

My Dear Sweet Ladies,

It seems when it rains, it pours. We had Delvin and Christy Nolt here for a whole week, which was filled with fun and coffee. We visited the Dubai Mall, which is at the foot of the Burj...(sigh)Khalifa (formerly Burj Dubai). But I shall digress a moment to describe a favorite stopping place of ours right in Dubai. The Dubai Creek is a saltwater creek that runs through Dubai and ends in a large saltwater marsh. This marsh is home to 27,000 birds, many of them pink flamingos. Quite amazing. But back to the Dubai Mall - home to a very impressively massive saltwater aquarium that holds over 33,000 marine animals. A few days after Delvin and Christy left, this gigantic aquarium sprung a leak, closing down the mall for a few days. Don't worry Delvin and Christy – you've been cleared, and it's now sealed back up and the mall is open again.

Then the headline in today's paper was "The Annual rain nightmare". Yes it's been raining here but I suspect they aren't referring to my laundry drying in the dining room. Fujairah doesn't have the worst of it really. Sure some streets are underwater but the deepest areas are an hour away in Dubai and Sharjah. For 5 or 10 dirham, you can get a ride across the road in a shopping cart (offer good only while water in road lasts). I will cryptically explain the problem: This only happens once or at the most twice a year, so to change something (like the sewer system backups) that doesn't *show* most of the time, seems wasteful. So they have to vacuum roads and pump overflowing septic systems. Where I come from, a Mercedes is a luxury sedan. They surely have those here, but they also use that brand of vehicle for liquid tankers. Orange, green, white, blue Mercedes tanker trucks for sewage, drinking water, non-drinkable water, and something else I can't remember now. I forget which color goes with which type but I'm hoping *they* don't.

My niece-Christina, is here for a month. She is helping with school, cooking, and shopping 😊. Oh, and she plays games with the children, which we all appreciate. We took her to Abu Dhabi with us this trip so she got to see that lovely, way too crowded/busy city. Most of the day was spent in the flat of my friend from Iraq. She and I have been hammering out a series of lessons about the Bible (with a certain perspective and goal that I won't mention here). To do this with someone who was raised in the culture and religious background that she was, has been an amazing eye opener. To see things with her eyes has been so helpful in this. The language between English and Arabic in the Bible has rich insights that both her and I have been so excited about. We've been working on it over email, but to be together in person working on it was so much better. And even though I weary at a trip that is over 3 hours each way done all in a day – it's the between places that have such beautiful scenery and wonderful wildlife that makes it worth it. The car never leaves the earth, but my spirit can soar above and watch and think.

One of the reasons we begged my niece Christina, and Delvin and Christy to come at this time, was that Kim was due back from Bible school but we surely couldn't have her travel all that long way by herself. So our Kim is back and the piano is singing and so are we. Thanks to the three of you for helping her return.

-----

The Logic-Free-Zone report:

~When we go to the public beach near us, it can be completely empty (except for a few fisherman), but if another comes to the beach, they will often park \*right\* next to our car. And when the people get out, they stand right near us and look at the same beach section that we are on. (Now these aren't usually local people here, but those from the subcontinent). This different need for personal space never ceases to completely astound me.

-----

I will not keep you excessively this month. Not because I think you need to be gradually weaned off of me, but more because I have been vacillating between the knowledge that I'm either holding you hostage with my narcissism , or merely making sure you don't forget me. I think there was a better reason but it is escaping me just now.

I would like to encourage you to keep praying for our leaders in government, with all respect. We don't know God's will for our wonderful nation, but we do know He will not forget about His people (which is, obviously, a separate issue than what happens to our country).

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

[www.mjohnsonfamily.com/gulfnews](http://www.mjohnsonfamily.com/gulfnews)

My friend and I, talking over things.



Camel crossing



Desert fun



Flamingos in the Dubai salt marsh (city skyline in background)



Hay Bale market day



The consequence of rushing your parking effort



Border crossing at sunset (the vintage shot for this month. From 2007)



Arabian sunrise. No two sunrises are the same, yet it \*is\* the same sun here as it is there. I like that.

