

15 December 1998

Dear Andrew:

Everyone's getting geared up for Christmas. Of course, if things work out the way they always seem to, you won't receive this until Christmas is a distant memory. Incidentally--probably not entirely unrelated to the fact that I am writing this considerably later in the month than has become my custom. Sorry. As it stands, exactly 5 days of work, 2 final projects and 1 final exam stand between me and a two-week break from work and a 3 week break from school. Both respites will be welcome. I will try not to gloat however, as I am aware that you will have no such vacation periods. I'm sure you realize by now that it's better that way.

Mom and Dad tell me that you have been transferred. I forget where. I'm sure Mom knows, but she is far quicker with the information that you are now close enough to the mission office to get your mail more frequently than she is with the name of the locale. I hope that you have adjusted to the change and that things are good there.

A couple of things have happened since I wrote last--nothing earth-shattering, but you know...just stuff. Crystal, Hannah and I spent a weekend in the mountains of West Virginia with a friend of mine from work whose family has some property up there and his fiancée. It was a good time. One of the nice (and I guess unique--although I haven't lived in that many places) things about this area is the ability to travel from a major metropolitan area to the middle of absolutely nowhere in about an hour's time. In retrospect we didn't do all that much up there, but it was beautiful and a great opportunity to get away. Both Mike (my friend) and I got sick while there, cutting back on the activity -- getting sick on Saturdays has become an unfortunate habit for me lately -- heaven forbid I get sick on a day that would allow me to skip church or work or something.. I say we spent the weekend up there. Actually it was only Friday night and Saturday. We might have spent the entire weekend there were it not for Mike (not much of a church-goer himself) who fully expected Crystal and me to want to get back to civilization in time to attend our Sunday meetings. I have gained the reputation around the office (or at least in some office cliques) of "the religious Mormon guy." I get lots of questions -- just this morning, I got asked if Mormons were circumcised. I was asked this by one co-worker, who still isn't sure if I'm Christian--this in spite of being told a least a half-dozen times, *by other co-workers*, that I am and what the real name of the Church is, etc. This same guy was tracted out by two "Mormon Sisters" the other night. He reportedly informed them that he was Catholic, and then was surprised when they didn't immediately turn around and leave. He didn't let them in, opting rather for the lame-o "this isn't the best time" knowing full well that he has no intention of ever talking seriously, but just lacks the guts to tell them to beat it. Anyway, he asked me yesterday if he should let them in when they come back. Kind of a stupid question if you ask me. Anyway, I was giving him kind of a hard time about some work-related thing yesterday--mostly in jest although he *is* an idiot. He told me that if I didn't back off, he would make the Mormon sisters come into his house and look at his Christmas tree. As I mentioned earlier, there are some things he doesn't fully understand about us. I have been officially acknowledged by one co-worker as "the funniest Mormon she's ever met." This may have something to do with my sarcastic sense of humor, but might have more to do with my occasional use of certain words which, though included in any standard Bible, I usually choose to avoid in temple recommend interviews and other more general church conversation. What can I say? Pobody's nerfect.

Mom, Dad and Peter came down for Thanksgiving, which we spent with G&G Henrichsen, Rick and Coco at Coco's place. Dallas lost their Thanksgiving game to Minnesota (now 13-1). It was a nice day anyway, but a Dallas loss will make any Thanksgiving a happy one. The Cowboys stink this year, but at 8-6 are still the best team in the utterly pitiful NFC East. The whole NFC is so weak that even the 7-7 Cardinals control their own playoff destiny. Anyway, more sports news later. My Thanksgiving started with the annual White Oak Ward inactive member tackle football game at Springbrook high school. I think we lost. I don't really remember for sure, since I was knocked unconscious on the goal line. 15 or so minutes later, I was conclusively diagnosed by the Capitol Hill police officer who laid me out as having suffered a concussion. He was probably right since, like I said, I have very little recollection of the entire episode. I'm okay now though. The next day, while Mom and Grandma took Grandpa to the hospital (for a problem which I'm pretty sure has been resolved now) Dad, Peter, Crystal, Hannah and I journeyed up to the Great Falls of the

Potomac where we particularly enjoyed watching the crazy kayakers tempt death on the river. Kayakers seemed to take special pride in the fact that of the many, many drownings that had occurred in that part of the river, none of the victims had ever been a kayaker. The next day, one drowned.

In other sports news:

The Eagles have only the Bengals and Panthers to thank this year for not being the absolute lamest team in the history of professional sports. They're 3-11 (I think) The Redskins have gone on something of a tear, winning their last three in a row and 5 of their last 7. They have been, however, eliminated from playoff contention. This is a true feat in the crappy NFC, in which the Arizona Cardinals (at 7-7) control their own playoff destiny. I might have already mentioned the resurgence of the Atlanta Falcons who at 12-2 lead the 49ers by one game with two to play. The Broncos had their quest for an undefeated season ended by...are you ready?...the NEW YORK FOOTBALL GIANTS (now 6-8.) The Broncos are now 13-1. BYU made it to the WAC title game where they lost to Air Force. The mighty (unranked) Cougars will meet #11 (and undefeated) Tulane in the prestigious Peach Bowl on New Year's Eve. Next year, BYU is leaving the WAC to create a new conference with the seven other teams from the WAC that ... well, I don't want to say they're *good*, but they don't absolutely SUCK every single year--Teams like BYU, Utah, Air Force, Colorado State, San Diego State --- You know, teams NOT like Rice, SMU, TCU, etc. The Fiesta Bowl is the Nat'l Championship this year--Tennessee vs. Florida State. Going into the final weekend of the season, Tennessee, UCLA, and Kansas State were all undefeated, and there was some controversy as to which team would be left out of the title game. UCLA and Kansas State fixed that problem by both losing on the last day of the season. UCLA's loss meant they will in fact go to the Rose Bowl (now part of the "Bowl Championship Series"--what they're now calling the old "Alliance" - remember?) and Kansas State got super-screwed, and will play in the Alamo Bowl. The Flyers are in second place (behind the Devils.) The NBA lockout continues. The league recently canceled the All-Star game (it was going to be played in Philadelphia. Oh well.

Non-sports news:

You've probably already heard, but the House Judiciary Committee approved 4 articles of impeachment against President Clinton (involving perjury, obstruction of justice, and abuse of office by lying to the American people.) The full house now will have to vote on whether or not to impeach the President. If he is impeached, there will be a trial in the Senate, where a two-thirds vote will be necessary to remove him from office. Conventional wisdom has the following: Clinton will never resign. There's about a 50/50 shot of at least one impeachment article clearing the house. But, he'll never be convicted by the Senate. Long story short: Unless he resigns (which doesn't appear likely), Clinton will still be president when you come home. At this point, I don't really care what happens to him. I'm just happy that his "place in history" which he is so consumed with, will be tarnished forever. You wouldn't believe how much this is dominating the news (at least here in Washington.) It's like there's absolutely nothing else going on.

I sincerely hope that things are going smoothly for you and that your first Christmas away from home is/was pleasant. Mine was. It was comforting to know that the people I missed missed me too, and to know that I was in the place where the people who missed me wanted me to be. I hope you're doing your best to teach with the members and that converts have real friends before they're baptized. I'm becoming increasingly convinced that these are keys. Keep being good.

Friday, the 11th was Hannah's second birthday. Rick, Carla, Coco, Grandma and Grandpa came over to celebrate it in conjunction with Grandma's 82nd birthday (the same day.) Hannah got lots of cool toys. She has made considerable progress since last Christmas as her interest has evolved from the packaging to the present itself. She was especially excited to receive the HUGE red Radio Flyer wagon which comfortably seats a family of six. Everyone seems well and geared up for the big Henrichsen Christmas get together which this year will take place on New Years Eve, and I'm sure will go late into the night....That sound you just heard was my bleeping out Dad's pronouncing one of those Bible words we don't say at church.

Love you,
Tim, Crystal & the angel.