

Dear Family:

27 August 2000

I begin this a little earlier in the month than usual. (I usually procrastinate until at least the 30th.) But as this is the last Sunday of the month and I stand to be in Richmond on business all next week, I'm likely looking at my last chance to get this out the door before September dawns and I start hearing Dad wondering aloud about the whereabouts of my monthly bore-o-gram.

This has been a decompression weekend. We all returned home late Friday night following a most pleasant week in Coeur d'Alene. The principal impetus behind our trip was the service held there last Saturday for Roland and Marci's stillborn son, Caleb. It was well done. Roland and Marci exhibited exceptional poise under the circumstances during their thoughtful remarks. The occasion was brightened by the attendance of Roland and Crystal's 3 siblings (whose journeys from Alaska, Hawaii and Southern California rivaled ours in length). Our own trip was unique in that Crystal and I (in our never-ending quest to spend more time apart) flew at different times out of different airports. Thanks to the good people at Priceline.com, Friday morning consisted of my driving Crystal and Lucy to Dulles at 5 am, and returning home in time for Hannah and me to take the Metro to National (which for some reason, to the disgust of liberals everywhere, is now 'Reagan National'). Hannah seemed to love the 'planes, trains, and automobiles' aspect of our voyage as much as I loathed it. She watched movies via my laptop's DVD player while I tirelessly responded to her endless requests for more cookies. She's actually a pretty good traveler. Everyone thought we were pretty cute. Everyone was right. The rest of our time in Idaho was spent goofing off on Crystal's dad's boat, (both Roland and his dad commented on how great I looked when I broke my old personal water-skiing endurance record of 1.2 seconds by 2 seconds), goofing off at a nearby amusement park, taking in the local color at the county fair, eating at some of North Idaho's finest restaurants, and (the highlight) watching fat gay often-naked Rich take home a million bucks on the final episode of "Survivor." My father-in-law, watching the show for the first time, lost any respect he might have had for me upon learning that I hadn't missed a show since week 3 of the series. His comment (something along the lines of "That's about the stupidest thing I've ever seen on TV, and I've seen MacGyver") was reminiscent of comments made by both my parents and all my friends and co-workers. While I find it amazing that I was the only person I knew (other than Crystal, Grant and Jen whom I lured into addiction) who seemed to be watching the most-watched show in America, it's not keeping me up at night, and I won't give it any more ink here.

Thus ends a month of family togetherness. We had spent the weekend prior to our Idaho jaunt in Moorestown. This allowed the 5 brothers to be together (and revert to our teenage mentalities) before Andrew's departure to perennial national football powerhouse, BYU. (Grant, Jen, Roland and Marci came over last night to watch Florida State cover Vegas's 25½ point spread over our vaunted Cougars. Next weekend, these same 4 people are laying down \$30 each for the privilege of watching the University of Virginia spank us in person.) It was nice being together. I can't remember what we did (other than endure a family photo.) Everything before the Idaho trip is kind of a blur right now—which is probably why this letter contains so many digressions.

Earlier this month (before anything else I've mentioned), we were invited to attend the temple marriage of Gary Tomelic (whom I baptized about 3 years ago when I was the Ward Mission Leader) and his wife, Maria. I'm always flattered when invited to attend a temple wedding. Such invitations are typically extended only to family and very close friends, and it pleases me to know that I'm on somebody's A-list. This instance was no exception...that is, before arriving at the temple and discovering that this couple's "very close friends", it would seem, include just about every endowed member of the stake. The reception, it would seem, was not organized by anyone holding an advanced degree in logistics. (Actually everything was very nice and pretty, etc. but it took forever to get to the food—my overriding criterion.) I don't know if it's an Eastern thing or just a non-Utah thing, but wedding DJ's here have this annoying habit of announcing the bridal party by mimicking the public address announcer at a major sporting event. "And now!...at 5-foot 8!...from Boliva!...give it up for...the GROOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!...etc." The live Mariachi band was cool for a while, but it didn't take long for me reach my personal tolerance level for it. I don't know why I always have to find the negative in everything. Maybe it's because negatives always seem funnier. Maybe I'm just in a bad mood because I don't feel like going to Richmond tomorrow. I don't know. I'm tired and going to bed.

Sorry if this reads like a downer. It's really been a great month. Thanks to everyone that made it so.

Love, Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy