

## Life in Minnesota 15

Well, it seems it has been a while since I wrote, last May I think. Much has happened –all positive for a change.

I just finished my first semester in grad school (which by the way I got accepted to) and managed a 4.0 in all of my classes. Surprised even myself because the classes were hard, trying to understand academeese style of writing in textbooks that are as dense as concrete. Very hard to comprehend on a first read which is very annoying. I like to read, but this is like swimming through molasses –a lot of “isms, ologies/ological” in theories and systems. Who ever thought that studying families could be so scientifically oriented and obtuse? Just let me loose with clients so we can “talk turkey” okay? –no I’m kidding ☺

I should explain that originally I wanted to get the masters in clinical psychology but the moment I opened my mouth at the interview, I was redirected to the Marriage Family Therapy program because I am a “systems” person, or so I was told. They told me “You’re in the right church, just the wrong pew.” So here I am in the MFT program and loving it. It’s a 3-year program with one year of practicum, but I’ve requested to do the practicum in my second year rather than putting it off in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. It might be another two years of supervision before I can get licensed. I’d like to run a specialty practice working with seniors which given our numbers in the coming years, will be needed.

From day one I was up to my teeth with reading, writing, weekly quizzes and practicum which started on day one. I like Argosy University’s approach to training future therapists. The academics are there but it’s not the traditional professor pontificating from a podium type of learning. We’re pretty much responsible for reading and learning the material on our own; they cover some of it after the quizzes, but the main focus is getting into small groups and doing the role playing –therapist vs. client(s) and then switch roles. They guarantee that we will be excellent therapists when they’re through with us, and I believe it. It’s a little unnerving to feel so exposed switching from therapist to client and back again.

How is very happy at Imation and they are happy with him. Currently, while developing a product development process for the company and mentoring other program managers without certificates or training, he is also the program manager for XtremeMac, situated in Florida which How has been flying to and back again about every two weeks or so. They’re called XtremeMac because they make accessories for Apple products and with How’s background having worked at Apple, it made him ideal to function in this capacity despite all the travel. Imation gave him a company VISA credit card so his traveling expenses are covered.

My book has been reviewed by two published psychologists and I will finally self-publish early next year with the reviews printed on the cover. They loved the book and were quite effusive about it, which is encouraging.

Following Christmas How and I are taking a 4-day vacation flying to visit our grandchildren in Nashville. We’re very excited to be seeing them and they are as well. Brayden, our three year old keeps asking when Nana and Papa is coming. Telling him “soon” is an eternity to him, but it’s wonderful to hear him talking and wanting to see us. I’m so glad we’ve used Skype/Oovoo to see them on weekends so they don’t feel quite estranged from us as most

are due to living in separate states. I love the immediacy of being able to interact with them on the computer.

We usually have our parakeet Ariel on our shoulders for these talks and boy does he get noisy when we're talking. He has about a 40-word vocabulary including saying "Shabbat Shalom." Some of the speech includes four or five word sentences and he never reverses words, interestingly enough because we say some phrases which basically combine other sentiments, and still it doesn't mess him up. Makes you wonder, doesn't it, how someone with a brain the size of a pearl of rice can talk so much? And he learns quickly. In the last few months he has learned to say, "Let's make coffee," or "You're too noisy." "Give me a kiss" with smacking noises is an all day favorite. We're teaching him now, "I can talk; can you fly?" We just love him to death, the grandkids too. Destiny says she'd like to reach through the monitor to touch him and hug us.

I sing in three choirs now; the newest one is a professional early music ensemble called "Schola" and next month we've been hired to do a recording of a new mass with orchestra. It's nice to have paid gigs singing the music that you love.

In April '11 How will have been at Imation a year and we're planning to go on a cruise to the Bahamas which will be the first time for us. Includes stays at a hotel and access to a car. We fly to Ft. Lauderdale to connect with the cruise ship. Everything's paid for, we just have to pay for airfare to Ft. Lauderdale which How can probably combine business visiting XtremeMac. Then we'd only have to pay for one ticket. It will take some maneuvering but we'll work out something.

Well, that's it for now. I'm writing this during school break before starting spring semester so I'm going to finish knitting some things and do some personal reading which I've put off since September. I hate that part of being in school –no time for other reading. I read no less than 3 books at one time, but my most favorite is an eighteenth century historical novel about the Jacobite uprising in Scotland against England. Reading about Scottish Highlanders is like reading about the Vikings. These guys don't mess around when they're being messed with.

Until next time....Love, Maria

*December 21, 2010*