

March 2007

Dear Sweet Ladies,

Another month, another insecurity. I would like to begin by informing all of you that even though we've only been here for a little more than half a year, I have an unmatched sock box.

We are anticipating, with great excitement the upcoming visit of Grandma and Grandpa (Mark's side) for 3 weeks. They will be here March 10 – 31st. The rollerblade craze that I mentioned last September, has gained a bit of momentum here on a few points. The little girls have rollerblades now (and helmets), and the big boys have added skateboards to the mix. Jon is actually considered "on staff" for Abu Dhabi Skaters. A club he helped develop for area boys who like to skateboard or rollerblade. It doesn't have the negative associations that it seems to have in the States. Jon helps organize trips, and is the photographer. Those city children eh? Anyway, in between schoolwork and classes, one can find the 3 older boys replacing bearings, cleaning bearings, soaking bearings. I had to have them clarify this procedure, because to my way of thinking, WD-40 makes things move more freely, and this would not be what I would want on a skateboard. Evidently I'm right – but that **is** what they want. Go figure. Mark keeps warning them about padding, and medical costs (he doesn't tend to mention that the "New Medical Center" hospital rooms don't automatically come with soap or towels, etc.) (!). Oh, but my point about all that was to say that any visitors we might be blessed with, will need to put up with the bearings, and – will NOT stay anywhere but here at our home with us, and I don't want to hear another word about it Lois. ;-)

So language lessons are progressing. I **am** the village idiot here too, but the local people are very kind about it. Jon uses Arabic and sometimes Urdu quite a bit with the fellows at the skateboard park. Namely his friend Bashar (from Iraq), who is here right now eating Chili and doesn't think it is hot at all :-D (the boys ate separate from the girls tonight as Mark wasn't home yet for supper). This fellow is considered Muslim in that his father is. But his own testimony is that he is a Christian and he and Jon have some good conversations. And some good skating. (and some good chili)

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The Zone report:

-There was an unusual event on Feb 23. A French man (Robert Alain), who calls himself "Spiderman", climbed to the top of one of the taller buildings on the Corniche (if you'll recall, the Corniche, is a word that means the edge, and is the road along the edge of the ocean here in front of our flat. The building is just down the street from us).

This would be remarkable enough had it been done with climbing ropes, carabiners, and safety harness. But he actually held on only with his hands and his feet. I guess that is what he means by calling himself "spiderman". It sounds like a frivolous risk to me. He feels he is inspiring others to be willing to do the challenging things in life, even if it scares you. His story is, that he used to be deathly afraid of heights, and still \*is\* afraid of heights. But he trained himself to climb very tall buildings without ropes in spite of that. His message is that you can learn to do the impossible – so go for it. Admirable in a way.

I was thinking more along the lines of "Healthy fear keeps you from a lot of danger".

-I was at the health food store today, looking for whole flax seeds. As usual, they will be getting it in "tomorrow". But I did get an interesting flyer advertising a vitamin product. This is the promise: "A full array vitamin and Protein that increase (sic) body weight and appetite."

-This one is probably my own ignorance raising it's oft exposed head, but they use the words "expiry date" on everything that has one. At first we thought it was just a misprint, but it's very consistent.

-The famous opera singer, Placido Domingo, was interrupted during one of his songs, by a drinking water semi-truck (that isn't - "partial truck", but one of those loud huge ones), in the desert. I'm pretty sure that only here would that juxtaposition of events happen. Of course he was far too experienced to let it bother him.

-Some of the men here, spit indoors too. I won't describe this.

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We are in the process of making plane reservations for the summer. We have missed our church very much, but are so very grateful for the sermons that are sent to us. And for the Sunday School materials and papers. We have missed our families and friends, and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. We are very delighted about attending a couple of weddings as well. To whom it may concern: Congratulations! :-D (that's to the parents too)

Once again, I will be staying behind a bit longer, with most of the children while Mark returns here in July. The farm has many needs, and it is too hot that time of year – here, to go out anyway.

Today's quote from Stephen: (said in a fast 4 year old voice) (after being picked up roughly by Jeremiah) "Jeremiah! That hurt really bad - you hurt my biggest bone that was harder than the other one that was the strongest bone I had!" (Jeremiah asked him which bone that was- Stephen said "It was my 5 bone of course")

This seems short, but maybe that is best sometimes.

Very much love and fond affection,

~Pam.

"Psa 61:2 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."





