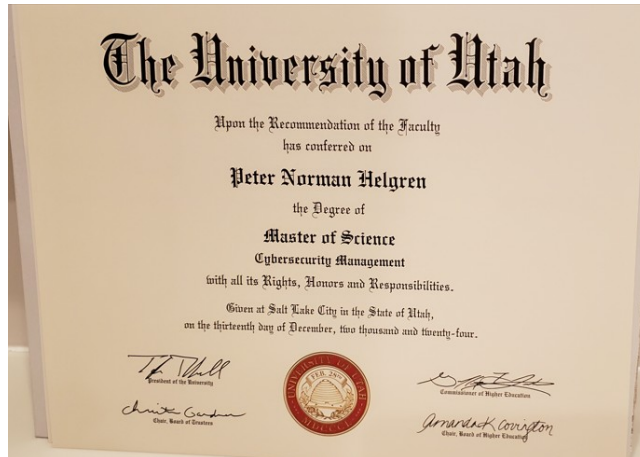


# 2024 Christmas 'Howdy y'all' from the Helgrens [www.helgren.com](http://www.helgren.com) for the latest!

December 21, 2024

Just when you thought that life couldn't get more action-packed, another year rolls around. This year has been a particular roller-coaster ride. Strap in! I'll fill you in on the details:

Add a steady drumbeat to this narrative – Study for 10 weeks...finals...study for 10 weeks...finals....graduation in December! Masters in Science in Cybersecurity Management, done!



The one thing of note as spring approached was a trip to Chicago to surprise my sister Mindy on her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Something about watching your siblings age is sobering...

Jonas continues his decade-plus employment with Red Touch Media with not as many trips to South Africa this year. His marriage to Heather ended this spring. He chose that transition as an opportunity to experience east coast beach living and relocated to Myrtle Beach. Why Myrtle Beach? We don't know. But he and the dogs managed to survive a summer in heat and humidity. We have seen him more often this year. At Easter and then during our temporary relocation to Salt Lake, at reunions, and more recently at Thanksgiving (with the dogs!). We don't know what the next year has in store for him, but I think he is rethinking life in the heat and humidity and will return to Salt Lake in the spring. We'd love to as well.



Sam continues to find it challenging to secure a job that will use his skills and experience. He is temporarily working a brewery/bar job in Park City but would love to find something full-time in logistics/transportation? He hasn't been

idle during his job search. He returned to Pyramid Lake to fish this spring and has been training for an Ultra all year. A volunteer stint at the High Lonesome 100 this summer netted him a spot in the High Lonesome 100 in 2025. He missed a chance to qualify this fall by contracting COVID just days before a race but recovered enough three weeks later to run a 50 miler in Arizona. We'll be there to cheer him on at the High Lonesome this summer.



The “routine” for Debbie and I continued, sort of, throughout the year. Debbie continued to work for Methodist Cancer Rehabilitation as a Physical Therapist, and I continued to work for Bible Study Fellowship as a Technical Program Manager. But the summer added several twists that accounts for the ups and downs, twists and turns that the roller coaster reference alluded to...

Jonas’ choice to move to Myrtle Beach opened up an opportunity for Debbie and me to head to Salt Lake to revive “Dear ‘ol Dad Construction”. We basically spent the summer renovating Jonas’ house, getting it ready for whatever was next for Jonas. It was basically an excuse to return to the state and city we love, spend some time with Sam, a few friends, and avoid a long, stuffy summer in south Texas. Wish we would have worked less and seen more friends, but it was wonderful. I won’t give you the full punch list but there was quite a bit of landscape work, a cleanup and sheetrockapalouza in the garage and the gutting and rebuilding of a bathroom shower. We also were introduced to Facebook Marketplace as we sold extraneous stuff and a boat...we could probably write a book about “Our summer in Salt Lake City”.

In the midst of all this activity, we had TWO family reunions. The Hein clan gathered in Idaho at Debbie’s brother’s cabin which actually gave us an opportunity to head up there a few times. Packing 50 folks in and around a cabin that comfortably sleeps 11 meant creative approaches to sleeping accommodations. Great fun!



Reunion #2 was for the Helgren clan and we met in “neutral territory” (Indiana). The accommodations were more “traditional”. Great weather for mid-August. Sam flew to Myrtle Beach and then he and Jonas drove to Indiana with the dogs. The clan gathering was great fun and, just like the Hein reunion, gave all a chance to \*try\* to learn the names of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and “greats”...



Just prior to the reunion we headed back to San Antonio for some scheduled doctors visits and to see if the house was still standing. This is where our year took yet another unexpected turn secondary to a suspicious mammogram. We delayed our return to Salt Lake so Debbie could undergo a CT and then a biopsy. We were waiting for results while in Indiana at the Helgren reunion. She was diagnosed with early breast cancer.

But, as He always is, God is gracious and merciful and Debbie’s form of cancer allowed for a lumpectomy and then only 5 radiation treatments, which were just finished. Despite all the ups and downs, God has remained, and will remain, loving and faithful. We are grateful.

May you see that faithfulness on display in 2025!