it in the final stages of her pregnancy with her first child. What an inspirational presentation! She helped us all see, once again, that through faith and determination, and a will to accept our condition and make the most of it, there is a wonderful life after these experiences. I was so grateful for her words and inspiration.

Dinner was marvelous. There had been perhaps a hundred patients and their spouses or care givers from the conference and probably 60 or more ate dinner with us all. Dr. Rhines and Gisela presented me with an award and a plaque. It states, "Heart of Faith and Spirit of a Warrior. To Jeff Head for sharing his journey with others through faith, the will to fight, and fulfillment." I immediately asked to say a word and all I could do was dedicate that plaque and sentiment to my wonderful, dear wife, Gail. I try, and I hope to help others...but many times there is a thin covering between that will and desire to help and other feelings that would get me down. Gail has helped me through that and been the real strength and I have to thank my Heavenly Father for her and let others know.

That whole day was great and we are determined to attend these conferences each year.

We got to the hotel late, went to bed and then arose on Thursday, Sept. 15th to head home. The trip home was long, but no delays. We had a four hour layover in Salt Lake City and about a mile and a half walk between terminals. I went a good ways and then we had to sit and rest. I was pretty worn out from all of the activities. Gail got a young man, an attendant there at the airport, and he ended up wheeling me the rest of the way to our terminal. A very fine young man whom we thanked and asked God's blessings upon. For some reason, in Salt Lake, they do not have the electric carts to take people around in. They determined the safety hazards over rode the benefit I suppose. I for one, wish they still had them.

So, here we are back in Idaho. I mowed the lawn yesterday, am heading for the dump today and will take my grandsons to the movies this afternoon. Wish the granddaughters could come...but there other grand mom has claim on them this weekend and that is completely understood. I am so thankful for our family and the time we all spend together. It is what life is about and those relationships, along with our faith, are some of the few things we acquire in life that we can take with us. Cherish them and spend as much time as you can building them.

Again, thanks to all, I will continue to update things as they occur.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff Head

36th Entry December 20th, 2011 - 2nd Anniversary of Diagnosis

Today marks a significant anniversary in my life, one that I certainly did not know was coming, did not wish for, and yet one that came in its time and has very significant impact on my life and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. Two years ago today I got the diagnosis that I had a malignant sacral Chordoma in my back. It was what had caused so much pain, searching, discomfort, and disruption to my life for a couple of years before, gradually increasing in intensity and impact through that time.

That diagnosis started Gail and I on a path in life we had never trod before. The tumor was literally filling up most of my sacrum (these tumors are slow growing and it had been in there for at least 20-25 years according to my Neurosurgeon, Dr. Rhines) and on the verge of spreading beyond. Chordomas, once they get into soft tissue are much more aggressive. They do not respond to normal radiation or chemo therapy. We were referred to and accepted at MD Anderson Cancer center in Houston and immediately (within a few days after Christmas) drove to Houston for our initial meetings. We thank God that the surgeons and neurosurgeons here rightly recognized the need to have this taken care of elsewhere. There are only 3-4 places in the country equipped to address this disease, particularly at the advanced stage I had.

My options were simple, either undergo massive and radical surgery to remove the entire tumor and significant margins around the tumor, or go into palliative care and let the cancer take its course. The surgery would be massive, itself life threatening, and would leave me significantly disabled for the rest of my life. Walking would be in question, normal bowel and bladder function would be severely impaired, nerve damage and feeling in my lower trunk and down my legs would be significantly impacted. Palliative care would make me as comfortable as possible, but once the cancer destroyed those same nerve roots that the surgery would take, I would face the same prognosis.

After a lot of prayer and consideration, and a lot of counsel from family, friends, medical professionals and through our church, we made the decision that was evident to me from the get go...we chose to strive for life...whatever life the good Lord deemed for us.

And so it went. It was very difficult. We had wonderful family, friends, neighbors, members of our congregation, and acquaintances all over the country, and people who heard of our plight pour out their love and faith on our behalf. That strength, coupled with our own faith and love of our Savior and Father in Heaven allowed us to face the struggle with faith in God, knowing His will would be best.

It has been hard and continues to be so. The cancer had spread and I have three small spots in my ilium (hip bones) that will soon be addressed by a special proton radiation technique that is highly concentrated and very exacting. These small tumors, like the other, are slow growing, but need to be addressed and it looks like in March of 2012 we will do so.

I write this now, two years later, after all that built up to the surgeries. The continuing pain, the reaction to some of the medications that sickened me terribly, the hospitalization shortly before leaving for the surgical dates in Houston that almost put everything off. The three major surgeries in about three weeks' time that involved 36 hours of surgery and transfusions equal to over four times my entire blood supply. The three months of hospitalization and slowly coming out of the 3 weeks of intensive care. Being taught to sit up, being taught to take care of my bodily functions and the type of diet I would have to be on from now on. Being taught to stand and walk again...first with a walker, then with a cane. The three months of intensive rehabilitation and improvements in my ability to stand and walk...and now the extended time back home and plateauing where I

walk without a cane and drive where I need to go.

I will never hike the mountains again, my walking is not altogether rock solid or steady, but I can do it and I can work and provide for my family when all of that was in question.

Prayers have been answered, faith has been confirmed. Not that I have been miraculously and completely healed...but I have been miraculously treated and enabled, for God's purposes to continue my life, to be with my family, to see my children continue to grow with their own families and careers. To witness tow morew grandchildren be born and have them now toddling around when visiting us playing with and sitting with their "papa". Taking older grandkids (we now have eight altogether) to movies and for drives, having them help me go to the "dump."

Spending more time with my dear, wonderful, and angelic wife and best friend and sweetheart.

God's hand is in each of our individual lives. In the good times and in the difficult times. His Spirit and Hand are there, if we will humble ourselves and reach out to buoy us up and guide our feet. He has a purpose for us, and that purpose, no matter how difficult is absolutely what is best for us because we touch others and help others as we get through the experiences as best we can and with His help, irrespective of the outcome. I know that a big part of my survival is to witness these things to others. To give hope...and to take hope as I see others, more severely impacted than me, struggle on valiantly and themselves help others, including myself, in their travails. I can do no less.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, to all who have exercised their faith in God on our behalf, who have helped us, encouraged us, prayed for us, and been there to whatever extent possible. I thank God for you each every day and witness His Hand in all of this for His purposes and for the betterment and enrichment of all involved.

Please read my entire journal...HERE on my site...or the PRAYER THREAD established for me at a conservative forum of which I am a member.

May God return the blessing to you each, tenfold for the tender mercies and help and encouragement and faith you have given.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

37th Entry February 8th, 2012 - Medical decisions and plateauing

We decided this last weekend to put off our next trip to Houston. We were scheduled for March, but we have a daughter getting married in early April, and a large family reunion in July, both of which involve significant travel and expense, so, as things seem pretty good right now, we decided to accelerate the time when we start annual visits to Houston to this year and start this September. We will get the necessary MRIs and CT Scans done here in Boise and sent to Dr. Rhines in Houston. If he finds anything serious requiring attention now, then we will certainly go down and take care of it.

All in all things are pretty good. I have definitely plateaued and am not seeing a lot of further physical progress in my walking or stamina. I get around well with no cane, but my strength and balance are certainly not what they were, nor is my stamina. So, I have to be careful and gauge what I do. It works out well and I have been richly

blessed to be able to walk, continue to work and provide for my wife and family, take grandkids to movies, go out shooting with my sons and friends, and to take walks. With a cane I can go much further, but as it is, I am limited to maybe a half mile to a mile without the cane and that will suffice.

The bowel/bladder regiment is the hardest thing...as those whom I have worked with who have been through it indicated. I have been blessed in that regard to not have to catheter myself because I can urinate. All the plumbing is there and for whatever reason, in the dealings with the nerve roots and such, my "valve" was left open so I do not have to catheter. But my condition has its own difficulties and I have learned to live with them, in the new "norm." I have been in contact with another patient who just went through a full Sacrectomy (like me) for his sacral Chordoma tumor at MD Anderson. I am so grateful to be in a position to be able to work with him and talk to him as he goes through the experience. I pray it is of some help...I know that others helping me meant a lot and I want to help others however I can. Our Savior would, He said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," the Golden Rule, and it really makes a difference...and in so doing, when we do it for the sake of others, we find it helps us too.

So, when we get the MRIs and Cat Scans, and as we approach the two year anniversary of my surgeries, I will write more.

Thanks again to all, from the bottom of my heart, who prayed, exercised their faith (and continue to do so), and helped myself and family. The best way I can try and repay that debt of gratitude and honor is to try and help others and always be grateful for what I do have. As always, thanks to my wife, Gail. She is my angel and has taught me more about selfless giving than any mortal person I know...and most of all thanks to my Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ for helping me, and schooling me through this process, to know that their will is always best...and helps us help others even in difficult circumstances and just adds all the more to the wonder of our life, and to our great expectation and faith in our future, here, and yonder, over Jordan someday.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff

38th Entry May 11th, 2012 - Two Year Anniversary of last Surgery and Latest Checkups

It's hard to believe that two years ago today I was completing my third and final surgery at MD Anderson in Houston, TX, to remove my entire sacrum. I remember distinctly a lot about that experience, and then of course there's a lot I do not remember because I was really pretty out of it on the pain meds.

I was in the ICU another two-three weeks after that last surgery, having already been in the hospital since April 27th, 2010, when I came in for my 1st surgery. That one was about 10 hours long and went in through my abdomen to prepare for removing my sacrum and the Chordoma tumor which had filled it up. They took my right side abdomen, including all of the muscles and skin tissue, and pushed it through to the back of my body to prepare for my 2nd surgery and use it to cover the wound that 2nd surgery would create. They also rearranged my intestines and rectum a bit to prepare for that 2nd surgery. They then went to my legs and on my right side cut through my fibula on both ends until it was barely hanging there so they would be able to easily remove it and use it during the 2nd surgery.

Then, three days later, on April 30th, 2010, they conducted the 2nd surgery which was the most major. It was over 18 hours long. They cut in through my back, making a circular incision down low on my back with straight parts coming up half way up my back on the top, and then clear down to my rectum on the bottom. This was necessary because of the massive amount of work they had to do. They cut through all of the muscles tissue there, including my glutes to get to the sacrum and open up enough to expose my entire lower spine. Then they

went through the painstaking procedure of cutting out the sacrum and all of the nerves and nerve roots associated with it. A very bloody, and a very intricate surgery requiring very special neurosurgeon expertise. I thank God it was Dr. Rhines doing it.

Part way through apparently they nicked a large blood vessel below the sacrum which began bleeding badly. An anesthesiologist noticed the drop in blood pressure but the surgical team could not get to it to repair it until the sacrum was out. So this individual pumped blood through me to keep me alive while all that was going on. 41 units of blood was used...about six times your entire blood supply.

Ultimately they got the sacrum out, repaired the blood vessel, built the lattice frame work of titanium around my last three vertebrae for support (which is quite the achievement itself...looks like a miniature Eiffel Tower, again thanks to Dr. Rhines)...but, then because it had gone so long, they determined they would have to do a third surgery to place the bone from my leg (the fibula) in as a strut support for the other work they did. So, they used the abdominal tissue they had prepared and covered the wound with it, and stitched me all up.

It was then 12 days before the third surgery. And that was the third and final surgery which I celebrate today, May 11th, 2012. Another 9 or 10 hour surgery where they cut back into me the same way they have gone in on April 27th, and then took my fibula and a blood supply for it from the other leg, and built a spar that connects my two hip bones to the bottom of my spine and the titanium structure there. They used long titanium lag bolts to attach the bone to my hips and then used bone dust made up from scrapings of my own bone and other bone supplies so that when mixed with my plasma it would stimulate bone growth around the areas of the bones that were joined together and all around the titanium structure. This bone growth would ultimately be the principle support my body depends on because the titanium would otherwise wear out in ten years and have to be replaced...and I do not want to go through that again if I can at all avoid it.

So, here I am two years hence. What a blessing it has been.

I know the good Lord, without doubt, through the faith and prayers of so many family, friends, relatives, neighbors, people at church...at many churches...and friends at work and folks from all over whom I don't even know, prayed for me, and through the expertise and very hard and compassionate work of my Dr.s, nurses, attendants, therapists, etc., and because God in Heaven, for His own purposes, preserved my life. I promised Him, as a result, that I would witness His name and that of His Son for their love, compassion and mercy towards me.

I can walk on my own, without any assistive devices. I have been working full time since I got back home in October of 2010. I am providing for my family and working toward retirement. As a result of a leave share program (described above) where I work, I never missed a day of pay, and was never on disability. I have seen two new grandchildren born who are both over a year old now and walking and so much fun. I was able to see our youngest son return from a mission for our Church from Canada and begin getting on with his life and future. I work with my older grandsons building 1/350 scale models which brings a lot of satisfaction and joy. I am able to still mow the lawn with our riding mower and take our garbage to the dump each week. I spend a lot of time with our ids, grandkids, and with my wonderful wife, Gail, who herself saved my life during those long, long weeks in ICU and the hospital and through rehab.

I have been to a lot of movies since being back, more than my whole life combined before, enjoying them with my grandkids, my own grown children, and most especially my dear sweetheart and wife, Gail.

Here's the link to a video on Facebook I recently took on Mother's Day, of two of our grandkids playing as their families visited us to celebrate Mother's Day with Gail:

Life is so good! How blessed am I to be able to witness these moments.

I was able to give a very neat presentation at MD Anderson last September when we went back for our checkup in Houston. Dr. Rhines (my principle physician and neurosurgeon gave a presentation, Dr. Garvey, the bone Dr. who worked with getting the bone out of my leg and building it as a strut to help support my entire pelvic ring also gave a presentation. Dr. Lieberman, who was my physical therapist after I got out of the hospital for three months and whose expertise and manner of working with patients helped me so much walk as well as I do, also gave a presentation) I was honored and blessed to be used as an example for others in this whole process.

BTW, I am convinced without Dr. Lieberman's particular way of working with patients and great knowledge of the physical body, I would not have been able to progress so far. We stayed an extra month in Houston to take advantage of that expertise. In retrospect, if I had had enough leave and time, another three months with him would have made even more difference...but in the end, we have what we have.

Here's a link to a short portion of my presentation that MD Anderson put up on YouTube:

And here's a link to the entire presentation on the MD Anderson web site. I would urge anyone interested in these types of life altering and saving procedures to watch it all. Here's that link:

Jeff Head's MD Anderson Presentation, September 14, 2011

Finally, we are at a point now where every six months we will do our MRIs, CT Scans, and blood work here in Idaho to be sent to Dr. Rhines at MD Anderson for review. If need be, he will then call us down there. If things are clean, then we will wait to the next check up and go to MD Anderson once a year, in the late summer/early fall, in September each year...probably for the rest of my life.

We know that there are three very small spots of cancer on my hip bones. Have been from the beginning. It is likely that this September that they will arrange to treat those with sterotactical proton radiation to retard or eliminate them.

They are Chordomas and very slow growing as long as they remain in the bone. If we can retard or eliminate them, then it is likely that they will not cause me any problems for the remainder of my life. Then the key thing is to just continue observing the soft tissue around the margins of where the main tumor was removed in the hopes that nothing comes back.

So far, so good in that regard. But in the end, all of that, in my estimation is in the Lord's Hands and we will face whatever it may be when it happens. We hope that no more will come along...but will deal with it should it be so, with faith in our wonderful MD Anderson medical professionals, in one another, in the faith and prayers of family, friends and others...and most importantly with a steadfast faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ and His Father, our Father in Heaven.

As it is, I have been richly blessed to enjoy the time I have since these momentous events and thank God in Heaven, my dear wife, Dr. Rhines, Gisela, Dr. Garvey, Dr. Fu, Dr. Lieberman, and too many nurses, attendants, and therapists to name. Also, thanks to my dear friends and partners in the Chordoma experience, Neil, Wiley, Mohammed, Steve, and Scott who have suffered and lived through these same types of experiences. Networking with and befriending those who have experienced these same things, and helping one another, has been a critical part of the recovery and ongoing process...and a very helpful and enjoyable one. Finally, thanks to all of our family, friends, and others (particularly many on the Facebook and on forums on internet) who prayed for us and encouraged and helped us. Life is good, we can all make the best of it, whatever our circumstance and

help others as a result of our own experiences and walk in life.

I will add to this journal now with any major events or findings, and at least each year in the September time frame as I have my major checkup.

Sincerely and in Christ,

Jeff Head
Emmett, ID
May 11, 2012

39th Entry September 6th, 2012 - Trip to MD Anderson for annual checkup, Conference and six principles

My wife, Gail (who is my principle care giver), and I drove from Idaho down to MD Anderson Cancer Center in between August 24 and September 3, 2012 to conduct my annual checkup for the Chordoma Cancer I have (and which this entire journal/blog is about), to attend the Annual Brain and Spine tumor Day at MD Anderson, and to visit my brother Lee and his family outside of Sanger, TX, north of Dallas.

Gail and I on the Road in Wyoming

It was a wonderful trip. Beautiful weather for the most part, and our Ford pickup truck is a comfortable ride, particularly for me and my resulting disabilities. We had two wonderful visits (coming and going) with my brother Lee at our family homestead which Lee and his wonderful wife, Brenda purchased, outside of Sanger, Texas. Lee has himself has been dealing with a major health condition over the last 6+ months since he was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig (ALS) disease early this year.

My brother Lee and his wife, Brenda, with Gail and I

Let me say that the medical diagnosis for me was fantastic. In my condition, about as good as could be hoped for. My bone grafts where they took my right fibula and created a support strut for me have grown faster and stronger than expected. I will post comparative photos once I get them from MD Anderson similar to the ones posted not long after my surgery. The bone grafts around all the titanium hardware in my spine have also grown very strong. Dr. Rhines indicated that in these situations the medical race over a four to five year period is to have the bone grafting become strong enough to support everything before the titanium begins to weaken and ultimately fails. In my case he is satisfied that we are already there.

Comparative look at my skeletal scan after surgery and in September 2012

The small Chordoma cancer growths in my hip bones are growing much slower than expected and while the result may have been to continue to ignore them...just in case we have pretty much decided to zap them with stereo tactical proton radiation next year to be sure. And, most importantly, there is no return of the Chordoma cancer in the soft tissue around my original surgery or anywhere else at this point. All very good news from the battery of tests, MRIs and CT Scans I had while there. As always, Dr. Rhines and Gisela were great. I am embedding a small video I took at the dinner the night of the convention. Great people!

Dr. Rhines in Houston

We also got to see Dr. Abraham Lieberman...or "Abe" as I call him. He is a fantastic, doctor level Physical Therapist who was amazing with my rehabilitation. We stayed an extra month with him and I am convinced he is one of the primary reasons (in addition to the faith and blessings, and Dr. Rhines and Dr. Garvey's amazing

expertise) that I am able to walk as well as I can today. He worked for TIRR then but has since started his own, very successful practice.

Dr. Lieberman at his new office in Houston

Now, I wanted to come to the main point of my update. As we drove, I couldn't help but think of and talk with Gail about the last three years and the monumental changes it has ushered into our lives, and the impact it has had.

As I did so, I was struck by several principles that have occurred with me that have helped me through the experience...and not only helped me get through it to this point, but also helped me come to grips with it and understand that the entire thing can and should be viewed in a positive light, despite the adversity, hardship, and impact.

Eight Principles for Major Cancer Patients:

1. Here are those principles I believe anyone who is facing or going through such an experience as a malignant cancer or other potentially fatal disease diagnosis, major, life-threatening surgery, resulting long stay in the hospital, resulting handicaps and the necessary rehabilitation efforts, and then the life altering aftermath can benefit from.
2. Have faith in something larger than yourself, something that is good and worth relying upon. I believe in and have faith in God in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ. That they know me and all mankind, love us, and have a higher more eternal view and perspective of our existence. Whether it be that type of faith, or the basic goodness and kindness of most people, or the unbelievable advances and wonders of modern medicine (which I attribute to the faith I just spoke of), or whatever your reference may be, have faith in a higher, larger power that is moving this universe in which we live and which has accounted for your own part in it. That it exists, and that it is aware of and has accounted for your part in it.
3. Understand that in almost all cases...you personally are not the cause for this occurrence in your life...even if you have had life styles and habits that may have contributed to it...there are just as many who probably engage in those particular life styles and habits more heavily than you who do not contract your particular condition. Do not get me wrong, we should all learn from and correct negative life styles or habits in our life that can hurt us, but also realize that the human body, its chemical balances, its nervous system, the brain, the vascular system, and the basics of the cellular and sub-molecular activity going on in our bodies are not things we understand perfectly at all (though we understand them much better now than at any time in prior history). Sometimes, difficult things happen, and the real measure is how we respond to it. Not blaming yourself is an important response that will impact your ability to recover and live a fuller life after the event.
4. Identify a primary care giver that loves and cares deeply for you. Who is strong and willing to stand by and help you through these difficulties. A friend, a relative (spouse, sibling, parent, aunt, uncle, and niece nephew) whomever it is, whom you trust implicitly and who can care for you and help in even the most difficult and revealing circumstances. I cannot emphasize how important this is. Men and women...think on this now in your marital relationships and foster and nurture those relationships. Forgive whatever may have happened, apologize sincerely for whatever may have occurred. Dedicate or re-dedicate yourselves to one another as your marital vows indicated. This relationship could literally make the difference of life and death as you proceed. And Care Givers, understand this same thing. It will not be easy, for either of you, but I can promise, if you love one another, and care and serve one another with the heart, it will be more than worth it and your love and appreciation for each other will grow more strongly than perhaps otherwise without these experiences.

5. Establish a support group of people who have experienced either the same, or close to the same experience you are having. Find them through the hospital or medical community or online and offer yourself to them to help them as they help you. Share phone numbers, emails, online place to contact one another, etc. Set up a schedule to keep in touch regularly. There is no one who can give you advice and help you through the day to day, detailed nitty gritty, physical and hygiene issues like those who have and are experiencing it...and in the process you will find ample opportunity to help them too. Again, I cannot emphasize how important this is. I know that there are a group of six or seven individuals who have experienced the same types of difficulties I have had precisely with this same rare cancer whom I keep in contact with and with whom we share our experiences. Things that work, things that don't, and an understanding of the actual living and impact to your body and its functions that your experience is having. Your doctors and nurses with all of their unbelievable knowledge and compassion, your own care giver with their love and day to day experience, themselves have still usually not actually experienced what you are experiencing and being in contact with those that do can provide unimaginable help and comfort as you proceed.

6. Find a hobby or interest once you get home and away from all the constant care and rehab. This is so critical. For me, it has been my work, spending a lot of time with my grandkids, and scale model building which I enjoyed as a youth and then later in my 30s and have now, at the advice of my dear wife, taken up again. Being able to productively occupy your mind in worthwhile hobbies, interests, or activities can make a huge impact in your day to day experience, your feeling of self-worth, and keep your focus on positive, productive things that edify and improve life, as opposed to focusing on the difficulties associated with your condition. Those difficulties are best handled and faced when they are in the background of an ongoing, productive, and busy life. This is another area I cannot emphasize enough. I have taken to helping a couple of my grandsons who are interested in building models. Every other weekend or so, they come over on Friday evening and stay over into Saturday. We experience what we call the three "M's"...Model Building, McDonalds, and a Movie. All of us look very forward to those weekends!

7. Finally, use all of the above to maintain and keep a Positive Mental Attitude about your life and conditions. I know it is difficult, but it does not have to be negative and it does not have to be wholly limiting. Push yourself to make whatever progress is possible. I got to a point where I was, with all the impact to my muscles, pelvic ring and structure, starting to jog! But upon hearing about it, my principle bone doctor advised me strongly against it. Though it was amazing that I could do it...it was also potentially damaging over the long term with all the jarring to the new bone structures and the titanium attachments. So I had to quit that. But I am identifying other areas I can continue to make progress physically in that are available to me. Whether using pedaled exercise machines, swimming, or other avenues, I know I can pick from several areas that will allow me to continue to strengthen and to progress so I feel good about my recovery and the progress I am making. Do not allow a setback to knock you down...and if it does, get back up and find new avenues to progress. A positive mental attitude enables all of the other five areas I listed to work for you, even as those five areas contribute to the positive things happening in your life.

8. Have faith in God. If you don't, have to a church, find a friend who does, and develop faith and love for God and His Son Jesus Christ. They are there. I know this a surely as I am writing this down. They will help...even if they do not miraculously heal you, you will find small tender mercies almost every day, and small miracles that allow you to keep going.

With these eight principles of recommendations, I know that I personally have been greatly benefited through my experience. I hope that sharing those helps others go through the same or similar circumstances with their own conditions.

I am reminded of the story of Job (though I do not compare myself to him spiritually). Just that he was beset by significant difficulties, and unimaginable sorrowful events. But he did not falter, he continued forward in faith

and with a positive outlook. In the end, he made a remarkable statement that goes like this, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed by the name of the Lord!"

If you are not a believer, do not focus on the faith aspect of this (though I honestly believe it helps), rather, look at the concept. This individual of old was faced with unbelievable painful and difficult circumstances. He understood that things happen in life...even difficult things, and he found that there was a blessing in each...both the good and the difficult. For each of us it is certainly easy to see the blessing in the good, fun times with friends and loved ones are amazing and great and enjoyable, and a blessing. It is more difficult to see it in the hard times...but this does not mean that the "blessing" is not there, or that the blessing is not very beneficial to us. I believe that these six conditions or recommendations I have spoken of will help not only to realize the blessings of those difficult times, but to benefit from them...and maybe in ways that were not possible through any other means. Think on that for a minute.

It is certainly not like ten years ago I was thinking, "Oh, I can't wait to get a sacral Chordoma and have surgeries that completely take me apart and put me back together again, and remove that cancerous tumor from my body!" No, it certainly was not like that, or that I prayed for it to come.

But it came anyway, and I can say now, almost three years after finding out about it, that the overall impact to me and those around me, even with the worry, the anxiousness, the concern, the pain, the discomfort and disabilities...that is has been a positive experience, and that I have been blessed as a result in my life to learn things about myself, and life, and about living that I may not have been able to learn any other way...so I can also, in my own way say, "Blessed by the name of the Lord!"

Thanks for reading, and I will continue to update my journal/blog here as I experience more of this ongoing, life-long event.

Sincerely, and in Christ,

Jeff
Emmett, ID
September 6, 2012

40th Entry April 27th, 2013 - Three years since my first major surgery

Well, it's been seven months since I last wrote here in my Chordoma Journal.

Time passes quickly and I have been so blessed. I work full time and was accommodated at work in a very good fashion. I am able to walk without any assistance devices...it may not be the most steady, and certainly not with a lot of endurance or stamina...but I am walking and enjoying it. I have been able to establish a very good, probably 95% of the time regiment for my bowel/bladder disabilities that allows me to function fairly normally on a day to day basis with a good schedule and diet that works well for me. I have seen three new grandchildren born and growing (that makes nine altogether now), and enjoy spending a lot of time on weekends with them. I hope and expect I will see more before all is said and done. I have a wonderful and loving, dear wife (we recently celebrated our 35th anniversary) and family that have been amazingly supportive and loving and gracious to me.

These are all great blessings and gifts from above for which I am eternally grateful, and humbled. And I thank God in Heaven, my Savior Jesus Christ, my wife, and family, and so many friends for being so understanding and helpful to me. In the end, those very relationships right there are what counts in life. How we treat others, nurture them and our relationships with them, and how we help those around us. I pray I can be as helpful to others along my way, as so many have been to me.

Today, April 27th marks three years since my first surgery when they did all the surgery work (over 12 hours' worth) to get ready for my second surgery, which followed three days later on April 30th, where my Chordoma tumor, which included my entire sacrum was removed (another 18 hours). In that second surgery, they had a few complications...not surprisingly, as it is about as intrusive and as major a neuro and ortho surgery as it gets. As a result, I had to have a third surgery on May 11th, to actually put the strut, which was comprised of my left fibula bone from my leg which they broke into an angled strut attaching the end of my spine and all the titanium cage they built there to my two hip bones (another 12+ hours)

Dr. Rhines and his Chief Nurse Practitioner, Gisela, along with Dr. Patrick Garvey worked miracles with me. God bless them and their entire staffs for their amazing capabilities and skill, their compassion and caring ways, and for their skill...and their faith.

They are literally life savers to me...and I would trust my life to their care in an instant.

Those were days that went by in a haze and a blur, though there are some very specific things I remember about it. Then laying on my sides for the next six weeks, getting turned over every few hours...from one side to the other. All of those weeks, trying to let those wounds and injuries heal, and to let the bones start to fuse and strengthen. What a joy it was on Father's Day, when my son Jeff and his wife, Jolene surprised me by showing up there in Houston and coming to see me in the hospital. I wept like a baby...but not in mourning...in joy.

Then a few short weeks of rehab in the hospital, trying to get me ready for release by getting me to stand (which was a significant undertaking in and of itself as the videos earlier in this journal attest), and then slowly walking around the floor with a walker and learning of my disabilities as they slowly undid the myriad of lines and tubes that were attached to me and sustained me. Finally, just after the first of July, I was released and went to an apartment that we had graciously found in the Lutheran Faith House, which staff and congregation were so Christ like and gracious to Gail and I the whole time we were there, and where I would spend another three months with Dr. Abraham Lieberman in very intensive physical therapy. Those were hard, but exciting days. Physical therapy of this nature hurts...simply put...and has to if you are going to make progress and be able to function as well as you possibly can. Gail encouraged and motivated me, Abraham Lieberman and the people around me there inspired me, and God in Heaven blessed me beyond what I deserved.

I am convinced that Dr. Lieberman and his unbelievable knowledge and understanding of the physical body, and his manners, was a HUGE part of why I made the progress I made, and anyone needing any form of spinal, amputee, or major physical therapy of that nature I would recommend him to. He was another life saver in this and someone I would literally trust my life to.

It was a hot summer there in Houston, and Gail and I got through it. My Aunt Esther and her family were such a strength. We were visited by several close friends and family while there...always encouraging us and bolstering our faith. God bless Gail for her love, compassion, and understanding. I also would never have gotten through it as I have done without her.

Then, finally, in very late September, we drove home to Idaho. What a joy it was to drive the pickup myself! What a wonderful trip through the mountains in the early fall. How GREAT it was to get home and find the preparations that my son Jeff and his wife Jolene had made for us at our home, and to then have two of my wonderful granddaughters from my daughter Becki, Kyra and Kenna, visit and sit with me on the front porch rocker as I had prayed for and envisioned for so many months!

Now, here I am, three years after those events and on my way. No new cancer thus far. I do have the three very small spots on my hip bones, completely within the bone, which were already present when the surgeries were

conducted. They have grown very little since. In September, we are scheduled, during my annual checkup there at MD Anderson, to have them treated with stereo-tactic proton radiation...which, if everything goes well, will either kill them, or retard them to the point that I will not have to worry about them for the rest of my life. That sounds good.

Either way, each day is a blessing and simply must be taken advantage of. Here are some pictures of happening with me and my family of late:

(Click on any picture for a high resolution view)

Our clan before #9 grandchild was born, me at the Silver Dollar Pawn Shop Las Vegas, daughter Rachel's wedding at Coronado, Gail & I at Norfolk Naval Base

Building model's w/grandsons Braedon & Riley, Kenna & Kyra at Kyra's 10th birthday, Daughter Katie & her family took me to the spring 2013 BSU Team Game
Wonderful experiences and I am glad to be able to share in all of them!

Now, this does not mean that there are not difficult or hard times. My Mom, age 87 years passed away in October of 2012. We had watched her for almost seven years, and she went into a care home when we went down to Houston for my surgery. Even in her failing health, she cared for and was very concerned about me and my health...and that of her entire family. Gail and I took her home to Texas from Idaho in my pickup truck, where she was buried next to my Dad. Then, a little over a month later, my dear brother Lee, age 60 years, passed away down in Texas. He was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) in early 2012. He was always a great example to me as an older brother and a dear, close friend in our adult years. He left his wife Brenda of 40 years and his four kids and grandkids here on earth as he returned home to our Father in Heaven...and we were off to Texas again. When I went through my own cancer surgeries and ongoing ordeal, I presumed that I would certainly pass before him as at the time he was in excellent health. But we never know...and therefore must live to be prepared for our time when it comes. Lee certainly did.

So, I do not want to paint a picture of a completely idealic and perfect situation. It is not. Sometimes life is hard. I will be on pain meds the rest of my life and there are times when the pain is significant and bothersome. The various disabilities are not easily born...but the key is that I am here to bear them! And I know, from the last three years, that I can get through however many more years the good Lord has in store for me, and do it in a mostly enjoyable and positive manner which can be a blessing to me and those around me. And that's good enough for me, and in my view, what life is all about.

I am about 5 to 6 years away from retirement, and if things hang together, will be in a good position for Gail and me...and for my kids and grandkids...which is something I dearly want to be able to do, as my parents did for me.

So, I hope this finds you, whomever you are, wherever you may be, and whatever circumstance you find yourself in, in a position where you can see your own life and circumstances in as positive light as possible, and realize, even in travail, there are silver linings...there are tender mercies....there is so much to be gained, experienced and shared with others...which then makes those circumstances actual blessings in disguise. I hope you can all see that...I know I have come to do so.

I will write again, during or after my visit in September to MD Anderson, or should anything major come up.

God's speed, and His blessings to you all!

Jeff Head

Emmett, ID
April 27, 2013

41st Entry: April 28th, 2014 - Four years since my first major surgery

Well, I am somewhat tardy on updating this journal. I should have done it last fall after my visit to MD Anderson and the events associated with that trip...which I will catch up on in this entry.

It's hard to believe four years has passed. Reminds me of something someone said from Biblical times, "and our lives passed away as it were unto us a dream." Sometimes it feels sort of like that.

As it is, four years ago yesterday I had my first surgery wherein they opened me up in front and did a lot of preparation work for the 2nd surgery that would follow a few days later where they removed my sacrum, which was filled with a Chordoma cancer tumor. That first surgery prepared what they would call my patch, which is my right side abdominal muscles (the three-pack on that side) and it's covering skin and pushed it through to the back of my body with its blood supply to be used in the 2nd surgery as the covering for the large wound that would be created by taking out my Sacrum. If left just to heal with scar tissue, there is a much higher likelihood of infection, so they intended to cover my large wound with my own tissue...and they did. And I had no infection set in as a result.

Hehehe...not too many people have tummy hair growing on their back side, but I have the distinct privilege of being a member of that club.

Anyhow, I remember only a little about the time in-between that surgery and my second surgery a few days later. That first one was like 12-14 hours. My second one would be 20 or more. I was kind of in a drug induced haze in-between. Then, they were unable to finish everything with the second surgery, and I had to have a third, (about ten days later) which is where they harvested my fibula bone from my right leg, which they had cut through in preparation, and used it as a strut, breaking it and forming a "V" between the bottom of my spine and my two hip-bones so I would have enough structure to support bone fusion which would support me when I later walked.

Those days in the hospital were long...and my dear wife Gail (with whom I thankfully and gratefully celebrated our 36th wedding anniversary on the 25th of April) was there with me the entire time. From the 1st surgery, until I got out of the ICU after my 3rd surgery, 3 or more weeks later. She only left my side to use the restroom and to eat. She did not go to our apartment that we had rented until I was in my normal room. She literally was a major reason I lived through it I can tell you. Fellows...take care of your wives and love them dearly. You never know what life may bring.

And now we are here, four years later. I went back to my job and was accommodated and continue to work full time...looking forward to my own retirement in another four years, which is the same amount of time I have been back now...so it is going to pass fast.

I can walk, though I do not have a lot of stamina, without any assisted device. I have gotten t work on my hobbies of 1/350 scale ship, and 1/72 scale aircraft model building which I really enjoy, and also try and do my grandkids when they can. I spend quite a bit of time on the internet, being involved in various military and conservative forums and activities which I also enjoy. I take my grandkids and my own grown kids to the movies as often as we can afford. LOL! Making up for lost time there because in my younger career, we rarely did that. Wish I had done more now, but certainly better late than never. I also get to spend a lot of time with Gail, which is the best time I spend.

So, to my trip to MD Anderson last fall. More good news. Bone fusion great. No new cancer.

We go every year for our "check-up." MD Anderson has a spine and brain tumor conference each year at MD Anderson sponsored by Dr. Rhines and Gisela. I is very educational and a GREAT experience. Gail and I like to go during that time period and schedule my MRI, CT Scans, blood work and consultation each year at that time so we can get our check-up done, and so we can meet friends we have made in the MD Anderson Chordoma community who also come to the conference. Usually we are there for about 3-4 days. It takes us 3 days to drive down, we spend some time with friends and relatives up around the Dallas area, go to Houston, and then spend 3-4 days driving back to Idaho. We are normally gone a couple of weeks and so it also serves as a sort of "vacation," for Gail and I. I really look forward to those trips each year.

Last year, Dr. Rhines (my main surgeon and Chordoma doctor, and probably the most knowledgeable Chordoma Physician in the world, and an unbelievably talented Brain and Spine surgeon in addition to all of that) had determined that last year would be a good time to treat the three small spots/tumors I still have in my hip bones. They are very small, very slow growing and no threat currently, but eventually they will grow into the same type of tumor they had to remove. So, if treating them now can remove them or slow them down enough, I will not be worrying about them in this life.

The treatment they use is called Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy or SBRT. My radiation Dr. is a very sharp lady, Dr. McCaleer. She is a vey, very intelligent Dr., and also very good with patients...and she has an excellent team.

The SBRT device at MD Anderson Cancer center

SBRT is a high-tech, 3D process where they place you in a pre-arranged and pre-programmed device, then use seven beams of radiation to treat you. Each beam delivers a non-threatening amount of radiation, but all seven come together to give a very ample radiation treatment to the tumor itself without impacting surrounding tissue. They program the location of the tumor into the machine relative to your body and calibration points they mark on you.

They then basically place you in some epoxy/resin that covers the lower half of your body as you lay in it, and then pull a vacuum on that and allow it to form a cast of sorts. That then becomes a mold for the actual treatment day which follows about a week to ten days later. During the initial simulation day, they then also move you around a bit to get you and what will be your ultimate mold, initially set up in the system, and they account for all sorts of variables, including your respiration in the program/plan they develop...which of course uses your MRI and CT Scans to program the location of the tumors. It is a very exacting science.

Then, a week to ten days later, you spend from three to five days coming in and getting the treatments according to that plan they make, once a day until finished. Mine was going to be 3 or 4 days.

Sample Plan of applying SBRT to a cancer tumor at the C2-C4 vertebrae

For me, the simulation came off pretty well. There was a little pain during the procedure when they pulled the vacuum (because you absolutely cannot move while this is happening), but it was not too bad.

Then, when we came back a week later, they had the mold all ready for me and I climbed in, having made sure I had taken some of my normal pain meds (methadone) beforehand just to be sure.

The mold is sort of like a hard fiber glass material that has been formed to the lower portion of your body. Once in for that 1st treatment, they again pulled the vacuum by placing a thick Mylar type substance over the top half

of my body and then sucked out all of the air. They do this before beginning the treatment so you will not move.

But for me, the problem was, this time, it seemed that the vacuum for the treatment was harder than what had been used during the simulation and it caused my back to be pressed harder into the mold. Well, I have a lot of titanium in my back and all I can figure is that it pulled that down onto a nerve of some type because right at the last it began hurting very badly. I hoped it might fade and tried to sit still (and you have to remain still the 90 minutes for each treatment), but I simply could not do so. I was squirming around (and that was not very much because of the mold) to try and find some position a little more comfortable. But my small amount of movement was too much for the procedure and we had to stop.

They tried to give me Fentanyl (a strong pain med) to relieve it and wait for an hour or so to try again...but it did not help. So, we came in the next day and they tried OxyContin (a real heavy duty pain med)...but that did not help either. Just too much pain for me to be able to handle. So, Dr. McCaleer decided to put it off for another year (this year now) and come back in 2014. This next time they intend to give me a general sedative and put me under for the procedure. So, we will see how that goes.

Anyhow, it was a good trip just the same. My condition is very good. Very good bone fusion along my struts and all around the titanium. This is critical for the structure to be able to hold for the long term.

Also, absolutely no new tumors at this point and that is also extremely good.

Other than all of this...the life after 2010 continues. There are good days, and sometimes not so good days. But all in all I am very happy and thankful to have been blessed to get through this and to have so many tender mercies from God in Heaven that have helped me do so, not the least of which have been Gail, Dr. Rhines and Gisela.

FYI, on a closing note. It looks like I will be directly impacted by the Affordable Health Care Act (aka Obama Care). Apparently, as it is currently planned, institutions like MD Anderson, the Mayo Clinic, Bethesda, etc. will not be primary care givers under Obama Care for long distance treatment. This means essentially that the insurance will not cover much if any of it. It means people like myself will have to look to local hospitals and care facilities to handle our condition. If so, then it will be a significant issue.

Here in Idaho, when confronted with my condition in 2009, the best Health Care Facility in the state urged me to go somewhere like MD Anderson because they were not prepared to treat it.

To date my insurance has handled this very, very well. It has not covered everything and we had to dip into our retirement for some of it, but it covered the vast majority, and it did so at the absolute best place in the world to treat it. Seems ridiculous to me that such institutions would be denied, and I hope that they get together and change this ludicrous decision. As I say, it will have a direct impact on me and my long term care as a cancer survivor.

But...as with all things...ultimately it will be in God in Heaven's hands. I know He knows of and cares for me personally, as He does all of His children....whether we believe it or not, or whether we agree with His decisions or not. If He wants me home, no power on earth will keep it from happening. Conversely, if He wants me to stay on this earth, nothing can prevent that from occurring. I am happy for the time I have, and grateful to be able to spend it with my loved ones.

I will follow up this fall on how things go and not make folks wait a year!

In Christ,

Jeff Head
Emmett, ID
April 28, 2014

42nd Entry: December 23rd, 2014- Report on AUG radiation therapy and 5 years since diagnosis

Well, I am very late entering this information and making this entry.

In early August we traveled to MD Anderson in Houston for our annual pilgrimage and to accomplish three things.

To conduct our annual check-up on my Chordoma with Dr. Rhines and Gisela, his chief nurse practitioner. To attend the Annually Brain and Spine Tumor conference held each year at MD Anderson, hear the presentations, and especially to see all of our friends there.

To conduct the stereo-tactic radiation treatment that Dr. Rhines had recommended and that we had tried the year before with Dr. McCaleer.

The trip down, as always was very nice. We drive across Interstate 84 from Idaho to Interstate 80 in Utah, then across Wyoming on I-80 to Interstate 25 in Colorado. Down I-25 to Raton, New Mexico, and then across north eastern New Mexico to Texas and US-287 which we then take all the way down to near Denton, TX where we normally stay with our sister-in-law Brenda. Then, down I-35 to I-45 and down to Houston. Over 1,800 miles altogether.

Echo Canyon in Utah

Denver Colorado

Near the Texas, New Mexico border

We stopped in Amarillo and ate with a close friend, Caylin, there who is retired US Army EOD. We then stopped in the Sanger area to spend time with Brenda, my late oldest brother's wife who lives out on the "place," where we grew up. It was a great visit, but short-lived because we had to get on down to Houston.

We arrived in Houston and over the next several days went through all of the appointments associated with my checkup. Blood samples, MRI, CT scans, x-rays, preparation for the radiation treatment, and finally consultations with Dr. Rhines.

Here I am waiting in Dr. Rhine's waiting room

While doing this, on August 12, we took the time to visit the USS Texas, the historic dreadnought class battleship that served in both World War I and World War II and which is not a museum at the San Jacinto State battlefield park. I had last visited it as a child when my Dad took us there in the 1960s. They have significantly refurbished her since that time and it was a very good visit. Gail took some pictures and a video of me climbing around on it (very slowly and carefully) in the 1000 degree heat. Hehehe...she wisely stayed in the visitor center where it was cool. There was no air conditioning on the ship where I was looking around.

Here I am before getting aboard the USS Battleship Texas

Jeff climbing around on the Battleship Texas

The consultations went very well. Could not have been a better report. The bone fusion in my spine and around the two struts made up of my left fibula bone placed where my sacrum used to be, or as good as they can be...better than expected. The small tumors of Chordoma in my ilium continue to grow slowly, but are reaching a size now where the radiation treatment proposed by Dr. Rhines is warranted. One area that they had thought was scar tissue since my surgeries has grown so they believe it in fact is a 4th small tumor and will be treated with the rest.

After this good news, we attended the conference, which itself was great. I always love listening to the several seminars during the day. Always good information...particularly now over the years seeing new information and developments. Particularly good was seeing our friends. The Shaws, Mohammed and his wife and children (Mohammed had the same complete Sacrectomy surgery I had a year and a half after me), and so many others, including Dr. Garvey (my bone/plastics Dr. for the surgeries), Dr. Fu (the rehab Dr. at MD Anderson who referred me to TIER), and Dr. Lieberman (the PhD Rehab Dr. who worked such wonders with me a TIER).

Drs. Panel at the conference including Dr. Rhines, Dr. Fu and Dr. Garvey

Dr. Rhines, myself, Gisela and her husband at the Conference

Myself and Mohammed at the conference

Also, we saw Mrs. Amiee and her mother. They were at the conference to accept an award on behalf of our good friend, Neil Aimee, who had passed away a month before the conference and whom we miss. I was asked to give a tribute to Neil at the conference and I was proud and happy to do so. Neil helped me a lot five years earlier when I was just being operated on and coming to terms with the disabilities and life after the surgeries. We talked each month thereafter and several of the times called him I was getting a Chicken Sandwich at McDonalds for lunch. He used to always joke with me about that. He told me towards the end that if he got to the Pearly Gates before me, he would have a Heavenly Chicken Sandwich waiting for me at the true Golden Arches when I arrived. I know he will...and though I miss him, I know, like with my parents and brothers and grandparents and others who have gone before, that I will see him again in a place without pain and suffering.

I will certainly not hurry that, because it is given to God to make such decisions...but I do not fear that day and look forward to it in God's own time.

After the conference we traveled back up to the Denton, TX area to spend the week before the radiation treatment. We had a wonderful time just taking it easy on the ranch and spending the time visiting friends we have in the area (Gail and I lived around Denton for a total of 6-7 years during our married life). Gail and Brenda got to spend a lot of time together and accomplished a lot. We also were blessed to eat dinner with and spend several hours with our good friends, Trey and Patty Martino. Trey has been a life-long friend, and is as close to a brother to me as anyone could be who is not actually a blood brother. Through our mutual testimonies of Jesus Christ and our many years of relations and memories...the difference is virtually non-existent.

Gail and I with "Cooper", at our sister-in-law Brenda's house

A Texas, late summer, Thundershower

Then, it was back to Houston and the radiation treatment. Stereo tactic radiation is a process where they use a

3-D, highly computerized equipment to generate five beams of radiation and then have them converge at the tumor sites to give a large dose of radiation to the tumor, but to do so in such a way that the individual beams do not do appreciable damage to other tissue they pass through. They take the week between the preparation appointment (which they call a simulation) and the actual procedure.

The stereo tactic radiation equipment at MD Anderson

We had tried this the year before...but it was unsuccessful because when they make the mold for you to lie in, they then pull a significant vacuum on you as you lay under thick, clear Mylar, so you will not move. That pressed my back into the mold they had made and in my case caused a lot of neuropathic pain as nerves were pushed against the titanium in my back.

So this year they planned to put me under each day for the procedure. This involved starting a little earlier and having an anesthesiologist team there to put me under...remaining under while they did the procedure for two to two-and-a-half hours, and then spending another hour to hour-and-a-half being brought back out of the "sleep," in recovery. Well, you cannot eat for twelve hours before the procedure, and when you add the 5 hours that all of that took, you end up with about eight hours to eat between procedures.

So, we would get done, go eat a light meal, and then about four hours later, eat a heavier meal, before going to sleep and coming in for the next procedure.

Gail working on a jig-saw puzzle in the radiation waiting room

At the Radiation center we sat with and got to know numerous people who were coming in for various radiation treatments. Most of them were on 28-30 day treatment plans where they came in for 20-30 minutes of treatment each time. They would all go in and then come out again and leave while we waited, and by the time we got done, they were all gone. But we only had five treatments to do, where they had 30 or so. It was a good experience being there with them.... getting to know them and their stories as we shared our own...and then praying for them each as they went through their procedures to treat their various cancers.

In such circumstances other differences pale and you come to know and love people without delving into the things that might otherwise divide you.

As we came in Wednesday for my third treatment, I have to say I was feeling VERY badly. Everyone responds a little differently to radiation. Some are more susceptible than others. Stereo tactic radiation, though it avoids too heavy a dose to vital areas, still deposits a very massive dose of radiation to the targeted areas. Your body does not like that. For everyone, radiation is a poison. Specific types have been shown to be more effective against different cancers...like with Chemo. But, like Chemo, they are poisonous to the system. I was once told, while my brother Greg was going through his fight with Lymphoma, that radiation and chemo are poisons that can and will kill you. The treatment plan is designed so that hopefully they kill or impeded the cancer before they do the same to you.

Anyhow, by the third day...for whatever reason...I was one sick fellow.

Gail with Dr. McCaleer at MD Anderson

Dr. McCaleer, who is very personable and a very smart and talented lady, saw me there and asked how I felt. I told her I was afraid that the next day they may have to wheel me in on a gurney. She said, "Oh no, that won't do...we will take care of that." And they gave me some steroids in my IV that day that are specifically designed to help fight the side effects of radiation. I have to say...they worked! The next day I walked in under my own

power feeling as good as I have felt in years.

But steroids also have side effects as they explained to me. You cannot take them too long, and they can make you just as sick in the end. They have treatment and impact curves and they try to design the steroid treatment to hit you with its positive effects as your system is experiencing negative effects from the radiation. Then they slowly take you off the steroids in the hope that its negative effects are less burdensome as they wind down, and the steroid's positive effects offset the negative effects of the radiation. Pretty interesting statistical and mathematical models involved in that.

Anyhow, I was able to get through all five days of treatment and still not feel too terrible from the steroids. Then, we headed home and had a wonderful trip back to Idaho.

The Stephen F. Austin monument in Texas

Sierra Grande mountain in New Mexico...first real mountain heading west

Front Range of the Rocky Mountains on our way home

Devil's Slide, UT, on our way home

One of the best things about these trips for me is that they allow me to spend two to three weeks with my dear, wonderful wife and sweetheart, Gail. In that way, despite the medical nature of it all, it is a vacation to me. Gail has been a strength, comfort, care-giver, sweetheart, and example and pillar to me through all of this. Not a day goes by where I do not emotionally thank my Father in Heaven for bringing her into my life 37 years ago, and for her goodness, kindness, and wisdom.

Now, it is December 23, 2014.

On the 20th of December I marked my five-year anniversary since being diagnosed with Sacral Chordoma.

In February, we will have an MRI here in Idaho to send down to MD Anderson where they will look at the results and see what impact the radiation treatment had on the spots in my ilium (hip bones). It takes a good six months for any swelling or impact of the radiation to surrounding tissue to wear off enough so they can really assess what has happened with each of the tumors.

In the last three months I have had a couple of pretty severe infections. One was a urinary tract infection (which I had not had before) and the other was an infection in one of my teeth. I learned something new in each case.

Because of the long-term pain medication, I am on (methadone in my case) my normal ability to feel the results of such infections is masked. This is pretty academic actually, but I did not think on it before now. Anyway, because of this, by the time the infection became bad enough for me to feel it, it had advanced significantly and was pretty bad. They have both been treated and I am doing a lot better...but in the future, at the slightest swelling of a lymph-node or feeling in any way out of sorts that comes with such infections, I will go into the Dr. to get checked out.

Our local Dr., Dr. McGuffey, who is a wonderful general, family practice Dr. has always chided me a bit for not coming in often enough. At our last meeting I told her she may get tired of seeing me and she said...no problem, you should have been coming in more often like I told you! LOL!

So, there's the latest update...stretching back four months! I will update again when we know the results of the

February MRI!

'Til then, a Blessed and Merry Christmas and Holiday Season to all!

...and the very best of the New Year for 2015 to you and yours!

In Christ,

Jeff Head

December 23, 2014

43rd Entry: August 21, 2015 - Preparing for 2015 MD Anderson visit, our 4th visit since the surgeries

Well, Gail and I are preparing to take our trip down to Houston and MD Anderson this year. I always look forward to it, as I have said in the past. It's like a little vacation for me to be with Gail.

It will coincide with exactly five years since I left MD Anderson after all of the surgeries, the hospitalization, and the intensive rehab I went through in 2010 between April and September that year. My how time flies!

It will also, as usual, overlap with the wonderful Conference they hold down there each year for Spine Tumor patients. We are looking forward to seeing our friends.

This time I go with some concern. I have reached a point in my living with this disease where I understand it, and can feel its impact very well. It has become a part of my day to day life and I am comfortable with, and coping well with the disabilities it has caused.

As a result, I can notice changes. For the last couple of months, I feel like things are changing. My bowel and bladder functions are not as regular or as comfortable as they had been...or should be. In addition, I am experiencing quite a bit more pain, even over the methadone I am taking, particularly when sleeping at night, in my lower back, particularly on my right side and at the top of my hip bone.

I am concerned that these things denote a change in the disease, and potentially either new tumors, or an increased growth rate of the one I have had since day one.

We will find out at the end of September.

Even though having these concerns...I am also at peace with it. I have been richly blessed to have overcome the more dire circumstances I faced in late 2009 and early 2010...with the help of excellent health care professionals, with the help, love and care of my dear wife, Gail (who to me, is in reality an angel sent down from Heaven), with the love of my kids and grandkids, of other family and so many friends. Most especially through the blessings and love of God in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. I know their hand has been in all of this...and it is their will that is being done here.

When I went down to Houston in 2010, we had a total of six grandkids. Here in early September 2015, we will see our 11th born. Five more in five years. It has been great! As has been seeing them all grow.

We shall see what the Lord has in store. Whatever the results of the tests in September, I will continue to seek God's will and follow it in this fight, and in my life. I just wanted to pass on the information, and the feelings I am having, and let everyone know its okay. We all go through phases in our experiences in life, and all of them...even the difficult and hard ones...can benefit us and those around us if we simply strive to keep our

heads above water.

I will update this once we know the results of this trip in September.

God's speed.

Jeff Head

August 21, 2015

44th Entry: February 6, 2016 - MD Anderson visit report and some continued painful feelings

I am sorry my report has been so delayed. Nobody and no circumstance to blame except my own delays.

However, we had a wonderful trip to MD Anderson in September (2015).

I went through the battery of tests like normal, and was seriously...as I mentioned in my last report...concerned about what they might find because of some of the pain I had been experiencing.

As it turned out, the MRI and CT Scans showed extraordinarily good news.

The radiation treatments from the year before, despite the difficulty associated with them at the time, had apparently been as successful as we could have hoped for. All of the areas treated were either gone, or completely inert and, according to Dr. Rhines, looked dead.

As usual Dr. Rhines and Gisela were willing to talk with us for as long as necessary. It means he runs late sometimes, but it also means once you are with him you will get to spend whatever time necessary for his consultation.

So I asked him about the additional pain.

He looked at me and we discussed things and as near as we can determine, it is probably related to ongoing issues I have with bowel and bladder management...particularly the former. With all of my "S" nerve roots gone, I have no feeling or automatic control over those things. In addition to having to learn to manually stimulate and deal with those issues, I have had to really regulate my diet and ensure that I have enough fiber...and even then, have to regularly take supplements to ensure my stool is not too hard. When it is a little too hard...or when there is a lot coming through, because of the operations and the way my internals were juggled around...I can easily feel pain associated with my bowels and intestines in those circumstances.

So, the idea is to work on that. Over the last few months I have and it has helped some...but not altogether. I still have pain, particularly at night.

There was one note of caution that we are about to check on in addition to this.

At the top of one of the scans, Dr. Rhines saw an anomaly that he wants me to check on. In the vertebrae just above my "hardware" he believes there may be something and he wants me to get a new MRI of that area specifically (it was right on the edge of the one I had), here in February to ensure it is not a new tumor.

I have an appointment with my doctor here in Emmett on February 17th to set that up at St. Luke's hospital nearby.

We shall see what it is...but if it is more Chordoma...in the bone they are very slow growing and I have no doubts but that there is every chance and hope that they will be able to deal with it.

I also have to say that the Conference this year was simply excellent. As I have said before, we go in the fall of each year for my checkups in order to coincide with the MD Anderson Brain and Spine Tumor conference each year. It is organized by Dr. Rhines, Gisela and their staff and a bunch of us who know each other as Dr. Rhine's Chordoma patients meet there each year.

Great information, great comradery, and just a very worthwhile thing for us.

Then, on the way back to Idaho, we took the shortcut though Minot, ND.

Our second daughter and her husband live there. Rachel is in her mid-30s now and had never been able to have children. The year before, as she was preparing to come with Chad to visit us for Christmas, a young man lost control of his vehicle outside a mall Rachel was shopping at, and he crashed into four vehicles in the mall parking lot and ultimately hit one that was pushed into Rachel and knocked her into a building wall. She was blessed that although she was seriously cut and bruised, and hit her head on that wall, she had no permanent damage and her skull was not fractured. For whatever reason, then, after visiting us, we got a call early last year informing us that she was pregnant! It was a great blessing and a true miracle.

Well, she and Chad had their son, Myles, shortly before we went to Houston and so on the way back we visited them and the new baby. It was GREAT!

Another blessing associated with my survival thus far...getting to see all of these new grandchildren. Myles is now our eleventh.

I will update this report again after we find out the results from the upcoming MRI and as we prepare for our fall 2016 trip to MD Anderson.

Once again, heartfelt and humble thanks to all of those who have prayed for us, had us in your thoughts, and who have helped us as we have gone through these experiences.

As always, I thank my dear and loving wife Gail. We will have been married 38 years this April and she has been the greatest blessing of my entire life...and my best friend. Also, thanks to a loving and merciful God in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ. This experience has been difficult...but it has also been a blessing, and they have taught me, and humbled me, so that I could see it for the blessing it is, despite whatever difficulty.

God's best to anyone and everyone reading this.

Jeff Head
February 6, 2016

45th Entry: April 29, 2016 - New MRIs reveal new tumors...and being sick from meds

I needed to update my journal here now that we got the initial results back from the MRIs, and also with respect to some medication troubles I have had that have been pretty onerous.

First, the meds.

I had been having more pain in my back and we talked with our excellent local Dr. about whether it was me

getting acclimated to the methadone I have been taking or whether there were issues in my back. We decided to up the dose in any case.

Turns out that all methadone is not created equal. Apparently, different manufacturers use different fillers and some different methodologies that can impact individuals. I happen to be sensitive to this apparently and it really knocked me for a loop. Was like going into withdrawal. I was very sick. Sickest feelings I can remember having. Felt like I was dying.

We ultimately got back to the original manufacturer and things started getting better.

Then I had a UTI and the medication was not working and some of the other medication they gave me for anxiety all worked together to cause my body to get too much methadone and I got REALLY sick all over again. Had to be in the hospital twice.

We hope now that is being fixed and may be making some progress...but it has been a very hard last 4-6 weeks.

The MRI scans did come back here in Boise and showed that I had new tumors in my lumbar spine. We sent these down to MD Anderson and they reviewed them and agreed. Several small tumors, but one that is pressing up against my spinal cord.

We are scheduled now to go down to Houston in late May for a bunch of tests and then consultation.

I expect they will want to irradiate the very small ones, but will probably have to operate on the one. I expect that will be scheduled for late summer or early fall.

This was not good news...but I have been stable and in better than expected shape for the last 6 years and so you have to take what comes and trust in the Lord. That is what I am going to continue to do.

Please remember us in your prayers. As always, Gail has been an angel through all of this. She is taking care of her Dad (her Dad and Mom moved into a small apartment we built onto our house) and me. I love her so.

April 29, 2016
Emmett, ID

46th Entry: May 21, 2016 - More info from latest CT Scans, Gail and I leaving for Houston

First of all, the medication issues and how deathly sick they made me have, gratefully, been addressed. Ultimately, I got off of methadone and am now on Fentanyl. Apparently, another issue with Methadone (and perhaps all opioids...I do not know) is that if you are on a long term maintenance dose like I was, your body becomes acclimated to it to such an extent that your body's effective dose is what you are getting and anything much below or above that become toxic to you.

But that has now been addressed.

Still I was feeling more pains in different places so we got a CT scan last week and sent it down to MD Anderson. The Dr.s here indicate that I now have a couple of lesions/tumors in my liver which also may be metastasized.

Clearly this is not good medical news...and we will see what the folks at MD Anderson have to say about that too. Right now we plan to be down there all next week...but will be willing to stay longer if they need to look at

more. I have the feeling they will.

I may require more surgeries and more radiation. It is not what I had hoped...but this cancer is rare and not well understood. It has come back where they did not expect it.

All of this is in God's hands. I trust him with all my heart and know His will is for the best. God in Heaven is the Father of us all. Jesus Christ is Lord and Redeemer of us all. They love us...completely. We may not understand what we have to pass through in this life...but they do...and they simply have sent us here to learn, and to choose. Choose to do good. Choose to find and follow them. Some paths are thorny as the song, which I love, "BE still my Soul," indicates. But our paths lead to joyous ends if we will simply turn to them.

I bear witness of this.

I will update later after we have a chance to find out what we learn in Houston.

May 21, 2016
Emmett, ID

47th Entry: August 12, 2016 - Back from Houston after more surgery and radiation

Well, we are back home and it has been a difficult, and yet so wonderful experience.

We found upon arrival that some of the pain I had been experiencing was due to two vertebrae in my thoracic spine which were putting pressure on the spinal cord which could paralyze me and they needed quick surgery. Dr. Rhines arranged this and now I have more titanium in my Thoracic spine and some repaired vertebrae. Maybe it is because I am older, or just generally weaker now at 60 years old, but the surgery and hospitalization was just difficult. But it also relieved the pressure and probably saved me from being paralyzed to one extent or another.

At the same time, I had six or eight more small tumors that Dr. McCaleer and Dr. Rhines decided to treat with more proton radiation so I had to heal from the surgery and so we stayed another 3-4 weeks at the Faith House. We made such wonderful acquaintances there of the good Christian people waiting for their various cancer treatments. Having prayers with them and bearing our witness of Christ and God to one another was so helpful.

In addition, Wylie Shaw, our good friend and compatriot in Chordoma for the last 7 years actually flew in from New Mexico to be with us as I went through the surgery. I am humbled by his and his wife's support and love for us. It makes me weep and I thank God for His tender mercy in having friends like this.

In the end, we had the radiation treatment and one day in particular was harder than any I had had to date. I literally came out of the radiation treatment and had to be taken to the ER because I began throwing up and just couldn't stop. Every 20 minutes or so for five hours I just had to throw up whether something was there or not.

They finally got it under control, and after that the rest of the treatments went fine.

We left Houston and returned to Idaho via North Dakota so we could see our newest Grand baby, Myles. He is one BIG BOY for less than a year old and is walking all around now and really just started.

What another tender mercy blessing from God to see that.

The people at MD Anderson want me to start a Leave chemo treatment that is kind of in a test phase for

Chordoma. It was designed for Leukemia but has shown some hope for Chordoma in a few cases.

Mohamed, whom we were able to see in Houston advised against it. He has already tried it and it made him deathly sick. So, Gail and I read up on it. At best it might retard things for up to nine months and then our body apparently gets tolerant to it and it is likely that you will feel very sick while you are on it. So...I prayed about it a lot. Read about it, and felt like the good Lord wanted me to decline...so I did.

We have pretty much decided to allow the disease at this point to move forward while we monitor it and treat those things that they can help.

This probably means that things will take their course...but we shall see. With God all things are possible and if He should want me home, I do not fear coming home and doing His work on that side of the veil.

If things continue and deteriorate, it will mean I will need to do a medical retirement. We are a little early for that financially, but we will place it in God's hands and see if family and friends can help where they can.

In the meantime (tis is now November 2, we found out this last weekend that number 12 grandchild is coming! Jeff and Jolene are expecting number four! Just another blessing and tender mercy.

Now November 2, 2016
Emmett, ID

Since writing this, both Wylie and Mohammed have passed on. I will miss them both.

So, this is as far as I took my cancer Journal. As indicated in my history, the condition is now considered terminal and I have decided not to undergo any clinical trials or experimental treatment.

If they come up with a true cure, I will use it, but unless that happens, I have undergone every treatment known, have been blessed with many extra years and a very decent life compared to what might have happened, and am content now to let things take their course and allow the Lord to guide my course to the end.

Appendix -2 - Some Essays on Liberty by Jeff Head

FORWARD:

I know that everyone who reads these may not agree with everything I have written. But I have included them here because they represent the feelings of both my heart and intellect regarding the liberty we enjoy in this nation (the United States of America) and why it is that we have enjoyed such liberty and such a stable government for so long.

The fundamental values that this nation was built upon are a big part of it...but even larger than that has been the fact that the vast majority of people in this nation have subscribed to and believed in those same values for so long.

Freedom requires responsibility. Responsibility can be applied and lived out if people recognize the fundamental values undergirding our society and believe in the very basic tenants of what is right and what is wrong. Our founders wrote about this. John Adams, for example, indicated that the Constitution that they were writing was good only for a moral and a religious people, and would be wholly unsuited and not work for any other. That is because he knew that the type of liberty being offered required that people by and large govern themselves.

People can govern themselves best if they have a strong religious and moral basis for their life.

With that in mind, here are several of the essays I have written over the years. Many of them were fairly widely published from the mid to late 1990s, through to about 2014.

Liberty - It's Communicable

What is Liberty?

Well, in my opinion, in the context of American liberty, here's an answer....

Liberty is freedom from encumbrance in an environment where the unalienable rights of mankind are both recognized and respected and where individual "Free Will" bounded by fundamental moral principle is the avenue for interaction in society.

That's a lot of pretty words that basically say that if a people are to be free, they and their government have to recognize and respect the God-given rights of others and be moral. In fact, liberty cannot coexist with widespread individual, or institutional immorality. Immorality places an individual's, or a group's, wishes, lusts, cravings, passions or beliefs above the unalienable rights of others. When this occurs, unalienable rights are infringed and liberty is lost.

Liberty can also not exist where moral choice is compelled and individual Free Will is destroyed. Again, the result is that unalienable rights are infringed and liberty is lost

Either of these negative conditions, rampant immorality or rampant compulsion of moral choice, lead directly to

tyranny. On one hand as society breaks down and individuals infringe on one another's rights tyranny rushes in to "restore order". On the other hand, or as a result of the first, the infringement is institutionalized as the "government" compels people in their individual choices. You decide how close we are to one or the other today.

The American path to stable, lasting liberty, which has maintained for well over two hundred years and been the beacon of liberty for the entire world, correctly enumerates all of the following unalienable rights:

- Life
- Liberty (meaning free will)
- The pursuit of happiness (meaning a livelihood and personal property deriving therefrom)
- Free speech
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of association
- Freedom of Assembly
- Petition and Redress of Elected or Appointed Officials
- Self-defense (firearms ownership)
- Secure in person and belongings
- Justice (meaning probable cause, trial by jury or peers, facing accusers, etc.)

There are others that are left to the individual states and the people. All of them derive from the Creator and are our natural rights as sovereign individuals and are only enumerated in our Declaration of Independence and our Bill of Rights in the US Constitution.

That our unalienable rights are enumerated by the Constitution and not bequeathed is a critical point in this understanding, as is the fact that morality and individual Free Will are inexorably tied to the exercise of those unalienable rights. These are facts that MUST be taught to all Americans, from the youngest years on, if there is any hope for society to understand and equitably exercise their unalienable rights and their liberty.

This education then, must be the object of our most strenuous efforts. Without this knowledge, we as a people will drift far afield from true liberty, and will ultimately fall victim to demigods, tyrants, populists and our own material cravings and other passions. Therefore, that we should waist and wear out ourselves in such a worthy effort in bringing to light this knowledge that our enemies continue to go to any length to hide and prevent.

When individuals understand that they were meant to be free to act in accordance with their own conscience and only within the confines of another's rights, the feeling is at once exciting and contagious. It opens a vista to a world of opportunity and to the accompanying accountability for their own actions. This accountability becomes the great governor in a society where individuals prefer to thereby govern themselves as opposed to being governed by an all-inclusive, over burdensome government. Such a society, where these truths of liberty are understood, develops and maintains a government whose primary purpose is to:

- 1) Protect the borders from outside invaders who would rob the people of their liberty and all the fruits of their labors.
- 2) To insure that any infringement on the unalienable rights of others is brought to justice, as provided for in the enumeration of those rights.
- 3) To provide for equitable commerce between the states.

Folks, this is Liberty ... this is what our founders envisioned and what our nation has lived out for most of its history. This knowledge is communicable and is the great antidote to our modern ills ... from cries for gun control, to social welfare systems, to intrusive taxes to rampant immorality. Some of the greatest comments on these topics were provided by our founders ... our initial great communicators. Let's punctuate this article with their words and communications on the topic, and let's catch that "communicable" spirit that they felt:

Quotes from the Founders of this Republic on Liberty

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."- John Adams, Oct. 11, 1798 Address to the military

"Public virtue cannot exist in a nation without private virtue, and public virtue is the only foundation of republics." John Adams

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure if we have removed their only firm basis: a conviction in the minds of men that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."- Thomas Jefferson

"And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms ... The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants," Thomas Jefferson.

"I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations."- James Madison

"We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."- James Madison

"A general dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy.... While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader.... If virtue and knowledge are diffused among the people, they will never be enslaved. This will be their great security." - Samuel Adams

"[N]either the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend of the liberty of his country who tries most to

promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen onto any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man." Samuel Adams

"If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom...go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels nor arms. May your chains set lightly upon you and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen." - Samuel Adams

"Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants." - William Penn

"Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." Patrick Henry

"Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect everyone who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are inevitably ruined," Patrick Henry.

"Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated." - Thomas Paine; 1776

"[I]f we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us, that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity." Daniel Webster

"They that can give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety," Benjamin Franklin.

"No country upon earth ever had it more in its power to attain blessings. Much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to depart from the road which Providence has pointed us to, so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass. The Great Governor of the Universe has led us too long and too far to forsake us in the midst of it. We may, now and then, get bewildered; but I hope and trust that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path. " - George Washington

These men knew human nature, the human heart and the intricacies of individual and group dynamics. With all else that has changed in the intervening years, these principles and truths have not changed, and neither have the applicability of their words and teachings.

Let us therefore go forth and spread these truths and these principles abroad in our land. Such principle are forgotten, discarded and walked on at the peril of us all. Let us educate those around us as to the true underpinnings of our liberties, and let us be prepared to face direct and head-on with these truths, those individuals and institutions who would subvert and destroy our liberties and way of life.

If we do not unflinchingly face them with truth and principle now, and if we do not endeavor to pass these truths on to those around us ... the time will come, as surely as night follows day, and as surely as our founders faced the same, when our liberty faces so grave a threat that we will be compelled to defeat the resulting tyranny (either internal or external) by nothing short of force of arms.

SUBNOTE:

Here's a GREAT few thoughts on our laws and how they should be fashioned from Frederick Bastiat (1850) in his famous pamphlet:

The existence of persons and property preceded the existence of the legislator, and his function is only to guarantee their safety.

It is not true that the function of law is to regulate our consciences, our ideas, our wills, our education, our opinions, our work, our trade, our talents, or our pleasures. The function of law is to protect the free exercise of these rights, and to prevent any person from interfering with the free exercise of these rights by any other person.

Since law necessarily requires the support of force, its lawful domain is only in the areas where the use of force is necessary. This is justice.

Every individual has the right to use force for lawful self-defense. It is for this reason that the collective force - which is only the organized combination of the individual forces - may lawfully be used for the same purpose; and it cannot be used legitimately for any other purpose.

Law is solely the organization of the individual right of self-defense which existed before law was formalized. Law is justice.

If today, our lawmakers were interested in restoring this nation to its greatness, they would catch the vision that this land was established for sovereign individuals, operating within the environment addressed by this essay, to govern themselves, not be governed by thousands of laws, regulations and agencies sent forth to harass the citizens and increase the power and prestige of lawmakers who ought rather to be the servants of the citizens.

Morality and the Exercise of Unalienable Rights

What is morality?

How is it defined?

Is immorality wrong?

Is immorality damaging to the individual?

Is immorality damaging to a society? ...

Questions like these are the root of much of the debate regarding the successful and appropriate exercise of unalienable rights by a free society.

How did the founders of this great nation hit upon a formula for the exercise of unalienable rights that has been so successful and produced, for the longest time, the most equitable state, or government, created by mankind, which has been very much the envy of most of the world?

Let me share a few of the reasons that I believe our founders were successful, as well as a few of the reasons why I believe it is in the process of failing.

Formula for Success:

1) Our founders recognized that our unalienable rights came from the Creator, God in Heaven. Not from the King, not from the President, not from the attorney general, not from the police officer, not from the Czar, not from the chairman, and not from any man or manmade institution or creation ... including not from any "Rule of Law".

2) Our founders recognized (regardless of their particular brands of religion) that morality within society in general was indispensable to the exercising of unalienable rights we derive from God. They simply recognized that the basic foundation for exercising their unalienable rights was this morality. This allowed folks to understand where the end of their arm was in relation to the nose on someone else's face ... and not just physically, but morally as well.

3) The system of governmental, institutional powers which were put in place around these understandings was weak centrally, and stronger the closer you got to the individual, and it was a Constitutional Republic based on all of this with clearly defined limitations and separations. It was not a democracy.

4) The majority of society in those day was much more humble and naturally tended to look to God and His moral standards (or Gospel) for strength and faith in exercising their daily routine and exercising their rights.

5) Most people in those days, based on the society and morality of the day, knew what was right and what was wrong, even if they chose to "partake" of the wrong.

6) In the context of all of the above, the free people of the day were pretty much their own masters and were not weighed down by too many regulations or rules, or institutional powers of government. Also, they had an entire "wilderness" to run to, if they did not fit in, or chose not to.

Now, here are several of the pertinent reasons I believe that our Republic is having the tremendous difficulties it is having today, wherein agendas contrary to the intent of our Founders have found fertile soil, have taken root and germinated.

Recipe for Failure:

1) In my opinion, the largest root cause for our dilemma today is a loss of our moral foundation. What was "known" by society to be wrong in earlier days is embraced and paraded today in an environment of amorality and moral relativism which has weakened our character as a people. We are literally having a terrible time understanding where our arms end and other's noses begin, both physically and morally. Equitable exercise of unalienable rights, as recognized by the founders, cannot last long in such an environment in my opinion. It will

either give way to anarchy, which leads to totalitarianism; or, it will lead to a progressively brutal "state" which will be built up to "protect" us from ourselves ... which ends up in the same place as the former ... totalitarianism.

2) Many today have forgotten God in Heaven and the fact that He has granted us our unalienable rights, and defines for each of us the moral compass ... and that He does it through free choice, letting us reap what are the just results of those choices. With certain types of behavior (and I believe homosexuality and abortion are two of them) the consequences ultimately play out at the societal level, irrespective of where the choice is made. In times gone by, very few people ever even consider openly engaging in, or professing such practices. It would have had immediate social consequences, and in most localities, would have had legal consequences as well. This is not because the people of that day were not "enlightened", or did not understand the basis for exercising unalienable rights. On the contrary, they understood the basis for exercising their rights very well and also understood morality and the lessons of history. This number (2) that I have described is really an extension of number (1).

3) Today's governmental institutional powers are fast becoming the opposite of that laid out by our founders. Strong centrally and getting progressively weaker the closer they get to the individual. Much of this, in my opinion, is due to the negative consequences of (1) and (2). This has in turn caused most of the separations and limitations of our government to be blurred or erased as it strives to "protect" us from ourselves ... to the point where we have been transformed into a virtual democracy, instead of the Constitutional Republic designed by the founders.

4) We are not very humble as a people today. There are notable exceptions, but generally, as a society, we are affluent and most do not feel a need for God or His guidance or moral standards.

5) There is literally, very little place to run for those who want to "be different".

I personally believe that these are the root ills. I do not believe that it will be fixed without what used to be called a "revival", both morally and politically ... and probably economically as well, and which impacts the vast majority of the people. In this context, the moral revival is the most important, for without it, the others are meaningless in the end.

How will this come about? I believe we must take seriously the charge and effort to educate ourselves and those around us in what made our Constitutional Republic successful.

Clearly, understanding unalienable rights, what they are, where they come from and how they relate to society and societal institutions is critical. Equally critical is how we can exercise unalienable rights amongst our fellowman equitably. This is impossible to do, in my opinion, and according to the founders, without understanding morality, what it is, where it comes from and a basic definition of its basis. I believe that the best foundation for morality rests in two great codes of conduct found in the basic religious underpinning of most of our society. They are

1) The Ten Commandments.

2) The Golden Rule.

In this way, our founders, with all of their imperfections, created a government of man which recognized and

respected God's hand. In my opinion, we need to find a way to get back there. It is a very delicate thing to do, particularly the issue between compulsion and free choice. Compulsion leads to tyranny, but that does not obviate the fact that unbridled and reckless free choice taken by larger and larger segments of society will lead to the same. Strong morals keep both from happening.

Therefore, I believe we as a people have to freely choose to align ourselves with as firm a moral compass as can be found, like the two standards mentioned above. This "free choice", or "free agency" is a critical and indispensable term which must be understood if morality is to influence the equitable exercise of unalienable rights. When large numbers of Americans choose a firm moral foundation freely, we will receive Providence's help. As it used to be said, Providence will "smile" on us as He has done throughout much of our history.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

AMERICA AT THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY

We stand at an absolutely pivotal crossroads in our nation's history that may well determine our future and way of life for decades to come.

It is a crossroads that we as a people have been a long time coming to, with the pivotal events occurring mostly in the last hundred years, and now escalating much more rapidly in the 3-5 years.

So-called progressives, socialists, Marxists, and those seeking to ignore or discard fundamental republican and moral principle, and our constitution, have pushed and pushed, have cajoled and cajoled, and have subverted our nation, calling the truth a lie as they have made progress towards their goal of "fundamental changing" America. Many have fought them, but far too many have ignored the worsening condition, others have been bought and paid for through blackmail, bribes, or appeals to entitlement and vice, still others have been swayed, in the name of congeniality or "reason", to compromise, to have pleasant dialog, and to meet half way with those pushing for the end of our Constitutional Republic, our Free Market, and our way of life and liberty.

The problem is, if you are always meeting the opposition half way towards their position, if they keep stepping further and further back along a particular path...then you are drawn right along that same path to the destination of their choosing. And that destination is not a constitutional republic, and is not liberty based on fundamental republican principle.

Such is the position we find ourselves in. Down one path at this crossroads lies an absolute fatal precipice for our constitutional republic, our liberty, and our traditional way of life. Along the other path lies a long and hard climb away from that precipice back to a place where our Republic and its Constitution can once again rest on firm and steady ground.

That firm ground is rooted in and founded upon fundamental principles and values. The principles are given to us by God in Heaven, the Creator, as our founders pointed out. It is He that has given us our rights and the principles that they are rooted in, not government, not "enlightened," so-called progressives.

The primary, most fundamental right bequeathed to us by God is the right to life.

And yet our society has become so twisted that the very definition of life...which is so obvious to anyone participating with God in its creation, has been twisted and wrested.

Abortion on Demand, Abortion couched in corrupt law [warning: graphic image], is not a right...it is the opposite of the fundamental right to life. Killing an unborn baby never has been and never will be an unalienable right. It is murder, and the result of a twisted and perverted sense of entitlement on the part of politicians buying votes, and from individuals who seek to destroy the life growing within them because they have been schooled, taught, and lured into believing it is a good form of birth-control, alleviating them of the responsibility of caring a baby to full term and thereby "inconveniencing" them.

Abortion is not a "family value"...it is the antithesis of family values and kills outright what otherwise would be the next innocent and loved member a family...either for those bearing the innocent child, or for those who are

waiting in line to adopt the innocent child.

Today we seem this same twisted thinking now being applied to all forms of contraceptive, calling "pregnancy" and illness and a threat to the family. Demanding that all of society pay for it for others as if though it itself is a "right," when in truth, it is simply a choice to avoid responsibility and the far better option, both morally and societally to simply control themselves and abstain.

That our society has become so engrossed in entitlement, so fixated on convenience, and in the sick and twisted power of words being applied to actions that have no basis in the definition of those words or in reality...is indicative of the absolute critical nature of the crossroads we now find ourselves at.

Liberty is also our birthright from God...liberty based on fundamental moral principle...based on God's law. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, the golden rule, etc.

It is not liberty to take from another who has earned something and/or owns it, and give it to someone who has not. That is not "sharing", that is not "charity." It is out and out theft.

Yet our government practices such theft on a daily basis and thereby breaks faith with its founding principles and the compact which created it.

Politicians infest our land...few statesmen or true public servants can be found among them.

They are proud of the titles, "Politician" and "Law Makers," They have come to believe that it is their job to make more laws, and proudly answer to the title. They have created entire courses of study and degrees in "Political Science". But what America needs is not more politicians who compromise fundamental principles, but statesmen and true servants of the people who stand firm and hold fast to those fundamental principles.

Politicians buy and sell votes by hobbling together laws and acts that practice the aforementioned theft so they can economically enslave entire classes of people and turn them into poor wretches who do not even know the extent of their own bondage and the shackles that hold them fast in their economic and societal bounds. Mindlessly voting for entitlements that are not theirs, and voting for the frauds who enact such "legislation" that takes them from others and unjustly, immorally, gives them to those who have not earned it, or have not received it as a free-will gift and charity from others.

"Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." Patrick Henry

And yet, despite the teachings and urgings of our founders to the contrary, here we are. Faced with existing and looming moral ruin and economic bankruptcy as the Free Market is dismantled before our very eyes by wanton Marxists who are dedicated to and proud of precisely that "fundamental change".

They have no interest in the free market or maintaining it or helping it. They are interested in destroying it, along with our fundamental republican principles so they can build a Marxist command economy on its ashes with themselves and their close supporters in charge.

That is the truth of the situation we face.

But events surrounding the current administration are opening a window of opportunity for all patriotic, traditional Americans who love life, liberty, and the opportunities those rights and the principles they are founded upon empower them with. The opportunity to work hard for and realize dreams and pass them on to their loved ones, or at the least bequeath them the same opportunity in the same environment, is under assault, and it is clear that it is teetering on the same precipice we find ourselves standing next to.

But millions of Americans are waking up and they are not happy as they realize that their very liberty and their very opportunity to achieve and excel are being robbed from them.

In this situation, we must remember that there are certain foundational principles and institutions that we can hold fast to, rally around, and draw other Americans to on our journey up the steep path away from the precipice.

It does not require a "new" constitution. It does not require "new" amendments, it does not require losing any of our birth rights or the unalienable rights God in Heaven has given us and that our founders enumerated for us.

What it requires is that we, as patriotic, God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans stand and assert our way of life, our constitution, and our rights...and that we do so firmly, without equivocation, and without compromise as regards those birth rights, those unalienable rights, or those fundamental principles.

I will try and illustrate the nature of this by drawing on experiences I have had in life. They were taught to me by my mother and father, who in turn learned it from their parents, who in turn learned it from many God-fearing and faithful generations before them, and on my Dad's side stretching back into the original colonies in the 1600s.

There are three oaths that I have taken in my lifetime that I hold inviolate.

They are oaths that I am willing...right here...right now...at any time to fight for, and if necessary to die for.

First: I made a sacred vow and oath, when I came to Jesus Christ and was baptized in His name, to take His name upon me, to try and always have His countenance about me, and to obey His commandments and live as He would live. In so doing I repented of my sins and He saved me spiritually and took me to be His own...and I now go through life constantly reminded of that vow, of that oath and covenant I made with God and Him, and constantly seeking to be more like Him, being lifted up by Him when I fall, and trying to help others do the same. This basic principle, repeated millions of times over in this country, is, in reality, why we are free.

Americans who have taken this oath and made that covenant have done so of their own free will and in their hearts. There is no license that makes this possible...nor could there be a government issued license to control it...because the moment man and his government tried to intervene in that process, it would destroy it. The enemies of true liberty and our constitutional republic know this. As it is, Americans who have taken that oath and made that covenant are the...most tolerant, most charitable, and most forgiving people as a whole on earth. That is why we are free, that is why others flock here to this environment of freedom based on moral principle.

Our founders understood the clear and paramount nature of the religious and moral relationship in the Republic they were creating.

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality

and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."- John Adams, Oct. 11, 1798

Second: I have made a sacred vow before God and man to my wife, my sweetheart and darling of over 34 years. It is a sacred oath and vow that has bound us together, and has done so within the environ and confines of that first oath and covenant we have each made. This oath, this covenant of marriage between us, a single man and a single woman, has provided the environment, the frame of reference, and the life-long (and for us, the eternal) commitment that allows us to weather every storm while bringing children into this world and raising them in an environment of love and faith. It has allowed us, despite whatever economic, emotional, career, or any other opposition or hardship to endure.

Such an oath leads one to understand what it is in life that is worth working hard and sacrificing for. It allows us to establish very long term goals and objectives and sacrifice for one another, and for our children and their future, and for our grandchildren and their future. Every statistic, from every demographic shows, that the nuclear family, when maintained and when these sacred vows are kept, is probably the single most important factor in the economic, educational, societal, mental, and spiritual wellbeing of the rising generation. This should come as no surprise...as our founders said, it is one of those things that is self-evident and ordained by our Creator. Such ties, such bonds are intrinsic to a healthy society that practices the morally-constrained liberty that our founders enumerated and vouchsafed for us...and which have been vouchsafed in the centuries since by the blood of patriots. Our enemies know this and have worked tirelessly to destroy the foundation for, and the very definition of this 2nd oath which defines a marriage and a family. They do not want strong nuclear families because strong nuclear families result in strong people who are committed to the death to the preservation of the environment that allows them to prosper...and our enemies want that environment destroyed so we can be more easily subjugated, or destroyed.

Third: I have taken an oath to protect and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same. Too many times people focus on the first part of that oath, which is critical, about protecting it from foreign and domestic enemies. but the second part is just as important, the part about bearing true faith and allegiance to the same...many, many politicians, heads of agencies, and others ignore this part and try and define the constitution to be whatever they think it ought to be in or time, instead of what it is. I took that oath freely and without any mental or other restraint or compulsion. Here's why. The constitution was written and put in place precisely to define a very limited government for a people who were free. A people bound by individual and personal moral constraint. Such a constitutional republic, with this specific, sacred, and inspired constitution came forth so that the environment of true liberty could be established which made it possible to make and exercise those first two oaths I have spoken of, and to do it in an environment of liberty, where the benefit to ourselves and to society can be maximized.

The values and principles upon which the constitution rests and that were enumerated by the founders, are not "quaint", they are not "outdated". The principles are eternal and are as old as mankind. They found a fertile place for implementation in America in the late 18th century, and God in Heaven, as Patrick Henry said, helped fight their fights, raised up friends to help them, so this environment of liberty could be established. And it was established. And it has endured.

Those enlightened men knew human nature, they knew the human heart, and they knew the intricacies of

individual and group dynamics. With all else that has changed in the intervening years, those principles and truths have not changed, and are just as applicable today as they were then.

So, these three oaths define what I fight and die for. They are the types of principles which we simply must re-enthroned in our public conscienceness and then elect executive and representatives with the same understanding. And that bring us right back to this crossroads.

GOD, FAMILY, COUNTRY.

These types of principle are what we rally around...irrespective of your denomination. Irrespective of your interpretation. Irrespective of whether you name Him Father in Heaven, or Nature's God. The principles apply and they are the foundation of this nation and the reason we have been the freest, the most charitable, the most prosperous, and strongest nation on earth.

Again, the founders and great thinkers and orators of the day understood how all of this tied together and warned against any tendency to stray away from it.

"[I]f we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us, that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity." Daniel Webster

And if we are true to those values and principles, we will not only remain that way, we will cast off the malaise, the darkness, the doomsayer attitudes of those who stand against these principles and we will overcome all enemies foreign and domestic, whatever the cost, and indeed bear "TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE" to our constitution and the fundamental, foundational principle upon which it rests.

We must make it painfully clear to the enemies of this nation, both foreign and domestic, that their push against these fundamental values and principles is at an end, and it is We the People who must inform them. In town halls, at Tea Parties, on Forums, through talk radio, mailing and emailing our reps, faxing them, sharing with our families, friends, and neighbors...wherever the people have their own voice and it is heard above the din of pundits, analyzers, so-called "experts", commentators, news anchors, and politicians...this is already happening at an accelerating rate all across this nation. We must now translate it to the ballot box, just as I believe we did in the 2010 mid-term elections when the same choices were before us.

We say to the progressives, the Marxists, the statists, all those who stand arrayed against our Constitutional Republic and who want to fundamental alter, change, and end it...the slide stops here. We say that the time has come for us to stand firm against the relentless push against liberty. We say that we will now lean into their assault, and push their efforts back the other way and cast them off into the dark depths that are their home.

If we do not forthrightly and unflinchingly face those who are seeking to subvert the fabric of our liberty now, and if we do not endeavor to pass these truths on to all those around us ... the time will come, as surely as night follows day, and as surely as our founders found, when our liberty will be under so grave a threat that we will be compelled to defeat the resulting tyranny (either foreign or domestic) by nothing short of the force of arms, just as our founders were forced to do. History is the great teacher. We either learn from it and endeavor with all our might to learn its lessons and not repeat them, or we will repeat them with an outcome that is not necessarily a forgone conclusion.

We must let the enemies of liberty know that we are not only willing to fight, but we are prepared to do so and to do so with extreme prejudice in defense of our constitution and the principles and values that serve as its foundation. Those enemies must understand that their fate will be so awful if they attempt extra-constitutional or totalitarian methods of suppressing our rights and liberties, that they will not dare to do so.

As Ronald Reagan said, years ago, "It is a time for choosing."

Let us choose aright. If we do, the promise of our founders and their experience extends to us.

We are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. - Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775

But if we choose wrong, we, or our children or grandchildren will live out the harsh warnings and lessons of history:

"Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants."- William Penn

"A general dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy.... While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader." - Samuel Adams

And for those who think that it cannot happen here. Once again, history teaches and tells us differently. Wake up and look around. It already is. As Sophocles wrote well over 23 centuries ago:

Far-stretching, endless Time

Brings forth all hidden things,

And buries that which once did shine.

The firm resolve falters, the sacred oath is shattered. And let none say, "It cannot happen here"

It is a time to stand.

It is a time to be firm and unflinching.

It is a time to have faith, lean into the efforts of our adversaries and push them back!

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

My Oath and Promise as an American Citizen

In this time of crass and blatant lies by the leaders of our nation and their appointees. Where American lives have been lost on foreign soil based on those lies. Where the freedom of our citizens has been infringed upon for pure political purposes based on lies. Where the literal health of the nation...and by extension the lives of its citizens...hangs in the balance as a result of crass, blatant, and knowing lies. Where the very good faith and name of this Republic has been dragged through the mud based on lies.

In such times, as American citizens we must remember who we are, and what we have been given as a people. What so many have sacrificed so much to pass on to us. Those gifts, and the principles upon which they are based transcend any lie, and any individual, or group of individuals telling them.

We have God-given, Constitutional Rights:

As Americans, and according to the US Constitution, we have a God-given right to the following:

The right to life.

Freedom of speech

Freedom to peaceably assemble

Freedom of religion and conscience

The right to defend ourselves and to keep and bear firearms

These are our most fundamental rights, upon which our freedom and liberty rest, and upon which our other enumerated rights rest.

The US Constitution is the ultimate law of the land:

No lower court, no President, no state or federal legislature, no Attorney General, no Secretary of anything, no officer of the court, no judge, and no law enforcement officer can infringe upon, or render those rights in any way moot without using the amendment process provided for in the constitution itself. In fact, all of those individuals have taken an oath to bear true faith and allegiance to that Constitution and to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic. They are showing by their actions, when they attempt to violate those rights, that they are actually oath breakers, and enemies of the Constitution they took an oath to protect.

As to all of those rights listed, no official amendment has been enacted revoking them, or renouncing them. Therefore, according to the law we still have them. And, as God is my witness, since our life and liberties come from Him, even if unhallowed hands got amendments passed to infringe upon them, we would then appeal to God in Heaven for His aid in overthrowing the resultant tyranny and return our land to the Constitutional Republic, with liberty based on moral principle and constraint established by God, which our Founders established.

In this regard, despite our founding and the clear wording of our Constitution, as stated, many governmental officials and appointees have, over the last decades, and particularly in the last 6 years, been trampling on these

rights and trying to cajole, finagle, and legislate these rights away. In many instances people have been detained, jailed, imprisoned, and even injured or killed because those citizens sought to maintain or defend their rights in the face of the acts, interpretations, findings, executive orders, and laws de jour that have been foisted upon our nation. The people making, passing, enforcing, and enacting these conditions have, by their actions, defined themselves as enemies of the Constitution of the United States, and enemies of liberty, our way of life, and We the People.

It is time to fulfill our Oath to the Constitution:

It is time for all citizens who have taken an oath to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution, and to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic, to stand and fulfill their oath. The language of the Constitution with respect to these rights is clear. "Shall not be infringed," "Shall have the right," etc. are clear statements that cannot be misinterpreted. Legally they can only be undone by constitutional amendment. Morally they are gifts from God and beyond the purview of mortal man.

If we are to retain our liberty and our way of life, and vouchsafe the blessings and prosperity attendant to such liberty for ourselves, our families, and our descendants, we must stop this treason now.

I am but an every-day American citizen. I hold no high office. Yet, as an American citizen:

We must heed the call as God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans to stand:

The call to all God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans to stand and say NO!

The call to all God-fearing, liberty-loving Americans who have taken an oath to defend the Constitution against such enemies, and to bear true faith and allegiance to stand and do so now against those who are subverting our constitution and our Republic. If you have not taken that oath in an official capacity, but have that promise and that commitment in your heart...then I call on you to stand with us!

This must happen by the tens of millions. It must start as massive civil disobedience to these unconstitutional acts, and demand that they be overturned.

It must bear itself out at the ballot box, ridding ourselves of these flim-flam, political whores who are beholden only to themselves, their vice, and cravings for power. And yes, it must always be defended by the cartridge box. That is the true reason our American founders, our heritage, has passed on to us the 2nd Amendment which these usurpers and interlopers fear so much.

Stand in your homes. Stand in your towns. Stand in your counties. Stand in your cities. Stand in your states.

We need a revolution of the heart and mind...and faith in God:

A revolution that leads to action against this state of affairs, and puts our faith in God. We need a revival of the independent and liberty loving spirit of our forefathers who sacrificed all to purchase our liberty for us.

Identify direct and crass violations of the Constitution and demand their overturning and do not obey such laws. They are not legal.

As examples:

If you do not want to photograph a homosexual wedding because of your religious belief...do not do so, and then fight tooth and nail, with all the resources at your disposal against any attempt to coerce you to do so. Those trying to coerce you are the enemy to all we hold dear.

If you feel the need to speak out against this encroaching tyranny in any form...do so, and urge others to join with you. Do not be silenced. The time has come to stand resolutely and disobey such attempts to silence our 1st amendment rights.

If you are a law-abiding citizen, do not give up your arms to any so-called government official who tries to take them away from you under the color of law. What they are doing is illegal and is treason against the very fabric of this nation.

If your school or town wishes to pray to God before a game or meeting, do so. Invite others to pray with you, allowing them to not bow their heads if they so desire.

Come together. Form committees of correspondence and committees of safety in your town, cities, counties, and states. They need not, and should not be beholden to, or a part of, any political party. They must be common Americans, coming together to protect our freedom and our constitution and to demand those who represent us to do the same or be removed forthwith from office.

If we do not do this...if we ourselves are unwilling to stand and fight for our liberty and that of our children and grandchildren and generations yet unborn, we will lose our precious liberty and all the blessings, prosperity, and future that attend it.

As God is my witness:

I declare, as a sovereign American citizen, that I will stand and identify unconstitutional encroachment wherever it exists, and to then fight against it.

I will identify said encroachment, proclaim it, demand it to cease, and if must be, I will fight against it until such actions are purged from our land.

Until all of those underhanded, self-serving, con-men and women who would foist such conditions on us beg the very mountains to fall upon them and hide themselves and their intent from a civil society.

I so declare, I so commit, so help me God.

Please, I beseech all who read this, join me. Then share the same with others and have them join you!

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

A WITNESS FOR CHRIST- THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Much has been said of late regarding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Church (probably particularly because of the campaign for the Presidency of Mitt Romney in 2012), and whether or not the Church is "Christian" or not. So, since it is being talked about so much, I thought it important to give my own perspective and witness.

Forgive me in advance for the length.

Jesus Christ, miraculously (through the power of the Holy Spirit) born of the Virgin Mary, is my Savior and author of my Salvation. His atonement and redemption in the Garden and on the Cross have saved me, and it is that alone that has saved me. This is the same Christ, written of in the Holy Bible, which I accept as God's word and His scripture, who was born in Bethlehem, raised by the carpenter, Joseph in Nazareth. He taught in the Temple when young, He grew up and taught His gospel, performed great miracles, healing the sick, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead. He chose His disciples. He himself said He was the Christ, the Son the Father, of Almighty God. He was unjustly tried by the Jews and the Romans, and was crucified according to Biblical prophecy for the sins of mankind and rose (Was resurrected) the third day. He will return to this Earth and reign in honor and glory through a glorious Millennium. I look forward to the day of His return.

I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What many call a Mormon. We do have different beliefs about the Godhead. We believe in three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We believe they are separate and distinct individuals and turn to the Bible itself of that interpretation. Christ indicated indeed that He and the Father are one, but in the great intercessory prayer in the Gospel of John, he explained exactly what that meant when he prayed to the Father and asked that His disciples might be one, even as He and the Father were one. He did not ask that they come together in some form of single conglomeration of them all in body, He prayed that they would be perfectly united. He also prayed to the Father...not to himself. He also said He came to do the will of His Father, not His own will. His Father's voice was heard at His baptism, while the Spirit descended separately. His Father's voice was also heard and on the mount...separate from His own. The martyr Steven saw Christ sitting individually next to the Father. All of these things are very clear regarding the distinct and separate nature of the Godhead.

We also believe that we are saved through faith and grace. Our own actions are not sufficient to save us...but we do believe that Christ indicated, very clearly in the Bible that there were certain things that we, as His disciples should do...necessary as a part of our salvation. He said if we love Him, we will keep His commandments...and His apostles taught (notably John) that if we did not keep His commandments, His love was not in us. James taught very clearly that our faith would be accompanied by good works...or that that faith was dead. He sent His disciples forth to baptize and indicated that they who believed and were baptized would be saved, and they who did not would not be saved. So clearly, there are things that as believers, as a result of our sincere conversion, must do. These are all things that various denominations interpret differently and have differences over...and that is fine.

We believe, as Paul taught, that the Church of Christ is made up of Apostles, and Prophets, evangelists, bishops, etc. We believe that His Church was restored to the earth...not for "Mormons" but for all mankind and we go about teaching people of it. We believe that all mankind, whenever and wherever they have lived throughout history will be brought to a knowledge of Christ in this life, or before the judgement in the life hereafter, so they

can either accept or deny His salvation. We believe Christ himself set up this great work on the other side after He was crucified and before he was resurrected when he "taught the spirits in prison," according to Biblical verse in Peter.

We do not worship Joseph Smith or set him up as an equal in any instance to Jesus Christ. We believe Christ used Him to perform a mission and that mission was the restoration of Christ's full church, also as prophesied in the Bible, with Prophets and Apostles and all that Paul spoke of. Do others believe the time for that is past? Yes. And that is fine as a part of their faith. We also believe in the Book of Mormon, which itself clearly states that it is a second witness of Christ and goes along with the Holy Bible (which we also believe in as Holy Scripture) to witness of Him. It does not replace the Bible...it is not "another Bible," we believe it is a witness of Christ from ancient America. Do others believe we do not need this witness? Yes...and that too is fine according to the dictates of their faith. Joseph Smith ultimately sealed his mission, despite whatever faults he had...and he had them for he was a human and imperfect...with his own blood.

We believe that when Christ said, in Matthew to "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect", that he meant it. We believe that is the ultimate aim He and the Father have for us. That our ultimate purpose, through the salvation of Jesus Christ, is to do so. But that would be in the far hereafter. We believe what Paul said, in Romans when he said, "We are the Children of God, and if children, then heirs, and joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with Him, that we might also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

I witness, in all humility, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. He is my personal Savior and the only one to whom I look for, for salvation. That is a true and sincere statement. It is He who will judge me. By most all Christian standards, that statement of acceptance of Jesus Christ means to most that I am saved. The Bible teaches that it is only through the power of the Holy Ghost that I can make such a witness...and I so witness now.

The other differences notwithstanding...they are miniscule when compared to the saving grace of Jesus Christ which I freely accept and teach.

It is what my church teaches. It is what I teach my children and grandchildren. In the end...Jesus Christ is the Chief and principle cornerstone of it all. Without Him and His atonement all else is meaningless.

Are there those in the church who lean more heavily on one doctrine or another? Yes. There are in all Christian denominations. Are there bad apples amongst us? Yes...as there are in any large organization. Any Christian church is really a hospital for sinners...all of us. So yes, mistakes are made and sometimes emphasis is misplaced. But the grounding teachings of Jesus Christ and Him crucified are the basis for it all and that is the crucial doctrine.

A Christian is a follower of Christ and His gospel, who accepts Him as their Savior through Christ's atonement and who believes in His Father, and in the Holy Ghost, and who believes He was resurrected with an immortal body and will return in a glorious second coming. I believe all of these things...though my interpretation of some of the doctrines associated with them may be different than yours. Nonetheless, I believe them with all my heart and follow them and try and teach them to others.

I believe in Christ, I teach of Christ, I look forward to His coming, and I thank God in Heaven for Him and His salvation and for the witness of the Holy Ghost which has born it into my heart and soul.

These are all good things and we should all rejoice in anyone who comes to such knowledge. I do...even if they come to that knowledge outside of the LDS church...I know that their heartfelt testimony and acceptance of Christ will bear them up. Of course, in our faith, I believe they will ultimately also learn about the truths we teach...but that is for the future and for God himself to decide. In the end, if we are true followers of Christ, when He comes and enfolds us in His arms, if we love Him, we will do as he bids...even if it is not altogether what we thought in life. I know I will. I pray all of us will.

Others may seek to discount this, my testimony. But they cannot destroy it because it is between me and my Savior and it He who will judge me. I testify that my witness is sincere, humble and true, irrespective of what others may say about me and my church. I plead with people to get to know members of the Church, ask them what they believe, observe their lives and who they commit themselves to in life and then judge for themselves. The Savior taught that "by their fruits ye shall know them". Get to know them and see their fruit.

I have placed this here with one objective in mind...to provide a witness and testimony contrary to much of what is being said about my faith, that it may stand as a witness...and to do so honestly and humbly. I am not seeking argument, not trying to "prove" anyone wrong...just giving my own witness and letting people know some of what we believe and why. I will not follow this up with a public bash and argument of theological principle. The key and core element on which all else hinged...for any of us IMHO...is the core witness and belief and acceptance of Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary and crucified on Calvary as our Redeemer and Savior.

Anyone who believe in Jesus Christ and Him crucified...and who knows that His gospel and the fundamental moral principles He taught are the bedrock foundation of our republic and our Liberty is my ally...even if they naysay my faith. I will not naysay their faith in Jesus Christ because that collective faith is what is important if we are to restore this Republic. We are and should be allies in this fight, and I do all I can to reach out and work with others accordingly. Anyone who knows my history and my involvement in numerous activities on behalf of liberty knows this is true.

Again, I thank all who have prayed for and joined their faith with my own and that of my family in my recent health crisis with cancer. The prayers of the faithful...a large portion of which are not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, were effective and instrumental in my life and I humbly thank all who exerted their prayers and faith on my behalf. We are brothers and sisters and I plead with all to join together and not let the adversary or a spirit of dissention split us apart as we fight for our nation.

God's blessings and speed to you all.

Jeff Head
Emmett, Idaho, USA

LATINO & BLACK AMERICANS - FOR GOD'S SAKE, WAKE UP!

We have now experienced the most liberal, progressive candidate in the history of American politics, with the worst record on the economy, Barack Hussein Obama.

The over-riding segments of the population that enabled his victory were the Black vote (who voted for him by over 95%) and the Latino vote (who voted for him by over 70%).

And they did so, absolutely against their own best interest.

Oh, in the short term it can certainly be argued that Obama's campaign of "social justice," and equalizing the playing field from his perspective...which perspective is a socialist, redistribution of wealth perspective at best, and a Marxist perspective at worst, is appealing to voters who find themselves as a group the most negatively impacted in terms of employment, family stability, poverty, and crime rates in the nation, and particularly during this long standing economic down turn.

When a politician promises specifically to "right these wrongs," and to give these voters "free stuff," be it contraceptives, food stamps, a portion of other people's income, free school loans, easier housing, etc., etc. one can see why people would be tempted to vote for them. And make no mistake, that is exactly what the progressive left is doing, as they have done for decades. Dangling entitlements and "free stuff," in front of people in an effort to buy their vote.

But everything has a cost...as we shall see...and the cost is horrific for those whose life styles, livelihoods, and social positioning are adversely impacted.

Despite it being hard to look beyond the entitlements and hand-outs, it is all the more important to examine the record of the politicians promising such things. Perhaps they do so to hide their actual record and real motives. What they have actually done (or not done) for these constituencies, is something critical to determine before making a decision as to who should lead this nation and address its economic and social problems.

This nation spends over a trillion dollars on welfare every year. Since the inception of the "Great Society" under Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s, this nation has spent tens of trillions of dollars at the behest of the progressive left to try and "equalize," things by "giving" away money, perks, food stamps, house loans, school loans, etc., etc.

Have things improved?

No, they have not.

By abandoning the time honored and proven methods of hard work, personal accountability and responsibility, advancement due to merit, and the natural competitiveness and reward of the free market, these socialist policies have failed in the United States, and failed miserably...just like they have everywhere else on earth they have been attempted.

The ultimate outcome will be less for all, poverty for more and more, bankruptcy for individuals and the nation, and less and less wealth in the hands of the people as a whole, and more and more wealth and power in the hands of progressive government politicians and appointees who will live like kings and queens as they "govern" the rest of us. For example, take Barack and Michelle Obama. As President and 1st Lady, in 2011, their upkeep,

outside of official duties in the office of the Presidency cost the US taxpayers 1.4 billion dollars alone!

And while they live like royalty (which Americans fought to gain their independence from in the 1770s and 1780s), here are the brutal statistics for Latinos and Blacks regarding major demographics that they experience day in and day out in the society that has created by the progressive liberal left, obstentiously to correct these very wrongs:

STATISTICAL DATA BY RACE

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES: (1)

Blacks: 14.3%

Latinos: 10.0%

Whites: 7.0%

POVERTY RATES: (2)

Blacks: 27.3%

Latinos: 25.6%

Whites: 9.8%

DIVORCE RATES: (1st time marriages) (3)

Blacks: 30.1 %

Latino: 18.1%

Whites: 16.3%

CRIME RATES: (Commission) (4)

Blacks: 1.33%

Latinos: 0.67%

Whites: 0.47%

CRIME RATES: (Victim) (5)

Blacks: 2.30%

Latinos: 2.00%

Whites: 1.10%

GANG MEMBERSHIP AMONG YOUTH: (6)

Blacks: 31%

Latinos: 47%

Whites: 13% Asian/Other: 9%

These are the actual results of what Barack Hussein Obama has presided over. A man who took a wholly preventable and manufactured economic crisis in 2008...which crisis was predominantly a result of these same failed policies...and then made it worse.

All of this simply goes to show the abject failure of the progressive, leftists policies that Obama has presided over. These are the very policies the Black and Latino populations are suffering under...and which they voted for in overwhelming numbers.

WAKE UP FELLOW AMERICANS!

Like a watchman on the wall, the warning bell must be tolled. Yes, "WAKE UP FELLOW AMERICANS!" Do not succumb to the promise of "free stuff," and social equalization promised by politicians who have failed to improve the standard of living and way of life for the very people they claim to help. They have no intention of "helping," they have every intention of "controlling." They want to ensure permanent voting blocks, taking advantage of people in these bad circumstances...which circumstances they themselves have created and then continually promises to "fix"...a fix which never comes.

In fact, the only "fix" is that the "fix is in."

Awaken to your dilemma and divorce yourselves from the Pied Piper mentality these leftist politicians and race baiters, and divisive, class-envy promoters are peddling!

Instead, hold fast to the time-honored traditions and values we all hold dear as Americans...depending on our God and ourselves to provide as best we can for ourselves, and depending on families, our churches, and private charitable organizations to help when in need...and not a government and politicians who want to use the needy for their own ends. No longer listen to or give credence to the absolutely misleading, illogic of the progressive left.

Faith in God, strong families, hard work, personal responsibility, honesty, integrity, the free market, and a reliance on our unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are the answers. No one can "give you," happiness. You must use these fundamental values and then pursue and find it for yourselves! THAT is the promise of America...that you are free to do so.

...and this does not even begin to discuss the 100% moral turnaround this President made on marriage, the most critical and important institution in our society, the destruction and demeaning of which adversely impacts every one of those demographic measurements mentioned (and a lot more) listed above. President Barack Obama reversed his campaign position from 2008 and in 2011 stated as the President of the United States, that marriage should be defined as including two men or two women instead of the Biblically revealed and clear principle that marriage, ordained of God, is between a man and a woman.

Beware any man or woman or party that promises a quick fix for you on the backs of others. Or promises that your "special interests," no matter how perverse, will be included as the norm for society. Such politicians are

snake oil salesmen of the worst order, and their attempts to use class envy, a promise of free stuff, and their power in government to force these things are nothing but a deceit and lie to empower themselves at your expense.

God bless America, and God bless her people to turn to Him and His time-honored and proven moral and societal values for our hope and for our success!

Remember 2016 is coming! How and who you vote for makes a difference...a real difference that has impact beyond the rhetoric and platitudes. Vote for an impact that will allow YOU to improve your life and that of your children and grandchildren. Vote for self-determination, for personal responsibility and accountability, and for real promise...promise that leads to success and your own personal improvement and that of your family, neighbors and friends...and away from the endless captivity and morass the progressive left is selling you, and entrapping you with.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho

USA

Notes:

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oct. 2012, Summary Table A
2. US Census Bureau Report, Nov. 2012, Table 3
3. Science Daily News, Dec. 2011
4. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Prisoners 2010, Appendix Tbl 15, Dec 2011, Updated Feb 2012.
5. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Criminal Victimization 2011, Appendix Tbl 5, Oct 2012
6. FBI Gang Member Statistics, April 2012 Update

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

When Truth becomes Treason

I take the title for this essay from a book written about Nazi Germany in World War II. That book was called "When Truth was Treason" and was about a group of young men who dared defy Hitler and his Nazi propaganda machine in the early 1940's.

Their sin? They took issue with the propaganda being published by the Nazi's regarding the war effort and began doing what research they could and publishing, via handmade flyers, the truth.

The result? The ring leader, a 16 year old boy, was beheaded by the SS while his friends were shipped off to concentration camps. The "ring leader" and his friends were taken to Berlin and tried at the highest levels. While the other boys cowered, this young man stood before a high official of the SS and when asked if he had published data which conflicted with the State's report, he asked the SS High Command, "Do you believe the State's report?". For these affronts, and this attitude, he was beheaded and his friends sent to the gulag. One survived several years in German concentration camps, forced service in the German army and then several years after the war in Siberia. When ultimately returning to Germany, he wrote the book.

Today, though many do not want to believe it or contemplate it, we live in a time, when the truth of our nation's heritage, the principles upon which its true liberty is based and the commitment required to maintain that liberty, are not only being denied and ignored, they are being vilified and set up to be viewed as "wrong thinking" and seditious. Ultimately, this thinking, particularly since it has become the basis for the "politically correct" dogma and propaganda of this nation's major governmental, political and media institutions, will lead to conditions similar to those which existed in Nazi Germany and any other totalitarian state.

We can see this all around us, whether it's labeled "gun nuts", "right wing extremists", "Christian fanatics", "homophobes", etc. the terminology itself is engineered to degenerate and disenfranchise any who voice their views in favor of the fundamental moral and philosophical principles that underpin our liberties. These efforts to marginalize and ultimately criminalize the truth of our heritage, our way of life, many of our rights and the foundational moral values that lay at their core, are clear.

Where they lead is also clear.

As in Nazi Germany, and other totalitarian states that are begotten through their efforts to propagandize the people and cull independent, liberty minded people from their midst, these trends will lead to the people themselves incrementally accepting evil and tyranny in the name of superfluous reasoning. Attitudes like:

1. The trains are running on time.
2. Winning an election is more important than truth, we'll address the truth after we win.
3. Don't worry about principle because educators, the media, and our leaders know what's best.
4. Be true to the "Party", don't let principle stand in the way of the "big" tent because the party leaders have a plan.
5. Don't offend anyone with direct talk or images about what is happening around us...that just drives them away.
6. A vote for your conscience is vote for the other side.

7. Don't worry about your own self-defense, that's the government's job.

...and more become the norm and in their name essential liberty, the fundamental principles upon which it rests and anyone committed to it are sacrificed and discarded as "dangerous", "extremist", and "out of step" with reality.

How do we reverse such trends?

We educate ourselves about our heritage and liberties and then we educate others. There are many more people in this nation who understand the fundamental truths, either intellectually, or in their hearts, than we realize. They have been marginalized, but we must stand forthrightly and find them, gather with them (and do it not just in one or two places with a few dozen, but in tens of thousands of places all over this land), converse with them, educate one another, spread the word and prepare...prepare for war.

In reality, the eternal vigilance necessary for liberty should have led us to always as citizens, be prepared for war anyway. This is so that no internal tyrant would ever think of challenging "we the people". But we have been complacent and they are well beyond "challenging" us...they are in the process of destroying us.

The root of the problem has the isolation of the individual by the propaganda machine of those seeking absolute power. This occurred in Germany, it occurred in the Soviet Union, it is still in place in Red China and many other totalitarian states around the world ... and it is occurring right now, right here in the United States.

The answer to the problem is to un-isolate ourselves. We still have some effectual powers to do so (talk radio, the internet, our homes, our communities and ability to gather there, etc.) and turn it around. This effectual power is still backed up by the actual power of the 2nd amendment.

Good people understand this innately and are driving arms and ammo sales up to all-time record highs as this evil is growing so rapidly amongst us.

Is there little wonder then why there is such a push to destroy that actual power by the enemies of liberty? ... or any wonder, given the trends and historical precedent, why so many allow it to incrementally occur? It is being programmed that way!

We must stand forthrightly and spread the word and let our brother and sister Americans who still recognize or can perceive the foundational truths of our liberties know that they are not alone. There are more of them out there than we realize. We have been programmed by 30 second sound bites and the mass media, government indoctrination centers for our children and treasonous officials to believe that we are alone in this thinking. We must break out of it.

We must encourage our compatriots, relatives, friends and neighbors to publically take the stand now, despite current risks. By so doing, we can empower them to break out of the propaganda, marginalization and isolation traps set for them ... and avoid the much harsher reality that await us in the near future.

That reality is taught to us by history and history is a harsh and direct school master. If we the people do not break out of the "truth is treason" cycle before both our actual and effectual power is completely negated...well, just ask our founders, or ask the European Jews of the early 1940's, or ask the folks in the "Soviet Empire" or dissidents in Red China under Mao ... or ask the youth of Tienamen Square what the results will be.

The result of letting these conditions go unanswered, and allowing "truth" to be labeled "treason" is either bloody revolution or genocide. As Sophocles wrote well over 23 centuries ago :

Far-stretching, endless Time

Brings forth all hidden things,

And buries that which once did shine.

The firm resolve falters, the sacred oath is shattered;

And let none say, "It cannot happen here".

It is happening right here...right now.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

Illegal Immigration and its impact

On occasion in my email, I get messages and questions regarding my JEFFHEAD.COM site and the various pages on it. Some agree with what I say, some do not. Sometimes I get rousing Hoorahs, sometimes profane denouncements, other times messages seeking information or clarification.

I received a message seeking info/clarification today. It reads:

JH,

Did the Book Audacity of Truth have a statement that immigration was a burden to the US?

If so, Can you PLEASE send me the quote?

Thanks

Rml4u2cu

I responded to this individual with the following email...and hope anyone reading this will carefully consider the response and feel free to pass it on to as wide an audience as possible:

Rml4u2cu,

First, I know of no "book," called the Audacity of Truth.

I do have a page at JEFFHEAD.COM called the "Audacity of Truth." It lists issues with Barack Obama.

As to immigration, I have never claimed, nor do I claim, that legal immigration is detrimental to the US. It is not. It has been a great boon to this nation. My own ancestors on my mother's side came to this nation as legal immigrants in the 1870s and then again in the late 1890s. On my father's side, my ancestors came to these shores in the 1600s.

Having said that, ILLEGAL immigration is definitely detrimental to the US. When illegal aliens or groups of them come into the US without documentation and outside of the legal process, it creates several very detrimental conditions. To name a few:

- 1. It is illegal and unchecked illegality promotes more illegal activity of all sorts.*
- 2. It creates an undocumented, illegal alien underclass of people in this nation who are preyed upon by other illegal, illicit elements in society.*
- 3. It creates a massive, unfunded burden on health care and education in this nation.*
- 4. It creates a scenario where employers are tempted to hire workers outside of the legal process, which itself creates very bad conditions. For example:*
- 5. It suppresses wages and opportunities for legal US workers.*
- 6. It subverts the tax, social security, and other legal process in place in the nation.*

7. It is used as a political lever to drive for legalization of illegal activity in an effort to "buy" the votes of those people given "amnesty," of any sort.

Through #5 above, it subverts the political and election process in this nation.

So, legal immigration, where legal immigrants come to this nation according to law, who are assimilated into our society, pay their taxes, learn the language and the laws of this nation, willingly take an oath of citizenship to affirm and follow the laws, and is very good for this nation.

Illegal immigration, where illegal aliens avoid and in fact subvert all of that is VERY BAD for this nation.

I believe a President who uses executive order to enact laws (which is Congresses responsibility) to in any way legalize illegal aliens, abjectly violates the President's oath of office. It should, IMHO, be immediate grounds for impeachment. It does not matter said President is white, black, yellow, brown, red or is a man or woman. The law applies equally to all.

...and it doesn't matter whether said President thinks it has taken too long to enact the reforms he/she seeks. Such an excuse simply amounts to a tacit admission that such a President cannot work with Congress and is unwilling to make the necessary compromises on his or her own position to allow for any reform. In such a case, the laws as written remain the same until appropriate laws can be enacted, or, through the constitutional process, an amendment is passed. Otherwise, it cannot mean that such a president can unilaterally violate the law and separation of powers clearly defined in the U.S. Constitution, to "go it on their own." Such an action would itself be illegal, and as I said, should lead to immediate impeachment.

I hope this helps.

Sincerely,

Jeff Head

November 17, 2014

Folks, we have a set of circumstances in this nation where in mid-term elections this year we overwhelmingly elected a particular party to both the US House and the US Senate precisely to derail and forestall the activities of this current, disastrous administration.

One of those issues is the desire by this administration to legalize millions of illegal aliens who have violated the law in coming to this nation, creating all of the detrimental conditions (and more) I outlined.

Please urge your elected representatives in the US House and the Senate...and your State officials, including the governors, to send a clear and unambiguous message to this administration that any use of executive orders to bypass congress in this matter will lead to impeachment and removal from office.

Please, if you get the chance, watch the following YouTube video I put together. This is all about how legal immigration worked to our benefit for generations. Now illegal immigration has been working to our detriments for many decades and it must be reversed:

Coming to America

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oloRblsNJGA>

Sincerely,

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

THE GRUESOME TRUTH OF THE ABORTION HOLOCAUST

Pardon the length of this, and some of its directness...but, IMHO, it needs saying and contemplating. I mourn for my county that conditions have risen that are so depraved, so ghastly, that we must speak of it, and see it's harshness so directly in order to shine the light of truth upon it, but, as God is my witness, such are the conditions of this day.

We live in an era where a most violent, brutal, sick, depraved atrocity is being perpetrated and accepted by far too many in our society as "ok" and common place, because it has been protected by corrupt law, because it is framed in gentle, PC phrases like "pro-choice"(but the graphic results of that so-called "choice" are hidden away from public view), and because far too many Americans are wholly unfamiliar with the ghastly, gruesome nature of the practice as a result.

That must end.

I speak of the atrocity and genocide of abortion.

Sooner or later, the scales of history, nature, and nature's God will be balanced and corrected on this matter.

God in Heaven will not stand forever by and allow the unmitigated slaughter and genocide of his most innocent children to go unanswered.

We MUST continue to do all in our power to turn this around...but every day we are not successful in so doing, another approximately 3,300 living souls are butchered...and I mean butchered in the most real and graphic sense.

As stated, most are not acquainted with the extent or graphic nature of the butchery that is going on in America, protected by corrupt law. Most do not want to be acquainted with it. Pardon the graphic nature of the following photo, I know most people will recoil in horror from it...but this is what is going on every day, thousands of times a day, across this nation:

(Picture of aborted baby)

THE GRUESOME TRUTH ABOUT WHAT ABORTION DOES TO A LIVING BABY IN THE WOMB

That is the gruesome truth of what is occurring. Approximately 3,300 a day, approximately 1.2 million per year. Over 50 million to date. And people need to see it and look long and hard at it, as difficult as that is to do, because like the graphic pictures of the Nazi holocaust awakened us to the true nature of it, and burned away any rationalization of it by apologists, the pictures of what is going on in America need to do the same if we are to avoid even worse horrors in the future.

Dr. Tiller, who was shot and killed on May 31, 2009, trafficked in precisely the type of gruesome death portrayed in that photo and profited from it. He was worse than Dr. Mengele or Goebbles of Nazi Germany. He personally

performed...personally performed...tens of thousands of abortions. He advertised for it, he reveled in it.

56,000 were killed in Buchenwald...and the world justifiably, and understandably condemns the holocaust and hunted down and executed the perpetrators.

By his own admission, Tiller butchered 60,000 and more, and yet a corrupt law, that has protected the practioner in this gruesome holocaust, protected the man from the true rule of law.

Anyone blind to the sick, evil irony of that have accepted a depraved set of circumstances and strong delusion.

I mourn Tiller's family at the loss of their father and grandfather. I doubt seriously that they knew the full and graphic nature of what he was involved in.

But I absolutely refuse to mourn the fact that he, Dr. Tiller, a bloody, gruesome killer of fully formed babies...who were alive, who could FEEL THE PAIN of being literally ripped asunder, will himself murder no more.

Some people say that there are only perhaps three valid reasons to commit violence against others:

- 1) In a justified war.
- 2) To protect your own life and liberty, or that of those dear to you.
- 3) To protect your property.

I fear greatly for our nation when I realize that not even the gruesome death of 50 million innocent children has produced in ourselves as a society the will to FORCE this evil to stop. Perhaps we should realize that the culture of death has been at war with us for over 45 years...and the death toll has been staggering.

When will be the proper time to respond to this genocide with force? After 65 million are dead? After 100 million are dead?

Or perhaps it will be after they open live-birth-abortion centers all across this nation where people can bring in their unwanted children who are mentally challenged, physically challenged, or just too inconvenient up to 24 months of age to be "disposed of". Will that be the right time?

Don't kid yourself, there are forces and voices in this country pushing towards just that type of thing now.

We should all ask ourselves these questions because it is the stark reality of what is going on...and then seriously think about and pray about the answers.

Clearly, in Nazi Germany, in the 1930s, the time for the people of Germany to use force to stop what the Nazi culture of death produced there was long before the concentration and death camps like Buchenwald, Auschwitz, and many others were created.

Well, we have death clinics already in place all over this land, and have had for decades, and they are continuing on, day in and day out, in this ghastly genocide.

And do not try and imagine that somehow it is not the same as the 1930s. What we are seeing done here under color of law, IMHO, is even worse than what occurred in Germany (also under the color of law I might

add)...though it is a distinction of degrees in pure evil. It is the slaughtering of the most defenseless souls amongst us, those with no choice whatsoever, and no ability to avoid it. They can't run, they can't hide...they can only utter a silent scream within the very womb of their mother as they are literally ripped asunder. Unprotected by their very mothers, their fathers (which are not even known in far too many cases), their grandparents, their kin, the Doctors who took an oath to protect life, or the laws of a nation that was originally founded on, first and foremost, the unalienable right to life!

I pray we can halt this genocide and slaughter in the court of public opinion and at the ballot box.

But our forefather's hoped for the same thing over slavery (on both sides I might add) until the bloodletting came. I fear God in Heaven will already hold us all, our entire society, responsible for the magnitude of this evil.

I know this...if it ever does come to a war over this issue, I know exactly which side I will stand and fight with.

If, God forbid, it does come to that...and with the evil depravity that has gotten ahold of so many hearts amongst us in this nation on this issue (like our own current President who said, in support of abortion that, "I don't want my children punished with a baby."), I fear it may well come to that.

Then like John Brown prior to the Civil War, we may find that the individual, who "went to war" against Dr. Tiller at a time when it was clearly illegal to do so (though it is legal for the butchers to rip those children apart for profit each and every day), as I say, we may well find that this act was on the right side of history after all.

Finally, let this quote from April 24, 2009, by Barack Hussein Obama, who supports abortion on demand, but when referring to the Nazi Holocaust stand as the final witness in this article. Every phrase in what Barack Obama uttered on that day stands as a witness against him and all abortion supporters because it also speaks the truth of the more gruesome holocaust of abortion, which has claimed many, many more innocent lives.

"It is the grimmest of ironies that one of the most savage, barbaric acts of evil in history began in one of the most modernized societies of its time, where so many markers of human progress became tools of human depravity: science that can heal, used to kill; education that can enlighten, used to rationalize away basic moral impulses; the bureaucracy that sustains modern life, used as the machinery of mass death, a ruthless, chillingly efficient system where many were responsible for the killing, but few got actual blood on their hands."—Barack Obama April 24, 2009, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Chicago Sun Times.

Jeff Head

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The Mortal Threat to American Liberty

The times that try the souls of American patriots and defenders of true liberty are no stranger to the sovereign union of the United States of America. From its founding, and the battles and campaigns that marked the tremendous struggle against the tyranny of England; through the crisis of the horrific "War between the States"; through the conflagrations which conspiring minds and tyrants drew it into in World Wars I and II; to the increasingly mortal moral, political, and spiritual decline and military squandering of the last 30 years; ... the heart and soul of American patriots and their liberty have continuously been tried in the forges of sacrifice, commitment, duty and honor.

Of all of these, the decline of this Republic and every defining foundational principles upon which it rests over the last decades, are without doubt the most threatening. A free people cannot survive or endure in indolence, apathy, complacency, immorality, amorality, licentiousness and lasciviousness. Every ounce of reason in any virtuous and honorable heart cries out that to enjoy true liberty, a people must be moral and retain their virtue. Else, they will not know from whence their liberties derive. Else they will deny the heritage and birthright of the very derivation of their liberty. Else they will demand for themselves every indulgence, craving, vice and perversion imaginable at whatever cost. Else they will invite tyranny to either maintain a corrupted public order (at the point of the sword), or they will be trodden under by more powerful, more committed peoples who desire the land and its riches for themselves.

Such calamities have befallen this Republic and are its sad state today. Although largely untested as a people over the last fifty years in terms of physical discomfort and immediate threats to material wealth and perceived security, yet it has been threatened, attacked and largely overcome in its soul. What remains, unless somehow restored to the moral and virtuous character which attracted many to its shores for so long, is but an empty husk awaiting the inevitable physical storm which will topple it.

There are enemies who know this and who are basking in the near fulfillment of their plans to take advantage of this condition and benefit from it. Their vision of "World Governance" requires that the foundational principles upon which this nation rests, which are capable of producing and maintaining sovereign individuals, localities and States, bound together in an eternal union, must vanish from the earth. This would allow their socio-fascist "3rd Way" dominion to come about. Sadly, by all accounts, and by the very testimony that one's own eyes and senses impart with each passing day, their efforts have been largely successful.

But the principles upon which liberty is founded are true and eternal. They are endowed by the Creator upon all mankind. That same Creator watches over the affairs of nations. Whether one understands or comprehends this is immaterial to the truth of it. As long as such knowledge is held in the hearts and minds of moral and virtuous, reasoned individuals, restoration and ultimate triumph remain possible.

Let us be direct. The time for choosing a course of vigilance is likely past ... but if it is not, then it must be now. If the people do not pay such a price in generous and copious amounts immediately, urgently ... then soon the ultimate triumph of liberty will come only at the price of the blood of patriots and tyrants. Such conditions, history teaches us, will be couched in the suffering and death of millions.

Let all the complacent and apathetic take warning. Let conspiring and aspiring politicians who have anything other than the preservation of true liberty be forewarned. Let the power mongers hear the resolve of patriots

and shake at the sound thereof. Let the decrepit and perverse beware and turn from their ways. Let tyrants fear for their lives. Let those whom would take advantage back away. Let foreign institutions and powers shrink from their wanton designs. As surely as night follows day, unless all such turn from their current path, and unless the hemorrhage of virtue is stemmed ... a reckoning and a conflagration is coming. Its approach is etched on the collective consciousness.

Choose well what side of that conflagration one stands upon, for there is a wind rising, there is an awakening occurring in the hearts of a those who will not allow liberty and the principles upon which it rests, to go away quietly into the night. The collision of the forces of morality, virtue and liberty on the one hand, and indolence, self-indulgence, vice and tyranny on the other hand is inevitable. It will be forced on the former by the latter. The only thing which can avoid a fiery collision will be the people as a whole, immediately welcoming and initiating a revival of morality and virtue which forces the tyrant and the decrepit out of the public eye and consideration by their very numbers. Otherwise, a dark storm will break upon this land and engulf it. The rapidity with which it will break, and the severity with which it will strike, will be an amazement and astonishment to all. The consequences which it metes out, and the report thereof, will become a crushing blow to the hearts and minds of those who must suffer through it, or even hear of it, until the contest is decided and liberty is restored to its true foundation.

From the unheard voices of tens of millions whose opportunity for life and liberty are snuffed out before being allowed to take a breath, from the voices of the thousands whose lives are being devastated or taken as a result of ever encroaching tyranny, from the wild hills of northern Idaho, from the fires of Waco, from the ruined skeletal walls in Oklahoma City, as a result of the lies, manipulations and deceptions of tyrants and the decrepit, a veritable chorus calling for a reckoning, calling for a return to the Constitutional intent of our founders is rising in its volume and its urgency. It is a sound that cannot, indeed, it is a sound that WILL NOT, go unheard or unheeded.

It is therefore evident that the full flavor of liberty will only be savored by those willing to undergo the hardship and travail of defending it. No principle or belief system, that was not worthy of sacrificing one's all to maintain, was ever capable of producing the conviction, responsibility and moral virtue required for true liberty. That same Creator who endows upon all their unalienable rights to life, liberty and property, and who is the author of the morality and virtue which define the equitable exercise thereof, has set a high price on liberty which our generation must be prepared to account for. How will that accounting be made? ... It is up to us.

In the words of one of the great founders, which words have sounded in the throats of patriots throughout our history as they faced the times which tried their souls, "Give me Liberty or Give me Death".

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

I am a Christian Man (Response to "I am a Muslim Woman")

This article is written to people everywhere who continue to contemplate the 911 attacks on America and how America's reaction to them are shaping our world. It is particularly written to people of reason and good conscience in the Islamic faith. It was originally published, shortly after the 911 attacks, here, on the Free Republic conservative forum. I am republishing it in an effort to punctuate the understanding of what we are involved in and the continued need for identifying, tracking down, and bringing to justice those who perpetrated those 911 attacks or those who supported and abetted them. I also do so in the hopes that people of reason and conscience everywhere may have a better understanding of the heritage and background that Christian Americans (who are the vast majority in this nation) hold and how it influences us in the current set of circumstances. The article was also originally posted in response to a Ms. Rini, of Indonesia, who posted an article/testimonial about herself entitled, I am a Muslim Woman.

I was raised to believe in and place my allegiance to God, Family and Country. In that order. My God and the One whom I worship and defer to in all things is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, who died for all mankind and who will return to this earth someday (I hope soon). He is a God of mercy, compassion and love who taught us to love those who spitefully use us and to turn the other cheek and forgive others ... He also taught that there are times when men, if they do not already own one, must sell their clothing to buy a sword to defend themselves and their free will.

I was raised to respect, cherish and defend to the death the principle of free will. I have a firm conviction that free will, exercised within moral and religious constraint, is the most fundamental principle associated with mankind's ultimate happiness and progress. Based on my own travels and experiences around the world, I believe the single most conducive place for the exercise of that principle in the world today (despite whatever other faults) is the United States of America. Having said that, in my own travels throughout the world in my engineering profession, I have also come to observe and respect many different cultures and peoples.

I was taught (by good parents and through my faith) a tolerance for others, a desire to share my faith with anyone willing to listen, and the understanding that not wanting to listen is a perfectly understandable and acceptable right, one I should respect in others and hold dear myself.

I married in my early twenties and have (along with my dear wife) raised five children (actually the youngest is now fourteen and not quite "raised" yet). Each of these five, with minor variations, believes as I believe ... and that is good and is one of the things (in my opinion) that will always keep America strong. I am now 47 years old and have three grandchildren, the first of which was born not long after 911. All three are being raised in the same manner that I was, and so the circle of life and freedom continues.

We abhor immorality, vice and sin. We abhor the threat of force and compulsion even more.

This is because people cannot truly repent and change their lives for the better when coerced. It must come from within themselves...they must freely choose. Hence, in the Christian faith, (with very few exceptions) forbearance, persuasion, teaching and the voice of warning are the tools we are taught to use as opposed to secular law, force, and compulsion to win the hearts of mankind. This, when coupled with the basic tenants in American society regarding free will that I have already discussed, has made for the freest, most prosperous and most tolerant nation on earth. It is important for all to understand that a commitment to these principles and

qualities by the vast majority of Americans of every stripe and color is what has lifted America up...not pride, arrogance or in any way being somehow genetically or physically better than anyone else.

That same commitment to free will and tolerance has, regrettably, also made for some measure of vice, pornography, drug culture, etc. within America in general. But the levels, despite what you may see or hear on the news, are very low when compared to the whole, and in general, to this day, we are a people governed by the rule of law based on moral constraint...and we continue to work on the ill amongst us through the means I already mentioned, and through wise (and sometimes not so wise) use of those laws when the immoral or sinful activities cross the line and begin to infringe (through force or compulsion) on the rights of others.

I hope this gives people everywhere some flavor of what is underlying in "Christian" America, at least from my perspective living in the "heartland" here ... particularly when it comes to our feelings about the horror of 911.

This brings me to an important understanding, one that is a critical part of my own testimonial that I have related...a part often unappreciated and misjudged and doubted by those (foreign or domestic) powers and entities who would use compulsion and violence to change the heritage I just spoke of. That point is this...We WILL fight to the death to defend these principles and visit just retribution on those who try and destroy them.

So, people of reason and faith everywhere, including Ms. Rini, please understand that there are tens of millions of Americans who believe God is love too and that He loves us enough to allow us to be free and make our own individual moral choices (when not infringing on others) and to seek to influence others through persuasion and long suffering.

I know that Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of all the nations on earth. I also know that there are good and bad amongst all peoples, parties, sects, denominations and religions. Ms. Rini, I believe your honest testimony about your beliefs and I wish you God's blessings.

At the same time, and this is VERY critical and germane to the discussion, there are many, many in the Islamic faith (as we see it) who either approve of what happened in America on 911, or who have been to this day, unwilling to condemn it. Please, Ms. Rini, write a condemnation of what happened on 911, a condemnation without any equivocation that somehow blames us for those attacks, to supplement your remarks. That would immeasurably help all of us in America.

We Americans, Christian and otherwise, are very disturbed by a continued general lack of avowed and open condemnation of 911...a condemnation that should reverberate and ring loudly and openly around the entire world, particularly the Islamic world. A condemnation with no excuse, by Islamic clerics both abroad and here in our own country. A continued lack of that loud and clear condemnation is the part of the fuel (along with the continued burning pyre of the WTC and the Pentagon that resides in our hearts, which marks the resting place of thousands of innocents) that continues to feed the feelings of righteous indignation in America.

For all those Islamics who truly believe that God is love and that He is merciful yet Just, then go with God and distance yourself from these others amongst who will not condemn such atrocities ... because these others and those who harbor or abet them WILL continue to feel our terrible retribution. Not a retribution of revenge, rather, one of Justice and a true desire to see that a 911-like experience never happens again.

...and if we somehow are not successful, and there is another similar attack...then we shall start from that moment, and once more do all in our power to defeat and destroy the enemies of free will and moral constraint

and see that it never happens again from that point. To paraphrase our President in this...we will not be deterred, we will not falter...we will not fail in this, as God is our witness.

So, again, I am a Christian man. There are scores of millions here just like me...I am nothing special. I believe what I have related to you is something all people of good conscience everywhere, particularly in the Islamic world, need to hear and understand.

As a note in passing: I also believe, for example, that millions of good people of reason and conscience in Iraq, who are now free of an evil tyrant who harbored and supported terrorists and who murdered and plundered his own people, have now heard and understand this message, and are responding to it so that they too, can enjoy the true blessings of liberty. In the end, as with all of us, it will be up to them.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

TODAY'S FREE TRADE IS NOT ABOUT THE FREE MARKET

We are in a very real battle in this nation and it is a battle for our heart and soul. It is spread out on many, many fronts...education, foreign policy, work ethic (individually and societally), immigration, the economy, moral values...and the list goes on.

Let's focus on the economy and one significant part of it...a major, growing part of it. Free Trade and foreign outsourcing.

I was going to entitle this article..."I used to make something"...or..."We used to make something in this country". But, I thought better of it and realized that such a statement was really focusing on the tail end of the issue as opposed to the root.

So, instead, I am simply calling it, "Today's Free Trade is not about the Free Market."

And it is so, today's Free Trade is NOT about the free market. Instead, in a very similar manner to other key issues in this battle for the heart and soul of America, what is happening is that a very craftily wordsmithed message of "Free Trade" has been put forth that people have bought into, thinking "How could anyone be against free trade? Why, isn't that all-American?".

Like with abortion, "How could anyone be against a woman's right to choose? Isn't that all American?"

In both cases, the craftily worded title has nothing remotely to do with what is actually going on.

The free market is the system our founders based our commerce on, where the intrinsic, underlying moral values of the people involved in the free market governed the equitable, free exchange of goods and services for other goods and services or currency. Sort of like John Adams said regarding the Constitution...

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."- John Adams, Oct. 11, 1798

It is that underlying moral foundation coupled with our liberty that made the Free Market in America the envy of the world, just like those same issues made our governmental form the envy of the world.

Well, as far as I am concerned, Adam's words could be tailored to this topic like so, i.e... The Free Market was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the economy of any other.

This is a basic truth. Like our government, our free market was not supposed to be very regulated or burdened with myriad rules. The people and the companies were to use their own moral foundation to govern themselves. But, when the moral foundation is removed, you do not have what was intended for the Constitution, and you do not have a true free market.

When we use our foreign policy and economic policy to set up shop and trade with countries, societies, organizations or to implement policies that exploit their people's mercilessly, who keep them down without a hope for true liberty or freedom, who trample the moral values our own system was based upon...and when we

do it knowingly, without compunction for those very underlying values, then we do not create a free market...no, that free trade has nothing whatsoever to do with, and is in no way similar to the FREE MARKET, rather, it serves to corrupt it.

Such notions, such actions are in fact wordsmithing for popularizing and putting forth a policy to drain the United States manufacturing, technological, agricultural, energy and other critical industries in order to weaken us...plain and simple...and it is working.

Based on my own travels on behalf of US firms and then later consulting for them...that is what is really happening here in my own opinion, and until we refocus as a people on that underlying moral foundation and the absolute need for it...we will continue to lose ground.

By the way, those same principles that are working at the societal level, have equal application at the personal level too...in fact, in the end it is the sum of their working at the personal level that creates the issue at the societal level.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

The Progressive/Liberal Train Wreck in America

It's time to once and for all debunk the progressive liberal destructive arguments about class envy and put them in their place and hold them accountable for the fallacies they foist on the public in a singular effort to divide this nation. It is creating a train wreck in America, and they know it, and are willfully making it happen. They do so solely to win elections and continue to promote and push their socialist/Marxist agenda. Because that is exactly what it is.

They try and indicate that the so-called "wealthy," do not pay their "fair share" of taxes. Nothing could be further from the truth, and they know it. That's why they use generalities and never really define how much would be "fair." Truth is, to them, there will never be "enough," because that would rob them of their talking point from which they launch into their other mantras about society.

If you pay close attention, you will find that what these methods they employ with "the wealthy," are exactly the same they use with race, gender, morality, and any number of other divide and conquer programs they employ to distract the populace away from their terrible record on economics, on foreign policy, on jobs, on spending, and on the failures of their own programs. Like the recent Stimulus Plans, the recent Green Energy Plans, or the decades long, so-called War on Poverty, which has spent many trillions of dollars and failed to help those whom it was directed at. The dirty secret is that these were never intended to succeed as you or I would define success. They were never meant to win or accomplish anything positive for those whom they were supposedly directed at...and indeed, they have failed miserably...but they have successfully served the left as spring boards to keep the American citizenry divided and distracted from those miserable failures.

Back to the wealthy, and here are the facts:

The Wealthiest 1% of American citizens pay 37% of all taxes.

The wealthiest 10% of American citizens pay over 70% of all taxes.

Clearly, the so-called "wealthy," are not only paying their "fair" share, they are paying a tremendously "unfair share."

Particularly when you note the following. It is estimated, in total, between their private companies, their corporations, their personal hires, and the money they spend in the market place, that the wealthiest Americans contribute the following to job creation:

The wealthiest 1% of American citizens in this country provide over 20% of all private sector jobs.

The wealthiest 10% of American citizens in this country provide over 40% all private sector jobs.

Now, this has fallen off in the last several years. Want to guess why? That's right, they have less to invest, and less to spend because of a growing, over burdensome tax rate and because of looming uncertainties in the market associated with the out and out socialist agenda of the current administration which is having negative impact on them individually and on their companies. As a result, it is estimated that these numbers are down between 5-10% over the last five years alone.

...and before the liberals can respond about government "creating" so many "public sector" jobs...just where do

they think the money comes from to pay for these jobs? How are they funded? That's right, from the tax monies the government collects. And who is paying the vast majority of those taxes? That's right, again...the wealthy. Just apply common sense and understand that if the wealthiest 1% of people are paying 37% of all taxes, and the wealthiest 10% are paying 70% of all taxes, then:

The Wealthiest 1% of citizens are actually paying for (and thus providing) 37% of all public-sector jobs.

The wealthiest 10% of citizens are actually paying for (and thus providing) 70% of all public-sector jobs.

But there is a difference. Those private sector jobs actually produce something...most importantly, more wealth. Those public-sector jobs, the vast, vast majority of them, take away wealth from the private sector and are therefore a burden on it. That is why our government was designed to keep the government work force as small as practicable to accomplish the most basic roles of government; to defend our borders and nation, and to provide just enough oversight of commerce to keep it from becoming illegal. Nothing more.

The progressive liberals and leftists know all of this...they just do not want you to know it...or, if you find out, they certainly do not want you to comprehend what an abject indictment it is of them and their policies.

The net of all of this is, that sadly, the progressive leftist policies and mantra result in, 47% of all Americans paying NO TAXES, and 35-40% of Americans on government assistance just to be able to get by.

This is tragic, and sad...but it is also no mistake. The left and liberals want a larger and larger segment of the people dependent on government because they view those people as a locked-in voting block to get them elected and continue this madness.

In essence they are willfully entrapping people into economic serfdom and slavery so they can gain power and influence over all Americans. It is the very thing that patriots shed their blood to free this nation from English tyranny of in the 1700s, and the very thing so many have fought, bled, and died to keep external enemies from inflicting on this nation ever since...only to see an enemy from within accomplish it through willfully appealing to the lowest and most base traits of human nature to inflict it on us now.

By taking the money from the very people who create so much of the jobs in this country, they ensure that the unemployment rate remains high and that the numbers of people who must ultimately seek government assistance also remains high, which is their goal.

Now, they have an endless supply of so-called "economists" and others who will strain at reasoning, and come up with very flowery words to try and convince the people of the unbelievable...that in some way, when they take from the producers and give to those who do not produce that somehow this translates into more and better production. That is the essence of their argument...but common sense and a straight forward look at the numbers paints it for the hogwash and lie that it is. Stated as simply as possible, you cannot make something out of nothing or, you cannot somehow take away from something and have what you take away be more than the whole you took it from. It would be like saying,

"Oh, I see you have 10 dollars. I will take six of those dollars and call them twenty dollars and all will be good."

Charlatans like this have cropped around this nation in the past, and in the past they generally ended up being tarred and feathered and run out of town on a rail.

We clearly need to figuratively institute the same solution today. And we can do so this November in 2012.

It is time to end this sham and call it what it is: It is a despicable travesty and monstrosity perpetrated on the American people by a group of willful scoundrels, who use these pitiful tactics to become representatives and promote their own wealth, their own power, their own vices, and their own agenda in their own interest and not in the interests of the people.

Most Americans are self-respecting. Most want to, and are willing to, work hard to provide well for their families and work for the traditional American dream of owning their own homes, sending their children to college or seeing them successful in society, and saving for their later years. These are all good, and wholly realizable goals by the vast majority of Americans, but only if we base our success and wealth on the fundamental principles and values that created those dreams in the first place, and reject these leftist, socialistic notions that have failed miserably and been the ruin of almost all peoples who have attempted the allure of some kind of "paradise" built on the terribly weak and faulty foundations of class envy, entitlement, an easy street, something for nothing attitudes the left engenders.

If we remove the excessive tax burden from those who create a majority of the jobs and business in this nation, we will unleash earning power in America and the people will end up sharing in it and finding the resultant jobs and wealth to realize these goals if they are willing to work for them...and most Americans are more than willing to do so. The irony of it all is (and the left knows this) it will also increase the amount of tax revenue without entrapping people into government serfdom and thereby enable us, as a nation to spend that money on much more productive things...and to give back even more to the people so they become more and more a part of the growing segment who actually produce things in America.

The path out of these doldrums is to send the progressive/leftist/liberals packing and to do so fundamentally, that they will not show their face again in the public arena and so America can then engage in healthy debate about the free market, about energy, about foreign policy, and about morality in ways that improve our nation instead of these faux liberal straw man arguments that divide us and lead to our downfall.

Again, if you analyze it, you will find that the left employs these same tactics to the gender and race issues to try and keep those segments of our population "down" and divided as well. They need racism and so-called gender inequality to use against all Americans to further their aims...but when you look closely, you will see that despite all of their high minded words and arguments, despite all their promises, that in situations where they are sadly given the chance to implement their ideas, it ends up being the women and the minorities who suffer the most in terms of unemployment, business failure, foreclosure, and any number of economic and societal ills under their programs. That is because these ideas and misbegotten policies of the left, generate those precise results while they push to implementing even more of the same while it occurs, as they are doing right now as you read this...and then blame everyone else...anything else, except themselves for the results.

Once people understand this, and then understand the power of the free market and sound economic policy and fundamental moral principle, they are enabled to cut completely loose from these shackles and throw off the progressive/liberal/leftist deceptions that are so effectively holding them back. The progressive liberal left wants to hold people back so they can count on their votes to endlessly give them more power, so they can be on top of the ash heap of history that they have created.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

WHY IS AMERICA FREE AND PROSPERED?

True Liberty is not possible without fundamental moral constraint, and the desire, the discipline and the willingness for individuals within society to apply that constraint to their own lives on a voluntary and ongoing basis at all levels of society.

That is why America has prospered and been free, because this principle has been lived and because the source for the fundamental values that make it possible has been recognized and openly and freely professed. That source is God in Heaven, the Almighty Creator. Our Declaration of Independence, and then our Constitution and Bill of Rights are rooted in these facts...in this principle.

When peoples from other lands, from all over the world and different cultures come together in America and adopt these fundamental principles...it makes us strong, and perpetuates our liberty. That's because these principles encourage and produce self-reliance, independence, self-worth, respect for others who live accordingly, and individual responsibility.

But when people come here with no willingness to either learn or adopt these foundational principles, or when our own citizens depart from them and pass laws at the federal, state, and local levels that work against these principles, or when our constitutional interpretation is so wrested as to accomplish the same...it is then that we are weakened from within and it is then that we are on the path to losing our God-granted and cherished liberty and republic.

Therefore, if we fail, it will be because we failed in these principles first and foremost.

But if we are to retain our liberty, it will be because we remember these critical principles and rise up as a people and apply it ourselves, and insist that it be applied by anyone who represents us at any level of government.

...and it will be because, in knowing and honoring those principles and fundamental values, we are armed as a citizenry and will not give up that latent force, but instead, teach our children to own, understand, and bear arms from an early age, and remind all politicians of the same.

The founders of this nation, the United States of America, knew these principles, staked their all upon them, founded our nation and laws in them, and spoke of them often:

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."- John Adams, Oct. 11, 1798

"We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."- James Madison

"[N]either the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend of the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen onto any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man." Samuel Adams

"Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." Patrick Henry

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure if we have removed their only firm basis: a conviction in the minds of men that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever." - Thomas Jefferson

"Public virtue cannot exist in a nation without private virtue, and public virtue is the only foundation of republics." John Adams

"A general dissolution of the principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy.... While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but once they lose their virtue, they will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader.... If virtue and knowledge are diffused among the people, they will never be enslaved. This will be their great security." - Samuel Adams

"The Constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people, it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government - lest it come to dominate our lives and interests." Patrick Henry

"No country upon earth ever had it more in its power to attain blessings. Much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to depart from the road which Providence has pointed us to, so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass. The Great Governor of the Universe has led us too long and too far to forsake us in the midst of it. We may, now and then, get bewildered; but I hope and trust that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path. " - George Washington

"I know here that you will agree with me that standing up for America also means standing up for the God who has so blessed our land. I believe this country hungers for a spiritual revival. I believe it longs to see traditional values reflected in public policy again. To those who cite the first amendment as reason for excluding God from more and more of our institutions and everyday life, may I just say: The first amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people of this country from religious values; it was written to protect religious values from government tyranny." - Ronald Reagan

"Let it be said of us that we, too, did not fail; that we, too, worked together to bring America through difficult times. Let us so conduct ourselves that two centuries from now, another Congress and another President, meeting in this Chamber as we are meeting, will speak of us with pride, saying that we met the test and preserved for them in their day the sacred flame of liberty -- this last, best hope of man on Earth." - Ronald Reagan

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

A PROPOSED VOTING ACT FOR THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

A proposal for an Act of Congress that if enacted and maintained, would destroy the Progressive Liberal Agenda in the United States permanently. The progressive liberals have created a voting block that is absolutely based on a pure conflict of interest and encourages the worst in human nature for their own political power and gain. It is time we put an end to it and elevated and helped all American citizens.

UNITED STATE OF AMERICA

VOTING ACT OF 20xx

(USA:CRVA-20xx)

1.0 Introduction:

Voting is an indispensable responsibility of citizens in any free republic. Voting in the United States of America must be unimpeded for US citizens, and cannot occur under the influence of any coercion, intimidation, or conflict of interest. Free, unhindered voting by such American citizens, free of coercion, intimidation, and conflict of interest is therefore a vital imperative and this Act ensures that voting in the United States of America rises to and maintains this critical standard.

2.0 Voting:

Only US citizens shall be allowed to vote in any government election in any state or territory of the United States of America.

3.0 Voter Registration:

Any person desiring to vote in any government election must produce a valid voter registration card at the time of voting.

3.1 Voter Registration ID card Issuance:

Voter Registration cards, including a picture ID, will be provided to all applicants, free of cost to them, who can prove both of the following:

3.1.1 That the applicant is a US citizen over the age of 18. Citizenship can be confirmed by any one of the following documents:

3.1.1.1 An original or registered copy of their birth certificate showing their birth within any state or territory of the United States of America.

3.1.1.2 A current US Passport showing their citizenship status.

3.1.1.3 Official documentation from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services granting full US citizenship and date.

3.1.1.4 A prior Voter registration card upon renewal.

3.1.2 That the applicant does not derive more than half of their income from any form of government assistance or welfare. This can be verified at the time of issuance by:

3.1.2.1 An applicant's tax record from any one of the prior four years showing the same.

3.1.2.2 Other documentation showing the applicants sources of income based which will be verified by the IRS or other government agency before issuance of the card.

For the purposes of this Act, the following sources are not considered as assistance or welfare:

3.1.a Any government or private pension or retirement.

3.1.b Disability pay.

3.2 Voter Registration Card information:

Voter registration cards will include particular information and a photo ID of the applicant sufficient to identify the holder of the card. This will include:

3.2.1 A current picture ID of the applicant taken at the time of the issuance of the card.

3.2.2 The following information of the applicant:

3.2.2.1 The applicant's full legal name

3.2.2.2 The applicant's current address

3.2.2.3 The applicant's age

3.2.2.4 The applicant's date of birth

3.2.2.5 The applicant's place of birth

3.2.2.6 The date of issuance of the card

3.2.3 The voter registration card will be protected by current electronic technology that encrypts, protects, and maintains the data on the card.

3.3 Voter Registration Card Renewal.

Voter Registration Cards will be required to be renewed every eight years and will occur as described in sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this Act.

4.0 Enforcement and Penalties:

Voting for any governmental election will be strictly enforced and protected by law enforcement. The following penalties will be enforced for the documented crimes, with the listed penalties upon conviction. There will be no possibility for plea bargains or reduction in sentence, irrespective of time served or behavior while serving, for these penalties:

4.1 Voter fraud.

Any individual attempting to obtain or use a fraudulent voter registration card, or to use someone else's card for the purposes of voting in an election within any state or territory of the United States shall, on conviction, be guilty of a Federal felony and be subject to the following penalties:

4.1.1 First conviction: 5 years in prison and a 50,000 fine

4.1.2 Second conviction: 10 years in prison and a 150,000 fine.

4.1.3 Third Conviction: 25 years in prison and a 1,000,000 fine.

4.1 Voter intimidation.

Any individual attempting to coerce or intimidate any voter through force or violence, threat of force or violence, blackmail, or any other illegal method for the purposes of forcing or changing the vote of another, or to obtain someone's voter registration card, shall, on conviction, be guilty of a Federal felony and be subject to the following penalties:

4.1.1 First conviction 10 years in prison and a 100,000 fine

4.1.2 Second conviction: 15 years in prison and a 250,000 fine.

4.1.3 Third Conviction: Life in prison and a 1,000,000 fine.

5.0 Summary:

This Act is for the sole purposes of ensuring the integrity, legality, and insurance of the vote within the United States of America. The ability for citizens to vote without the threat or influence of coercion, intimidation, or conflict of interest, is indispensable to the viability and maintenance of freedom and liberty in the United States. We ignore or become apathetic about this vital responsibility at the mortal peril to us all.

The Congress that passed such an Act, and the president who signed it into law, would be true American heroes and patriots. There would be provisions necessary that I am sure I have not included here.

That Congress and Administration would also have to enact recovery legislation that would help the millions of Americans who have been taken in, beguiled, and acclimated to an environment of malaise and non-achievement...in short an environment of abject dependency...to be brought back into the American main stream and free market. It would have to be based upon the fundamental Judeo-Christian principles of charity and help that are the hallmark of America.

The resulting tax laws, the enabling of the free market, the rewarding of innovation, and the re-establishment of the underlying, foundational principle of this Republic would serve to erase this blight in our nation within a generation, and to see sustained improving conditions for all of those so effected by these charlatans.

God grant that we the People can stand up and seek out, find, and elect men and women with the courage, commitment, and virtue to make it happen.

Jeff Head

Emmett, Idaho, USA

Appendix - 3 – Examples of Jeff Head's Model Building

I began building models as a young man when about 12 years old I built a 1/350 scale Cutty Sark. I had it on a book shelf in my room for years, long after I left home it remained there.

When my parent build our new home, the room in the center of the upstairs had some shelves above the built in clothes drawers, and they were meant for me and my models.

I built quite a few models back then, and would line them up on those shelves.

After leaving home for school and then a mission, and then getting married and having our children and working, I did not do models for many years.

Then while we lived in Cincinnati I began building models a little more seriously again. When we moved to Dillion, I stopped again.

Finally, after being diagnosed with cancer in 2012, Gail, who has always given me the best advice, recommended that I start again. I had collected quite a few kits in what I called my "stash" that I intended on building when I retired. Gail recognized that building models is a good outlet, and could be a good therapy to allow me to concentrate on something while at home so I would not be so directed in my thinking about the cancer, the pain, the disabilities, and all that went with it.

She was right.

So, I began a project to build in 1/350 scale, all of the modern aircraft carriers of the world and their escort ships from any navy/country that had them. Also, to build in 1/72 scale, the modern aircraft of the modern powers. All of this was military.

I added aftermarket detail sets that included the hand railing for these ships and the various sensors, made of photo etched metal. I built the models mostly in plastic kits, but also included some kits that were made of resin, and others that were 3D prints of various material when the 3D printing hit the market.

What follows are a few examples of ships and planes. I have many more and you can see them all at my online site at <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/> which will be up as long as I live, or at the online Fine Scale Model Magazine Forum at . <http://cs.finescale.com/f/> . Just do a search at the Fine Scale Modeling site for "Jeff Head 1/350 scale Review and Build", or use 1/72 scale too. You can google the same thing and come up with various results from other places that have posted my work.

In the meantime, the following pages will highlight some of the aircraft carriers, escorts ships, and aircraft.

I do have quite a few left to build, including some World War II features, as well as some NASA features like the Space Shuttle and its launch complex and the Saturn Five and its launch complex we sent to the moon, if I have time to get to them.

1/350 Scale model of the USS Ronald Reagan, CVN-80, US Navy nuclear aircraft carrier

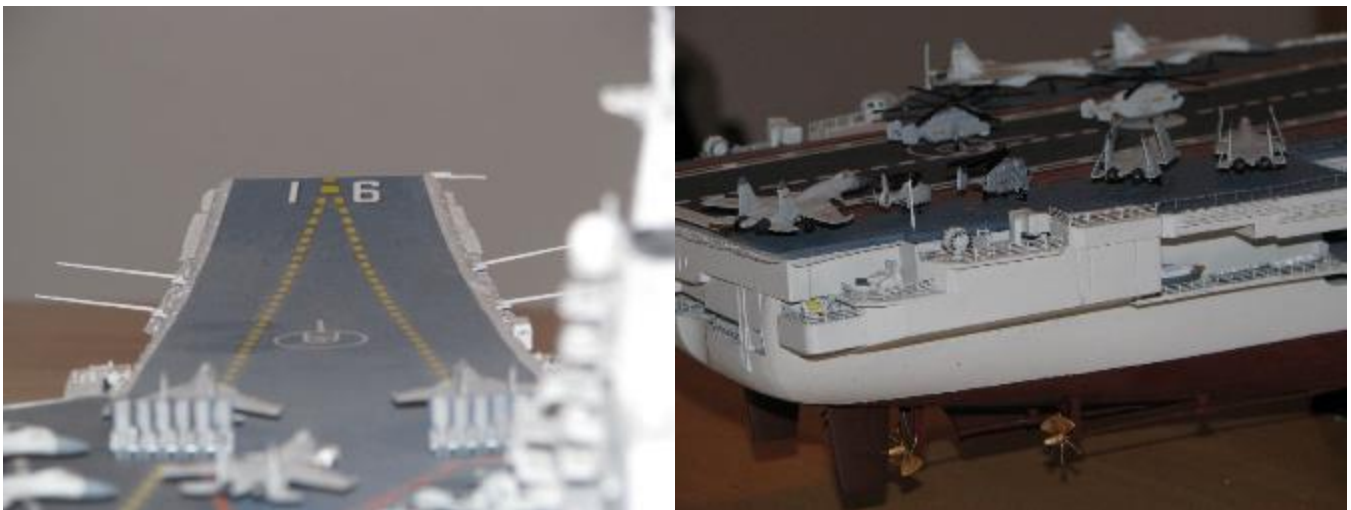
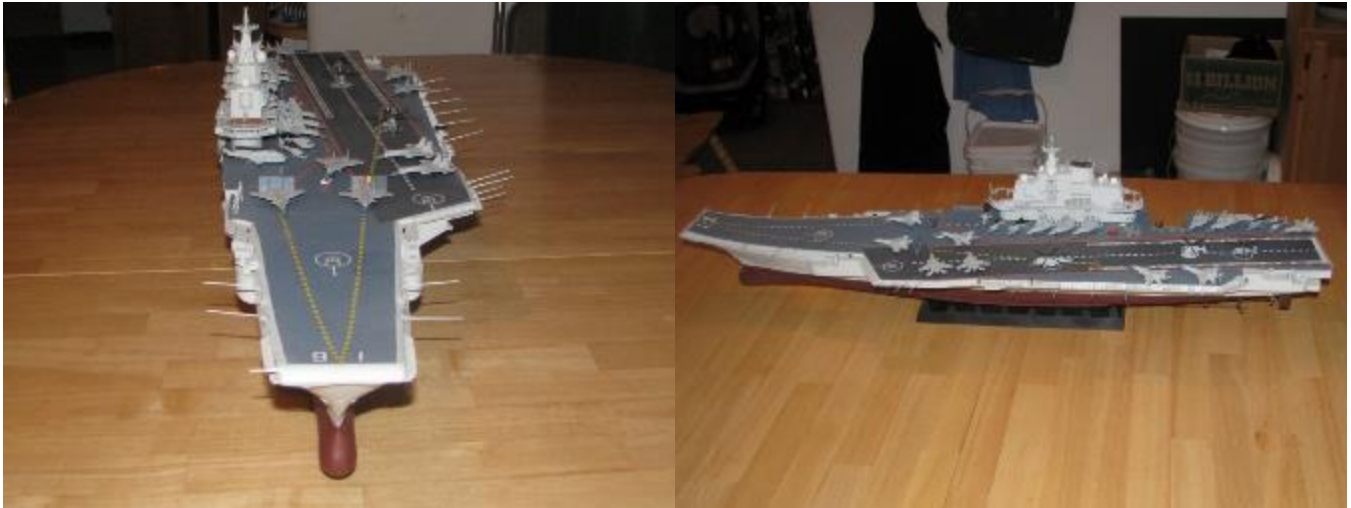


My web site link - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/cvn76.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling link - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/173536.aspx

YouTube Video link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESIQidhdXT0>

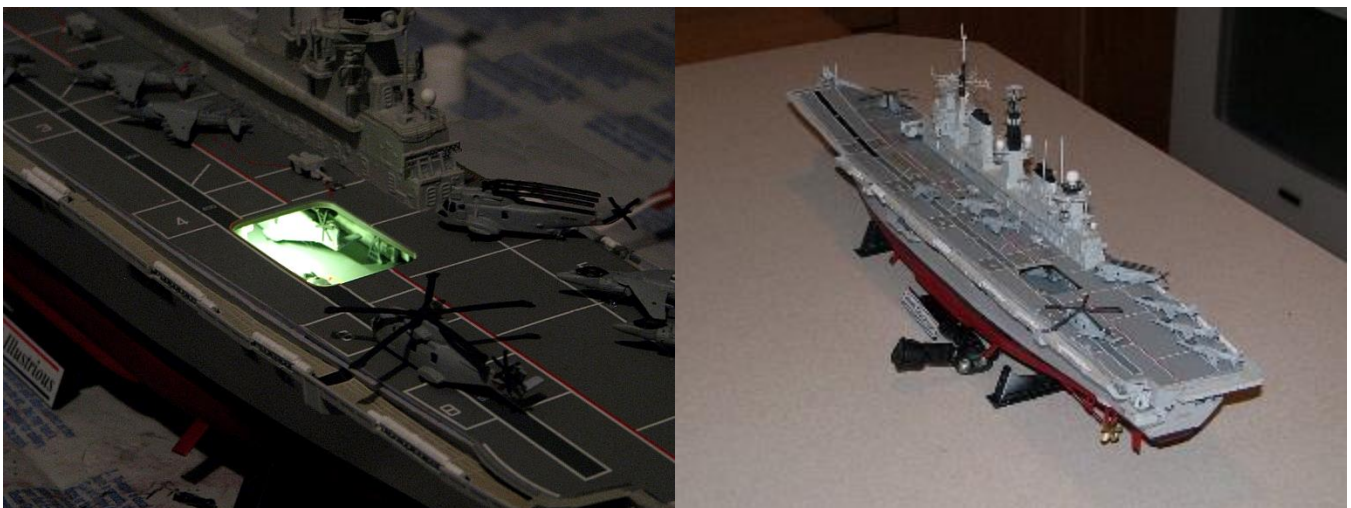
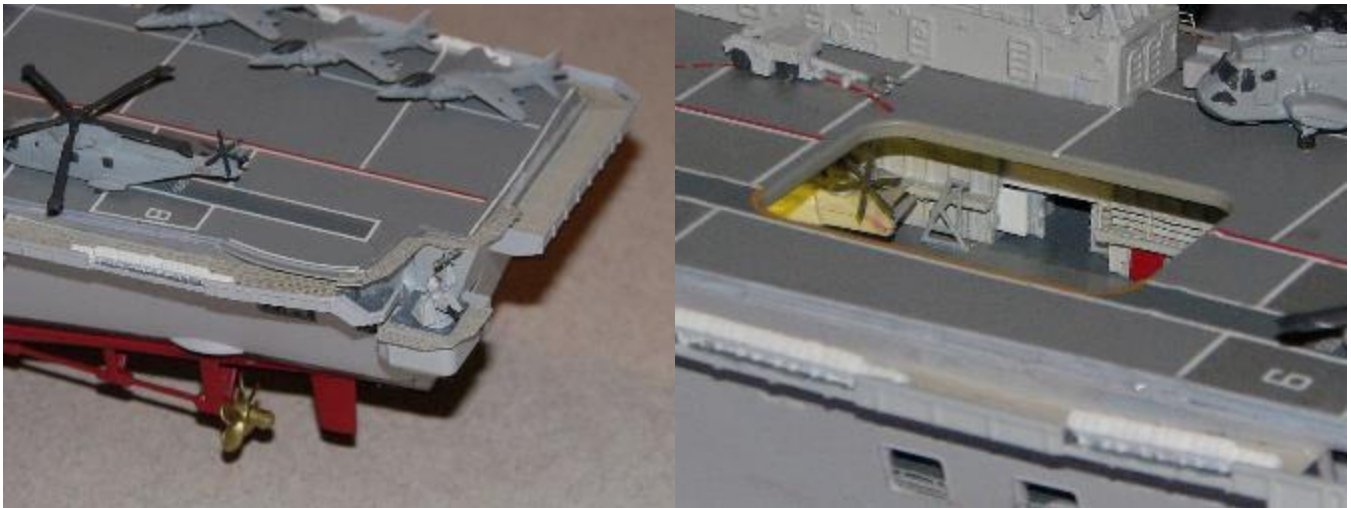
1/350 Scale model of the Liaoning, CV-16, Chinese Navy aircraft carrier



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/PRC-CV-01.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/148599.aspx

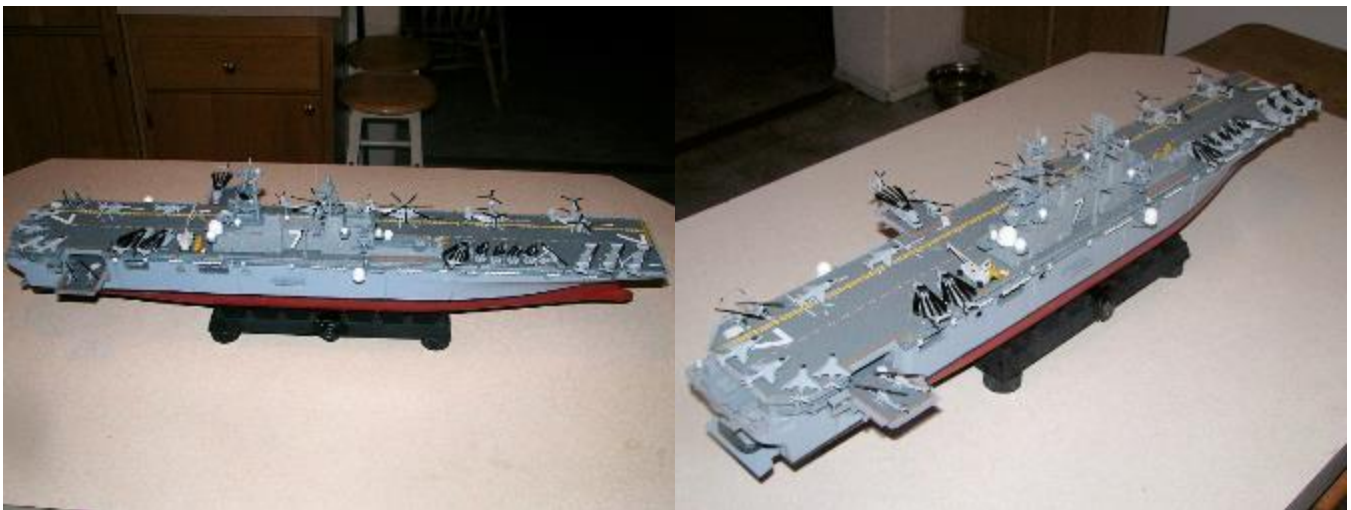
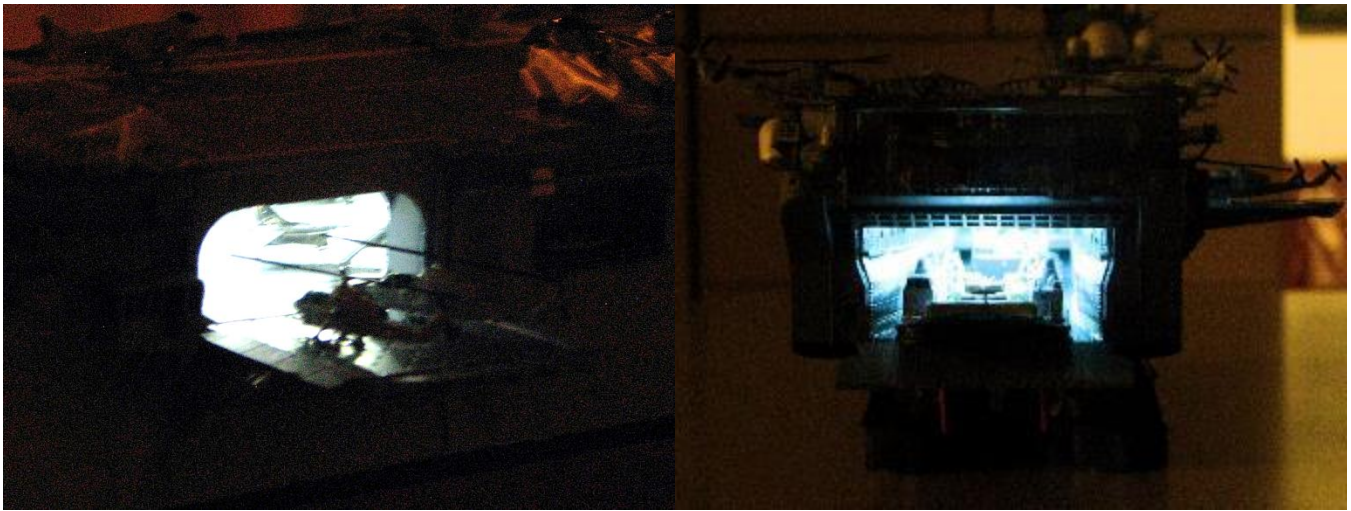
1/350 Scale model of the HMS Illustrious, R06, Royal Navy aircraft carrier



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/UK-R06.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/p/154274/1671148.aspx

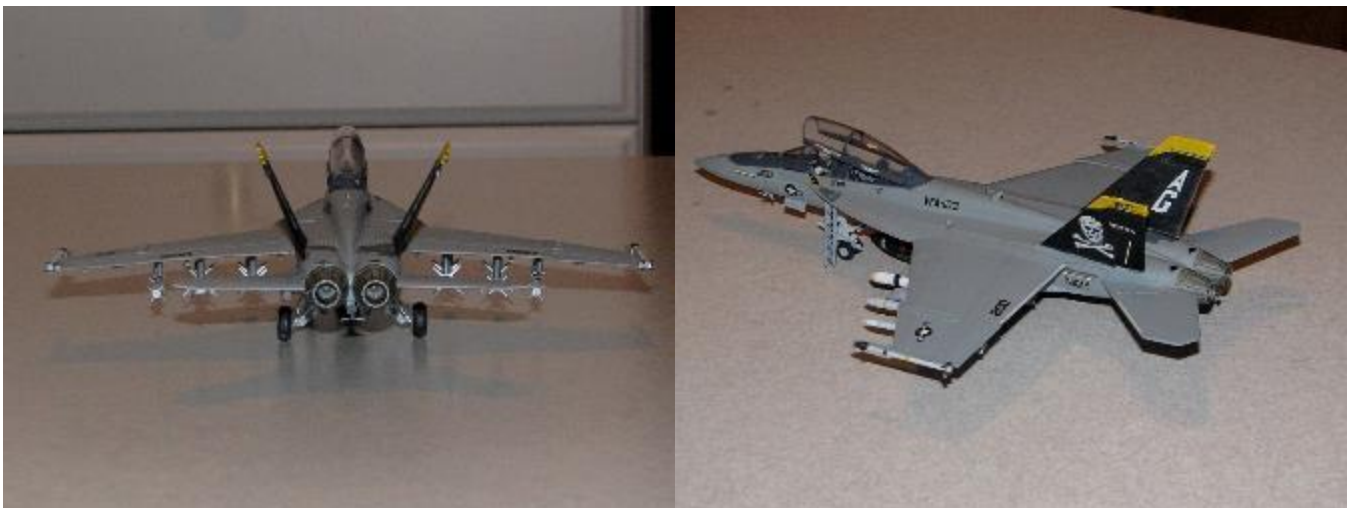
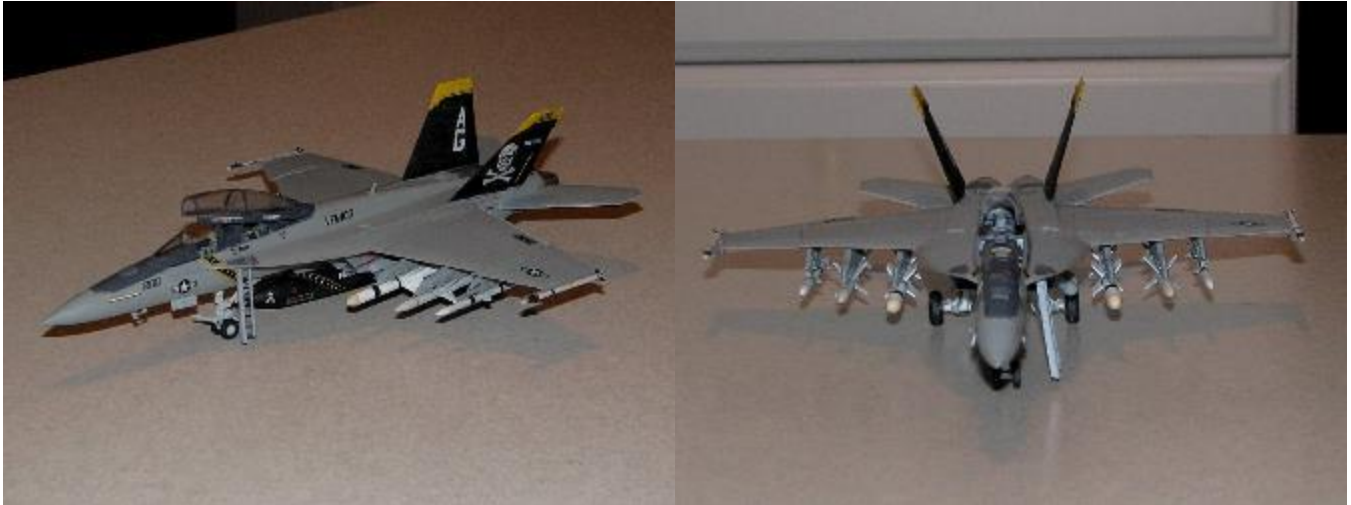
1/350 Scale model of the USS Iwo Jima, LHD-7, US Navy Amphibious Assault ship



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/lhd7.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/163616.aspx

US Navy F/A-18F 1/72 scale Superhornet, principle Naval Strike Fighter for US carriers



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/US-F18F.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling site - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/2/t/159490.aspx

Chinese Navy J-15 1/72 scale Flying Shark, principle Naval Strike Fighter for Chinese carriers



This is the aircraft the Chinese are flying off of their aircraft carriers now. They are very capable aircraft and cannot be taken lightly.

My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/PLAN-J15.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling site - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/2/t/159876.aspx

USAF B-36J, 1/72 Peacekeeper, 1st US Strategic Nuclear Bomber



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/b36.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling site - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/2/t/168844.aspx

YouTube Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sogC0lad0ag>

I built this aircraft as a tribute to General Jimmy Stewart, the famous actor who was also a World War II hero

US Navy 1/350 scale DDG-82 USS Lassen, AEGIS Destroyer

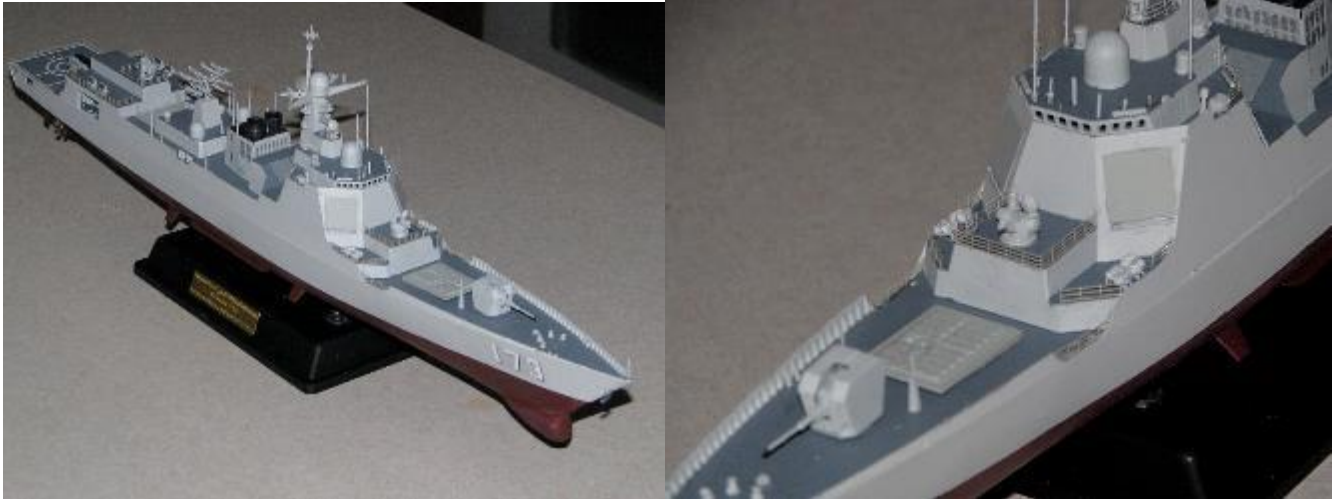


My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/US-DDG82.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/148599.aspx

These are the types of ships that escort large US Navy carriers and amphibious ships like those above.

Chinese Navy 1/350 scale Type 052D Kunming class escort Destroyer



These are the newest Chinese destroyers and they are very good. Ten years ago the Chinese were 25+ years behind us. When comparing their new ships with ours, they have made up almost all of that ground, and they are building very rapidly a large, competitive navy. Before my father died, as I shared my analysis and research with him, he told me it reminded him of what the Japanese did in the run up to World War II.

The Chinese are building such ships in such numbers (they have built and launched 16 of these type of destroyers in the last six years in the same time we build six new one). We still have a significant lead, but at current rates they will catch us within a few years. And they are using the money from our huge trade imbalance to fund it. In my opinion, we simply have to create a fiscal [policy that will keep this from happening...or at least demand that the Chinese reform their communist government, one party system before we have such trade with them.

If we do not, we may learn the hard way that history has a way of repeating itself.

My Site: <http://www.freewebs.com/jeffhead/modelbuilds/plan-ddg173.htm>

US Navy Doolittle Raid in 1/350 scale, four ships that participated in the historic attack



This was the famous raid in April 1942, when the US Navy risked everything to bomb Tokyo after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The US Navy carriers were not in harbor for that attack and it was a blessing from God. Most of our other major ships were sunk or badly damaged.

The President got a plan from Colonel Jimmy Doolittle to fly US Army bombers off of US carrier, something they were not designed to do. The aircraft could not land back on the carriers so they had to fly on after attacking Japan and hop to find friendly places in China (who was also fighting Japan) amongst the free Chinese (as opposed to the communists).

The attack was a complete surprise. 20 bombers could not do much real damage in one attack, but they scared the Japanese who held back many more fighters from then on.

Sadly, the American bombers ran out of gas and all of them except one had to crash land. Still most of the personnel made it to friendly lines with the help of the Chinese people. The Japanese ruthlessly took out their anger on any Chinese suspected of helping and killed upwards of 20,000 Chinese in the aftermath. But the attack bolstered American spirits and gave the Japanese a fore taste of what the US was capable of, and what we would ultimately do in winning World War II.

US Battleship Texas in 1/350 scale, fought in both World Wars, now a Museum Ship



The USS Battleship Texas, BB-35, fought in both World Wars. She was commissioned in 1912.

She participated in the invasion of Africa and then D-Day, and fought a battle with German shore emplacements at Cherbourg France after D-Day. She went on to fight in the Pacific, being involved in several of the final invasions that brought the war in the Pacific to a close.

She was made into a museum ship by the state of Texas and I can remember seeing her as a child. Recently, on one of our trips to Texas during my cancer I went back aboard and climber around on her.

Such historical treasures are worth seeing and remembering the brave Americans who fought with them to preserve our freedoms.

My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/BB35.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/167815.aspx

YouTube Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tF0zpNYcCT4>

Russian Navy Nuclear Battle Cruiser, Kirov Class Petr Velikiy, in 1/350 Scale



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/RUS-CGN099.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling site - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/7/t/157979.aspx

US Navy Complete Carrier Strike Group in 1/350 scale



US Navy F-35C Joint strike Fighter Stealth Aircraft in 1/350 scale



My web site - <http://www.jeffhead.com/modelbuilds/us-f35c.htm>

Fine Scale Modeling site - http://cs.finescale.com/fsm/modeling_subjects/f/2/t/165825.aspx

I have many models...well over 150 and cannot show them all here. But I enjoy building them and studying them. I was blessed in my career to work on numerous military projects from aircraft, to armored vehicles, to

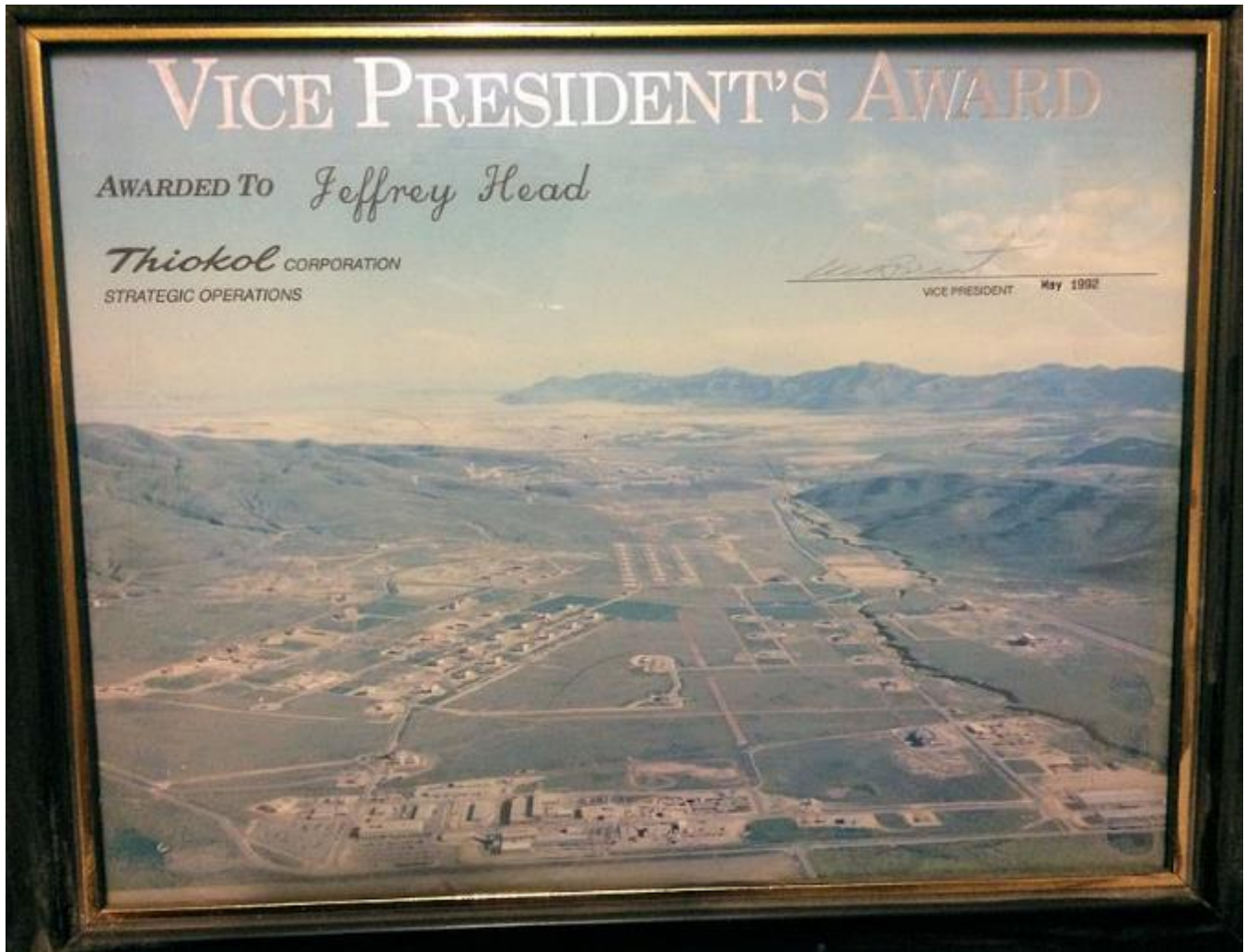
submarines. I hope you have enjoyed seeing a few of them here.

Appendix - 4 – Some Awards I have received

The following are pictures of some of the awards I have received over the years. I wanted my descendants to know of these and that if you work hard...and do not really seek them yourself for their own sake...there are times others will recognize your hard work and says so.

This first one is for the work my team and I did in the wake of the NASA shuttle Challenger disaster, which occurred in 1986. It was ultimately determined that seals on the solid rocket boosters had failed because of the temperatures at which the shuttle was launched and the conditions it caused to those seals.

It was analyzed for several years and my group went into Thiokol and came up with solutions using the SRDS I-DEAS software that we developed and marketed. Their group and the executives at Thiokol made an award to me, and I accepted however on behalf of the entire group, and made it a condition of having the award.





Acceptance into the Sons of the American Revolution on behalf of Stephen Darden, an ancestor on my father's mother's side. We actually had six or seven related ancestors who fought during the Revolutionary War.



My acceptance into the United States Naval Institute in 2001, to which I have remained a member since.



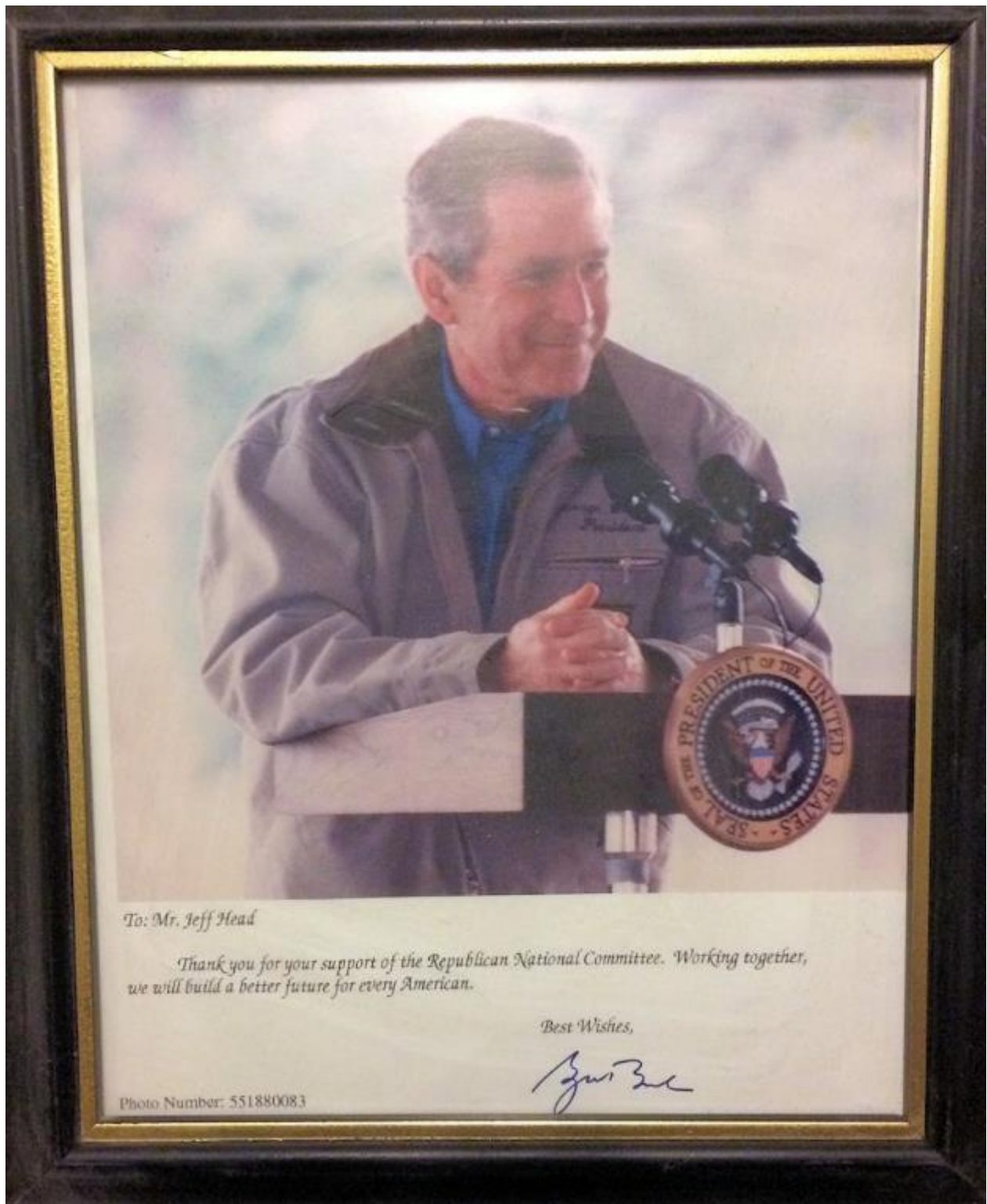
This is the "Person of the Year" award I was honored to accept in 2002 for the activities I was involved in at Jarbidge, Nevada, Klamath, Oregon, and then with the US Flag raising at ground Zero at the World Trade center. The Free Republic web site and forum is a group made up of several hundred thousand members who vote each year of this recognition among their own group of people involved trying to help America.



2003 National Leadership Award from the Republican Congressional Committee, Business advisory Board.



2004 Businessman of the year award from the Business Advisory Council for my work with my books, which I published with my own Business, Alpha Connections at the time.



I received this Recognition picture from President George W. Bush in 2005 for my work as a grass-roots citizen in 2004 during his re-election campaign. I never met him personally, but I did work hard for his re-election.



I received a Congressional Order of Merit in May 2006 for my cumulative work over the years helping constitutional and Conservative principles in the many issues I was involved in over those years.



This was one of my favorite and most cherished awards. I received it just before my medical retirement from the US Bureau of Reclamation. I was given to me by veterans of military service, both active duty and particularly Idaho National Guard personnel whom I helped after their service at the Bureau to get re-established in civilian life, and particularly working for the Bureau of Reclamation. I believed that they deserved special attention and help for their service to the country and I was surprised to get such an award because I believed I was simply doing what those individuals deserved for risking their life on behalf of all of us.