

February 7, 2005

Greetings everyone,

So after a brief and enjoyable month in the states I am finally settled back into my Scottish life. Scotland is so peaceful that in many ways it feels like I never left at all. This place is a gift and I am trying my best to remember that each day. Surprisingly the last week has been quite warm, at least compared to the wintry weather my parents tell me about in North Carolina, and I have found myself wandering about the sandy shores of West Sands or walking alongside babbling creek beds. Luckily, now on clear days the sun goes down around 4:45 versus the 3:15 sunset we experienced before the Christmas holidays. My classes do not begin again until Monday (Feb.7), so it is nice to have some time to think, curl up and read, unwind, and embrace the people around me (and thankfully more often they embrace me). While life has been harder lately and my emotions at times have enveloped me, the Lord has been more than faithful (fortunately He is ever so much more faithful to me than I am to Him!) in reminding me that He loves me dearly as his beloved. More than ever, I have realized the importance of honesty and boldness in my prayer life and what a blessing it is to embrace life as candidly as possible whether I am embracing it in the form of brokenness or joy. Scotland, fortunately, exudes such a state of serenity that it is easy for one to just 'be' and accept what God is offering knowing that it is better than what I would ultimately give myself.

My month at home was truly busy and task oriented. While it was such a blessing to be surrounded by so many I love, I must admit I was ready to leave my checklist and running about behind after nearly five weeks. My life was in such a whirlwind that I quite possibly lost all of the most essential clothing items I needed for my time in Scotland - my winter jacket, a pair of gloves, and my winter hat - I was unbelievably careless. Basically, my time was torn between a 30-hour work week at my dad's office, research and paper writing for my St. Andrews coursework, numerous job applications, preparation for several rotary talks, and not to mention family and friends to catch up with and embrace. I was pretty exhausted by the end of my supposed 'break.' Arriving home was particularly sweet because eight dear friends from the Chapel Hill/Durham area greeted me at the RDU airport. My dear friend, Scott Reid, drove me home and my dad and mom had dinner ready in the cabin for us to chow down on - I mean we are talking the real southern deal - a roast, corn bread and mashed potatoes. It was fun to catch up with Scott and we spent some wonderful time walking along the Mayo River by the old Avalon dam and laughing about new and old stories - with Scott, as many of you Davidson folks know, laughter comes quite easily and frequently!

Christmas was particularly special for the Moore family because my entire family was together for the first time since June when we went to the beach. Emily, Beth, and I had an entire week together and Dalton rolled in from Boston about 3

am Christmas Eve morning. I love that over the years Christmas has really become just about family, and the frills and trinkets that once brought about early and highly anticipated 5am Christmas mornings, instead, takes the shape of a much needed hug or conversation. My dad went to great lengths to decorate our cabin over the holidays and I tried my best to help in the cooking of Christmas recipes such as the cranberry sauce (this task was a joint effort by my grandmother and me). New Years quickly followed the Christmas festivities with a fast and overwhelming rush. I made my way up to Richmond, Virginia and was wonderfully and fabulously greeted by at least 50 Davidson friends at my beautiful friend Mary Sommerville's (now Mary McCulloch!!!) wedding. It was an absolute treat to be surrounded by so many special people on such a sweet and spectacular day in the life of a dear girlfriend. I rode up with several of my fellow young life leaders and several young life girls from Mooresville high school. I don't think I have laughed nor smiled so much in months. Needless to say, I was exhausted when I returned from the festivities, but completely satisfied in the reminder of how lucky I am to have such incredible friends.

The first week of the New Year started out with a bang for sure. On that Monday, my aunt Sallie took my sister and me to the Matisse & Picasso Exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art. My aunt, who is friends with director of the North Carolina, had arranged that we would visit the museum on a Monday when it is officially closed. We arrived at the staff entrance awaiting David Steele, the head curator of the exhibition, and instead we were greeted by Larry Wheeler, the director, who informed us that Will Ferrell would be joining us on our art talk - yes, you heard me correctly - none other than Will Ferrell (check out photos in the snapfish account)! Yeah, so you can only imagine my state of mind at this point. How much more random can you get, right?! Art and Will Ferrell - not a likely combo in the real world. So basically, I spent a Monday afternoon discussing art with the same guy who ran around butt naked in Old School. Surreal to say the least. I carried his little boy, Magnus (yep, that's his name, alright), on my hip. I was informed later by Will and his Swedish wife that he liked blondes. I guess being blonde isn't always a derogatory thing!

Anyway, the rest of the week was drudgery. I wrote a fifteen page paper and completed several major job applications and interviews. However, the following weekend I drove up to Washington and Lee and visited my gorgeous girl friend and roommate, Sarah Davis. For those of you know Sarah you can only imagine the social life I had pre-scheduled for me over the weekend. Sassy Sarah had me dressed up for a law school cocktail party and an Irish pub crawl (with the Irish exchange law students) before the weekend was finished. In the midst of the festivities, Sarah and I rolled back the convertible top of her car and made our way around the Shenandoah Valley catching up on life stories. I love no matter how much time elapses in special relationships that it is so easy to return and pick up where you left off - such a gift!

My last week at home life only got crazier. Between rotary talks, finishing up work, and a wild rush to Chapel Hill to catch up with my old Bible study, special girl friends, adopted families, and young life friends, I found myself completely and utterly exhausted. I actually just stayed at Caribou coffee on Franklin Street for 5 hours on Friday afternoon and had old friends just come by and chat. It was a perfect day of catching up.

My grandmother and I had some special time together over lunch dates and grocery shopping. I knew my grandmother was a celebrity in Rockingham County, but after several grocery shopping experiences with her I now have a whole new appreciation of my grandmother's renown as a political mind and community servant. I mean grocery shopping with my grandmother can be a 3 hour experience: walking down the canned food aisle it is not unlikely to encounter conversations ranging from the Mayodan library closing to her opinion on the upcoming Iraqi elections. She never fails to be in full 'sass' I can assure you. An elderly church friend commented on my grandmother's black pants, and her witty immediate take was "they collect everything, but men and money."

I think possibly my favorite time during the holidays were my last 24 hours at home. I finally became a couch potato for a few hours, watched some Carolina b-ball and my first movie of the break. My emotional state upon leaving my little sanctuary of Avalon Loop was extremely mixed. The best memory, however, occurred the eve of my final night at home when my parents set on my bed and prayed over me. I think that sense of preparation and love has meant more to me than anything over the last few weeks as I have re-adjusted to my Scottish life. By the time I got on the plane, I think I could finally breathe. I caught my last glance of American football (the eagles playing the falcons) at the airport gate before my plane boarded. The reality of leaving my parents was much more stark than I had realized and I found myself in tears by the time I got to my gate. I have always been a homebody so I guess this shouldn't surprise me, but I didn't realize how much leaving them would hurt this time. I miss them a great deal now and I am thankful to know that they are coming for a visit in June.

I spent a few days in St. Andrews recovering from jet lag and then my cute girlfriends, Steph and Emily, flew to Brussels, Belgium with me. The week could not have come at a better time. I love how purposeful the Lord is when it comes to timing. Not only did I have my new girl friends with me, but also I got to see 4 other great friends from different walks of my life. We stayed with the precious and super fun Alison Holby for the week in Brussels and sweet Rebecca Rigel joined us by Thursday of the same week. I think I might be the luckiest person in the world to be loved on by such special gals. A magnificent way to start out the second part of my life abroad. We spent the first few days in Brussels walking about the Grande Place (in which we! happened to encounter the Mannekin Pis "the peeing boy" a tourist attraction for over 300 years), visiting markets and eating lots of chocolate, coffee, and Belgium waffles. On Tuesday Steph, Em, and I traveled to The Hague, Delft, and Rotterdam. Now for you true Lindsay

lovers out there you'll recount that I visited these lovely places back in September and while I found them lovely on first impression, I must admit my return was motivated by none other than the famous Dutch sweet of the "stroop waffle" - a delightful blend of thin, crisp waffles filled lightly with maple syrup. If you have had one of these bad boys before you will get my overwhelming desire for them. The girls laughed at me as I carried 8 bags of these delicacies out of the country. You better believe I'll be rationing them all semester in St. Andrews. Better still, I found a beautiful 17th century Dutch tile of an old shepherd and his flock at a local out of the way tile and print shop. Definitely my favorite trinket from abroad so far! I am hoping one day I can have a full set of antique Dutch tiles inlaid in my fireplace.

That night Steph's old roommate from Egypt, Erica, joined us for dinner and let us stay at her flat in Rotterdam for the night. Erica is Dutch and super fun. I am thankful Stephanie got to see her again and enjoy good conversation. The following morning dear old Jimmy Constantine joined us for none other than ice cream and coffee in Rotterdam. I think we were the only idiots eating ice cream in the lightly snow-covered ground and below freezing temperatures. With Jimmy, though, sweets are never to be denied. The following day, we went to Bruges, Belgium. This precious, fully preserved medieval town is beyond description and charm and is considered one of the most charming beautiful cities of Europe. The day was about as dreary and cold as one might could imagine and Bruges still had us in an awe-stricken state. We wandered about the cobblestone, winding streets and eventually made our way to the Groeninge Art Museum to meet Jimmy for the day. It was great to enjoy several Bosch, van Eyck, Campin, and van der Weyden works. I, of course, was right in my element. We eventually made our way to a Tea House and had some warm drinks and biscuits. The day before in Delft, I had the Devil's Drink (coffee with ginger and cream - might I add it was sensational), but in Bruges I felt a little tamer and just had some rich, homemade hot chocolate. Upon our evening return to Brussels, Rebecca Rigel and Alison joined us for dinner and we continued our 20 some episode marathon of *Alias*. I have never been an *Alias* fan before now, but I must admit I am now converted and am seriously thinking about going on ebay.uk just to check out used *Alias* season series. Steph, Em, and I are quite hooked. Thanks, Holby!

Our last full day in Brussels my Chapel Hill buddy, Nate, joined us. While our time was limited, it was good to enjoy some conversation with Nate for the afternoon and over dinner. Brussels happened to be his first leg of a 10 day European adventure which included visiting me, another friend in KarlsRuhle and some time skiing in the Swiss Alps. I can't begin to tell you how blessed and loved I felt by the old and new friends that surrounded me that week. I love how God knows exactly what we need when we aren't even capable of asking for it.

So, now I am back and somewhat settled. Classes get into full swing this week and I am sure before long my second home will quickly become the St. Andrews

library again. However, I am excited about my studies and what I am learning more than ever. This year has truly been confirmation of that. I have some good prospects with internships and jobs for next year, so hopefully by the next time I write again I will have exciting news. In all honesty, though, it is hard for me to think beyond St. Andrews and it saddens me that my time here will eventually come to a close. I am thankful that the relationships God has so beautifully introduced here will be a continuation of the provision He has in mind for me.

Before I conclude I would like to share a little about my dear friend, Anne Sweeney (if you recall she is my elderly friend who loves hot pink lipstick!). Her companionship has been the biggest gift since my return. Danny, her precious husband, passed away Christmas day (I mentioned in my previous email he had throat cancer). Danny developed pneumonia and died during the early Christmas morning hours. Anne's strength astounds me. I find myself visiting her hoping to give her some strength and love and instead, she showers me with more strength and love than I could ever hope to give. On Tuesday of this past week, she shared with me in detail about Danny's passing. She told me the nurse asked her to give him a hug and say goodbye. There have been few times in life when I have experienced someone older crying and Anne's tears flowed swiftly, yet peacefully. The whole experience was extremely cathartic for me because as I held her, she held me back and I found myself crying as well. Her friendship is truly a surprising joy in my life. Earlier that same day, my friend Emily and I saw five of our friends outside Anne's window and before we knew it, Anne had thrown open the window and was yelling for them to come up and join us for tea. I have never met such an incredible lady who has such a love for life. Anne, as a recent widow is quite possibly the coolest person I have ever met. I love the fact she just throws open her window and invites strangers into her warmth of her cozy home - now if that isn't Christ at work I don't know what is...

Well, that's it for now. Please update me on life, work, family, or anything you might want me to know when you get a chance. Please know you are thought about from across the great pond.

With love and thoughts,

Lindsay