

Hello All,

Finals and Christmas break managed to keep me fairly busy, and prevented me from sending an e-mail at the end of December. For that reason, I am sending this e-mail and then the next one won't come until the end of February.

December began very well for the ND Chorale, Section 1A of O'Neill Hall, and me. The Chorale wrapped up its fall season with performances of Handel's Messiah on November 30 and December 1. Both concerts went very well and had huge crowds. It's possible that the recordings of those concerts could be made into a CD in the future, but I'll have to keep you updated on that. Then, on Sunday the 2nd, O'Neill Section 1A, my home section, won the Grace Cup Football Championship over Keough Hall, our neighbors and rival dorm. The Grace Cup is named after Grace Hall, the former home of both O'Neill and Keough men, and is played for every year by the winners of the intra-hall tournaments in O'Neill and Keough.

The following week was highlighted by sign-up for classes for this semester, which went very well for me, as well as Miss ND and O'Neill's winter formal, SnO'Neill. Miss ND is a humorous pageant hosted by the men of O'Neill that pits ND's best and brightest ladies against each other for the coveted title of Miss ND. They present talents, answer questions, and, of course, model their finest formal dress in an effort to win this title. SnO'Neill was also a lot of fun, even though no one could figure out how to dim the lights at our host location in the Mendoza College of Business.

The only real highlight of the rest of the semester was the South Dining Hall Christmas Dinner on December 11. The food, which included prime rib and swordfish, was amazing, and we had almost the entire section there eating together. After that, finals started, and though all of my finals went well, it was not a lot of fun.

I returned to Dubuque on December 19 and that night we had dinner to celebrate my dad's birthday. I got my first semester grades on Christmas Eve, and when I announced them at dinner, Jordan said, "We didn't send you to Notre Dame to be average." (I had gotten 3 A's and two A-'s) Christmas was very nice and it was good to see all of my family and friends over those couple of weeks. On December 28, Jordan left for Australia to compete with the USA Swimming National Junior Team. He swam very well and brought back a bronze medal as a part of the 400 free relay team.

On January 5, I returned to ND to start a week long tour of the Northeast US with the Chorale. We had stops in the Cleveland area; Scranton, PA; New York City; Philadelphia; D.C.; and Pittsburgh. While in New York, I had the opportunity to see "Chicago" on Broadway. While in D.C., I went to the top of the Washington Monument, which I had not done in my previous three trips to D.C. Another highlight of the trip, for me at least, was stopping at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and getting to see the rooms where our government was first developed.

We returned to campus on Sunday, and classes started today (Tuesday). This semester, my classes are a little more along the lines of what I'm actually planning on studying. I'm taking two history classes, one is called "Victorian Britain" and the other is an art history class called "English Art and Society". I'm also taking a seminar on Psycholinguistics and my intro to Philosophy. Rounding out my class schedule is the second of three Spanish classes that I will take here, "Advanced Grammar and Writing". As I write this, the only class I've actually attended is my seminar, so I don't have much to say about the actual classes.

While it was nice to be back for those few weeks, I'm also glad to be back on campus, getting back into a schedule and continuing to work towards my degree. I will be back in town for a short time at the beginning of February, mostly to go to the High School State Swim Meet, and my spring break is the first week of March.

In Notre Dame,

Jesse