

My Dear Sweet Ladies,

The earthquakes continued for awhile after my last letter. They happened in the day this time so we could experience them fully (proof that it's all about me). The chairs and walls were shaking and there were no cracks in the walls at first, but by the next day the cracks were becoming apparent. Not bad enough to do anything just now, but we'll keep an eye on them. There were plenty over at the college where Mark works. The younger children and Jeremiah were playing a rousing game of Monopoly in the dining room and didn't notice any of it, but Kim and I were upstairs enjoying the ride. Obviously we were in no danger of falling into a crack in the earth.

Monopoly is the new fun game around here (for some anyway...). Apples to Apples is great when we have company over, but Monopoly is strictly for those who will still love you when it's all over (5. hours. later.). This version has Arabic script along with the English, money is in Pounds Sterling, properties are in London (Trafalgar square, etc...). When playing this game becomes inevitable, I make sure to at least get the antique flat iron game piece.

Lots of yard work this past month to try to recover things from the wind storms. Have I mentioned yet that almost all the trees here have long spikes....?(!) The basketball popped a hole when it landed in the bougainvillea. :- (Bananas are still green. At this stage we discovered we can take the flower head off and make soup from it. Now is our chance since bananas certainly don't grow in Minnesota. Neither do lemons but once the leaves were all blown off we discovered there were a lot more lemons on the tree than we thought previously (leaves have since grown back nicely). Spikes don't appear to blow off no matter what. Everything but the Magnolia seem to be recovering nicely. The poor magnolia looks worse (bare) since the leaves that were damaged have all dropped off now. There is still green though, and where there is life, there is hope.

Thank you for the quotes, Mom. I'm familiar with this lady and I well believe she knew what she was talking about. I found this one appropriate for me just now, but I'm wondering - if I don't do this perfectly, does that mean I'm not utterly surrendered to Him? I guess it must. Pray for me Mom. It's a beautiful quote and I want this miracle to be true in my life.:

"It is wonderful what miracle God works in wills that are utterly surrendered to Him. He turns hard things into easy, and bitter things into sweet. It is not that He puts easy things in the place of hard, but He actually changes the hard thing into an easy one."

(Hannah Whitehall Smith)

"The Zone" report:

~Someone must have approached the main intersection near our house too fast, because now there are 2 new "speedbumps" (better known as "speedhumps" here). They're pretty brutal so we're hoping they wear down over time. I have been set straight on those though since when my sister was here, she suggested that perhaps they are actually *anti*-speed bumps. ::slaps forehead::

~The picture taking session at the Women's college was organized well enough. At least nobody fell apart until the photographer told the fully covered subjects to smile. We'll not know if they obeyed.

Thankfully they too have a sense of humor, since "our" faces are not covered up and show every grin.

~ There is a backhoe digging a large hole in the road outside our wall (again). While I realize there may be some logic in digging this hole every few month or so...none of us can quite see it. We **can** see the hole to avoid driving that direction though.

items of interest (to me anyway):

- Kim enjoys watching me scramble for the correct Arabic word when being grilled to discuss things... but I think what amuses her more is my propensity for getting just the wrong word. I hope you can sympathize however, when I explain to you that the word for mouse (the animal) is the same for the word for a computer's mouse. I simply got the wrong animal word (I used the word for elephant...which starts with the same arabic letter, but is a bit larger of a "mouse" to try to use...). And who knew that the word for bathroom just had a **bit** more emphasis on one sound than the word for pigeon. I don't have much use for a pigeon, whereas...

-Our verse for devotions one evening in mid Feb. = Psalm 119: ?. This was Stephen's rendition: "How can a young man keep his way through Europe?..."

I **really** wanted his answer to that but I'm afraid the chuckles around the room tipped him off. Thankfully he's a good sport. :-)

-We have met another neighbor family. They want to learn English (they actually specified "American" English) and laughed when we brought them cookies. The laugh was good natured in that they evidently have noticed that "Americans love cookies". (blush). Please pray for this budding relationship between families. They have only very young children, and a brand new baby since I started this letter. A boy named Rashid. Very darling.

- More evening meals than not, there are also neighbor children eating with us. One young boy calls me mom, and Mark-dad. What's one more, Mark always said :-)

- Trips into beautiful Abu Dhabi are much less looked forward to lately. More of a necessary foray into heavy traffic and no available parking. I will be glad to not have to anymore.

- Jonathan has his Fujairah drivers license. That means all manner of indulgences for me. Such as not having to cart people around, avoiding trips to the store for some things, hopefully not having to drive into Abu Dhabi....

- Kim has laryngitis. It's been an amazing few days :-D

That's probably enough for now. This month brings more visitors (Grandma and Grandpa) from the U.S. and the onslaught of the major part of the birthday season for us. The weather is in the very

comfortable 80's, bringing a return of the geckos, and if I'm lucky

- Hide quoted text -

I'll have the company of one or two in the kitchen in the evenings.

Much Love and Fond Affection,

~Pam.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?
I will offer to Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving." Psalm 116:12,17





