

Dear Family:

26 November 2000

As I'm sure everyone has had enough, I hereby pledge that this letter shall contain no bad puns or other pathetic attempts at humor on the subjects of pregnant, dimpled, acne-scarred, swinging revolving-door chads, Florida's corrupt judiciary, retired Jewish Palm Beach County residents, recounts, Warren Christopher's perma-"duh" expression, or Katherine Harris's eyelashes (though an informal poll conducted at work confirms that mine—even on days when I wear no mascara—are, in fact, sexier).

As a result, this letter will not be funny. I mean, what else am I supposed to write about? "Work" for the past three weeks has consisted of little more than people refreshing their favorite Internet news sites every 5 minutes to make sure they haven't missed anything. Representatives of our client probably would be getting on us about sagging productivity if they weren't busy doing the same thing. It now appears that I'll be in Richmond through the end of the year, at which point I will have probably slept in every room of the Richmond Sheraton Park South Hotel. Then the lawsuits ought to begin. The way we figure, a federal government agency, our client, our client's subcontractor, and a bank will all sue one another. Assuming nobody calls me to testify (which, though it hasn't been ruled out, isn't likely) it ought to be pretty entertaining.

Crystal's federally mandated "nice" birthday dinner occurred this month at our favorite French restaurant (we've now been there twice), Normandie Farm, in Potomac. The main difference, as far as I can tell, between Normandie Farm and La Madeleine (our favorite French cafeteria) is that the Boeuf Wellington at the former is prepared with the requisite duck pâté and costs about four times as much. The entertainment value of our dining experience was significantly enhanced by the elderly Asian woman at a neighboring table who shot an entire roll of film inside the restaurant. She began by taking at least a dozen shots of the other three people at her table. She subsequently proceeded to spend the next 20 minutes wandering around, bumping into tables, and forcing other diners to scoot in their chairs while capturing the walls and ceiling from every possible angle. Maybe you had to be there, but we almost choked on our escargot laughing at her.

Though Crystal ordered a new sofa and area rugs early this month, they haven't arrived yet, and our living room was largely empty when we hosted 3 other couples for a main course during the ward "progressive dinner." Everyone meets for appetizers at one rich stake presidency member's huge house. People then split off to various poorer people's houses (like ours) for main courses before reuniting at the stake president's even bigger house for dessert and serious non-alcoholic drug-free partying. Roland and Marci left early so Grant and I were kings of the ping-pong table. Unfamiliar with progressive dinners, we're still wondering if this is just another weird Mormon thing. Anyone else do this?

This month was also my first as Grant's home teaching companion. Suddenly, for the first time since being Dad's companion, I actually find home teaching more enjoyable than burdensome. We teach a very interesting list of people that will doubtless provide a constant stream of material for future letters.

Thanksgiving at Mom & Dad's was nice. We were joined there by Grant, Jen and Abby (who made the same journey we did a day earlier) and Matt, Andra and Anika (who made the arduous 1.1 mile trek across Moorestown) as well as by Chris Yi (a Lockheed Martin physicist who, in collaboration with Lockheed Martin engineer Matt, successfully jury-rigged the ping-pong net, restoring the table to championship status). The weekend with everybody together (sans Andrew) was similarly pleasant. Backyard football was fun until I sprained my ankle. It's mostly healed, though I occasionally fake a sympathy-seeking limp. We screamed at the TV together as BYU eked out a season-ending victory over just-as-bad Utah. Nobody slept much thanks in part to Lucy's illness, correctly diagnosed by Dr. Roland after a 3-second glance in her mouth as an 18-syllable virus I can't remember. She's feverish and frequently unhappy. We're treating the fever and pain while hoping the virus runs its course quickly. One of us would have skipped church today if Crystal didn't have to give a talk (she did well) and I didn't have to direct the choir (we were very good). Crystal did take Lucy home after Sacrament Meeting, and she seems somewhat better this afternoon. For the record, she now takes 3 or 4 unaided steps on average before falling down.

Good talking to you. Hope you're able to extract some peace from the chaos of the holiday season.

Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy