

## The 2011 Keeping-It-Real Allison Family Christmas Letter



Do you remember last year's family Christmas letter we sent you? That was when we announced that Stacy was pregnant. (Yeah, we were VERY surprised about that too.) We'll, I hope you're sitting down right now... because we are happy to announce that... Stacy is not pregnant this year (that we know of anyway). So take a deep breath and release it slowly— just like in all of our numerous Lamaze classes. Grab a cup o' joe or hot chocolate. Sit down and enjoy feeling great about your family by reading the truth about our family. Hey, it's our annual ministry of encouragement to you. We don't call it The 2011 Keeping-It-Real Allison Family Christmas Letter for nothing.

Yeah, I know I look older, but I still feel young. The problem is, my body isn't getting the message. You know you're getting older when the phrase, "Pulled an all-nighter" means you didn't get up at 3 AM to go to the bathroom. By definition, you are getting old when: 1) You have so little hair you can comb it with your fingers. 2) You must use a comb for your beard. And 3) When you shave your face you also shave your ears. But enough about Stacy. As far as I can see, it's only going to get stranger as we all grow older together. This May, Emily will graduate from college, Aubrey will graduate from high school, and Ivy will turn one. YIKES! That's quite a spread. Like the bumper sticker says, "Live the wild life... have kids."

After all these years of raising teenagers, Stacy is actually starting to smile again, thanks to **Ivy Alyse Allison, (7 months)**. Our very first night at home with baby Ivy is best summed up by 1 Corinthians 15:51: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." I must confess that when Ivy smiles at me and says, "Da-da," I truly become putty in her little hands. One day shortly after Ivy was born, this is what I said to all my other kids: "We really blew it with you guys, but this time we're gonna get it right." I think they thought I was joking. But was I? Hmmm.



If anyone from our family grows up to be a comedian, it will probably be **Sadey, (10)**. Before Ivy was born, I was on a dad/daughter date with Sadey, and I said, "I find your mom attractive and mysterious." Sadey said flatly, "She's a pregnant woman who cleans a lot." A few days after Ivy was born, Sadey said, "Dad, you and Ivy have the same amount of hair." I said, "You sure know how to hurt a guy." Without missing a beat, Sadey said, "That was a compliment for someone your age." She's got pretty good self-esteem too. One day I asked her a question, and she said, "I'm sorry, I can't hear you over the sound of how awesome I am."

I was walking around the house without a shirt the other day. (Not a pretty sight.) When I saw my wife and daughters **Libby (13)** and Sadey, I started to flex my "muscles." My wife looked at me strangely and asked, "What *are* you doing?" Striking another striking pose of strength and dexterity, I said, "I want my daughters to know what a strong man looks like." Libby looked disgusted and said, "No need. I'll look it up on Google." Libby's quite the thinker too. She recently illuminated my mind with something I never knew. She said, "Did you know the more you eat the harder your abs get." I said, "Somehow that doesn't sound right." It's amazing what kids learn from TV and the Internet.



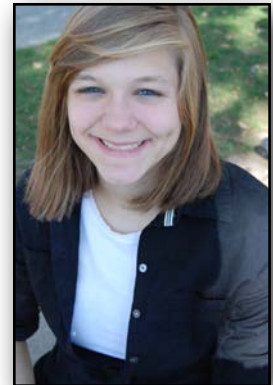
**Bill, Stacy, Emily, Bill 3, Aubrey, Josey, Libby, Sadey, & Ivy wish you and yours a Merry Christmas!**

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**Josey, (15)**, is the next aspiring driver in our house. That's right. I see more gray hair, loss of sleep, and getting older faster in my near future. But I might also learn to be cooler, thanks to Josey. One day, Josey attempted to give me how-to-be-cool lessons. Promptly after her lesson, I got on Twitter and tweeted: "My teenage daughter is giving me cool lessons. BOOSH!" The lessons stopped immediately. I guess when it comes to cool, I'm a quick learner. I love stalking Josey's Facebook. One of my favorite Josey status updates is, "My life flashed before my eyes. It was really boring." I also like this short poem I found on Facebook that I think Josey wrote about me: "When the temperature gets too high, the elderly start to die." One last tidbit about Josey: She thinks I'm nose. At least that's what she wrote in her diary.

It turns out that **Aubrey (17)** is a track/cross country star. Who knew, right? After consistently proving that she could win in her track events (eventually going to state), the coach asked me, "Where have you been hiding Aubrey?" I said, "Coach, I've known Aubrey all my life and I've never seen her run across the backyard." After Aubrey took 1st place in the 400 at her first ever track meet, my heart was filled with joy. I said to her, "It's so good to know that you are fast enough to run away from boys." The more I watch Aubrey grow up, the more I settle into this firm conviction: Not only do I believe in parentally arranged *marriages*, but I also believe in parentally arranged *dating*. With six unmarried daughters, I say it's time to get back to the Bible's way of marrying them up.



My one and only son, **Bill (19)**, is "an undecided comm major" at Bradley University. As the lone man left in the house, I can't win a single argument these days. So I REALLY appreciate it when Bill comes back home to watch Da Bears with me. On a recent visit with us, Stacy said, "When Ivy is 9 years-old, Sadey will be out of the house." Bill responded, "When Ivy's 9, I'll be living back home." Can you say, "Failure to launch"? When Bill wrote essays for scholarships, he crafted this little ditty about his life with so many sisters: "The complete saturation of females in my life has helped me in understanding the opposite sex, *as much as any man can*." All these sisters also might be why he tends to be a little overboard about masculinity sometimes. One day I heard him say to one of his friends, "If your dad doesn't have a beard then you've got two moms."

Lord willing, **Emily (20)**, will graduate from Moody Bible Institute this May with a highly employable Philosophical Theology degree. (Please contact me if your church or ministry is looking to hire a philosophical theologian.) If it weren't for Twitter, I wouldn't know anything about the last three years of my oldest daughter's life. One time she tweeted, "Please pray for my husband...mostly just that he exists." (Oh I have been!) Another time she tweeted, "When I get married I hope I can skip that stage where you take Christmas card pictures with your dog." (Stacy and I have one of these pictures.) And—my favorite tweet—bemoaning the plight of growing up a missionary kid, she said, "I should keep track of how many times somebody tells me they saw my face on a refrigerator."



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