

Welcome To The Craziness

The family received news today that our extended family has grown by one. Around 3PM, we got a phone call from Alaska informing us that my cousin Charnel had delivered a 6lb. 3oz. baby girl, Chloe Mae who is being welcomed I am sure by her big 2 year old sister, Kyli Nicole. 20 inches long and has a thick head of black hair (can she mail some to me...or just send it back with grandma and grandpa when they fly up on Saturday). One very cool thing, the proud papa who is on deployment in Afghanistan was on the phone listening as their second daughter made her entrance into the world. When Charnel called and talked to Mom, she told her to call everyone. Well... everyone but two people she called had already heard via text messaging or were called by someone else whom it seems tells everyone in the world after she hears any juicy gossip. But all is well – healthy baby girl with ten fingers, ten toes, and healthy mama. Won't be able to see and spoil her until March when Rich returns from Afghanistan and they come South for a visit. I'm surprised there haven't been any pictures sent over cyberspace. What are you waiting for?!

Welcome Chloe (I like that name)



Bored With The Afghans

My cousin and her small family moved to Alaska last November. Alaska?! Who goes to Alaska! (HEHE... small inside joke). Char's husband was stationed there after his training in the U.S. Army. In March, Rich was deployed to Afghanistan but he

is allowed to communicate via phone or computer from time to time. He will be able to return for a week or so for the arrival of their second child (reportedly another little girl). I chatted with him a few weeks ago to discover that he is stationed in a relatively safe zone... in fact, he was bored. I think I would rather be bored in Afghanistan than being in the heat of battle somewhere else..

My sister got a phone call this afternoon from Alaska. It seems that Rich helped set up for a concert that will be taking place featuring a famous country star. Both Char and Christi were upset that they could not be there, too because Rich got to meet him and got his autograph. I told them... if you wanted to meet him so badly, you could both enlist and join him. Don't suppose that is very likely in their familial circumstances. But I believe that they were both promised autographs. Hopefully, some pictures as well.

I wonder what Christi would have done if instead of Toby Keith there were stars of the WWF or WWE or whatever the so called "professional wrestling" group calls themselves. I believe it has been downgraded to "sports entertainment." Honestly, it reminds me of a soap opera with all the convoluted story lines and obviously staged matches. .. good for a laugh. However, somehow there is a number of members in my family who enjoy it. I still remember running outside on Saturday mornings when dad turned it on. To each his own, I guess. I would much rather see Toby Keith in person. Of course, there are other celebrities I would like to meet.

An Afgan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky

I just finished reading a really interesting book about a girl named Farah Ahmedi. She grew up in Afghanistan, and when she was only 7 years old, she stepped on a land mine and was almost killed. She was one of the wounded children chosen to get medical care in Germany, so she had good medical care for 2 years, but it came with the price of loneliness because her family had to stay behind in Afghanistan, she didn't speak German, and no one at the hospital spoke her language. Her leg was amputated, and her other leg was rebuilt without a knee, leaving her unable to bend it. When she returned to Afghanistan as a 9-year-old, the Taliban was starting to take over, and a rocket hit her house, killing her father and two sisters. Her brothers were forced to try to flee to Pakistan in fear of being drafted or executed by the Taliban, and she hasn't heard from them since. Since she and her mother were the only members of her family left, they were forced to flee the Taliban also – we've all heard about how the Taliban don't treat women very well, and women couldn't even go out in public without men. This was difficult for Farah and her mother since they didn't have any men left in their family. They spent 4 years as refugees in Pakistan until they were finally granted approval into the World Relief's American Refugee program. After the long process of applying and finally getting approved, they were waiting to leave for America when September 11, 2001 happened, and their trip was cancelled as no foreigners were being allowed into the country. Within 6 months however, the program was reinstated, and they came to America.

The book chronicles all the adventures, trials, and tribulations it took for Farah to become the successful American citizen she is today. It was a VERY interesting

read; from the details of life in Afghanistan under the Taliban to the struggles of an Afgan widow and her daughter getting used to the American way of life. In fact, they had been through so much, that when they got to America, they were certain that their American hosts were actually slave owners who were trying to imprison them. It's a wonderful story about the triumph of the human spirit, and I recommend the book to anyone who likes learning about different parts of the world, other cultures, or just likes reading a good non-fiction life story. In fact, her book was published when she entered a Good Morning America contest and became a finalist. I heard about it because Farah attended the rival high school to the one where I went, so for me, it was interesting to read about the area I grew up in as seen through the eyes of someone who had been through as much as Farah and was seeing the area for the first time as an immigrant. [Check it out!](#)