

**Eloise party at the NAMTA Montessori conference hotel in
Portland, Oregon
March 2005, typed from notes dictated by Zahra Sherman (age
4) to her Amala (Susan Stephenson) and
Baba (Jim) and Lala (Aunt Ursula)**

Friday:

(This is from my journal. Amala took lots of pictures for me to make a book.)

Tonight I packed my suitcase, said good-bye to my parents, and told them they could phone me on Lala's cell phone if they get lonely. As soon as we got to the hotel and up the glass elevator to our room I unpacked my suitcase and Amala started reading me the book about Eloise who lived in a hotel. When we got to the part about the lobby and the potted plants we put our shoes back on and took the glass elevator back down stairs to investigate the lobby and look for potted plants. There were a lot. We also went to see the swimming pool but it was covered up so we asked why at the front desk. The hotel person told us that it is only uncovered and used for swimming in the summer. I'll come back.

When we came back to our room we went out on the balcony to see the moon. It was a sliver. Then we got our sleeping bags ready, Ursula and I did, and I took a bath. I asked Amala if there was anything else special at the hotel and she got a backpack out of her suitcase that looks like a little horse. She got it for me in Texas and I get to keep it. I put my sweater in it. Baba and Amala have a bed with a lot of pillows on it. There is one pillow on each with the word "sweet dreams" on it. I got to use one of those. Baba read books to me while Amala and Lala got ready for bed and then we all chose our breakfasts for room service and hung the menu on the outside of the door and someone will pick it up at midnight. Amala said it would be a man bringing room service because men are stronger than women. She just wanted to make Ursula yell at her so she said that joke.

Both Eloise and I live on the top floor of the hotel. Eloise is make-belief but it is still fun to have an Eloise party.

Saturday:

Lala and I woke up very early but we whispered for a long time so

Amala and Baba could keep sleeping. I told Lala that I wished it were still the first day because I really like to unpack my suitcase. Finally the room service person brought us breakfast. It was a woman. We call breakfast "petit dejeuner" just like Eloise does. That is French. The petit dejeuner was wheeled into the room on a special cart covered with a tablecloth and cloth napkins and pretty silverware and china dishes. We had fresh fruit and juice, and milk and cereal and toast and jam and I don't remember what else. I was so excited that I didn't eat very much but I love room service. We ate in our pajamas. Amala wears a nightgown but I never heard of anything like that before.

Now it is night and I am back at my hotel. I decided to stay another night. Tonight Amala gave me another chess lesson and I learned about pawns and bishops and knights. They each have a special way to move and we played games. Baba read me a simply science book about spiders another one about Eloise in Paris. We decided to visit the lobby again and saw a man playing the piano. I want to learn to play the piano because my mama knows how. Today we took the glass elevator up and down a lot of times and could see the mountains and the hill where our house is. We are living on the 15th floor. Our room is 1559. I know how to find it and how to use the key to make the door open. Before we went to bed we put lotion on our bodies and feet and hands and faces. It is hotel lotion and we get to keep it. At first it worried me that I would stay all gunky but then I kept rubbing it in and finally it was all rubbed in and my skin was soft. I get to take home the rest of the lotion.

Tonight Lala is sleeping in one of the beds and Amala is sleeping on the floor with me. She likes to read before she goes to sleep so I snuggled into my sleeping bag. Lala showed me how to do it so that my knees can stick out of the bottom to get air when they need to. I think sleeping bags are more fun than beds. Well anyway Amala read her book and told me I didn't have to go to sleep but that I should just rest and try to keep my eyes open and I don't remember going to sleep but I did very soon. I like sleeping in a sleeping bag a lot.

Sunday:

This morning Baba want down to the conference early and phoned us to say that there were bagels and lots of fruit waiting for me so we got dressed and took the elevator down to eat with him at the conference. I watched a movie about Montessori schools but I didn't know what *high achievement* is and I have heard the word *Montessori* but I didn't know what that meant either. Amala told me that Montessori was a

woman who changed schools. When I heard about what schools were like before I was glad that I get to go to a Montessori school. Children used to not have the freedom to walk around or talk or work with materials. I would not like that.

I got tired of watching movies so Amala and I took the elevator back to our room and played chess. Now I know how to move knights and pawns, and bishops, and rooks and the king and the queen. The queen goes on her color and can do just about anything she wants.

We packed our suitcases and I checked under the beds and in the drawers and in the closet and in the bathroom to see that we didn't leave anything. When I told Amala that I wish we could take the hotel chess set she told me that it didn't belong to the hotel but that she and Baba had brought it for me. I am very excited about that. When I get home I am going to tell my parents all about chess and that when a person loses he should say "I am very glad that you won and I enjoyed playing chess with you" to the person who didn't win, and then that person should say "Thank you. I enjoyed playing with you too." but sometimes we play games were no one wins. That is good. Also I am going to see if I can have room service at home, like Eloise.

The end.