

Fall/Winter 2007

Dear FOOT Leader Alums,

I hope this finds you well. It was a glorious fall here in New Haven, but a strange one too, in that it has been unseasonably warm and so very summer-like. With California burning and Georgia running out of water, this heat thing is no longer that welcomed. But now we are into December and the mercury has finally plunged. We had a great run of FOOT trips again this August with lots of happy freshmen returning to the Old Campus. Check out page 62 in the Nov/Dec. 2007 *Yale Alumni Magazine*—Carrie Albert's comments in case you missed them! (Also check out page 48 about Steve, my mysterious husband many of you just caught a glimpse of all those years!) Our excitement was in the Catskills where we had a helicopter evacuation—our very first. The injury was minor, a twisted knee, but when the rescue squad members showed up and saw they had a 200 lb. boy to carry out, they called in the helicopter. It was extremely dramatic with the copter hovering over the site and dropping down the basket. They couldn't tell the leaders where they were sending the young lad; the ambulance on the ground would make that decision. So you can imagine that phone call I made to the parents; "Your son is fine, but we did evacuate him from the Catskills in a helicopter, and we don't know exactly where he is at the moment." The dad took it well; the mother was a bit stressed. It all worked out fine in the end. Support crew met him at the hospital after we did locate him and after he was discharged returned him to his FOOT group after they had hiked down to a roadhead.

We had a wonderful event this September. I took about 10 FOOT Leader Seniors who had been friends with Alex Capelluto, the Yale sophomore who died while riding his bike back from crew practice last year, to our place in Vermont—Sky Acres. We painted a new barn, and then celebrated Alex's spirit on top of our hill overlooking the Green Mountains. We then made a donation to the foundation Alex's parents have set up in his honor.

As you have gathered we are making some changes with the newsletter. I am posting this online to save paper and mailing costs. I hope you will still enjoy this as in the past. I have seen some changes since I started with FOOT including switching from electric typewriters to personal computers! Our first letters, etc. were on electric typewriters! The current FOOT Leaders are working hard to make FOOT more diverse and more affordable. So we might be calling upon you all to help with this. We thought one good idea might be to have some of you show up at various Yale Clubs or Yale gatherings around the country when interested high schoolers are deciding about Yale. You could do a plug about FOOT. We certainly could use help with fundraising for the Yale Capital Campaign that has the orientation programs earmarked for support. You might hear more about this in the future.

Another area that we should work on is perhaps getting volunteers to be class agents for a class or cluster of classes to keep in touch, gather news, help put this newsletter together. Del Berger Lapidoth suggested this and I think it is an excellent idea. For a while I felt as though I had a handle on you all—knew where you were and what you were up to—but now with over 600 FOOT Leader Alums I am getting a bit overwhelmed. I still love the personal touch and don't want to lose that.

Also—we do have our FOOT Leader Alum listserv. We use it sparingly, but it still is a good thing to have. If you want to sign up, you have to do it yourself. I cannot do it for you. To post to this list, send your email to: [yfoot-l@ayalists.yale.edu](mailto:yfoot-l@ayalists.yale.edu). For questions about how the list works, take a look at the FAQ at: [www.aya.yale.edu/lists/faq.htm](http://www.aya.yale.edu/lists/faq.htm). If you ever want to subscribe or unsubscribe or change your member options via email send a message to: [Yfoot-L request@ayalists.yale.edu](mailto:Yfoot-L request@ayalists.yale.edu). I think folks are still gun shy about it—please use it for job contacts or info, traveling requests, or moving to a new area and trying to locate other FOOT Leaders—or whatever is of general interest!

From now on, please go to our website: [www.yale.edu/foot/alumni](http://www.yale.edu/foot/alumni). This text will be there for you! If some of you sent in photos over the year, we are now posting them in a link. If you emailed them to me, I may have lost them because I have switched from an old imac to a dell and I couldn't transfer some of my emails. So—if you have photos you can now post them directly to this site so all FOOT alums can see! I hope you will do this—it's great to see all the faces and families!

You might also be aware that Yale is conducting a huge capital campaign and they actually are trying to raise some money for the orientation programs. This would help us immensely, especially for providing financial aid for students. We are trying once and for all to set up an endowment. So, please, if you get a call from a Yale agent about the campaign, think of FOOT! In addition, We still have in place the Jason Karpf Memorial Fund in memory of **Jason** '92. We also use these funds for scholarships to FOOT.

The format of the news is that for the most part I cut and paste your emails to me. So you can see the name, email address and class. Please excuse any grammatical/spelling errors. Some might be mine, but some might be yours!

So here is the news from the alums! One final point—there are a few of you that have sent in news over the course of the year—we have followed their journeys—Laura Grant '92, Claire Hirschmann '05, Danni Lovell '06—in lengthy emails. I have included their journals (I think I may have missed one or two) and I hope you all enjoy them as much as I have even if you don't know these people. In a way, you do know them as a FOOT Leader.

I had a wonderful afternoon with **Jamie Williams** '86 when he was in town for a talk he gave at the Forestry School. We headed out to the Union League and had a great time catching up. He is actually leaving the Nature Conservancy in Montana to move to Boulder, Colorado. Florence has always wanted to live in a college town where she is still free-lance writing. Jamie had lots of different job offers since he is a very hot item. I'm sure by now he is off and kicking with a new venture. Earlier he had a great 5 month sabbatical with lots of river trips including the San Juan (site of the 1995 FOOT reunion!) Their new address is 3176 Fourth St., Boulder, CO 80304. 303-449-2491.

**Liz Ablow** '87 sent a wonderful holiday card last winter. She and her family (hubby & 2 kids) are doing well in Seattle, Washington.

**Eve Vogel** <[evevogel@uoregon.edu](mailto:evevogel@uoregon.edu)> '87 is still out west in Oregon. She has a son named Ari, a boyfriend named Ken and a dog named Anja.-- "I'm just finishing my PhD this term, in Geography, focusing on a political history of the Columbia River and its relationship to the Pacific NW region. Two pubs are \*supposed\* to come out some time soon, but I haven't gotten final proofs yet so I'm not sure when."

**Patrick Whelan** <[notableoak@msn.com](mailto:notableoak@msn.com)> '88 "In the second week in August, I will be on a grand driving vacation with my family up from Florida to New England. I have been teaching history at Saint Stephen's in Bradenton. Next year will be my 20th."

**Ann Vileisis** '89 <[avileisis@yahoo.com](mailto:avileisis@yahoo.com)> "Dear Friends, I've got good news to share! My book is finally done. KITCHEN LITERACY: HOW WE LOST KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE FOOD COMES FROM AND WHY WE NEED TO GET IT BACK was just released a few weeks ago and is now out in bookstores. As many of you probably remember, it's a history that looks at how we got into the everyday situation of knowing so little about what we eat. For more info about the book, check out my website: [www.kitchenliteracy.org](http://www.kitchenliteracy.org) (there's even a YouTube video!) I feel remiss in being out of touch with so many of you, but the final push toward completing the book demanded all my energy. I am looking forward to touching base and catching up in a more personal way (talking on the phone/writing letters, etc.) after I finish my book tour in December.

I am currently on the road giving readings and slide presentations for groups and at bookstores. With warm regards! Ann"

**Ben and Betsy Saylor** '89 sent in their holiday cheers—a great photo of them and their two boys at the dunes at the northern tip of Denmark. They are still in Spearfish, South Dakota. Steve and I have visited them—a lovely place!

**Carrie Hatcher Kay** '89 sent in her best wishes at Valentine's Day: "We are doing well. Kids are tons of fun. Josh is half way through law school and I'm still loving my work. Much love, Carrie."

**Trex Proffitt** <[trexler.proffitt@fandm.edu](mailto:trexler.proffitt@fandm.edu)> '89 "I'm so glad FOOT continues to be the fantastic experience it always has been.. We are all well and enjoying the start of school again, and all that is implied in that."

**Paul Jahnige** '89 and wife Sally have a new son! They sent a wonderful holiday card with rhymes which is posted.

**Frank Levy** '89 sent a wonderful holiday newsletter/card. Here are excerpts from the captions that went with the photos—I think you can figure out what's happening: "Another year gone and what great memories. A Chinese New Year theme fourth birthday party, a few wonderful snowfalls and much enjoyed early morning sledding. A road trip from California to Iowa. Backyard deer, a great visit to Breckenridge to ski with good friends. Neighborhood Easter egg hunt, a 21 person Seder, dress up galore, dancing, the new deck and much backyard fun. Kerty starts a new job. A third birthday party to which kids arrive clean and leave covered with paint. Summer brings hot weather, a big 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party. An escape to San Juan Island, where new trails are discovered, scrumptious blackberries are eaten and art is created on the deck.

A visit to the giant slide at the Iowa State Fair upon return and summer is gone! A visit to Beijing for the first time in over 10 years and reunions with good friends. Fun on haystacks at Howell Tree Farm and playing Pippi Longstrump at home. Off to Carmel for Thanksgiving, capped off with a visit to Disneyland and the beach at Santa Monica.”

**Tiff Bingham Cunningham** '89 is in Connecticut with son and husband, Jim & Cameron.

**Moshe Usadi** [MoUsadi@aol.com](mailto:MoUsadi@aol.com) '89 “We have moved back to NC, this time the Charlotte area. We like it a lot and hope this will be our last move. Our address is 8613 Aberdeen Wood Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226. Sky Acres sounds great! I hope that we'll get to see it again! Take care, and happy New Year. Moshe”

**Juan Escarfuller** [felicisimo@yahoo.com](mailto:felicisimo@yahoo.com) '90 “This will probably get to you after your trip to the Dominican Republic (I went last winter) so I write to say I hope you enjoyed yourself and left the DR wanting to go back. It's my homeland, Santo Domingo for me and Moca for my spouse. Oh, this is Juan from FOOT '86-'89. Long time no see and first time I write. I am happy your love of adventure and life is taking you there. My own adventure finds me wrapping up a PhD in religion here in Nashville and wondering out loud how to relocate for work in the DR with my spouse and 3 little boys - with the conviction that the answer to how is yes. Family is still there and so much more calls to us lo' these many years. More later but for now I want to say FOOT still provides me stories and reflections and bliss and dreams that keep me in action and in love with my work and all around me. Peace and goodness to you... much merengue and platano too these days. Love.—Juan”

**Gillien Todd Taft** '90 sent in the birth announcement of her new twins! So she is now the mother of three: Charles, Will and Chloe.

**Theresa Thompson** [skeeko@earthlink.net](mailto:skeeko@earthlink.net) '90 “Just wanted to make sure you had my correct address in your records Theresa Thompson (at Yale, I was Teri Johnson --FOOT support crew '87, '88 with Tom Beierle and Michael Kahan)

624 Dixon Avenue, Asheboro, NC 27203. 336/629-1175”

And then she emailed later: “We are surprised but excited/delighted... our new Baby decided to come almost 3 weeks early. Just wanted to let everyone know I may be out of touch for a little while! Matthew Christopher is healthy and all seems to be going very well, and my experience at the freestanding birth center with nurse midwife and no drugs was even better than I had hoped. Please be in touch by email to let me know how you all are doing and what is happening in the outside world! And thank you to all of you for your encouragement and support! Love, Theresa”

**Baker Mallory** '91 and wife Jody are doing well with son Augustus (Gus). They were looking for land not too far from us in Sky Acres, Vermont. That would be terrific if it ever came to pass.

**Steve Bunyak** '91. “Happy 2007! Dylan Louise turned two on Jan. 5 and continues to surprise us each day. She's a big fan of the zoo, “noo-noos” (pasta) of all varieties, and time at local playgrounds. Sasha continues to deepen her practice of spine and pain medicine for CORE Orthopaedics. She's also starting a women's health program. Steve began teaching again in August with 16 third graders at The Gillispie School in La Jolla. He's been asked to be the assistant head of school next year, and is excited about the opportunity. We'd love to host you anytime, so fell invited! We didn't travel much last year, but made it to Sedona, AZ and the Grand Canyon in mid-December, enjoying two days of snowy GC wonder. Here's wishing you and yours a year of wonder.”

**Emel Wadhvani** '91 “This past year has brought many changes, so we have decided it is appropriate to venture into the form letter practice to update all of you on our lives. Most significantly, we now write from Sacramento, having moved here after eight long and happy years in Boston. What brought us here is a tenure-track position for Dan, at the University of the Pacific in nearby Stockton. We are living at the southern border of Sacramento. Our boys have made amazingly smooth transitions to their new school. Kenan is in a private Montessori elementary school and Adam is at its pre-school counterpart. Dan is happily settled into teaching and writing. The transition from a large university to a small liberal arts school has had its ups and downs and it would take much longer than the space we have here to dissect the pros and cons. In general, Dan is teaching 2-3 days per week and focuses on research and writing with the rest of his time. I have kept my job with my Boston firm and am telecommuting 20 hours a week, defending Boston-area municipalities in environmental and land-use matters. I will eventually take the California bar and transition to something here, but having enough time to hang out with the boys is priority for now. We miss the intensity and urbanity of the East Coast (not to mention our family and really good friends there) we are getting pretty used to the concept of ‘leisure.’ In general, life is a bit slower, there is more time to hang out as a family, and more opportunity to be outdoors.”

**Chris Roberts** [christopher.c.roberts@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.c.roberts@gmail.com) "Dear friends, As most of you know, my book, based on my PhD dissertation, has been imminent for some time now. You have all been wonderful with your encouragement. This experience has been very moving to me. Thank you all very, very much for your support. I am writing to announce that the book is now officially available. If you'd like to learn more about the book, or even buy a copy, attached is a flyer with more information, including a 40% discount offer. (That makes it a little cheaper than Amazon.) Even with the discount, the book is embarrassingly expensive. The publisher thinks this is a library book. But I think, given the subject matter especially, that the book could really be a service to certain people, not least Christians vexed by gay marriage debates. I am told that if I can just sell a few dozen copies to individuals, as opposed to libraries, then the publisher will almost certainly agree with me and go to paperback. Consequently, and to my further embarrassment, I am boldly trying to sell the hardback, so that I can get the paperback out and hopefully do some good. Consequently, please feel free (and even encouraged) to forward this flyer as far and wide as possible. Thank you again. All best wishes, Chris. PS Next week, Hannah, Martha and I are headed to Yorkshire for a month."

**Eric Steadman '91** "Our biggest news of course was the arrival of our second child, Cuthbert. He and Sonia have a wonderful relationship, visibly delighting in one another's presence. We are now firmly and happily established as a family of four. As you may recall from our letter last year, Cuthbert was diagnosed with a medical condition called an omphalocele. He was born on June 22, 2006 and within eleven days he had five surgeries. (To see pictures and read about Cuthbert's medical story, you can go to [carepages.com](http://carepages.com) and visit the "HenningerSteadman" CarePage.) He has been an extraordinary gift to all of us and we are exceedingly grateful.

Sonia (3) continues to grow and blossom, sharing with us her passion, focus, and delight in life. She began school in the fall of 2006, going one day a week to Barbara's Montessori School. This has also been a significant year for Rita in ministry. Serving as Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church while the Rector Stuart Kenworthy was in Iraq as a military chaplain brought her many challenges and rewards, as well as many opportunities to grow as a priest and pastor. This experience confirmed her sense of call to lead a parish, and after Stuart's return Rita began the search process for a position as Rector. I also had an important year vocationally. My experience at George Washington University confirmed my sense that teaching high school mathematics is the right place for me, and so I withdrew from the Ph.D. program there and received my M.A. in mathematics. I also realized how strongly I feel about helping at home with my own two children. So I continue to tutor high school mathematics students in the evening, but for the next several years I foresee taking care of the kids full time during the day. So there are many mysteries as we look to the rest of 2007. We will probably end up closer to some of you and further from others, but we hope to stay in touch with all of you. We could not have come through 2006 without the love and support of our friends and family, and so we send you all our love and gratitude especially on this Valentine's Day." An update is that I just received a change of address: Eric and family have moved to 21 Grove St., Bangor, Maine 04401!

**Karen O'Brien Dunn '91** sent a lovely holiday card with her hubby and three kids!

**Danielle Lapidoth** [lapidoth@webscribe.ch](mailto:lapidoth@webscribe.ch) '91 "Thank you (once again) for all your hard work. I know this is a major undertaking--there are so many of us, reporting so much news annually. That's a wonderful thing, but produces a huge paper/ electronic trail for you to track and record and publish. I am personally a fan of the paper letter, but if it represents significantly more work for you, you should definitely go to electronic, or look to farm out some of the work to a "secretary" the same way the class notes do. (Maybe one person per five graduation years, 82-87, 88-93 etc.) I am sure there is some solution that can keep this fabulous newsletter alive and kicking either on paper or electronically without placing the entire burden on you. Honestly, I do not think it is out of laziness that none of us have volunteered so far--it's just that we like the idea that "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose": Cilla ensconced on Science Hill making things run smoothly makes us feel secure! As if despite the crazy vagaries of life, the world is in good hands. I think you know what I mean, though I have not expressed it eloquently. At any rate know that I stand ready to do a stint for FOOT if the need is real. All the best, Del"

**Kate Hackett** [kfhackett@gmail.com](mailto:kfhackett@gmail.com) '91 "Friends, We have been TERRIBLY remiss about being in touch...but for good reason. We are moving to Delaware August 8th. This has been a REALLY long process for us and we apologize to those of you are hearing this for the first time. Ithaca has been WONDERFUL and is an incredibly difficult place to leave (as some of you know!). We got married here, bought our first house, had two kids, and frolicked here...and we leave both Biscuit and Stella here. Lots of beginnings and lots of endings we're working through. But we're also excited about our new opportunities

with The Nature Conservancy and the University of Delaware. So, I do hope we have the chance to be in touch personally with each of you sometime, but understand that even though this is an impersonal email, we are thinking of you and grateful to have each of you as friends and extended family. Our future contact info is:

Kent Messer and Kate Hackett, 123 Dickinson Lane, Wilmington, DE 19807 Much love, Kate”

**Jacob W Bowers** [jwbowers@umich.edu](mailto:jwbowers@umich.edu)’92 “Dear Friends, We all have a new friend. Her name is Marina Winfield Bowers- (Marina Ke-Ge Winfield Bowers-Wong). We’re calling her Mari. She arrived at 3:40pm, November 30th. At that time little Mari weighed 8 pounds, 2 oz and stretched 20 inches. Her vigorous wiggling and loud screaming spurred the pediatricians in attendance to give her one and five minute Apgar scores of 8 and 9 respectively ([http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apgar\\_score](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apgar_score)). We are all doing very well. You can see two pictures of Mari here: <http://web.mac.com/jakebowers/iWeb/Site/Mari.html> You’ll need this information to access the pictures: username: amigos. pword: pengyou. We hope you are all well. Best, Cara and Jake p.s.We’re moving to the political science dept at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. I hope you are well.”

**Louisa Castrodale** ’92 sends in her best from Anchorage Alaska! She is happy with hubby and her young son Sammy. 3221 Briar Cliff Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508 if you are ever in the neighborhood!

**Laura Grant** [ljgfeldis@yahoo.com](mailto:ljgfeldis@yahoo.com)’92 “Hey everyone! It's us checking in from the land of the Turks. We've been having a pretty good last few weeks, starting with a week of pure vacation in Turkey! It was our first time in the country, and we simply loved it. We headed to Istanbul with the 3 kids in tow on Azeri airlines (AZAL) and landed in Istanbul, where Kevin had orchestrated a taxi to meet us. That was fortunate, because Istanbul is an enormous city. I can't say enough about how kind and friendly the Turks are to our kids and our family. Never have we had an easier time getting through security and all that jazz at the airports. But I would not have wanted to try to flag a cab with 3 kids and 3 suitcases..... So we spent 3 days in Istanbul visiting the sights, mixed in of course with ice cream breaks and stops at parks. We did not partake of fine dining, even though we wanted to, due to the nature of the children :) We saw Topkapi palace, where there was a fine sabre collection and a huge diamond worn by the sultans - the kids loved that. And they loved balancing on the walls of the fountains and trying to find the hugest tree in the courtyard. We saw Aya Sophia, the underground cisterns, and the blue mosque. Went to the grand bazaar BRIEFLY (lots of breakable stuff there!) and got a very cool chess set for the boys, and a cool little box for taz to put his sword-wielding toy guy in. Took a boat ride up the Bosphorous to a huge castle/fortress which amazingly they let you climb around freely. The boys were in heaven there. They played soldier and tried to find all the spots where arrows were shot out at enemies, and hot oil may have been poured over the wall. All our efforts at raising pacifists are in question... We climbed up high on the walls, climbed on the cannons, and hid behind trees pretending to be ancient warriors. The next day we headed south to Antalya to see some roman ruins and hit the beaches. It was a good mix of sightseeing and playing. The weather was hot and we enjoyed the pool. Taz rode a camel, but Kadin took a pass on that. We went and picked pomegranates, and the boys ate probably 10 pomegranates each. We decided to sacrifice several shirts for the pure pleasure of enjoying the local fruit. One night we even let them chow their pomegranates in the bathtub, to avoid staining the entire hotel room! Last weekend we took a day trip out of Baku to see some ancient petroglyphs. It was amazing to get out of the city into the rocky hills and see the etchings. The kids loved climbing all over the rocks and playing caveman. Then we went to Shirvan national park and saw some of the last remaining caucas gazelles and even spotted a fox! There were gorgeous birds around the marshy area, too. Now, all this being said, there are many huge challenges living here. We are trying to keep chins up and look at all that is interesting and beautiful. However. Keep in mind that on the entire drive down to the petroglyphs, then further on to the park, litter and garbage is strewn EVERYWHERE - it's like nothing I've ever seen before. Literally people living next to piles of rotting slimy trash, and cows eating the trash. It is horrible. And the industrial pollution is ever apparent - oil-bearing train cars so covered with and dripping oil that you can't read the writing on the car. Completely covered. Pools and lakes of oil along the roads, out as far as you can see. Nasty looking water lapping up on filthy beaches. So I'm not trying to paint a purely rosy picture, just trying to look on the bright side! Otherwise a person could go nuts. Kiana is growing fast and is staring to eat rice cereal and applesauce and bananas. She LOVES her food! She grabs the spoon and sucks the food off, when she manages to hit her mouth with it! It's a messy affair. She is very happy and smiley, always ready to play and to be entertained by whoever is paying attention to her at the time. She's a big hit when we're out on trips! In Baku, she stays home a lot and hangs out in the yard where all the roses are in bloom, even napping out there. It's the place she sleeps best - sleep

is still a challenge for her. The boys are liking school, and we started a soccer team last Saturday for Kadin's age at school. It was a big hit with 6 & 7 year olds who showed up. Taz is riding his bike and climbing everything. His newest preoccupation is jumping from high places - how high can he go? He is so proud of his jumps! Kadin is starting to read and sneaking books into bed at night. They still love to play police and store together, and Taz makes pictures at school and brings them to Kadin in the evening. Kadin loves it and Taz relishes the attention from his big brother.

Gotta run for now. We miss you all and think of you every day! Love Laura & the crew”

Next from Laura: “Hello Everyone, Ok, it's been a long time since the last email, but finally I'm sitting down to do it! I had to come to the embassy to write so I would be away from all home distractions.... We've had a really busy last couple of months. This week, Kevin has an expert in from the states and the two of them have been doing training and consultations about setting up a financial intelligence unit in Azerbaijan. Passing a new law to create this unit will be a huge step toward gathering information on large transactions in this country. The weather has been fairly warm and extremely windy. Some days the wind is really cold, but usually it feels like fall. However, the wind is so strong that 2 nights ago it literally blew PAINT off of our house. There were paint chips all over the yard. Hopefully the roof is not next.

We are still meeting at school every Saturday morning to play soccer with the kids. Lots of kids come every week, and it really is fun for everyone. Sometimes it is so windy that they have to play inside. The soccer field is next to a construction site where a highrise is going up, and things like boards and boxes routinely get blown off the new building onto the field. So, when the wind is up, the game moves inside :) My cousin Greg sent us a great packet with ideas for coaches - drills and fun exercises to do with the kids. It's been great to have some new ideas to keep the kids focused! Some of them are getting so fast that it's a challenge to get everyone to have a chance to really play. The kids have a lot of fun together, and last week they all trooped over to our house for Kadin's birthday party after soccer. It was great to see them all piling into the gate together, dropping their soccer balls, and starting to play again in the courtyard. They are from all over the world - Japan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Turkey, UK, US, Poland and a few more countries. That aspect of the school is a great benefit to us all. Taz really loves to dress up in masks and capes to play his imaginary games. He loves to climb trees and the swing set, then jump off and pretend he is flying. He plays circus and lets me watch - sometimes I even get to fly on the trapeze with him. He plays that he is my dad and I have to listen to him, "ALL THE TIME." He made a book at school and like to read it to me. He loves having stories about pirates, dragons, and knights read to him. Animal stories, and anything about kids on adventures, are also very popular. Kadin is starting boy scouts at school, and has high hopes for learning bear safety and first aid. We'll see what's on the agenda for Baku Boy Scouts.... Both the boys love to play with their sister. Luckily for now they keep the fighting between themselves and save the cuddles for the baby. The love it when she giggles, which they are the best at making her do. Once they enter the room, Kiana only has eyes for them. When she starts to crawl, I'm sure she will be relentlessly following them everywhere. She loves to talk and sing, and a few days ago she really learned to clap. She had been clapping once or twice here and there, but now she has the sequence figured out and she claps when anyone sings to her. And bounces in place, like she's trying to dance. She also loves her bath, and will hardly let us take her out of it. She wiggles and squiggles until all you can do is to put her back in the water. Then she looks up and grins and starts to splash again. She loves to be outside in the yard, and she especially loves the swing. She sings and looks around at all the blowing leaves while she's swinging, and sometimes we get lucky enough to see a bird or a cat on the wall. She's start to eat more, and pears and apple/blueberry are her favorites. Last night the adults in the house went out to one of the old caravan saray restaurants in the old town. That is really fun because it reminds us of the ancient past of Baku. We sat in an old stone room with an arched ceiling, and there was a small fire lit in the corner. It was warm and cozy while we could hear the wind whipping outside. The walls are lined with old carpets, and we sat on benches covered with rugs and long round pillows. We were trying to get comfortable when one of our Azeri friends arrived and sat down in the perfect, natural posture on the bench - sitting and reclining slightly, while leaning with one elbow on the pillows. We all copied his posture and became much more comfortable right away :) Then the wine, beer, salads arrived. The eggplant dishes they make here are really amazing. They have one that is slices of eggplant rolled up with olive oil and walnut paste. It is just delicious. There's more, but this is enough for now! Gotta run to the bazaar before the wind blows all the veggies away :)

Laura, Kevin, Kadin, Taz and Kiana”

And still later from Laura: “Hi friends and family, Greetings from the Caspian! We hope spring is treating you well wherever you are. We had a great day weekend enjoying - finally - a day of full blue sky and sunshine. It has been gray and rainy (and of course windy) a lot lately, but yesterday we lucked out and had

a Sunday full of sun with no wind. A friend took us out of town and showed us a gorgeous beach about 1 1/2 hours by car north of Baku. It is a long stretch of beach, with a saltwater lagoon on one side of the beach and the open Caspian on the other side. There were several small fishing boats pulled up along the beach, and lots of room for the kids to run and play. A long soccer match began (kids v parents), we picniced, had races, took walks, and dug in the sand. It was a great relief to have found this place to enjoy a day in nature. We were also lucky enough to see a lot of gorgeous birds. Herons and pelicans were two of the highlights. We also saw a lot of falcon-type birds (not sure exactly what they were, but they were busy hunting for mice and rabbits) and a flock of small sea birds walking in the surf then taking off and skimming the edge of the water before finding a place well away from all the kids to land again. I found out from another friend that he knows a bird watching guide here so we will plan an outing with him one of these weekends soon.

At the end of the day as we were driving away, we saw a boat coming toward the beach so we stopped to watch. We talked to the group of 5 fishermen and looked at their catch - they had several hundred kilos of fish, each about a foot - 18in long. Apparently they go out fishing every day. They wondered if we had a Japanese motor we could sell them - they said one Japanese would be better than the 2 Russian ones they were using... they generously gave us several fish and we gave them an Alaskan baseball cap. It may be sighted on the Caspian this summer :)

On the way home we stopped for gas and saw one of the most dilapidated cars that actually ran that I have ever seen in my entire life. It was an old lada, of course, but it had no hood and the entire body was so rusted that it looked like it could literally fall apart at any moment. They filled it up with gas, then 2 guys pushed it toward the road to get it started, one jumped in with his friend who was behind the wheel, and they hit the road again. I wonder where they were headed, and when they might arrive. All in all it was a great day, and one that has been rare for us here. The rare part is being able to appreciate nature and have the kids run free and play. Now is the season to get out on the weekends, so I hope we will be able to send more stories of beautiful parts of this country that we have been able to see. Take care and please let us know how you are! We miss you all. Love Laura Kevin Kadin Taz and Kiana”

**Katie Michel** '93 is still in NYC with daughter Sadie and husband Adam. At the time of their card they were expecting a new baby—which I'm sure has arrived by now!

**Perry deValpine** '93 <[pdevalpine@gmail.com](mailto:pdevalpine@gmail.com)> With great joy, Perry, Rebecca & Luke welcome Eloise Ruth Whitney de Valpine. Born August 8, 2007, 9:20 am (2 weeks early) Long (21 inches) and light (5 lbs 9 oz). Mom, baby, dad, and big brother are all doing well.”

**Seth Hawkins** <[c-turtle@earthlink.net](mailto:c-turtle@earthlink.net)>'93 “One day after tornadoes and floods ripped through the Carolinas, Noah Collings Hawkins was born -- November 18 at 7:11PM. Luckily we had blue skies for his birthday itself... he's not quite ready for ark-building yet! He is 8 lbs 7 ozs, healthy and cheerful and absolutely wonderful. Ethan & Kai are excited about their new comrade-in-arms, Kelly made it all look easy, and Seth is in awe of the whole event. Pictures are available by clicking on the "View Photos" link below, or accessing <<http://www.kodakgallery.com/I.jsp?c=xpfsorv.430csdb7&x=1&y=og3ryq>><http://www.kodakgallery.com/I.jsp?c=xpfsorv.430csdb7&x=1&y=og3ryq> on your web browser.

Happy thanksgiving, seth, kelly, ethan, kai... and noah!”

**Burch & Rachelle LaPrade** '93 <[burch@jolesch.com](mailto:burch@jolesch.com)>'93 have sent in some great photos of their life in Iowa. They have 4 kids now! Three boys and finally a beautiful little girl!

“It's a Girl! Kendrick Maxim LaPrade. 7 lbs, 13 oz. 19. Born June 30th. Check out photos of Kendrick and her 3 brothers at: [http://www.lapradefamily.com/baby\\_kendrick/](http://www.lapradefamily.com/baby_kendrick/) We're all at home and doing well. Burch, Rachelle, Abbott, Forrest, Beckett, and Kendrick”

**Stephen Kahn** <[stephenakahn@comcast.net](mailto:stephenakahn@comcast.net)>'93 “a quick note to let you know that my contact info has changed: [stephenakahn@comcast.net](mailto:stephenakahn@comcast.net) - yes my middle initial, for alexander, has finally, due to necessity made an appearance in my email address. 510.717.4472 cell. 510.420.8420 home. 2743 Woolsey Street, Berkeley, CA 94705 Everything is new except for my cellphone number.”

**Scott Walsh** <[swalsh@environmentaldefense.org](mailto:swalsh@environmentaldefense.org)> '94 “Sasha and I are happy to announce that Charles Fairbanks Walsh entered the world today at 12:04 PM. Charlie weighed in at 9 pounds even, and measures 20 3/4 inches from head to toe. Sasha did great through the labor, and is doing very well now. Charlie has been a really great kid from the start - he's alert, easygoing, and, of course, very handsome with light brown hair and dark blue eyes. Our parents have gotten to meet Charlie already, and tomorrow we'll introduce Charlie to his big brother Leo. Much love, Scott and Sasha”

**Ted Deinard** '94 [theodore.b.deinard@citigroup.com](mailto:theodore.b.deinard@citigroup.com) "Thought you'd be interested to know that I've named to the board of the Chewonki Foundation. (a wonderful environmental education institution in Maine) Hope you're well. Best, Ted" (Ted is working in NYC at Citigroup.)

The Christmas card from Marty and **Charlie Hale** '94 had a new addition in the photo. I think Charlie got married to a lovely girl named Ann!

**Jay Readey** '94 sent a great long holiday newsletter. We have included it in the photo section! (If it's not there at this time, it will be soon!)

**Elizabeth Murdock** [emurdock@hotmail.com](mailto:emurdock@hotmail.com), '94 "Thanks so much for the baby FOOT t-shirt. Can't wait until it fits her. It is terrific to know that FOOT is going strong. You have built something tremendous. Thank you for keeping the connections going strong!! Lots of love -Elizabeth"

**Anne Weil** [anneweil@comcast.net](mailto:anneweil@comcast.net) '94 "Things here in Boulder are going well! My kids are now 18mos, 3yrs and 4yrs. We're excited to finally start enjoying the things we moved to Colorado for- think snowboarding, x-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, camping etc. I am working for a communications company writing environmental school curriculums for the City of Boulder so that the students here can learn the importance of clean water, stopping pollution, and public transportation, etc. It's lots of fun."

**Ben Madley** '94 Your recent newsletter was fantastic! Thank you very much for putting it together and sharing it will all of us. Barbara, Jacob, Eleanor and I are now happily nestled in the Berkeley hills after our four years in the Elm City. My dissertation research and Barbara's quilting are both going well, but we all miss Yale and New Haven. I hope that all's well with you! Although we're sad not to be in New Haven the upside is all of the Footies living in close proximity. This week we had dinner with Matt Eddy and his wife Sarah as well as Perry De Valpine and his wife Rebecca Whitney. Our new address is: Ben & Barbara Madley, 1442A Walnut Street, #416A, Berkeley, California 94709. If you are out his way please do look us up! I can easily round up a sizable collection of Footies out here!"

**Peter Braasch** [Peter.Braasch@hotmail.com](mailto:Peter.Braasch@hotmail.com) '94 "The quick update- I just finished my acupuncture training, passed the national boards and received my license. Was thrilled to move back to Pittsburgh from the craziness of SE Florida where I had been studying. Particularly happy because that meant I could actually live with my wife. We had been apart for the better part of 14 months. So, life is good. I am slowly putting together everything that I need to start seeing patients in July. Excited, nervous, a little crazed. As part of the fun of being back home, am thinking about trying to get the local FOOTies together. I know Christian Manders- but are there any other folk in the greater Pittsburgh area? Just out of curiosity- are there any other FOOTies that you know of who are working in acupuncture or any of the other alternative healing arts? I hope that things are good with you and you are looking forward to some fun and relaxing adventures this summer. Thanks again for all of your work to keep us in touch with one another."

**Philip Mundy** [ppmundy@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ppmundy@bigpond.net.au) '95 "I am very busy with work and the new little boy (Ben) born last February. Good to see that the FOOT program continues to flourish. On your point about the cost of sending out the annual news . . . what about giving people the opportunity to sign up for a .pdf version you'd send by email? This way at least you'd save something on postage -- I always cringe when I see how much it costs to send to Australia. Best, Phil"

**Josh Cott** '96 [joshcott@yahoo.com](mailto:joshcott@yahoo.com) "I've moved (only 2 miles away, though). My new address is: 610 Beach St, Ashland OR 97520. We're loving life on the west coast. Ashland is a terrific place. The dirt trails start a 1/3 of a mile from our (new) front door, and keep going all the way up to the Pacific Crest Trail. Noah is 19 months and keeping us busy and laughing. Hope all is well with you!"

I had a lovely visit with **Cat Balco** '97. She has finished the Yale Graduate Program in Art and now has a great teaching job at the University of Hartford. She informed me that Luke Hansen '97 is back in town practicing medicine at Yale-New Haven.

**Amelia Shaw**: [ameliashaw74@hotmail.com](mailto:ameliashaw74@hotmail.com) '98 "I just visited the website, and it really made me feel homesick! I am working now as a television producer for the UN peacekeeping forces in Port-au-Prince, Haiti... and to see all those photos of the lush green hills and valleys of New England made my stomach twist up with a longing for home, and with a nostalgia for all my wonderful memories from Yale, and all my FOOT trips... I really miss those things! So thank you so much for keeping in touch with us, it really added a special part to my day today, as the entire Yale FOOT experience added to my life! All the best, hugs and kisses. Amelia"

**Leah Angell Sievers** '97 is in Midlothian, Virginia with daughter Vivian and hubby Mike.

**Melissa Lee** '97 and husband Scott McGarvey have two sons now—Lucas and William. She wrote: "It's hard to believe it's been 10 years since the days of being Yale undergrads...we spent time with Brian



Ching and Leah Angell Sievers this springs. Scott and I are still in Chinle for the Indian Health Service, not sure yet what the future will hold, but we're looking for more adventures in the years to come!"

**Gretchen Boger** '98 sends her holiday cheer with husband Tom Lank and daughter Edith. She's still in Princeton. I believe has a PhD from there.

**Lucy Schaeffer** <lucyschaeffer@earthlink.net> '99 "My address is: 112 Saint Mark's Ave Apt 2B, Brooklyn NY 11217. Also, I got married this September! (2006) Xxo, Lucy"

**Lincoln Else** [lincoln@aya.yale.edu](mailto:lincoln@aya.yale.edu)'99 "My apologies for the mass email, and cheers to those I haven't spoke with in some time. As some of you know, I'll be leaving for Nepal in a few days to spend the month of January teaching with the Khumbu Climbing School. Thanks to Mt Everest and countless other breathtaking peaks, Nepal has long been one of the world's premier mountaineering destinations. Thousands of expedition teams have come to Nepal over the years, and almost all of them have depended at least in part on the local Nepali people. The Sherpa people of the Khumbu region (an area that includes many of Nepal's most famous peaks) are known around the world for their climbing ability, strength, and kindness. Unfortunately, though some of the best climbers on earth come from the Khumbu, many of the Nepali people working in the mountaineering and guiding industries lack the technical skills and experience to perform their jobs safely. That's where the Khumbu Climbing School comes in. The idea is to establish a vocational training program where Nepali people wishing to join in the guiding industry (one of the main sources of income in the Khumbu region) can learn the necessary skills to work safely. From basic climbing skills and language classes through advanced mountaineering techniques and emergency medical training, the school aims to give local Nepalis the knowledge needed to fill leadership roles in the industry that has blossomed in their own back yard. Each January a group of climbers volunteers to instruct the two week program in Phortse, one day's walk from Namche, "capital" of the Khumbu region. I have been lucky enough to spend a good deal of time in Nepal, and instructing with this school is a way I can give something back to the people from whom I have learned so much. It's almost a cliché at this point to expound the virtues of the Nepalis, but the cliché is true: they are an astoundingly strong, generous, and kind people. For more information about the school itself, the program's website is at <http://www.alexlowe.org/kcs.shtml>.

What this program is attempting to accomplish is sincerely good: good for the people of Nepal, good for the western tourists coming to their country, and good for the region as a whole. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have about the school and my involvement with it by email ([lincoln@aya.yale.edu](mailto:lincoln@aya.yale.edu)). I will be gone for most of January teaching with the 2006 KCS class but will be back in contact by early February. Stay tuned for images and stories from the experience. Namaste, Lincoln"

**Adam Rosenblatt** <[adam@hopefirstcomics.com](mailto:adam@hopefirstcomics.com)> '00 "I want to let you and my FOOT friends know that on May 24, 2007, my wife Amanda Levinson and I became the proud parents of a little boy, Leo Bialer Rose-Levin. He was born in Palo Alto, California, where I continue my graduate studies and teaching at Stanford (focusing on literature and political theory). In a funny coincidence, another Foot leader alum, **Dona Tversky** (now a med student at Stanford) was briefly in the delivery room while Amanda was in labor, and was kind enough to come visit us in the maternity ward soon after. She's expecting a baby in the next few weeks herself, and it's been nice to connect with her and make plans to get together as we both adjust to parenthood. Attached you will find a photo of Leo. All my best to the whole FOOT community. Yours, Adam"

**Boomie Aglietti** <[boomie@aya.yale.edu](mailto:boomie@aya.yale.edu)> '00 "I'm sorry it took me 5 months to respond to your last email! Anyhow, I hope all is well with you, and I just wanted to offer an embarrassingly belated suggestion regarding the FOOT newsletter (which you've probably already come up with on your own): why not make it an e-newsletter with pics as attachments (thereby eliminating all printing and mailing costs and being eco-friendly)? Apologies again for my tardiness!"

**Edward West** <[edwardwest@gmail.com](mailto:edwardwest@gmail.com)> '01 "Hi FOOT! Things for me have been going well, and I'm currently finishing up my 3rd semester of a 4 semester MBA program in "Sustainable Business Management." It's at a place called the "Presidio School of Management," started by Hunter Lovins and other Sustainability luminaries. It's been going really well, and I'm on track to be part of their 3rd graduating class; just 15 of us! But the program is growing fast--the class just one semester behind us has 45 people in it! I bet there is much overlap in the FOOT community and the Sustainable Business community-- and we need lots more smart people to enter this field-- please consider it! So spread the word! Feel free to email me at [ewest@presidiomba.org](mailto:ewest@presidiomba.org), or check out the website at [www.presidiomba.org](http://www.presidiomba.org)

if you have questions. I'll be happy to put in a good word with the admissions officer. :) I also got the opportunity to attend Catherine Price's recent Birthday Party in Berkeley; Josh Berezin and Elizabeth Goldstein were also in attendance. There was much pie and laughter. After school is out, I and a couple other friends are starting a cool sustainable business! More info on that as it arises. I hope this finds you all well, Love, Edward"

**Eric Shelov** [eshelov@gmail.com](mailto:eshelov@gmail.com) '01 "I realized I owe you an update on another FOOT couple, feel free to file it away for the 2007 newsletter. It's a bit belated, but Emily Hyde '02 and I got engaged this past spring, with a wedding date set in stone for 2008ish. Currently, we both live in Philadelphia. I am midway through my first year of residency in pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, while Emily is in her first year of an English PhD at Princeton. I'm sure somebody's mentioned this to you, but I think a good halfway idea with the newsletter might be to put it together as a .pdf file and email it to the list. That way you get the personal delivery touch without all the postage nonsense. Hope all's well in New Haven, we'll give you a holler if we are passing through. Eric"

**Sarah Ichioka** [sarah.ichioka@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.ichioka@gmail.com)'01 "I'm entering Year Five in London, and have by this time been completely won over by the (sometimes subtle) charms of this metropolis-of-villages. I'm still working in the interstices of between architecture and planning, trying to enhance our cities as remarkable and attractive places to live and work so that fewer of us will feel the need to sprawl out into the sub- and exurbs (and thus preserve more unspoiled wild spaces for all those peachy-cheeked FOOT alum-babies to explore when they grow up). I cherished the company of the magnificent Emilie Hitch here for the past two years (although she has recently moved back to Minnesota). Em and I met my former co-social chair Nathan Vasquez for a nice sunny pint just after he moved to London this summer. I don't think I have any other particular gossip to report to headquarters. Don't underestimate the amount of traffic a web-based alumni newsletter would get. Not only would an e-newsletter be cheaper (and less work for you), but it would also save some trees, which from a FOOT perspective is surely a desirable side effect. All the best, Sarah"

**Eliza Halsey** '01 had a baby this year. She wrote: "Saidam is growing so fast and is quite a delight. She smiles and coos and loves to be held!"

**Ian Cheney** [iancheney@mac.com](mailto:iancheney@mac.com) '02 "Hope this finds you well! I know this is late notice, and you may have already heard, but our film "King Corn" is coming to Yale tomorrow (Weds) for a screening at the Whitney Humanities Center. We're having a great spring bringing the film to festivals, and will be broadcast nationally on PBS this fall -- but in the meantime I'm very excited to bring the film back to campus. Best Ian" I went to the screening which was terrific and bought my own copy of King Corn. Saw **Curt Ellis** too!

And later: "We've taken our DVD ordering offline for a little while, because we're premiering the film theatrically this fall -- starting in NYC on October 12th -- but DVDs should be available not too long after that in time for the holidays... Great to hear from you, and glad that FOOT and Harvest are doing well. That's just wonderful. I just finished another film about a green building in Boston and would love to send it your way... Best, Ian" I heard Ian and Curt interviewed on the radio about all this. Very exciting!!

**Peter Shattuck** '03 is in Dublin, Ireland. Visitors are welcome! [ciatuci@yahoo.com](mailto:ciatuci@yahoo.com).

**Julianna Bentes** [julianna.bentes@yale.edu](mailto:julianna.bentes@yale.edu) '04 "I've moved back to New Haven for law school. Julianna"

**Amy Kohout** [amy.kohout@gmail.com](mailto:amy.kohout@gmail.com) '04 "I had an absolutely fantastic year in Vientiane, Laos. It was extremely hard to leave but I know that I've established some friendships that can handle the distance. My mom and I took a road trip in my pretty (new-to-me) car from Buffalo to Albuquerque, New Mexico and I'm just about settled into my tiny house in the South Valley. I'm a few blocks from the Rio Grande, and I have a turquoise door! You know what this is leading up to -- new contact info! (menleeo) Snail mail: Amy Kohout, 1007 B Miramon Ave SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105" Amy and I had a wonderful visit when she was in town.

More from Amy: "I am now the assistant director of the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation, a magical non-profit that runs expeditions for 10-19 year olds in the summers and does some programming for independent schools during the year. We manage/own 540 acre property in the Zuni Mountains here in New Mexico, and we're embarking on an ecological restoration project that will involve encouraging our cottonwoods and thinning our ponderosa pine forests. The "Gulch," as we call it, keeps me pretty busy, as during the year it is just me and the director. Part of my job is to travel around the country visiting our alumni families, giving slideshow gatherings in their homes and meeting with prospective families in their community- pretty fun!

I know I wouldn't be out here in NM working for the Gulch if I hadn't participated in FOOT. **Maddy Fleisher** (04), who I met on my FOOT trip in the fall of 2000, came out here for Thanksgiving and we went camping for the weekend- it was a bit cold, but a wonderful trip."

**Carrie Coughlin** [coughlincc@gmail.com](mailto:coughlincc@gmail.com) '05 "I am a first year med student at Washington University right now. When applicants come to WashU, they are matched with first year students, who meet the applicants the night before interviews and answer questions. Most recently, I was paired with someone whose name sounded a little familiar. While talking, we discovered we both attended Yale, were History majors, and were FOOT leaders. **Josh Berezin** graduated in 2001, but, especially since he was Poohba, I know I'd come across his name before (and he knew my leaders, of course). We had a great time talking. Ever on the lookout for FOOTie fun, Carrie."

**Claire Hirschmann** [claire.hirschmann@gmail.com](mailto:claire.hirschmann@gmail.com) '05 Claire has been sending in long newsletters all year. She has been in Africa and South America teaching and traveling for the Traveling School. The letters are wonderful journeys.

"Sawubona, as they (and now I) say in Zulu. South Africa and I have become friends. I am, in fact, enamored of it. A few days ago, our whole crew – sixteen girls, four teachers – visited a local township school (all black). We were adored. The digital camera is an incredible invention for cutting through awkward interactions – snap a picture, pull it up on the screen, the shyness instantly dissolves in peals of embarrassed and enthralled laughter, and the conversation can begin. Somewhere in one of these interactions, I somehow managed to inadvertently and irreversibly convey that Beyonce and I are very close friends. The school rather phenomenally had computers, and we were sitting with them in class (an amazing sight in itself, given that some fifty kids were attempting to learn on eight computers – they all clustered around the machines in varying degrees of comprehension: a few playing solitaire, a few aimlessly clicking a willful mouse, a group of cool boys – backwards hats, popped uniform collars, synchronized badass looks on their faces – staring, enthralled, at the Golddigger music video), when the power suddenly, though given their unimpressed response, predictably, cut. The teacher rapidly rallied them into singing for us the deep velvety South African national anthem. The girls sat in the front, gorgeously and diligently singing, while the nonchalant boys, slouched in the back, came in with a low, rich harmony. Our reply of The Star Spangled Banner, especially the screeching "rocket's red glare" was woefully inadequate. So we added a rendition of Lean on Me... and the party began. We sang, they sang, they danced, we danced, they recited Mandela speeches and AIDS discourses and American rap. We responded with Ain't No Mountain High Enough and I Will Survive. I even found myself performing a duet of Total Eclipse of the Heart. I believe someone has it on video tape. I will find it and burn it. We left revered. It was everyone's favorite day. There are a few things I must tell you about this country. Diet Coke cans are slightly heavier than at home, so there always seems to be one last impossible sip at the bottom. To marry, African men still must pay their wives' families in cows. Skipping rocks is universal. Women walk down the highways carrying boxes and buckets on their heads. Having a vulture rip raw mean from your hand is terrifying. Petting a baby hippo is not. Handshakes have three distinct parts. Rappelling is called abseiling. It is customary to eat large wet meals with your hands and somehow manage to get nothing on your hands. Avocado packing plants distribute countless boxes of free avocados to exuberant American girls. Baboons in heat are a distinctly unpleasant sight. A large, 25-person overland safari truck goes nowhere unnoticed. The mustard, like the air, is sweet. Sala kahle, stay well, Claire

There are, I have discovered, some incongruencies in South African culture. Please envision: a picturesque, pastoral vista of a hilly African landscape, complete with wandering cows, scrawny little chickens and laundry lines tickled by the occasional breeze. Surely you'll include red dirt paths, dark women carrying large bundles on their heads, and mud huts (circular, about 30 feet in diameter, with grass roofs and colorful -- usually turquoise -- geometric designs covering the brown walls). Now, please add to this picture a satellite dish. Yes, a satellite dish. Attached to almost every mud hut in sight. No driveways, no cars, but TVs. Oh, yes. TVs. Okay, clear your mind. Picture a traditional Zulu wedding. The bride is topless, her face is covered, and she wears a long, flowing skirt. The groom dons the full skins of a leopard and a zebra, and has a furry ruff wrapped around his head. He carries a sharpened spear, wears several ornate bracelets, and never smiles. Now look down. Each is shod with brand new, shiny white Nikes. And several of the guests are pulling out cell phones to inform others of the wedding's locale. It's rather disconcerting. But let's get back to the wedding for a second. We first met an old, wailing woman whose

gesticulations included those of breast-feeding (pinching her breast with gusto), pregnancy (large arm sweeps around a prominent, round belly) and the actual birth (this I think you can imagine), all followed by loving, shrieking glances and the groom. Undoubtedly his mother. Other snapshots: men carrying skin-covered shields and spears (often in the form of an umbrella), chanting and banging on their shields with said umbrellas; the groom sitting down in front of all his friends, flipping up the butt flap of his leopard skin to moon the entire community (followed by hysterical laughing and the Zulu equivalent of cat calls); women with Coke can lids strung around their ankles, feet banging away on the ground in sudden, jerky steps; the groom chasing the bride around a large field, trying to pull money off her hat, while those guests not busily texting on their cell-phones bang drums, whistle, and hoot.

A. Maz. Ing.

Other adventures of the past month: backpacking through the Drakensberg Mountains (while carrying a 25-pound tank of propane because no other method of lighting a stove actually seems to work out here...talk about exciting); visiting an African Baptist church where the speakers were at maximum decibel level, the preaching in English with a convoluted and simultaneous Zulu translation, and the singing still gorgeous; teaching a history class where we pretended to be Zulu warriors bravely and fatally attacking an Afrikaaner wagon circle; visiting an African orphanage where several of the kids managed to obtain our cameras and spent the next hour shriekingly snapping shots of themselves and, more often, the floor; being soaked by a huge and unexpected wave on my first entrance into the Indian Ocean; traveling down the western coast from waterless hostel to waterless hostel, becoming increasingly dirty and decreasingly hydrated; attempting to learn how to kite board, realizing it requires at least four lessons and \$500, and settling instead for surfing off the South African coast (rough life, isn't it?); not being attacked by the ubiquitous sharks... Etcetera. I'm loving it. Obviously. (Or "obvi", as the abbreviation-obsessed girls -- and, I'll admit it, I -- would say...) Sala kahle, Claire

Hello, friends. So I would like to explain to you how exactly it is that we are traveling around this country. First, there are twenty of us. Some of you may be imagining a caravan of little rental cars following each other through the red dirt roads of South Africa, amusedly stopping for the ornery cows that frequently wander into our path; pulling large, frustrated U-turns in grocery store parking lots; blending in on the freeways with the other thousands of cars driving around. Negative. Cars are not our style. Nor are mini-buses, vans, or other such minute methods of transportation. Oh, no. We are traveling in style in a large overland truck. Allow me to explain this phenomenon. First, imagine a truck. Not quite as big as a semi, but close. One of those large U-Haul trucks, perhaps, or those blank white ones you always see on the freeway and wonder about their contents. Now, instead of the standard merchandise-carrying box on the back, envision something like a tour bus. But higher. And more rugged. This thing goes everywhere (and, when it gets stuck, we all have to disembark and cheer for our irascible driver, who swears under his breath and revs the engine). It's twenty-four feet tall (we had to actually dismantle an entrance the other day to get into the caravan park), carries 25 passengers, and has a kitchen that pulls out of the side. Along with all that, it's bright blue and invariably has somewhere between three and twenty female heads sticking out its windows. No, no. We do not blend. I've become obsessed with teaching the girls a Word of the Day (yelled to them over the rumble of the road), so I've started reading the dictionary. So far, we've had such linguistic gems as obsequious, quixotic, indomitable, didactic, and cacophony. If you have any suggestions, send them my way. I'm loving this. Likewise, I'm doing a Poem of the Day from Garrison Kiehl's Good Poems. It is unfortunately incomplete, so send those my way, too. We teachers are getting a very anticipated, very deserved (we like to think) break: the girls are spending the next ten days in homestays, and we just get to tour the town. We've spent the majority of the day at a music store, asking the very accommodating if not slightly overwhelmed Music Information Dude (not his official title) about good South African music. Very helpful. Bad for the budget. Alright. Thanks for tuning in. Eagerly anticipating poems and words (and definitions), Claireabelle

Friends. I write to you from our latest port (literally, as it happens: I'm on the eastern shores of the Atlantic) of Swakopmund, Namibia. True to African form, this place is...well...let me just describe. To begin, the journey here: you know those pictures you always see of Africa with the blowing romantic grasses and the lone tree silhouetted against either a blindingly blue sky or a ridiculously multicolored sunset? Right. Imagine that scene for minutes...hours...days. (Imagine the havoc caused when our over-sized U-Haul truck stops for a toilet break and the lone tree is a good mile away. Mmm. Yep. A lot of bare bums, one hundred percent visible.) So we've been driving through the shimmering heat and lone and level sands for a good three days. All of a sudden, this mirage of a Bavarian town rises OUT OF NOWHERE. German

beyond imagination. Complete with incredible bakeries, large men who unquestionably wear minute Speedos at the beach, and that weird double-s thing on all the street signs.

(Brief historical note -- history, is, after all, my current forte -- when the white man's burden and the mad rush of imperialism hit Europe, Germany, a little late in the game, came storming down the western coast of Africa. They passed lands already claimed by the French, British, Belgians, Spanish, and Portuguese and found themselves in what remained: a near-uninhabitable desert. Unperturbed, they claimed it and started making it into a German colony. Hence the Bavarian architecture.)

A brief checklist of adrenaline-inducing activities of the past few weeks:

1. Zip-lining through the canopy of a huge and ancient forest. Don't worry. I'm not destroying the woodlands: not one single nail was used in the construction of the lines. This initially made me nervous. Thank God for friction.
2. Receiving the "bone-head" award from the girls for diving into a muddy river with my glasses on. My glasses fell off. I spent fifteen minutes swimming around (blindly) patting the obscured river bottom. Eventually found them. Felt like an idiot. Looked like an idiot. Am an idiot.
3. Sand-sledding down some crazy sand dunes. "Sledding" is a bit of a hyperbole. The company gave us 3' x 4' cuts of pressboard, told us to stay still, and pushed us down. Fun with a capital F. Sandy with a capital S. I went 74 km/hr. Don't know what that is in miles. Don't care. Sounds more hardcore in kilometers.
4. Sky-diving. (What? Yep. Skydiving. Had absolutely no instruction before I threw myself out of the plane. Granted, there was my tandem buddy attached to me, but the intro to the jump pretty much consisted of me showing up to this random hangar at the end of this random dirt road, and Gerry, the aforementioned tandem buddy, telling me to arch my back when we jumped, and we'd figure out the rest once in the plane. "The rest", as it happens, consisted of him screaming into my ear incomprehensible commands, a few energetic thumps on the altimeter on his wrist, and then a distinct, "We'll talk about the landing once I open the canopy. Just put your feet out of the plane when you're ready..." Yep. 9,000 feet above solid ground, I put my feet out of the open side of the plane (...hi. That was weird. The side of the plane was OPEN), and we plummeted. Pretty freaking amazing. Plus, I wanted a cool story. Definitely got it. P.S. I thought my parents would flip out when I told them. My mom's response? "Hmm. Interesting. I've been thinking about bungee-jumping over Victoria Falls." Whaaaat? Yes. That's what she said.)

I also feel the compulsion to tell you about another crazy German town we've visited. In the early-1900s, someone found diamonds about thirty miles from the Atlantic coast -- again, in the middle of the desert -- and a tiny mining town rose out of the sand. Germans of all classes rushed to the site and erected these massive houses -- they even shipped in a game hall (complete with an opera stage and bowling alley), peice by peice, from the homeland. This town was crazy. They had a hospital, a post-office, an intra-town train system, and an ice-maker. In the 1920s. In the desert. An ice-maker. Absurd. Anyways, less than forty years later, better diamonds were found farther south, and the place was left. Abandoned. Deserted. And now the desert is devouring the houses. There are rooms half-full of sand in houses that rise out of and are entirely supported by the dunes. During Literature class, which the girls had in one of the emptier rooms, I (rather imperfectly) recited Ozymandias to them. Very rusty. Very appropriate.

So, I feel it is my social responsibility to describe this place in terms other than rock climbing, hiking, and sky-diving. Being the South African History teacher is a rather intimidating position. When I tell South Africans what I do, they consistently challenge me to tell them something they don't know. That's fun. I doubt that I've ever managed to enlighten anyone on historical references obscure or otherwise, but the conversations thus engendered are incredible. Even after perusing the dictionary, I'm struggling to find a word to describe this country. Apartheid officially ended in 1990, and since then South Africa has been in turmoil and reconstruction.

The poverty is unfathomable. We spent a week in Cape Town working at a squatter's camp, mainly playing with kids (many of them AIDS orphans, many of them with rotting teeth, many of them from families so poor or so large or so both that no one pays the children any attention). There are enormous problems with drugs and gangs and violence and crime, and the kids get sucked into it at an age when most Americans are still watching Sesame Street.

There is also, however, an incredible hope in this country. It is a sense that South Africa is constantly improving, that the ugly and brutal past is slowly giving way to a successful and beautiful future. We went on a rather untraditional tour of Cape Town in which we saw graffiti murals that begged for an end to xenophobia, listened to hip-hop that spoke of regeneration, and spent time with a group of black South Africans who perform anti-racism skits in schools.

Four girls and I actually got to join these actors/dancers/rappers. We went to a colored school (during apartheid, there were four racial designations: whites, blacks, indians, and coloreds. Coloreds are basically the mixed descendents of any combination of the previous three races...people still identify with these categorizations...) -- apparently, two black teachers had just started working at this school, and the students had no respect for them because they were black. So we Americans and the four actors/dancers/rappers performed a skit about the connection between all races -- the basic message was that we are all united because we are all human. I can't really explain the skit because it was all in Afrikaans, and we just stood around playing the guys' girlfriends...but we screamed when necessary and very dramatically ran off the stage when prompted. It was probably one of the most incredible things I've ever done. We got some of the students to come on stage and talk about what it's like to be left out, and what it means to be proud of who you are. In. Cred. I. Ble. We left the stage after getting the entire auditorium of about 200 kids to sing Ain't No Mountain High Enough. (It's pretty much become our theme song.)

So that's where I am, that's what I'm doing. Loving life. Boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away, Claireabelle

Well, friends. I'm still reeling. Probably the effects of the weird mosquito-borne(non-malarial) tropical virus my dad thinks I picked up in Malawi, but perhaps some small part of it has something to do with the fact that I just returned from four incredible months in Africa. I don't even know how to write about it anymore. Do I mention how a month ago in this crazy place in Botswana, eighteen of the twenty of us got violently, dysfunctionally sick (picture a dusty campground, twelve trips to the hospital, girls in various states of misery with faces in various shades of green deliriously limping to the bathroom)? Or that we visited an aboriginal village in Namibia and were floored by the sparseness, our awkwardness, their kindness, the boredom, and the ingenuity of a guitar with four intact strings played beautifully? Or the clatter of a market full of tall, skinny, carved giraffes; obsequious salesmen who offer trades for hairbands, bracelets, broken cellphones, and Nalgens; embarrassingly pushy American tourists; and silky wooden bowls? Or that on our last day, we went white water rafting down the mighty Zambezi and flipped about eight times (and swam within thirty feet of a baby crocodile)? Do I just skip to the Dickensian turn of events, in which a great aunt of mine died without a will, my dad unexpectedly inherited, and my parents decided to meet me in Zambia spend the money on a luxury African safari? Too many good stories. So, I'm back in my room that hasn't changed since high school (read: Leonardo di Caprio pictures all over my door). I have donned every piece of clothing I forgot I owned. I have finished grading my last set of papers. I am reveling in being cold for the first time in four months. I have yet to unpack my bag. My sleep schedule is utterly whacked out.

I would like to be able to reflect coherently on the past four months, give an eloquent description of what I've learned, how I've changed, what the current state of Africa is. I can't. The best I can do is say this: I am in love with Africa. I love the baby elephants, the acacia tortillis trees, the opulent and cruel smell of sunset (like crushed bugs and honey), the way that African languages sound like music, the easy pace of everything, the sense that the area is slowly and gently mending. And I am in love with what I'm doing. I love using rather unacademic words to explain the stories of history (I actually used the word "mo-fo" in class once), watching these high schoolers see extreme poverty for the first time, teasing them about their hot surfing instructor, helping them figure themselves out, singing madly with them out the truck windows Aladdin's "A Whole New World", being called "Teach", seeing them write the newly-learned word "sesquipedalian" in the register at the top of a Namibian mountain, believing that I might have actually taught them something. So. That's what I can say. And, in other shriek-inducing news, I just found out that I get to do the same thing all over again. But this time in South America. Starting February. Mind-blowing. Globe trottingly yours, Claire Bear

Well, friends. I'm off. Off to the land of Incas and giant tortoises, orchids and Carnival, teeming markets and edible guinea pigs, remnants of Spanish imperialism and enduring indigenous culture, beaks of finches and jagged Andean peaks, famous rain-forests and bananas. In short, I'm headed to South America. Indeed. For the next four months, I'll be adventuring around Ecuador, Peru, and potentially Bolivia (this uncertainty comes from the fact that the Bolivian government just announced that Americans need visas to enter the country...but no one -- American or Bolivian -- is quite sure exactly HOW we go about obtaining said visas. So that's a maybe for now). Pretty freaking amazing. I'm still working with the Traveling School, still teaching history, still not quite sure how this is my life. How's my Spanish? Non-existent. So that should be fun. Peripatetically yours, Claire Bear

Well, amigos. I'm sitting in an Ecuadorian internet cafe, trying to decipher the punctuation of the keyboard, and listening to the Spanish version of "Unbreak My Heart" (which, I can say with some certainty, will

never enter my cheesy pop song singing repertoire). I have just emerged from two weeks of exploration in the Amazonian jungle. We drove into the basin on this ridiculously winding and gravel road on which our bus was never more than three feet from the car ahead and two feet from the steep Andean precipice to our right. And then we descended into the rainforest. THE rainforest. The one everyone always talks about saving. THAT rainforest. Walking into the rainforest feels like stepping into a bathroom in which someone has just recently taken a shower. Though a thick stillness blankets the area, silence is a non-entity: constant sounds of the river, the crickets (deafening, when you start to listen to them), the squawking parrots, and other indecipherables (rattles and hums, buzzes and creaks, squeals) perpetually echo through the gargantuan trees (of which there are so many species that it is literally impossible to enumerate them). Insects that imitate leaves crouch on branches; thick spiderwebs that look like blankets showing the flexibility of time, space, and matter stretch between plants. A brief list of our adventures in this lush greenery: we explored caves once occupied by indigenous warriors who battled the Spanish conquistadores; smeared healing mud (mixed with a rather unsettling amount of bat feces) on our faces; rafted down a tributary of the mighty Amazon (during which my students pushed me out of the raft at least seven times -- it's excellent to realize what a healthy amount of respect these students have for me); whacked our way behind machetes through the rainforest; ate ants that tasted like limes (yep...I really ate an ant); swung Tarzanesque (complete with ululations) on jungle vines; learned (and failed fantastically) two methods of climbing a limbless tree; and spent hours watching thousands of ants eviscerate a grasshopper carcass.

Teaching classes in such an environment is glorious. I just lead a mock talkshow on oil exploration in the Amazon, and the girls called in as irate environmentalists, smug oil executives, and everything in between. They were actually screaming at each other and yelling, "Ring! Ring! Ring!" to try to be the next one heard. Fantastic. In a different more self-reflective class, I had them write on what character is, and one of the girls said, "Character is both the path you choose to take and how you carry the machete." Freaking cool.

I have also reintroduced the word of the day to this new batch of students. The first two words were "narcissistic" and "aphrodisiac" (I figured I'd try to hook them on the Greek myth angle). I think my life was officially complete when, while watching an ocelot gaze enamoredly at us in an Amazonian wildlife rehabilitation center, someone said, "I think we're aphrodisiacs," and another student replied, "Oh, don't be so narcissistic." I mean, really. Utter joy.

A few other notes on Ecuador. The plumbing is weak, so you have to throw toilet paper in a nearby garbage can. It is disgusting, my students tell me, when you forget. Hammocks are ubiquitous. Popcorn is served as a starter every night with soup. 5'5" is an imposing and towering height. Speaking in Italian and smiling abashedly will generally get you by if you don't know Spanish. Vanilla is an orchid. I think I'm going to eat guinea pig tomorrow. Yikes. From Andean heights, Clarita Well, compañeros:

Have you ever wondered what happened to all those Sacajawea dollars that started circulating in 2000 and then seemingly disappeared? While some may be in the extensive collections of hoarding Americans, most of them have made their way down to Ecuador (which switched to the US dollar seven years ago) and are now weighing down my wallet. Odd experience, that, to be buying Ecuadorian sweaters with obsolete US coins. And now a brief update on the South American adventure.

A few weeks ago ago, we spent six days living with an indigenous family. Our presence there was almost incomprehensible: I'm still trying to reconcile the vision of our cavernous backpacks exploded on their dirt floor; our Patagonia jackets and North Face fleeces strewn among fraying soccer balls, embroidered frilly white shirts, and straw sleeping mats; the smells of Herbal Essences shampoo mingling with sweat and mildew. This culture shock and my inability to speak Spanish was initially rather more than overwhelming (I may or may not have had a minor breakdown), but I ended up learning little things: the power of gesticulation, that rice and beans (and a generous amount of salt) is one of the best meals in the world, how to say "throw the Frisbee" in Spanish, that tickling is universal, and, among other culinary things, how to peel potatoes with efficiency and a knife.

During the stay, I also officially experienced the entire death cycle of the guinea pig. (Allow that to be enough of a warning for the contents of the following paragraph.) I spent a week watching the things run around the kitchen floor (it is customary in indigenous homes to have cuy [kwee] -- as guinea pigs are called -- live in the kitchen. You feed them, allow them to pick up the crumbs, and then kill them. Interesting observation: in the middle of the night, they frequently make this weird, high-pitched squeaking

noise. Eerie. Especially echoing through walls at three o'clock in the morning.) But, so. After watching them scamper about for a week, I witnessed their killing (a rather brutal hacking across the neck, followed by the draining of the blood into the fire cooking the accompanying potatoes...), their de-furring (for lack of a better name), their disembowelment, and their frying. And then I participated in their consumption. Smoky and dry, vaguely chickenesque. (I couldn't quite bring myself to try the head or the feet, but both are considered delicacies and were thus instantly devoured by our gleeful hosts). Apologies to those who once had these little creatures as pets and are now slightly to utterly revolted.

On the less gastronomic side of things, we also encountered Carnival, the South American equivalent of Mardi Gras, and all the chaos that accompanies it. We hired an unusual taxi (a flatbed truck, more or less, with terrifyingly flimsy supports) and filled the back with all fifteen of us, about twenty other random kids, and gallons and gallons of water. We then drove around the city pouring the aforementioned water on just about everyone. As gringas donning obscenely bright rain jackets, we escaped neither attention nor attack, and returned to our houses covered in water, mud, dye, shaving cream, and chicha (the local moonshine, created by chewing the potato-like yucca, spitting it back in a pot, and letting it ferment...). Lovely. After removing all evidence of the debauchery (last semester's word of the day), we spent a few days in Quito, Ecuador's capital, which is nestled comfortably in a valley within the Andes. I drank countless cappuccinos with cinnamon and led the girls on a historical tour of Old Town, which included a visit to a church gilded with seven tons (SEVEN TONS) of gold and a reenactment of the 1875 assassination of President Moreno. I'm not sure that this reenactment (complete with shocked and wailing onlookers) was particularly subtle, given that Moreno was hacked to death with a machete on the presidential steps and then carried to a nearby cathedral, but we certainly enjoyed ourselves. Plus, my job is to make history memorable, and I think with this one event, at least, I am pretty sure I succeeded.

We've also tramped through Andean volcanoes, spent five days learning about permaculture and composting toilets in an Ecuadorean Ecolodge, viewed the largest rodents in the world (which look exactly like the ROUS's from The Princess Bride, though slightly less obviously humans dressed in costume), spent fifteen consecutive hours traveling on various busses (on one of which a Charlie Chaplin movie and its accompanying blaring music played. Incongruous. Very incongruous), and watched a student get a sonogram (which included seeing her bladder, ovaries, uterus, and appendix...pretty freaking cool, as I kept exclaiming, much to her embarrassment).

I am still in awe. From all of it. Your South American correspondent, Clarita

Well, friends:

I write to you with a body excessively full of red blood-cells. At least, I assume it to be something like that, because I just spent the past week fluctuating between altitudes of 13,000 and 14,750 feet.

Memorable components of our trek through the Peruvian Andes:

1. The full gamut of weather: crushing sunshine, disheartening rain, even a decent dumping of snow. A gentle introduction for those students who had never been backpacking...
2. Scrambling over a thunderous landslide half a mile wide that had occurred eight hours earlier. It dislodged, among a thousand others, a rock the size of a Mississippi steamboat. Mildly disconcerting.
3. A day of classes in the shadow of the most glorious mountain I've ever seen, complete with crumpled glaciers, textured bowls, and a pristinely symmetrical peak (there is an immediacy to the Andes that is stunning: the range is such a young one that its peaks have not yet had the time to relax into the angle of repose).
4. Packing wads of coca leaves in our cheeks and licking flecks of them off our lips as we ascended. (Coca leaves are magnificent at helping with altitude sickness, extremely bitter, and apparently illegal in the states. That's right: illegal. Yes. I feel like a badass).
5. Topping out at a pass at 14,750 feet. That's higher than Mt. Whitney. And we were BETWEEN two peaks. Absurd, these Andes. Absurd.
6. Returning spending a good two hours driving up, and then down, an unending series of switchbacks. They were even marked as "Dangerous Curves" (a brief aside about driving here. It appears that street lines and traffic lights exist only as suggestions. The car horn is a constant and potentially polite -- rather, not necessarily rude -- means of communication. Road warnings are a rarity. Almost a nonexistence. The presence of these signs on our drive, then, indicates just how joyfully formidable our route was).

What else have we done? Gone salsa dancing in an Ecuadorian bar; spent a week surfing on the Peruvian coast (during part of which, our instructors, dubbed Hotty McHotster and Jerky McJerkface, led all 15 of us wet-suit encrusted gringas on a warm-up run up and down the beach -- not quite our shining moment of



cultural blending, that); endured several muggy all-night bus rides (with such glorious movies as Babe and Troy -- so wonderfully pirated that we got to watch the shadows of people getting up to go to the bathroom throughout -- to divert our exhausted attention); attended an incongruously celebratory Good Friday parade; and watched the Motorcycle Diaries for history class (the girls were ecstatic that they didn't have to listen to me for two whole hours and, by the end of the movie, smitten simultaneously with Gael Garcia Bernal and Che).

Next stop: Machu Picchu. A history teacher's dream come true.

Did you know that the Incas had neither the wheel nor a writing system? True statement. Though they did, apparently, roll things on balls and communicate using a system of string and knots. Fascinating. Your Andean queen, Clarita

Well, friends. It's been a while. I've been wandering. The distant past: I last left you in April (undoubtedly on the edge of your collective seats) on the brink of hiking the ever-ascending trail to Machu Picchu. I suppose I should announce that I did, indeed, survive it. And though the site is unquestionably over-run with tourists, and though when I got to the notable Sun-Gate, the rain pounded so powerfully its mist obscured the iconic view, there remained something magical and ethereal about the place. That legendary mountain silhouette, the stones so perfectly fitted they make mortar seem as useful as silly putty, the myths of condors and pumas hovering above it all like evaporating morning dew...pretty freaking amazing. (Then then sun came out, and all the world truly seemed to sparkle.) And a few days later, I donned crampons, grabbed an ice-ax, and summited a 17,000 foot Bolivian glacier. The more recent past: I got home shimmering with adventure and a desire to do something on my own, so I bought a one-way ticket to Mexico City. (I should probably augment this statement a bit. You all know me. I do not quite radiate impulsiveness. You know this. I know this. I DID buy a one-way ticket to Mexico City. But then I also bought a few more connecting flights to get me to Costa Rica and, yes, back to the United States. The thought of being potentially stranded in Central America was just a little too advanced for my remedial spontaneity.) So I spent four weeks on the Pacific coast of Mexico trying to absorb as much Spanish as possible (by doing things like taking Spanish classes, visiting local tortilla-making stands, eating the most delicious food in the world). And then I got myself to Costa Rica to do the same thing.

It was glorious. The present: I'm home in Seattle for a bit, reveling in understanding everything spoken around me, humidity of less than 90%, and a closet of more than two shirts.

The future: I'm going back to Africa for another three and a half months. Yep. I am so smitten with the southern hemisphere that I'm doing the whole thing all over again. More teaching, more traveling, more adventure. New girls, same route. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia -- if any of those places sound even remotely enticing (and, really, they should), come visit. But if you don't, I'll keep you updated. Hope your world is turning as it should (and that those of you addicted to Harry Potter are recovering from the disheartening knowledge that the series is officially over).  
Roamingly yours, Claire

Well, friends. Here's a question: would I leave for an extended trip without sending out a mailing address? No. Definitely not. Here's the deal: I'm leaving for Africa...for three months...tomorrow. I'm doing the whole trip again, from Johannesburg, South Africa to Livingston, Zambia (with a bit of rock climbing, surfing, sandboarding, river-rafting, Namibia, and Botswana in between). And what is the whole point of this trip? Well, here's the best part: I'm doing all that while teaching history and literature to a crazy group of high school girls.

**Danni Lovell** <danielle@sunshinefarmmarket.com> '06. Danni also has been sending in long newsletter all year. Enjoy!!!

"Hullo! Fall has crept up on us here in Chelan. We had enjoyed a mild, warm September, sunny days in the 80s and mild nights. However, October has arrived and there is a chill in the air. The days of jumping in the lake after work are gone, but the snow is not yet here. Many things have happened since I last sent an email. Last week, a number of us on the farm piled in a van and headed an hour down the road towards Spokane. We pulled off the highway and continued down a bumpy dirt road (chasing some loose cows off track at one point) until we reached a broken down homestead. The roof had tilted, the outhouse was being swallowed by the earth, but there were some new looking mattresses through the broken window in the front room. Peculiar, if nothing else. From there, 6 of us tromped around large open plains for several

hours. You can see pictures of it here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vibrantdanni/sets/72157594311854528/> (disclaimer: my friend zac doesn't really like wearing clothing if he can help it. any pictures with him in it are decent, but just a warning so you aren't surprised) Part of the tromping brought us to the edge of a giant canyon, filled with the Columbia River at the bottom. In the 30s, the river was dammed to provide electricity to the Northwest, and as this happened, it moved several small towns, many of which still have buildings down under the water. We sat and enjoyed the scenery, and the chocolate cheesecake that Tom (the one wielding the large knife and cake in the photos) pulled out of his backpack. I mean, who *doesn't* go hiking with a cheesecake? I was happy that Tom was along, because at one point, all the hills, powerlines, and clouds looked the same. I was completely turned around and if I'd been alone, I probably would have gotten lost. Tom says that in the winter all you can see for miles in any direction is the white of the snow and blue of the sky, making it even easier to get lost. We crossed a dried out pond and scared off some more wandering cows. They had all gathered, clumped up against a fence to peer at us. But, they suddenly decided that we were threatening and stampeded off. This weekend started Friday night with First Friday, which is a monthly celebration of the downtown of Chelan. Each has a theme, and this month's was Apple Pie and Scarecrows. Various groups around town made scarecrows that were placed along light posts along the main street. There was also an apple pie competition. I entered, but did not place in the top three. The winner had cut inch size leaves out of pastry to layer as the top of her cake. I'd just rolled out a circular crust. I tell myself that her crust and paper doilies were what snatched my crown. I actually didn't taste any of the pies but my own, because it was \$5 a slice after the winners had been announced. I can make my own pie for that cost, and enjoy many a slice. Saturday morning was not so enjoyable. After waking up, I soon learned that coyotes had gotten into the pen with our baby goats in the night and killed both of them. We were all pretty devastated by this news. The babies were very much like pets to me and a few others here. They'd cry for attention and milk whenever I walked by, and were hilarious to watch race and jump around their pen. So, we miss our babies. Sunday night, I was busy boiling down some pears to make another batch of pear butter, and Anne was writing an article for the CSA newsletter. We heard some really strange noises and saw a large four legged creature take off down the road. At this, we started moving quickly towards the goats (who are 100 metres from our house). Unfortunately the coyotes had returned and killed another of our larger kids and injured a fourth. At this time we had one of the more aggressive mothers in the pen with those kids, but it still wasn't enough. We now seem to have a system that works, with two llamas (the bullies of the ruminant world) guarding the injured Moscovitch and Jack (the older kids). And, for the last few nights in a row, I've gone out with our goatherd, armed with a broom, pot lid and headlamp. The broom for home run swings at nearby coyotes or for hitting the handy pot lid. There's logic to the choices. And, it appears to have been working (or those mangy thieves have wandered off somewhere else) for all has been quiet the last two nights.

Canadian Thanksgiving passed by quietly on Monday, although Anne and I cooked a harvest lunch yesterday (squash and apple soup, rutabega and carrot cake, fried leeks and potatoes) and then again for dinner. And, this weekend I've been enlisted to help bake 7 different pumpkin/squash pies for our CSA end of season party. So, pies are on the horizon, and I've started to crack out my woolen socks for the night time. Fall is truly here. Hope things are going well where you are! I'm always thrilled to hear how things are on your end. Until next time, Danni

It's November 29th and 8 degrees in Chelan. It's also snowing. I returned from my East Coast jaunt and Texan Thanksgiving to find that Arctic winds had snuck their way into the Chelan Valley. The house I live in, is one mostly heated by a wood stove. Which I neglected to purchase wood for, so I have been sitting in numerous layers of clothing, nursing tea for the best part of the past two days. But never fear, it's not as bad as it seems (I do like to complain sometimes), and it is supposed to return to the mid-30s on Thursday. It's a bit of a shock to return from places filled with people and friends (New Haven, New York, Boston, DC, Williamsburg and Houston) to the quiet pace of Chelan, but it's wonderful to be back. Most of the adventures I had while back East involved seeing lots of friends. And for all of those of you that I did see, I realized how much I missed parts of Yale (all the parts except the stress and the work). Crashing on couches after late nights spent talking, Master's Teas, ridiculous emails making fun of dirty hippies that result in watching terribly good movies, the whole lot. I also spent some of my travel time to start knitting a sweater for my pregnant neighbor. But other than that, there aren't too many things new in my life. I am still unsure how long I will be in Chelan beyond next October. I have yet to organize the end of the things I pulled out of boxes. That firewood is still pending. But, my jaunting travels (and Yale's stomping of

Harvard) has me refreshed for winter. Not much changed in Chelan while I was gone. The exception to this is the passing of one of the farm dogs, Rosie May. She was 12 going on 13, and very sick. Both Cordie (the zippy Daschund) and Ginger (the grumpy shepherd) seem to miss her sometimes, along with the rest of us. She was a sweetheart. A really faithful old dog. I've got myself involved in researching green and affordable building options for our co-housing group. For those I haven't talked to co-housing about, it's an idea of an intentional community, with strong bonds, but personal homes for each individual family. There is a community of people planning a neighborhood to go on the land here, but it is in the nascent phases. Lots of research and planning happens at the moment, which suits me well. I like considering ideas of home ownership, how I want to know my neighbors and how much of a crunchy hippie I'm going to make my far off ideas of children into. Some things that are in the future for my life at the farm... First, podcasting. For those who have not discovered the highly addictive world of podcasting, they are downloadable radio shows on any topic someone has seen fit to record on. And, in the next few months, we will be starting to send one out from the farm. And I will definitely let you know when that happens. If you are interested in some of the background of my farm, head to <http://organicallyspeaking.org/wp/> and download the 'Broken Limbs' podcast. You can listen to it on your computer or mp3 device. It's an interview with my boss, Guy Evans, with a little shout out to me in it (a really little shout out... as in 'we have a woman who just graduated from Yale out here'), but you have to start small to become famous, right? Guy sums up many of the things that had me bundling my life into 9 boxes and moving to a town I'd never heard of. Correction: I had previously referred to Wenatchee as the 'thriving metropolis of 70,000'. I recently realized that it is actually only a 'budding force of 29,000'. Chelan is still indeed a town of 3500 in the winter and 35000 in the summer. I hope that Thanksgivings for all who celebrate them were merry and thankful. Cheers, Danni

So, my email of only a few hours ago spoke of a quiet, wintertime, bucolic lifestyle. However, I have just returned from an hour in the snow and freezing temperatures attempting to return our beef cattle to their pasture. I was pulled from bed by pounding on my door at midnight, only to find an officer of the Chelan County Sheriff's Office. "Your cows are loose. Someone called in." he says "Oh. Let me call my boss" I say "Or it might be your llamas. Either cows or llamas" he says "Are you sure?" I ask "Yeah, llamas, maybe goats too. Behind the farm market and all over" I call my boss. He doesn't answer. I call his house, his wife answers. She talks to the officer. He leaves. I get suited up and go to check on the possibly loose goats and llamas. They are all accounted for, but I intercept Juliana driving up the hill. To the cows we go. We find all 6 huddled outside their pen. Gate shut and chained. How did they get out? A mystery solved later... We chase the cows around for a bit. By chase I mean walk slowly, arms outstretched, willing them to walk into the gate. Three do so, and three do not. Including the one now named Teddy Bear in my head. He's huge. The biggest by far. We spend 30 minutes moving the last three up and down the same area of fence, but they keep trying to run downhill. So Juliana goes off to check the fences while I sit and try to figure a better way to herd them. She fixes three breaks in the fence, and I fail to do anything positive. We then attempt to herd them using both her manual subaru and my skills. And fail. And then drive all the way round the pasture, in the hopes that they will go to the grain buckets near the gate. And instead find the three loose cows romping in the compost that is across their pasture from the gate. As far as they could possibly get. They romp, and the ones inside push on the fence. We think they'll be out again by morning, but there's nothing more we can do. The two of us and half of a border collie (her other half is a lazy german shepherd). Until tomorrow... Danni To talk of many things! My life has moved quickly in the last three weeks, and I haven't sent much about it in ages. I think for the sake of clarity, I'll start at the beginning. In early January (January 3rd to be exact) my boss Guy asked me if I was interested in taking the position of Market Manager at our Sunshine Farm Market. I had been trying to find a way and proper time to talk to him about extending my current contract (which ended November 2007). The manager contract ends at the end of December 2008. And, it is a challenging and rather thrilling opportunity to handle retail sales, hire and train employees, manage sales, interact with the community, and on and on. For two years! So, I said yes. Which means that I shall be in Chelan permanently until December 2008 at least. This is bringing about lots of little changes, including plans to maybe get a dog, plans to definitely get a business card, a local phone number, a feeling of a real settling into my life here, and just general elation! You can check out our (my!) market at <http://www.sunshinefarmmarket.com>

In that new role, I've spent time giddily calling local producers of pickled vegetables, apple butters, spiced peaches, red pepper jellies and on and on. I get to start each conversation with "Hi, my name is Danielle and I'm the manager of a farm market in Chelan." I love it. The part, besides where I flash my new title and they are less excited about it than I am, that I love the most, is that I get to work with these other small business owners (well, I'm not an owner, but the same idea). I spoke to Tofu Phil (his self proclaimed name), the producer of my favorite Small Earth tofu, about how I love some of his products and how we want to sell them. Well, I get really excited about it. Things around the farm have been quiet and predictably unpredictable. Two weekends ago, Guy and Juliana were both away, and the 2 weeks of sub 20F weather took their toll on the water supply to the cows. The hose froze and then burst, burst and then froze. Whatever happened first, it stopped the water getting the half mile from the tap to the trough. Which meant that I had to break 6-8 inches of ice up with a little axe each morning and night as I fed our dudes, and get nearly 90 gallons of water lugged to them every 3 days. Thank heavens I didn't have to carry it myself, but I had to make sad puppy eyes at our neighbor carpenter, and he and his friend lugged it in their trucks. (my borrowed volvo could neither lug water nor make it up the skating rink disguised as our driveway). That crisis was dealt with, and now Guy and Juliana are away for the next three weeks. So, I have the farm relatively to myself. I have adopted the farm dog Ginger (a shepherd/australian something mix) as my own, and got a new roommate, Richard. He's the new mechanic here on the farm, and while I knew that he was moving here, the information chain failed to pass down the info that he would be moving into my house for a month. His house currently does not have a working bathroom, so it makes complete logical sense. But if I'd known, he'd have had a clean house and clean sheets (someone else stayed in that bed over winter break). But, instead, dog hair/bread crumbed house and subclean sheets. Eeep! He rather deserves a whole email himself. He talks so quickly that I feel like I'm swimming through molasses when I talk. And loves industrial music and culture, power yoga and cooperative housing. He fits right in around here. The two other crazy things that have happened in the last 24 hours. I was asked to consider being the producer for the Laramie Project, a play about Laramie, WY, the town where Matthew Shepherd, a young gay college student, was murdered in 1998. It's being put on in Chelan, and I'm now 1/3 in charge of making that happen. It's really exciting to have this play all about what happens when tolerance break down come to my rather small and conservative town. Second, I signed up for a triathlon. I signed up after a really contentious town council meeting that I attended all about the walmart issues surrounding my town (another long story). But, I'd gone through several evolutions of angry, happy, frustrated, elated... all during this meeting. So when a woman talking about triathalons happening in Chelan in the summer, I just signed up. So, July 21st I shall be venturing on my first one! That's really about all for the moment. But until next time. Cheers, Danni

8/15/06 "Your highest right knows all futures. As you listen to its whisper, you'll find that the prize ahead is your own greatest happiness" – *Messiah's Handbook – Reminders for the Advanced Soul* – Richard Bach  
This is what greeted me when I opened the Messiah's handbook. Something to mull on, which I think really suited this day. Well, friends, life begins. I am sitting in my room in Chelan. I flew away from the East Coast today, for the near future. My room is a wash of reds and pinks between my towel, pillow and the bedcovers and wall hangings provided by Julianna (Guy's wife, Guy being my boss...) There is an artfully pinned red skirt on the wall directly across from where I'm sitting, looking just as if it had been kicked up by the wind. My room is small. Small enough that I don't think it will get messy any time soon, simply because there is no space for mess. It is a little smaller than the double in the sophomore slums of JE. Probably 6x8 feet. I have a small window near the roof that has put me in contact with a squawking bird and a distant view of apples. I can hear the highway and the boats zipping along the lake. There isn't enough room to put my hastily packed suitcases under the bed (some other form of storage already resides there), so they sit stacked in the corner under my drying towel. My beanie baby, proclaiming "You Did It!" sits next to a cup filled with grey sand and a portrait of a smiling woman. I listened to the whisper (or, as it appeared, shout of dismissal) from the forces guiding me away from things that were safe and known in New Haven to this unknown. I just spent the last few hours with Guy, driving and brainstorming all manner of things from plans for this winter, to plans for the next five years. I'm listening to my HBC soundtrack which I have not yet sent out, because I'm lonely for people, and those 25 are the most recent community that I quit. On my way out here, I had an interesting set of goodbyes to go through. I helped Matt and his mum pack up and out, mirroring every end of school term before (including the delicious meal that Matt pays his moving slaves with), had a short goodbye with Helen, a fumbled one with Fidel (I dropped the ball), goodbye drinks with half of FSAS (my FOOT friends) and then a night of chatting with Sophia and Lev in their new apartment. And even through it all, as I saw the things and people I was leaving behind, I

felt somehow that I was ready. I stood in Shaw's last week, buying food for the last week in town, surrounded by wailing babies, beeping machines, ambient chatter and all I could think was "I'm ready to be gone." Since then I've packed up, packed out, shipped my worldly belongings, crossed three time zones, and now I'm slowly unwinding in my home for foreseeable future. This room will be where I reside for about a month, and then I'll be heading up the hill about one hundred feet to the farmhouse. Welcome, this is our farmhouse, we have cluster flies alas. The Farmhouse is an unknown, but a bigger space of unknown. Space for my 10 boxes trundling their way westward, boxes which there is absolutely no room for in my current space. Tomorrow, work starts. Real, down to earth work. I'm terrified, but I'm thrilled. 8/15/06 again...

So, now I'm really settling in for the night. It is 9pm, and I can hear the crickets chirping outside in the night. There apparently is some way to calculate the temperature from the number of chirps per minute, but I can't remember how. Dinner was outside on the patio, with Guy, Rachel and Janna (the veggie farmers) and Zach (Chelan's resident tree climbing farm sprite). Zach gave me a welcome hug, and is something like Teddy Ruxbin as a woodland faerie. I watched the sun set over the lake as we ate corn, cucumber sandwiches, fruit salad and wine, all from within 10 miles. Local food at its best. Apparently, Daniel cooked lunches on Wednesdays. So, as I am taking over Daniel's other responsibilities, tomorrow is my lunch day. And, I only have to cook for 7 other people. This is in no way stressful. Stressful is the wrong word, but I am diving headfirst into the maelstrom of town life. Tomorrow, I'm taking the car into town to go grocery shopping. I'm crossing my fingers that Guy's car isn't a manual, otherwise this will be a fascinating expedition. The plan is for roasted eggplant and tomato confit. We shall see what actually transpires.

8/16/06

Washington is burning. At least, Chelan County and some of the neighboring forests and grasslands are. It took me the better part of the day to realize that the haze covering the lake and the view across the water was from smoke, rather than what I assumed was haze brought forth by the humidity (in a similar way to the haze in Houston). But, I was wrong. And soon corrected.

Today was a strange day, because I can't decide how much of it will be indicative of my future life. I woke up at 8 and lazed in bed for a little while, deciding whether or not to do yoga (not) and how much of my book to finish (quite a bit). I then had oatmeal with Guy, read some of the Wenatchee World (the local paper) and took the Volvo into town. I walked into Bear Foods, the local (and famous) organic/crunchy grocery store, and restrained myself from buying all kinds of silly things. But, I still did buy many kinds of silly things. Although, purchasing without buying vegetables or meat was a strange thing. The meat, I hope to get from a number of local butchers/happy cow ranchers, and the vegetables I can get at the market. So, I basically just bought a whole bunch of pasta, some cereal and toilet paper. Then, as I alluded to yesterday, I dove in head first and had my day for lunch. I perhaps set the bar a little high, with tomato confit, roasted eggplant, foccacia, and a goat cheese garnish. I still have phrases from Anthony Bourdain's *MEmoir, Kitchen Confidential*. In which he offers suggestions for home cooks to make their fare more like that found in restaurants. One suggestion being garnishes. So, I did. Parsley and goat cheese, both of which were in the rest of the meal, in some way or another. After lunch, I headed up for my first shift at the market. I worked from 2:30 to closing, which ended up being around 8. Up the river, there is a small town called Stehekin (which I am sure I just misspelled). And, in Stehekin, people put in online orders for produce, which I filled for shipping. This involved hunting down all the various things they wanted (two bars of chocolate, three crates of peaches, 40 ears of corn), packing it up, and organizing it in an intuitive way. All while in the 40 degree cold room. Hands and feet go numb, and then promptly feel as though they are melting when you return to the real world outside the insulated doors. I caught myself humming the same 10 beat melody. Humming is the wrong word, chanting perhaps. A melody that doesn't exist. And, I'm not entirely sure if I thought of anything besides 'peach peach peach peach pack the peach.'

I learned how to close up, run the till, send in batches, sweep efficiently and many other sundry things. I came back to find Janna making the cheese for the night, chatted, and helped her hang it up to dry for the night. I ate leftovers from lunch, eggplant/confit/discarded goat yogurt (some of the cheese was sacrificed to the gods of the sink as we attempted to hang it more efficiently). I also finished *A Million Little Pieces*. I thoroughly enjoyed it, but found myself racing through the sentences, not concentrating on the message conveyed as much as the pace at which it tumbled out. It is strange to think of the controversy with James Frey, the validity of his memoir, recollections, 'augmentations' and all that. I think if I were Oprah, I would still have been ticked off at James for selling the story as the whole truth. However, I don't think that there is a 'big deal' that occurred in the changing details/stories. Memoir and autobiography are always written in

the voice and mentality of the author. They want you to see them a certain way. Frey wants to be seen as a badass who finally got his life together, talking like a smart ass the whole way. And, fair enough. In the new intro to the book, he mentions the things he has been accused of fabricating as a mechanism to deal with the hard times, as a way to protect himself by appearing as more of a badass or hardcase. And, more power to him. I'd rather not be lied to, but I think it is the prerogative of an author to write what they want. Perhaps memoir and autobiography need to be more clearly delineated with stories, thoughts, hopes, dreams and some context slotting neatly into memoir contrasted with the details of life woven with some story content into autobiography. And of course it will never work like this. But, it's a thought.

So, I have been in Chelan for two weeks today. And, what a two weeks it has been. This past weekend was especially busy. We are gearing up for Labour Day, which is our busiest weekend of sales. On top of all this, we were having a <http://www.slowfoodusa.org/> Slow Food and Sustainability event, which included a tomato tasting, wine tasting, light supper, speaker (David Sweet, from the <http://www.nwei.org/> Northwest Earth Institute), and then a short concert.

The way the day unfolded was through a hum of activity all day. I opened, which means that I slink out of bed into the shower at 6:45am, stumble bleary eyed into the kitchen at 7:00am to the waiting cup of coffee brewing on a timer (when I remember), grab some breakfast (currently I'm going through a 'plain yogurt, honey and puffins' phase) and tromp up to work. I've also started putting the same playlist on each morning I open:

Wild World – Cat Stevens; Paradise – John Prine; Angel from Montgomery – John Prine

Sam Stone – John Prince; Peace Train – Cat Stevens; The L&M Don't Stop Here Any More – Michelle Shocked; Hello In There – John Prine; Flashback Blues – John Prine

When the Stars Go Blue – Ryan Adams; Pretty Good – John Prine

And one other that I just can't remember. Most of the music reminds me the most of Yale. I spend half an hour going over good memories and it helps me wake up as I move peaches and pears, apples and <http://www.aplets.com/>aplets. I remember the <http://www.yale.edu/tuib/audio.html> TUIB concerts I went to, and although I only really went to 3-5 of them, they make me think of everything else I miss. But, in a way that I like. I sing along at the top of my lungs to the music that has come to represent my time at Yale. Interestingly, much of it (as someone said at Bees and Cheer this year) is about the economic repercussions of coal mining in the American South and the aftermath from it's collapse.

The rest of the day went much as normal, with the waves of customers followed by lulls. I got off work at 4, where I would usually go and collapse home with some Chai. However, this day, I moved 20 ft to another table. There, I sat and checked people in for the event. Slowly, I lost track of how many hand I'd drawn smiley faces on. We had expected 40 with perhaps up to 60. Apparently there were over 85 people there at one point!

Because we had many more people than we'd expected, we had to be stingy on food for a while. Some people got tiny portions of the poached salmon and tarragon sauce we were doling out. However, there was more than enough salad and <http://www.fatfree.com/recipes/salads/fattoush> fattoush to go around. With peach cobbler to finish it off. There were some hectic moments where all of the farm staff were spinning around each other to dole out enough food, cut up enough tomatoes, serve enough wine and greet everyone with a pleasant smile.

There are hundreds of varieties of <http://www.heirloomtomatoes.bizland.com/varieties.htm> tomatoes, but we just doled out some black prince, brandywine, roma, Cherokee purple, striped german and green zebra for tasting. Each look completely different, with only the Roma resembling that which can be found in the supermarket.

The night went on with bites of the delicious food snuck between clearing plates, moving chairs, sipping <http://www.tunnelhillwinery.com/> Tunnel Hill wine, recording the speech, moving chairs again, setting up for the band, kicking the crap out of a tomato piñata, and finally dancing until I stumbled off to bed around 11:30. I couldn't sit still for what appeared to be a very well received speech, but I was 12 hours into a 16 hour day at that point, so I just collapsed onto a picnic table outside while the talk went on. And, I had time to reflect on how wonderful it was that an event, not promoted to the extreme, brought nearly 90 people to our market. 90 people who had been enjoying themselves all night. At the end, there were only a few of us dancing, but Zach had brought out his bag of costumes, so there were only a few of us dancing in graduation gowns, saris, sarongs, clown outfits and the rest. I personally was wearing a tweed jacket and a "Class of 2002" scarf as a tie. That night, the <http://www.sunshinefarmmarket.com/245.html> co-housing group was having a ceremony for those who will be most directly involved in the housing community.

They were camping out where the education centre will be when it comes into being, and woke up at

sunrise. I debated doing it, just because it's something I really believe in, but two things stood in my way. First, it would involve getting up at sunrise, when I could instead wake up at 7:00am (one extra sweet hour of sleep) and was more of a ceremonial attachment to the land for at least 5 years. Which I'm not ready to commit at this time in my life. Not that I don't want to, but that I can't commit. I stumbled back out to work at 7:30 to another excruciating 8 hours. Sunday night, we had a goodbye party for Muriel, who is headed back to school. We all went down to a house on the lake, swam around, went out in the boat, had grilled salmon and just severely enjoyed ourselves. Juliana made Muriel some <[http://www.sunshinefarmmarket.com/index.php?page\\_id=12](http://www.sunshinefarmmarket.com/index.php?page_id=12)> wonderful earrings, and the party dissolved around 9pm. Natalie (who is also leaving to start work), her husband Tim, Muriel and I went to JR's for some drinks and conversation. All went well, until I realized that I had volunteered to help Rachel, early Monday morning. Like work in the fields at 6:30am. On a sum of 12 hours of sleep from Friday through Monday. I complain, but it was a happy exhaustion.

Working in the fields on Monday morning was also different and fun. I walked up past the llamas to the two acres where all the vegetables are found. The sun was just peaking over the mountains to the east, and I was sent into the arugula with a sharp knife. Unfortunately, my knee was acting up from the long days on Saturday and Sunday, so I could not yet bend down to get to the veggies. So, I instead just bent over at the waist. It now being Tuesday, I'm still sore. But, on Monday, it seemed like a good idea. After about three hours of that, I gave up, came home and settled in for a relaxing day doing nothing.

Monday night, Rachel and I went to <<http://www.localmyth.com/>> Local Myth for pizza. Incredible pizza. We had pizza, and then I came home to collapse into bed for 12 hours of sleep.

This Tuesday has been lovely and relaxing, except for the attempts to fix a cash register. It's old and hates me. That's what I've decided. And, I was asked to be a bridesmaid. This is a new thing in my life, and perhaps will be something that continues on for a while (other people getting married, that is). So, October 6th, 2007, I'll be busy. Lindsey, a friend from high school, is getting hitched, and wants me there in a crimson/peacock dress. The slash is because the maid of honour, who has higher pick than I do on colour, gets to choose which dress she wants, and I get the other. Both are quite neat, but I need to go into Seattle to try it on. Oh well, I'll just make a weekend of it.

The rest of today has just been my domestic attempts. I made pad thai and cabbage rolls for lunch, I have a pasta sauce boiling down to concentrated deliciousness for freezing for the winter (realistically, it will last a few weeks. Maybe...) and apples and tomatoes dehydrating, for snacking and cooking. And, lots of listening to Evan Kleinman's <[http://www.kcrw.com/cgi-bin/db/kcrw.pl?tmpl\\_type=program&show\\_code=gf](http://www.kcrw.com/cgi-bin/db/kcrw.pl?tmpl_type=program&show_code=gf)> Good Food. Other than that, I'm now off to read the last of my Agatha Christie shorts... So, in short, life has been busy and wonderful. Keep sending me emails back! I love them! Cheers, Danni

So, life has thrown me for a little tail spin these last two weeks... I had some crazy back spasms descend and throw me for a loop two weekends ago, instigated by too much set painting/market cleaning/play stressing...

And then last weekend, The Laramie Project in Chelan started! (you can see videos from our performance here... 'Aaron McKinney's Confession' which is one of the hardest scenes from the play

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5jhrwrEbk> and here

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13HJsDF3IIQ> for my favourite scene) And this has been a wellspring of emotion and action. It's been going strong and wonderfully. And we still have 6 shows left!

But, the thing that has knocked me for a loop is... USCIS (they who send out work visas) have not accepted my application for consideration. This year, something like 150,000 people applied for the visa I needed, and so they decided not to read applications, but just to award them in a lottery. And unfortunately, whatever number I got was unlucky. So, I have to leave the country by October 1st. I can come back to visit, but no more work for this coming fiscal year. Which means, I'm at the same point I was last year. I have no clue where I'll be in three months. I've decided not to make any rash decisions this weekend, but to think long and hard about where I want to go. Do I want to cut loose and go wander Europe? Go for a walkabout in Australia? Make sheep's cheese in New Zealand? These are all things I can do, because my Canadian and British citizenship can secure me work without worries in all these countries... Why bum around Victoria when I can bum around Tuscany?

But, I'm overwhelmed. I love my job and my surroundings in Chelan, and I was set on staying there for the foreseeable future. And that is partially true, but only when 'the foreseeable future' means 'until September

or so'. So, I'll rage a little for the life I thought I had, but probably only for tonight.

Any suggestions for places I should now go? cheers, Danni

Hi friends and family, It's been ages since I've sent a 'this is how my life is right now' update. Mostly because my life has been hectic and challenging, and I've done a lot of sleeping, eating and working. With some biking in my spare time. But now, the finality of a decision brings me to let you all know. I have exhausted all the possibilities I have had before me to staying legally in the US of A. I considered hiding out at a Lutheran retreat centre, starting work in a hospital 40 miles away (and commuting) and everything else under the sun. And well, what this leaves me with is... nothing. Life in the US for the past 10 years has been lovely, and I've enjoyed nearly all of it (minus some awkward times in high school). But, the motherland is welcoming me back with open arms. Therefore, I will be departing the US for Canada (Calgary!) on September 25th. I just bought my ticket. That's the end of the line, folks. And as a good friend of mine in Chelan says "It's not like you're headed back to El Salvador in the 80s... Canada is a pretty great place to live" And it is indeed! Through the grateful offer of a friend since birth, I already have housing, and will be living just near the University of Calgary. Right close to a bike path. Life as far as employment is currently murky, but life in Chelan has shown me that things just happen upon me quite easily, so I'm sure I'll find something suitably crazy and ridiculous in no time. Or else go into retail, which I've found some great skill for... I've been told I could sell ice to someone from the Northwest Territories. Not in so many words, but you get the idea. So, that's the big news for now.

All you folks up north, let me know if and when you'll be in Calgary. Or how to find you in our great large land. And for all you folks down south, never fear, I'm sure I'll finagle some visiting, perhaps one last 'Game' huzzah. Or something. Cheers, Danni

Last night, I sent these words: "Three weeks from now, I'll have been in Calgary for two hours". I feel very much that I'm in the final countdown. I'm leaving, but maybe I'll come back. I guess there's no one to blame. Except the US government. If the spirit moves you, feel free to write an irate letter to your congressperson and senator bemoaning the current state of immigration and naturalization.

A number of friends have asked how soon I plan on coming back. And often this question is followed by 'and when are you coming to visit me?' As much as I'd love to be full of money and travel plans (one necessitating the other), I will most certainly be staying in one place, or as close to one place as I can for the next year, if not two years. In order to return to the US, I need to either marry an American or have a company sponsor me for a H1-B visa, the same one that I didn't get this past spring. The problem with this is the thousands of dollars of legal fees, need for the sponsoring company to foot that bill, and the potential that the immigration mess will not be worked out next year and I still won't get another visa. And then it wouldn't go into action until October 1st 2008. In a premature declaration, I'm saying that I plan on staying in Calgary for two years at least. There are plenty of adventures I can chase down up north. People in the Western Provinces (alberta, british columbia) are starting to do some really exciting things with local sustainable food economies.

A note about my new home town. Calgary is quite a large city. The third largest in Canada. It clocks in at near 1.2 million people. It is north of Great Falls, MT. It's at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. I have attached a handy map to find where I'll be going from and to... ([Here it is!](#))

So life is starting to both wind down and pick up. Labour Day weekend was crazy, and now we're picking up the pieces. Cleaning the cooler, putting down traps for ornery mice, trying to convert my brain into charts and graphs for the next manager ("on monday, I do the following things, etc." We're also planning a "Parting Party", "Parting Potluck" and a "Springtime of Death" party. The spring time of death is the party that we have on the autumnal equinox. Everyone wears black, we make borscht, eat rye bread, drink stout and red wine, dark chocolate desserts and make toasts to the end of the light. And this year, it is one day before I leave Chelan for Seattle.

Life is static but moving quickly, the days are getting shorter, the nights chillier. And soon, I'll be leaving the US for the foreseeable future. In many ways, I'll miss a town so small that I hear about car accidents on the highway before the ambulance arrives (one of my local market customers was right behind the truck when it flipped, is an EMT and was the first responder on the scene... And then came to buy tomatoes once the ambulance arrived). But, I am so excited to live somewhere with more than two delicious restaurants, two plays a year and zero things to do after 8pm (except sit on the porch, which is a wonderful thing as long as the weather permits)

Much love from the west, Danni

Happy Thanksgiving from the North! I've been in Calgary for 13 days, and I've been a whirlwind of activity. Two days after walking out of Calgary International Airport (famous airport also seen in the first



'cold' scene of "Cool Runnings") I had myself an interview at SPUD (small potatoes urban delivery, an organic grocery delivery service) and then quite quickly after, a job! I'm now the warehouse manager for SPUD Calgary in charge of managing "the pack" (where we physically pick and pack all the grocery orders for 600-800 customers a week), the "pack staff" and various systems to keep things stocked, cleaned and organized. My first week was incredibly exhausting and exhilarating. Three out of five days last week I stumbled home and went straight to a hot, epsom salted bath. I've gotten myself some Tylenol, some insoles and plans to keep my feet in better shape than last week for work this week. I've also had adventures getting myself to work. Unlike life in Chelan, I can't just sprint down a hill, 3 minutes before I'm supposed to start work. I had a few ordeals making my way along the Calgary transit. Long story short, I tried a number of different ways and bus routes to get to work last week, one got me there 45 minutes late (attempted to take an express, stop was under construction and I had no idea where the next stop was, missed it, hilarity ensued), 30 minutes early (7am, when no one else was there, uncertainty as to whether my alarm code was working yet) and a little tired and sweaty (all the other days, with a good 20 minutes stiff walk from bus stop to warehouse). But, I got there. Tomorrow I'm going to be extra adventurous and try to bike from home. Then I won't have any buses to navigate or C-Trains to miss. I did a test run today, just so I didn't get myself to work extremely late or early tomorrow, and found it to be a lovely 11km/35 minute jaunt from home. Totally doable in tomorrow's 13C (58ishF) forecast. We'll see how long I last into the colder weather. I've also been busy around the house, including moving a new bed into my room this evening (pictures of the disaster currently my room will be up eventually, whenever I find my photo cable), signing up for a recycling service, buying a home composted, raking and mowing our lawns, baking two pies for Thanksgiving dinner and just generally giving my roommates the impression that I'm a bit of an organic alien. But they like it. Otherwise, plans in the future include being flown to Vancouver next weekend for training, work work and more work, and continuing to explore my new home!

Hope all is well in your world. Cheers, Danni

Hi! Life has been running me a little ragged in Calgary. I can't believe I've been here for nearly a month! I'm not unpacked at all (as you'll see from my pictures below) but I'm getting much closer to it. I've uploaded a bunch of photos from leaving Chelan and moving into life in Calgary. Work has kept me busy (who knew lifting 20-50lb boxes all day would be so exhausting?) and sent me to Vancouver for training for two days of work and two days of wandering around town. I enjoyed myself immensely and got to see several old friends, but the rain and grey that rolled in on day three reminded me why I moved to Cowtown instead of Vancouver. Long live sunshine. The sun was shining and lovely today, transitioned into snow for an hour or so and then returned to sun. Calgary is never boring! I've been meeting up with friends from summer camp, running into pals from junior high on the train, finding several pairs of surrogate parents and eating lots of delicious food from work. I've restrained myself from signing up for all sorts of different events until I'm finally settled. A level of restraint I haven't had in ages. But, one that's allowed me to fall asleep at 7 when I get home each night.

I hope all is well where you are, and I hope to send more pictures as I do new and exciting things.

Until then, <http://picasaweb.google.com/danielle.lovell/LeavesFall>

Cheers! Danni

**Aaron Zelinsky** '06 is back at Yale Law School. He is still making cameo appearances in Davenport events.

**Jon Davenport** '07 "Hello all, Please be advised: I have graduated (hoorah!) and my email address has changed to [jonathan.davenport@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.davenport@gmail.com). I am going to take this mass mailing opportunity to plug my band. Visit our myspace page at [www.myspace.com/lossubterraneans](http://www.myspace.com/lossubterraneans) to hear some tracks. We play a mishmash of dixieland, klezmer, balkan tunes and hiphop, with a decidedly afro-cuban rhythmic feel. Contact [lossubterraneans@gmail.com](mailto:lossubterraneans@gmail.com) to get on our mailing list or say hello. We're rehearsing all summer and looking for gigs in the New Haven area! Thank you and good night. Jon"

**Caroline Howe** [carolinelhowe@gmail.com](mailto:carolinelhowe@gmail.com) '07 "SERIOUSLY. The Durham Fair is the biggest and best most wonderful thing to occur in Connecticut (after FOOT trips). It will change your life. Literally, it is North America's largest agricultural three-day entirely volunteer run fair. It is full of cows, llamas, racing pigs, fun and games, and tasty treats! Does it get better than that? And it is SO easy! Call up your friends (esp those with a car) NOW, get ready to pile in a car tomorrow, and head out to the fair. It's easy to get to (see directions, including parking below)! aaand then take pictures and tell me about it. Can't even tell you how much heartbreak I have not being there. But luckily, there are lots of cows, fun and games, and tasty treats in India, too!

love and miss you, FOOT! (and thanks Mila!) xoxoxo Caroline”

So news from the Kellert front. I am still at Hopkins. Some things never change, but it is still a wonderful place to work. I've been asked to write up an environmental plan for the school. Steve and I are dividing our time between New Haven, the Vineyard and Vermont. We live in a triangle. We are happy not to be traveling around the world as much, though we occasionally get the old wanderlust. Steve has announced his departure from Yale although this will happen gradually over the next three years. Meanwhile, he has started up a private equity firm with some Wall Street folks to invest in middle range green businesses. He is going to New York often and is having a blast. The companies he is investigating are very cool and exciting. So we shall see what happens here...Please stay in touch. I love to hear from all of you and all your adventures, trials and tribulations, growing families, and so on... You can always write me at FOOT P.O.Box 201434, New Haven, CT 06520 or find me at 57 Edgehill Rd. New Haven, CT 06511. 203-865-9126. [priscilla.kellert@yale.edu](mailto:priscilla.kellert@yale.edu).

Much love, xoxoxo Cilla