

My Dear Sweet Ladies,

I had to get after the two youngest today, for sliding down the stairs in a Rubbermaid bin. Not too many of you have seen our current stairway because the house isn't even done, but we're living here and working on it, albeit slower since school began. But the stairway is not a carpeted one. It is a bunch of wooden beams – no backs. It seemed like a rather odd thing to be doing, but this isn't the first inexplicable thing they have thought of doing. Whenever I feel discouraged about prayer not being answered (or so I think anyway), I really ought to just look at how many prayers Jesus must be praying for my children because I don't even know what they're doing. We've had relatively few injuries in our family for how many of us there are (and how many different ideas of "fun" can be tossed around and tried).

But you didn't graciously bring this email up to read about my children's enigmatic behavior. Well, maybe you did but I'm done with that topic now.

I'm not sure what provoked me to write a ladies letter, when I have been around many of my dear sweet ladies quite a bit lately ☺ . I think it's the realization that there are many of you that I don't see, and who haven't even heard from me since my last issue of planet Pam. I guess I got quite attached to you all. And obviously I'm quite attached to myself ::rolls eyes:: .

We returned to a shell, that wasn't even finished on the outside – for a home. Not to complain, but I'll do it for mom and dad (who very graciously did NOT complain ever). We crowded them out of their house and ate their food for quite a long time after we got home. We didn't unpack our suitcases until.....a few weeks ago. Wait, I think there are a couple downstairs that have just given up on us. But finally we all have closets and rooms, and a lovely kitchen to make food in. We had a makeshift kitchen in the mud room but I kept tripping breakers since the electrician didn't expect me to be cooking beans and frying hamburgers at the same time *in the mud room*. I'm very glad to be cooking for real now. My point is that none of us have had much time or energy left over to think of people we left behind across the world or people we haven't seen here yet. There is a good and bad side to that I guess, but it is time to reconnect with whomever we can.

Our two oldest children, along with Robyn's husband Greg, came to visit for over a week, about a month ago. We just barely got the construction out of the living quarters but we made it and we all had a nice time. The summer was filled with, of course, construction, painting, staining, varnishing, ect... , but there were also church carry-ins, a joint meeting with Sparta at Farmer's Park, a few camping trips for the older children, and other interesting things besides trying to make this place habitable. And now it's already time to work on Christmas songs. Time flies whether you are having fun or not and I am again reminded to make every good possible use of it. When I look at how old I am, and how it seems like just not too long ago that I was the age of my children (even the 8 year old), I hope I've made good use of those years, months, days, hours, minutes. But I know that I have wasted time. At any rate, I find myself *over* 50 now, knowing there are things I have not done yet that I meant to do. Not the "before I die I have to do this" kind of things. Just sort of life goal kinds of things. I'm not even feeling old yet. Rather annoyingly young I'd say maybe. But enough about me, let's talk about me.

Next week I will take the children to visit for part of a week at my sister's house. I must love her a lot (and I do) because she no longer lives in the land of Kudzu and I'm still going. Kudzu and I go way back to ever since I got brave enough to drive the 16 hours with 9 children, to her former Mississippi home. It was then that I fell in love with the dinosaur topiaries they make down there with Kudzu. Entire neighborhoods covered with beautiful vine. The perfect houseplant I thought. Now I'm not too bad at propagating plants. I usually have (or know where to get) gibberellin, and I know how to use it. But I'm telling you, the Kudzu will not cooperate with intentional attempts at bringing it north of the mason-dixon line, even with promises of heat, food, plenty of water, carbon dioxide and attention. (p.s. if anyone gets some to grow in a pot for me I'd be forever grateful). (p.p.s. don't tell the dnr)

So you got through the pallid paragraphs above to the one that tried to express my gratitude for "listening" to me through my years in exi.... The middle east. And for actually being my dear sweet ladies whom I know I can count on as friends, however long it is until I see you. And if you see me, do what Rachel W. did - stopped me to tell me who she was (I did know, but it sure was nice to have her stop me. She's so quiet I may not have noticed). I know some of you get this as a forward from someone else – *only* because I didn't have your email address, not because you aren't a dear sweet lady too. Thanks for reading and I hope to see you around!

Much Love and Fond Affection,

~Pam.

"For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy." Psalm 61:3

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Jon taking Stephen up to help paint trim



Lauryl and the cow (and some guineas in the background)



Lilly with a bunch of pets



Red sky at morning (over the chicken barn)

