

Dear Family:

25 June 2000

Congratulations to Grant & Jen on the arrival of Abby.

I'm getting started a little earlier than usual this month in the hope of getting this off to Andrew before he leaves Brazil. (I wouldn't want him postponing his departure on account of not yet having received my letter. Mom would never forgive me.)

For the first time in my life (that I can remember), my stake underwent a presidency reorganization that didn't somehow involve Dad. Even without the personal emotional attachment, it was a special experience. In what I suppose is an appropriate reflection of the diverse nature of our stake (in which, according to the outgoing stake president, 65 countries are represented) the new presidency is composed of an Englishman, a Salvadoran, and an Oklahoman. During his remarks, the Salvadoran observed that our stake is now headed by a president who speaks perfect English, a counselor who speaks perfect Spanish, and a counselor who, well, is somewhere in the middle.

I've spent most of the non-Ozone-code-red Saturdays this month hacking back limbs in the untamed forest that passes for our backyard. What possessed the former owners to plant so many trees in a yard that backs to a real-deal forest remains a mystery to me. Time not spent in trees has been ridding our neglected front yard gardens of 25 years of weeds and lawn encroachment.

I appreciated Dad's tree-trimming advice (i.e. cut off as much of those hideous things as humanly possible) during his whirlwind visit here two Saturdays ago. Accompanying him were Mom, Pete, Matt, Andra, Anika, and a van-load of furniture Mom & Dad were eager to have out of their basement...er, I mean graciously offer us as a housewarming gift. The brief visit was highlighted by our first visit to Grandpa's grave marker. We met Grandma there before heading to a Brazilian BBQ place. There, Rick and Carla joined us in ingesting approximately 46 different types of meat. Earlier today, a member of the stake presidency (the lone American who, I swear, looks and sounds exactly like Nolan Ryan) signed my temple recommend pursuant to my affirmative response to his question, "Do you obey the word of wisdom?" After further reflection, I'm not sure I was completely forthright on that one.

Crystal manifested her opposition to breast cancer earlier this month by participating in the annual Breast Cancer Foundation National Race for the Cure. She ran as part of national capital area's "Team LDS." (Mormons, it seems, are *strongly* opposed to breast cancer.) She recently received a postcard informing her that, sadly, breast cancer has yet to be eradicated, and that the race will continue until a cure is found. It also informed her (I promise this is true) that she had placed 11,026<sup>th</sup> (6,550<sup>th</sup> among females.) I'm very proud of her, and am racking my brain trying to recall the last time someone bothered sending me a postcard for coming in 11,026<sup>th</sup> place.

Lucy is increasingly vocal. To the delight of her father (who is willing to stipulate to coincidence) her favorite string of syllables is da da da da da. Hannah continues to take to her 'big sister' role. We enjoy watching the two interact, and maintain that one hasn't lived until he's witnessed a 3-year-old put on a baby voice to communicate with her 8-month-old sister.

Hope this finds you well and did not bore you excessively.