

Dear Family,

2 June 2000

This is written at 32,000 feet somewhere between Orange County and Baltimore. I elected to eschew the in-flight movie after getting burned on the flight west by “Hanging Up”, a wearisome mind-numbing chick flick. I bought the headset because I like Meg Ryan, Walter Matthau, and Lisa Kudrow, and the preview looked funny. Alas, I failed to notice that Diane Keaton, whose presence in any cinematic context is a recipe for tedium, was also a prominent member of the cast and discovered that every funny line the film offered was captured in the preview. But I digress. Anyway, opting out of the movie ought to give me enough time to pound this out before being required to turn off my ‘portable electronic device’ for landing—as many of you know, the simple act of thoughtlessly leaving such a device in the ‘On’ position can potentially send passengers aboard commercial aircraft plunging to a fiery demise...but only during takeoff and landing. Someone will someday explain all this to me, but probably not to my satisfaction.

I typically begin with fluff like that last paragraph when I can’t think of very much to write. Perhaps I should begin with why I was in Orange County (Newport Beach to be precise). I was called in as a secondary marketing ‘expert’ to assist a KPMG assurance team conducting an audit of a REIT. I, a self-respecting individual, am not an auditor, but periodically get assigned to provide this kind of ‘expert’ support. I’d go into more detail but my eyelids are already feeling a bit heavy, and I’d hate to be awakened an hour from now by a flight attendant instructing me to reconfigure my portable electronic device to the ‘Off’ position. Suffice it to say that although I’m not the secondary marketing guru certain people believe me to be, I knew more about it than the people on the audit team, so I survived. There’s got to be some kind of lesson in that.

My second-ever trip to Southern California (and first to Orange County) was pleasant even though I’ve never seen so many beautiful people or felt so ugly as a result. Rick (Crystal’s younger brother—we were baptized together 20 years ago) and Mimi were cool enough to come down from LA last night to comfort my feelings of appearance inadequacy and to play. We had a fun dinner at Benihana and enjoyed catching up.

The California trip will hopefully not develop into a regular thing for me though. I just don’t know if I have the energy for that kind of extended travel. The majority of our clients are in New York, and I must say the one-hour flight makes New York (despite the lack of palm trees) sounds awfully appealing right now. Before flying to California I was involved in the annual KPMG Mortgage Industry Benchmarking Studies. For those of you who didn’t allow your subscriptions to *Mortgage Banking* to lapse, these studies will be the focus of an article in an upcoming issue (June or July I think). In spite of my substantial contribution, I’m not credited at all in the article, though somehow I’m managing to get on with my life.

We thoroughly enjoyed the Memorial Day weekend. We traveled to Moorestown for the first time since Thanksgiving, ending our longest visit drought since my fraternal-inspiring move to the right coast 4 years ago. We arrived exactly one day before Matt, Andra & Anika, allowing us to secure dibs on the ‘good’ (i.e. Andrew’s) bedroom. In spite of the Brady Bunch shower situation (which will persist until the finishing touches on Mom & Dad’s bathroom—and even if we had Celestial Room bathrooms, they wouldn’t be as elegant—are completed) we all seemed to get along. Naturally the number one highlight of the weekend was the Memorial Day family kickball showdown in which Andra and I proved to be an unstoppable team. (Finally getting to meet Cathy Blondeau as well as Peter’s teacher/fantasy girlfriend was a close second.) In fact, everything about the weekend was great, and we’re totally jacked about having the Matt & Andra family so close.

I’m trying to remember what’s happened to our house since last month. The family room downstairs is now carpeted. The hideous wallpaper wall leading downstairs (Mom, Dad & Grant are especially familiar with it) is now covered with funky texture paint. (I’ve decided our house’s theme should be “It’s *supposed* to look like that.”) Meanwhile, the seemingly endless task of painting trim upstairs drudges on. Crystal has ordered area rugs for the living room as well as for the two girls’ rooms. I’m sure it will be lovely. I don’t think Coco’s been over since the area rug she gave us a couple of years ago took its distinguished place in our dining room. We hope she approves.

Well we’re zeroing in on Baltimore; I can see the bottom of the page, and my battery’s about to die. Looks like a good time to hang it up. Sorry for the lack of real news.

I just got home, checked my aol account, and picked up the good news about Rachel Huber. We approve of the name. Carry on and congratulations.

Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy