

To All My Sweet Ladies,

It must be a fairly common anomaly that when one mentions that your family is “well”, that the children come down sick. I should have known better really. But I’ll probably keep doing it because it’s important that you know they are sometimes (and probably usually) quite well...

Anyway, the day *after* I sent out the last letter, Jacob’s strange cough became waaay stranger and his fever began. Because he was so short of breath, we took him to the doctor (where he was prescribed antibiotic, inhaler, and cough syrup). 2 days later (when Mark was in Dubai for a few days), Lilly woke up white and weak and faint, and throwing up (it turns out she had a case of heat stroke, and is fine now). That night Stephen couldn’t sleep because of his cough. And the saga continued... Apparently that “blowing dust” one of you asked me about, gets breathed in and if you aren’t used to it you can get an infection, which is what Jacob got. I guess we’ll get used to it. Meanwhile – in case my day, in that last letter sounded like life was too simple and organized, perhaps this one will suit you better ;-):

Alternate schedule:

Pam wakes up with a start when she realizes she overslept after having been up with various children the night before. Get 2 children into the tub to breath warm air (without dust), hoping they’ll feel better, while she makes breakfast and debates whether to wake more up or to count her blessings and let them sleep.

Gives various medicine around to various children.

~9:00 ~ comes and goes and only one has started working on school work without her.

~10:30 ~ she takes Kim and walks to the nearby pharmacy for cough medicine, and the grocery for a few more ingredients (hoping that a batch of ordinary chocolate chip cookies would encourage everyone). (and later repents of using calorie laden food to bolster emotions) ;-)

~has lost all track of time by now~ gets Kim making cookies while she gets out lunch, serves lunch, grabs coffee, sits down to help the one student doing his work to work out a few math problem. Meanwhile due to the strength of the cough medicine, Stephen falls asleep at the table while eating lunch. Cookies get done, everybody has some and after clean up, Pam needs a nap. All thoughts of workout room gone.

---- but enough about me.(or not),

We’ve gotten a piano since I last wrote. While I am **neither** insane nor troubled by demons, I do see now what the attraction of music was for King Saul. I didn’t even realize how much I missed hearing Kim and Robyn play until Kim began to play again. Quite an effect in a large room with marble floors and 11 foot ceiling. I cried. Again.

More from “The Zone” :

~viewed recently from the balcony – man in his “dishdash” (native dress) on a jet ski.

~ while taxi fare is very cheap, it often costs a different amount to get there, than to get back. (things that make you say “hmmm”.)

~ the street behind us has 3 names, depending upon where you are on it, and/or how long the taxi driver has been here in Abu Dhabi. These are the names: Near us it is called “Sheik Zayed the 1st street”. Further toward downtown it is “Sheik Zayed the 2nd street”. The older taxi drivers know the whole thing as “Electra” (I don’t know why).

Other items of possible interest (pick 2):

~ Today at the local market, I found something called “Fruit Gums”. Those of you familiar with Adrian Plass will recognize these as something he uses to time the length of a sermon. They are a British candy rather like gummy bears (only fruit shaped) and fairly sour. And not as soft. So far our Mp3’s of sermons (thanks so VERY much to the good folks at Prairie Mennonite!) are running on average, about 4 fruit gums long. And that’s a positive reflection on Warren, Arnie, and Pete. A 4 fruit gum sermon is just about right. :-D

~ We were informed (after our bathroom water heater broke and leaked it’s hot contents all over the bathroom floor), that water heaters can break at any time. So if one is to be gone for a few days, it’s best to turn all water heaters off and have the building superintendent turn the water off. Said water heater has been replaced. We’re hoping for no repeats.

~ The fish market is not only a great place to find really great fresh fish (and other things aquatic and edible albeit some questionably so), but it is also a great place to get some good photos (if you’re early enough, the old fashioned fishing dows are still there).

~ The souk is a word that means: “outdoor Arab market”. (got that from Encarta ☺). It is the way you would have had to get almost everything here, even 7 years ago. They are interesting places, especially if you like to barter (as Mark does, but Pam does not). I only go if Mark will go with me. ☺

~ It is evidently a known phenomenon that after you have settled in a bit and are getting on with life, little things can make you cry more than *those* things apparently warrant. Things like not being able to find the right cooking utensil when you need it, or having the rice cooker leak starchy water all over, etc... This, I’m told, happens because of “unresolved grief” – i.e. having to leave your people and loved ones so far away, and communication with them gets a bit more difficult, and you just plain can’t see them or visit with them like you used to. Now I’m not big on pop psychology, but this one seemed to ring a little too true.

With much love and fond affection,

~Pam.



