

Feb 7, 2015  
(December Letter)

Hi Samantha,

We have obviously got a bit behind – and out of sequence – but it shouldn't hurt since the objective of the letters is pleasure! I see from your Facebook page (and your texts) that you are very busy with assignments and other activities so I'm not surprised that writing letters gets pushed down on your list. I have fewer excuses, however.

I have been wondering how much your studies have changed the way you look at recreation, leisure, and tourism activities – and even your own activities. I had a bit of an exposure to some of the perspectives on these things as a result of meeting and chatting with a colleague who has been doing research on the sociology of leisure. He was particularly interested in what he called “serious leisure” – referring to leisure activities that people treat on more than a casual basis. Perhaps you have come across his writing – his name is Robert Stebbins and he is at the University of Calgary.

He argues that serious leisure is different than “casual” leisure or “project” leisure because people get very devoted to these activities, whereas “casual” leisure is more like a “take-it-or-leave-it” approach and “project” leisure is specific to a particular (often short-term) project. I'm not sure what the implications are for each of these different types, but I expect that they might affect the ways in which activities would be organized for the different types of peoples' involvement. Perhaps your studies will help to identify these differences.

Do you find that your studies have changed the way you view some of the ordinary things you did before – like working with Saanich, hanging out with your friends, or even babysitting? If it does, I hope that you enjoy thinking about these things in new ways. This was one of the things that I have always found exciting about education (when it is done right). It was also the main reason why I changed my major from Math and Physics, to Chemistry, English, Religious Studies, and then to Sociology – since I got intrigued with the new ways of looking at my own life and its surrounding context that the studies introduced. I still find new insights about these things to be exciting.

I hope that your midterm break will be rejuvenating for you. Fran and I are looking forward to using ours for the trip to the west coast on the 20<sup>th</sup>. We haven't decided what we will be doing – other than attending Evelien's baptism on the 21<sup>st</sup> – but I expect that we will be able to spend some of the time in Victoria. It will be nice to hang out with you as well.

Love,