

Rediscovering The Past

INTRODUCTION

This is a collection of letters written in the fall of 1995, by four Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi freshmen. The letters were written to their future grandchildren and are meant to be read as the grandchildren enter college (around 2045). The intent of these letters is to allow the future generations a view of life at the end of the 20th century; to show the culture, politics, and history that exist at this time.

Stacy Durheim



Stacy Durheim

Dear Grandchild,

I am writing this letter to you, the grandchild that I may never even meet, to try to explain to you the lifestyle of an average college student in the year 1995. I am hoping that this will both interest you and teach you a little about the politics and the history of my life.

I will first give you some of my history that has lead to my average day as an eighteen year old college student. I am now attending Texas A&M University--Corpus Christi. I have lived in Corpus Christi my entire life. My major is biology, with the emphasis on pre- professional health. The medical technology is continuously advancing. I will bet that this is still true in your lifetime also. There are eye surgeries done with lasers, kidney stones removed with water-shock therapy treatment, and everyday there are new hopes for cures of HIV and cancer. This is all very new and exciting for the people of my time.

Well, now I will get on with " A day in the life of Stacy Durham". I wake up in the morning at 7:30 a.m. My usual routine is to first eat a bowl of cereal, usually Frosted Flakes. Then, I will watch the morning news for a couple of minutes. The recent topics are the murder trial of O.J. Simpson, the trial of Susan Smith, who drowned her two children, and also the upcoming presidential election, where Clinton is up for re-election. Nothing really amazes me anymore, every time I turn on the television I see murder, injustice and corruption. I hope that things will soon take a turn for the better.

I then finish getting ready for school. I take a quick

shower, brush my teeth, and put on a little make-up. Then, rushing out the door, I grab my backpack and frantically search for my keys. I drive my 1990 Toyota Tercel about seven miles to school, trying to remember not to exceed fifty-five miles per hour on the freeway and to fasten my seat belt, which is now a law. I drive around hoping to find a parking spot, and hurry to class. My classes include algebra, political science, history of the U.S., composition, and freshman seminar.

After about 1:00 p.m., I go home and either take a nap or study for a couple of hours. Then, I go to work at a computer programming company, called MPC. There, I help write computer programs using the operating system, Linux. I also install different computer hardware. This is a really great job, because many people are still very computer-phobic. I can not wait to see how much computers have advanced by the time you read this letter. I imagine that your entire lives are ran and organized by computer systems, that is still a very frightening concept to me. After work, I sometimes go to a friend's house and hangout for a while, unless I still have a lot of homework.

Well, grandchild, I truly hope that this letter will help you get a general view of what life was like in 1995. I also hope that you are happy and successful, and that your world is bright and safe. Thank you for reading this letter and for opening your mind to a different period of time.

Love always,

Stacy Durheim



Natalie Thomas

My dearest grandchildren,

Looking out the window on a cool, sunny october day, I begin to wonder how your live have been affected by the actions of my generation. I worry that the AIDS epidemic is still in progress, and if drugs and crime are ruining the lives of my beloved grandchildren.

During the 1990s, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS, became an apparent threat to the lives of millions. This lethal virus which is spread through sexual contact, attacks the bodies immune system leaving the person vulnerable to such illnesses as the common cold or flu. Education of teenagers about sex became popular, and was taught at school and through the television in various ways such as commercials. During the 1970s, free love and sex were promoted, but during my generation, abstinence was the key to a long and healthy life free of disease.

Drugs were not "in" during my generation, in fact, many campaigns such as commercials and rallies against drugs were quite common. They were used to educate the public on the affects drug abuse has on our health and perception of life. For example, drugs can alter a person's mood and consciousness, making them less interested in achievements and in the future. A drug abuser is also more likely to experience health problems such as memory loss and seizures. Although such campaigns existed during the 1990s, drug abuse was still high and more lethal than ever. Drugs, common in other decades, were more potent than ever before. For instance, with the developement of new skills in the production of marijuana, scientifically known as cannabis sativa, its affects were 100 percent more potent than earlier generations. The widespread use of hallucinogens, such as lsd, and stimulants, such as cocaine, were common, and the abuse of prescription pills became popular.

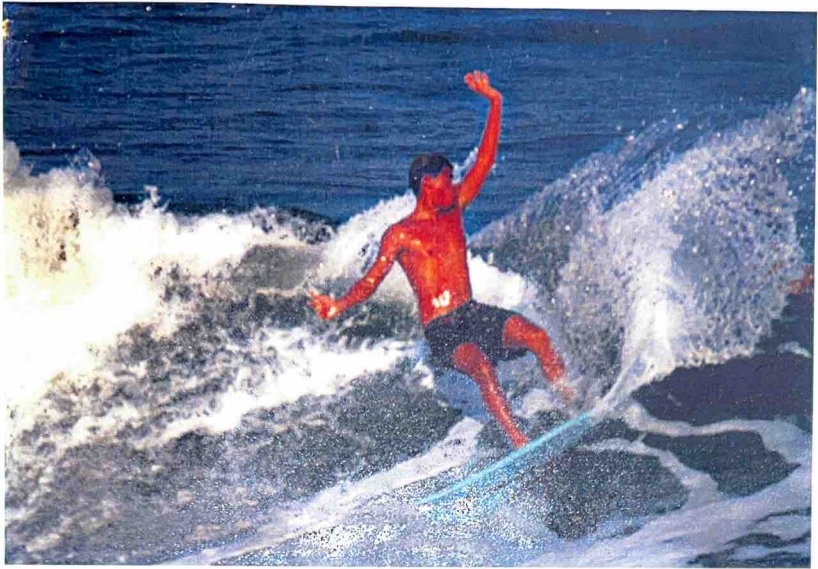
The crime rate was very high during my generation, because of a decline in morals. Teenagers, too young to support themselves, were having children. Gang related activities became common among various age groups. "Kids killing kids" was the ideal expression used to define crime. Drive-by-shootings became popular, and manslaughter rates were higher than ever. Laws declined police power, thus the public remained unprotected against the gangs and other dangerous factions.

My beloved grandchildren, I sincerely hope that the standard of living has improved during your generation. I hope that the AIDS epidemic is no longer a threat, and that drugs and crime are not destroying your precious lives. I wish to apologize for the actions taken by my generation, and I hope that future generations will learn from our mistakes.

Love,

Natalie

Cris Dennen



Chris Dennen

Dear Grandchildren,

This letter's purpose is to inform or interest you in the everyday life of a college student at Texas A & M University Corpus Christi in the year 1995. Also, the importance of the technology and history of this time will provide you with some sort of an example from someone who is here.

The difficulties in today's society are more of a mental block than they are a physical one. The thoughtfulness of people is down and life is somewhat forgotten. No one looks at you directly in the face, they pretend as if you are not there. Mentally escaping from this, you have to think about school academically. The problem I have encountered mostly has been the technological difference between college and high school.

College is so much different than high school. Technology is the main aspect that deters me. Computers are everywhere, many are harddrives with some even being CD-ROM's. If you are not somewhat computer literate than you are lost. The school issues out these cards called Sandollars, in which it works like a bank card. You have a certain amount of money which allows you to buy food, books, school supplies, or any other thing you can get on the university campus. The school also has televisions in every building stating special dates or a breaking news story, such as O.J. Simpson verdict in his trial for murder. O.J. Simpson is a celebrity who was on trial for the murder of his wife. The library is huge with materials containing any information you might need. They have computers there to tell you where every piece of information in the library is.

As I entered my political history class, I was amazed by

the equipment in there. The teacher came in to class and started using a microphone, so the class could hear him. He then used hand-controlling device to change a computer screen to project pictures upon a board on the wall. These advancements I have never seen before and was confound by them.

After eating lunch, I read a newspaper article in which it said George Bush, Jr., the governor of Texas at the time, signed a bill becoming effective January 1, 1996, which stated that carrying a concealed weapon is legal. This article upset me as I walked to my car to go home, envisioning a person pulling gun out of his jacket and blowing my head off.

As I left school, I stopped by Circle-K, a convenient store which carried items such as food, drinks, medicine, and candy. Circle-K used to have some competition from a different store called Seven-Eleven. I think they had some sort of buy out of other store and Circle-K came out the big winner.

I arrived at my house and unlocked my door. Safe and sound in my room, I turned on my compact-disc player, a way of listening to music, and I was transcending into my peace-Away from the pressures I had encountered just a few hours before-Away in my own solitude.

Love,

Chris G. Dennen



Rebecca G. Gomez

November 7, 1995

My Distinguished Grandchildren,

With your first days of college in mind, I write this letter to you. You will be eighteen and starting a new chapter in your life when you read this. Knowing what you are going through, I feel I have some insight, after all, I too am experiencing the same type of events. I want you to know how I began my first year as an adult.

Despite my love of learning and the joy I had in the discussions with my instructors, I found that high school was not the place for me. Therefore, I decided I was not going back to school. I informed my mother of my decision. My argument was: I wasn't dropping out, instead I was becoming a student of life. My decision visibly broke my parents' hearts; yet, they supported me one-hundred percent.

My parents had every right to be disappointed, after all, it was considered a terrible act to "drop out" of high school. The general consensus was that all a "drop out" could hope for was a job at McDonald's (the biggest hamburger chain in America). Despite this, I KNEW I was making the right decision for me. With my mother at me side, I officially checked-out of high school. The difficult part of the whole process was the disappointment in my instructors' eyes. They were so certain that I was making the biggest mistake of my life.

The exhilaration I felt the next morning, is indescribable, it was like being reborn. The grass was green, the sky was blue, and for the first time in my life I was FREE! Never before

did I see the world, I always knew it was there but had never noticed. I found myself overwhelmed with joy and peace. THIS was the beginning of my journey, but not the start of my adulthood.

When I refer to the start of my first year as an adult, I think of 1995. This year, I received my G.E.D. three days after my eighteenth birthday (February 7th). At this point, I was unsure about going back to school, but, your great grandmother, Eloisa Gomez, was determined to open the door for me. I applied to Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi in March. After passing my A.C.T. and T.A.S.P. exams, in April, I was accepted into the University. Your great grandmother was twice as excited as I was; she literally jumped up and down. Being accepted was the easy part, now I actually had to go back and rejoin the world of school; I was just a tiny bit apprehensive.

As summer began, I voted for the first time (in the mayor's election). It felt good to vote, it had been something I had looked forward to for a long time. After, I bought my first car (Diva), I decided to take the driver's license exam.

With my tiny apprehension growing into a small panic, I began working as an office assistant for the Social Science Department on campus a week before classes started and was able to get a feel for the campus. I found college very different from public school. It took me quite some time to adjust to having a hour between classes; I even felt guilty the first time I took a soda into class with me; I kept expecting someone to yell at me. What I found the most surprising was that no one forced me to do my studies and it was extremely easy NOT to do them. I also discovered that it was important to have fun and

even more important to laugh, because you can quickly burn out if you only study and work.

Soon after school began, I found that my perceptions quickly changed. I no longer dreaded school, instead I found myself looking forward to class (some more than others). I began to see my professors as tools to aid me in reaching my goal of getting a doctorate. Most importantly, I realized that I am an adult. No one will reprimand me if I don't go to class or decide not to turn in an assignment, of course there will be consequences, but the decision is mine.

At the same time, it is not easy going to school and work. Because of this, I learned to balance my homework, class time, work hours, and extracurricular activities. By the time Friday comes I am exhausted, but I am loving every tiring minute of college. I have been exposed to a whole other way of thinking and of seeing life. I have learned so much this year, and it's not quite over yet. I have grown up. I am an adult.

My dearest grandchildren, your about to enter an exciting time in your life. Enjoy it. Don't worry about pleasing anyone but yourself. Take things a day at a time; don't try to do everything. Have fun, just don't let your classes suffer. Always remember that I had to go through the same things you are doing and I did it way back in 1995. Good luck.

Your grandmother,

Rebecca G. Gomez