

TIM AND CRYSTAL
2346 GLENMONT CIRCLE APT. 210
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902
(301) 933-3459
E-MAIL: WILLIST@GWIS2.CIRC.GWU.EDU

Dear Family:

1 September 1996

Yeah, well we're here now. Most of the boxes are unpacked and we've got food in the refrigerator. We still have a huge stack of books on top of our one small bookcase and we don't have anywhere to sit down. We need more furniture. I've thought about having the missionaries over for dinner whenever the sign up sheet comes around in Relief Society, but I've decided I should wait until we've got somewhere for them to sit.

Today I went to orientation for my new job. I've been hired to work for an organization that provides before and after school care for kids whose parents work. I'll be working at Rosemont Elementary School. I'll have to be there at about 7:00 a.m. and we'll have kids filtering in at various times and send them off to class at 8:45. Then I'll be back in the afternoon. We have snack time, homework time, organized games and I'll be responsible for one hour-long activity a day. It sounds like it will be fun. It's something that I definitely think I can do without an inordinate amount of planning or stress. I'll be working about 25 to 30 hours a week. I'm also trying to get signed up to substitute teach so that I can do that one or two days a week. I would only be able to do it at Rosemont school because I wouldn't have time to get to and from any other schools.

Crystal began writing this letter 10 days ago. She wrote her piece, turned it over to me, and I dropped the ball. It might have something to do with the fact that my last two weekends have been consumed by two workshops that the B school brass elected to subject all the MBA students to. Two weekends ago, my Saturday was sacrificed to a 9 to 5 calculus workshop which was exceedingly boring to those of us who had taken calculus before, and immeasurably frustrating for those who hadn't. (How would you like to have an entire semester of calculus thrown at you in one day if you'd never seen any of it before?) Sounds pretty lame, huh? Oh, but it gets better. This past weekend, saw me on campus from 9 to 5 Friday, Saturday and Sunday for a communications workshop. I really can't judge the quality of the workshop itself because let's face it; 8 hours of any workshop for three days straight (especially when those three days are your weekend) will never get a thumbs up from this critic. So anyway this is the long way of saying that I am beginning my piece of this letter at 6:00 am on Wednesday, September 11. Graduate school is unrelenting. I am enrolled in classes in marketing, economics, accounting, statistics, information systems, and Organizational Management & Leadership. There's just a lot to do. Most of our assignments are group projects which is both good because you get to work with other people, and lousy because you have to work with other people.

Labor Day seems like a year ago (by the time we finally churn this letter out, maybe it will be.) But we spent it at the National Zoo. I hadn't been there since I was very little. It wasn't exactly how I remembered it, but it was fun - and free -- what more could you want? I had forgotten that Ling-Ling (Remember?--the female giant panda) died four years ago. Her empty cage now sits as a sort of shrine in her memory. Not to worry, Hsing-Hsing (the male) is still choking down the bamboo. Yum, fiber.

Hurricane Fran wreaked a certain degree of havoc on the Washington area. The damage here was minimal--branches down all over. The Potomac is flooding, so many parts of the city and northern Virginia are still under water. And as I have just heard it begin pouring out my window again, it doesn't look like things will get much better today. The flooding has scared many commuters who normally drive to work into taking the Metro, crowding some trains to the extent that there isn't even room to stand. This makes my 34 minute Metro commute seem a lot longer.

I realize it sounds like I'm whining a lot. Things really aren't all that bad. We're generally happy and hope you are too.

Look forward to seeing you

Jim + Crystal

TIM AND CRYSTAL
2048 CROMWELL CIRCLE APT 210
BETHESDA SPRING MD 20803
(301) 953-7499



Dear [Name],

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Tim & Crystal