

Ladies letter to home #3 Nov 06

Dear Sweet Ladies,

The past month has been an interesting one, and (hopefully) not at all an indication of how the rest of the year will go. Attempting to not bore you to tears at the outset of this letter, I shall only say that the Muslim holy month of Ramadan was hard on us all. Oh we made it through (you can do anything for a month right?), but we're quite glad to be able to legally eat and drink in public again (and have Mark home nights)!

There is a bit of censorship here that was making it difficult to consistently communicate with loved ones back home. It seemed that whatever we tried to connect up (cheap or free internet speaking) it quickly got blocked. I am pleased to announce that Mark appears to have gotten a few things working for us. Now if I can just avoid messing it up.

The children are learning to take cabs almost anywhere, and buy things at stores by themselves (with this monopoly money ;-)), and Kim can do circles around me in recognizing what signs say in arabic :-/. I'll study harder.

The rollerblading has shifted to the parking lot below. There are more people and cars there, but I can also watch them with the binoculars better :-D.

School is going pretty well really. There are a few other homeschoolers here if we want to schedule things. So far we had a mothers tea, and then a pizza party that evening that included the rest of the family.

As some of you know, I did get my drivers license ☺. Mark and the fellow responsible for Passports, visas, drivers licenses, etc... at Mark's work (Adel) took me to the bureau. Let's just say the morning sort of reminded me of this verse - **Pro 18:16** "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." It could have taken the whole day without their help (and money). Or longer.and one of these days I'll quite possibly drive somewhere besides the highway between Al Ain and here. Mark's car looks like an airplane cockpit to me though so I may just have to go sit in it and figure out where and what everything is. :-/ This is no ordinary city either...

This months "Zone Report":

~The attached photo is a truck I noticed driving next to us. I gather by the picture on it, that it does something with trees. The words themselves would have indicated otherwise :-D

~Stores and are open at odd times. Sometimes there are hours posted, sometimes not, but it doesn't always mean they will be open at those times. A typical postage = 10:00 – 10:00. A typical reality = 9:00-1:00 and then later in the day, 4:00- 11:00 (except during Ramadan, at which time afternoon hours would be more like 7:00 or 8:00 until 12:00 midnight). Now the issue isn't that in a hot climate you'd be closed during the heat of the day, but rather that it's your best guess as to whether or not you'll actually be able to shop at that store when you go.

~In a similar way – tourist attractions are not always even there when you try to go. There aren't usually phone numbers to check so you just have to consider it part of the field trip – to just drive there and see.

“Let your fingers do the walking” is strictly an American slogan. I'm not sure why they have yellow pages here.

We are eagerly looking toward when our oldest 2 children – Ben and Robyn, come the weekend before Thanksgiving (U.S.). I am visiting my typical state of denial as I pretend they will be coming to live with me forever (like the rest of the children will be). We've already got big plans ☺

I am learning to communicate telepathically with my appliances. It was that or brush way up on German and this seemed easier. It is only when a setting gets bumped, or somebody else foolishly tries to mind meld with the washing machine that we go for the 3 hour tour (very hard on the clothes). Otherwise I think I have it down to about a half hour wash (this works on the “empty boat picture setting” ::shrug::). The drying has to have the bottom part kicked in while you close the door and quickly push the button, and that makes it close. I'm still burning toast regularly, but we're starting to kind of like it that way. I guess we (the appliances and I) are getting along great for now and it can't get much better than that eh?

I know you are probably thinking that all I seem to do is teach the children, use my appliances and look at the ocean...and I guess that is fairly true. It goes with the job. But in between things – we're seeing interesting things and taking some great pictures, and most importantly – meeting people. Alhamdaallah (Praise be to God).

A side note: I did attempt to bring a plate of sweet rolls to the next door neighbors (who are from here). A lady's voice from inside told me to “go away!” (without opening the door). I'm not sure if this is a good sign or a bad sign but I'll keep trying.

Very much love and fond affection,

~Pam.

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed:
lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2

