

Dear Bob,



Our third grade class recently read the book *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown. In the story, the main character, Flat Stanley, was flattened by a bulletin board. When he wanted to go to California to visit some friends, his family folded him up, put him in an envelope and mailed him there. What a way to travel!

To help our class learn about our world in a new way, I am mailing Flat Stanley to you. I hope you will be a gracious host and show Flat Stanley around your town or city during his time with you. Please write about the places Flat Stanley visited and the things you did together. Send the letter, Flat Stanley, and a picture of Stanley in your town, back to my school by **THE END OF SEPTEMBER**. My class, teacher, and I can't wait to hear about Flat Stanley's "adventures" with you!

Thank you for helping me with this project. I wish I could fold myself up and visit you too!

Love,

Grace Pettit

Please send correspondence to:

(child's name)

Mrs. Kraus' Class

St. Patrick School

Center Avenue

Weston, WV 26452

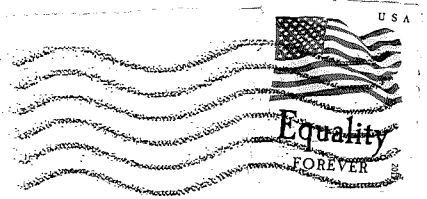


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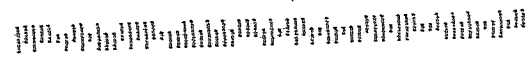
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BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

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September 9, 2013

Ms. Gracie Pettit
St. Patrick School
Center Ave.
Weston, WV 26452

Dear Gracie,

Flat Stanley arrived here in Texas in good condition. When I first opened the envelope and saw him, I thought maybe that the long time he was sealed in the envelope would have made him sad. It's a long way from West Virginia to Texas - especially when you're in an envelope carried by the United States Postal Service. If I were locked up in a dark room for a long time like Flat Stanley had been locked up in a dark envelope for a long time, I would be sad. But Flat Stanley told me that, other than being thirsty, he was feeling fine. He actually sounded happy. He said the time he had spent in the dark envelope had allowed him some quality quiet time. Even though this happened, Flat Stanley told me it was good to be outside of the envelope in the light again. It took a while for his eyes to adjust to the light. But that was okay. When he could finally see, he looked at me and said I looked exactly like you had described me. That made me feel good.

I knew that Flat Stanley had a good outlook on life when we first talked. I liked him right away. He seemed to like me too. Here are a bunch of pictures about the time we spent together. My wife, Monika, was first in Corpus Christi helping her father and then in Seattle helping our son Jeremiah, so she was not here during Flat Stanley's visit. We would've probably had a better time if she were here, but we did okay.

Thank you for introducing me to Flat Stanley. He is a good friend.

Sincerely



Robert J. Marks II¹

¹This letter does not necessarily represent the views of and has not been reviewed or approved by Baylor University or Flat Stanley. -Thank you.



Figure 1: When he first got here, I wanted to know how Flat Stanley got flat, so we went outside and sat on a bench and Flat Stanley told me all about what happened. He said getting flat didn't hurt as much as most people think. "When someone takes a picture of you," he explained, "you are flat in the picture. That doesn't hurt at all." And Flat Stanley is right! Look at the pictures above. I am flat, but it didn't hurt at all. I think, though, if I were run over by a heavy truck and made flat, that would hurt. So it's really not the same thing. It would be nice to be flat though. I could go see my grandson Tristan in Seattle really cheap. Like Stanley coming here to see me, it would only cost a postage stamp. The time in the dark would be okay. I could do that for all the money that I would save on an airplane ticket. But when I got there, it would be hard for me to hug him if I was flat.

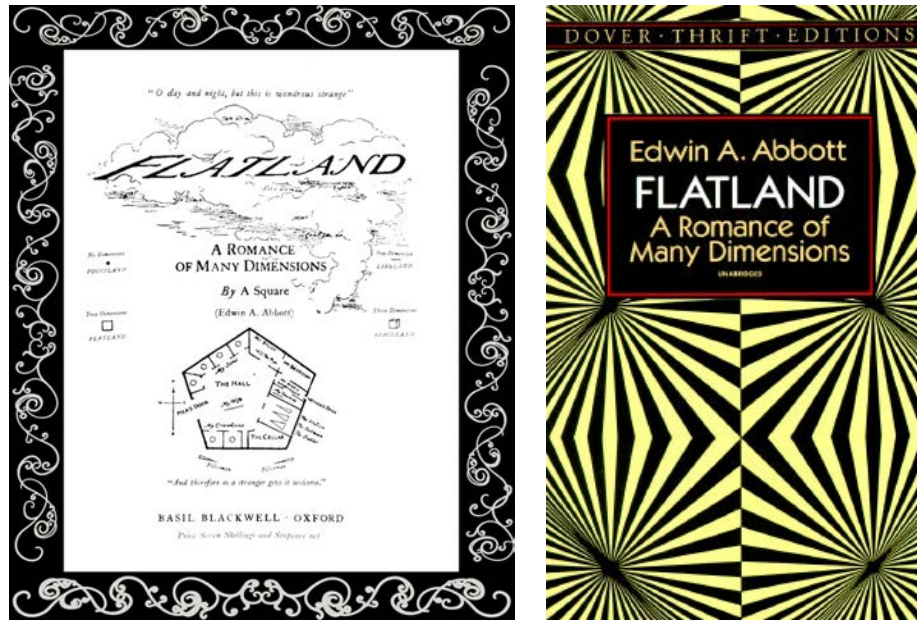


Figure 2: I asked Flat Stanley if he had ever read a book called *Flatland*. It was a book written over 125 years ago that told the story of people that were flat like Stanley that lived on a flat surface. I asked him if he thought he might like to live in Flatland with other flat people. He said no. If he lived in Flatland he can go back and forth and right and left but he could never go up and down. Flat Stanley likes to go up and down to see things in three dimensions like we do. He was excited that there was a book called *Flatland* and said he wanted to read it as soon as he possibly could. He couldn't decide between the free version of the book that is available on the web, or ordering it off of Amazon.com. I like free stuff best myself.

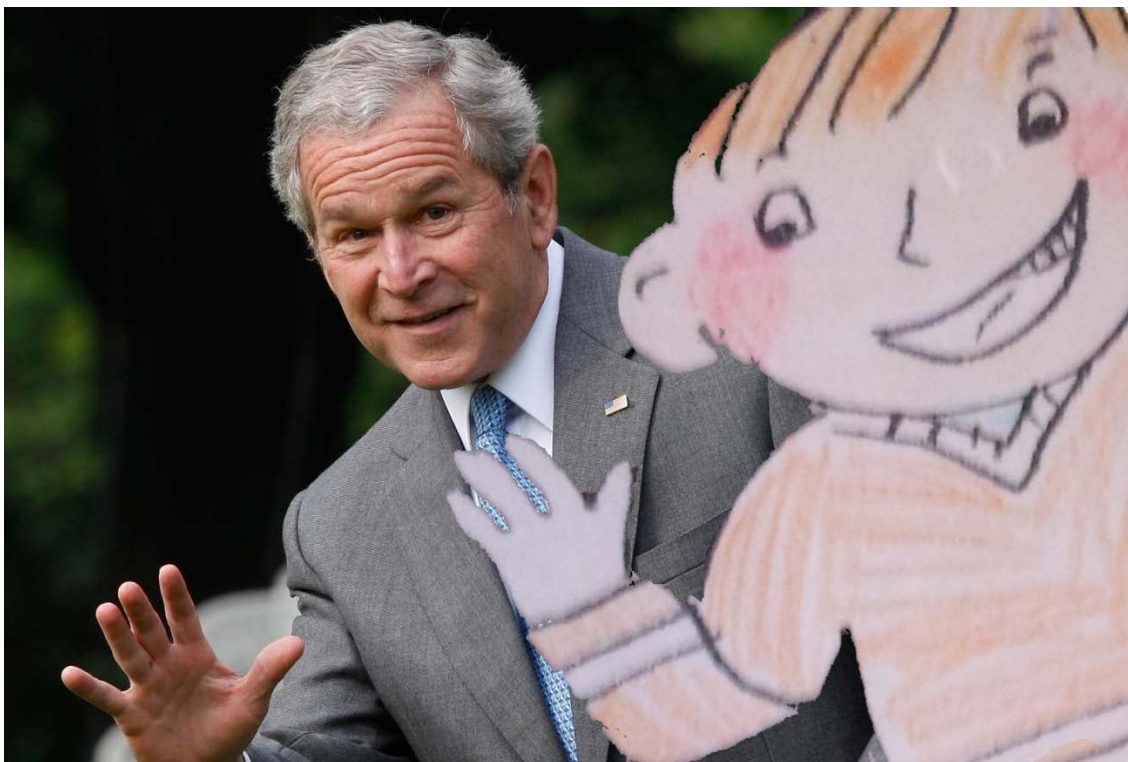


Figure 3: Flat Stanley was mailed to us at our home called *River Ranch* in McGregor, Texas. McGregor is near to Waco and is right next to Crawford, Texas where former President George W. Bush owns a ranch. He doesn't live there anymore, but visits once in a while. In fact, the *Middle Bosque River* that runs through *River Ranch* also runs through President Bush's ranch. Flat Stanley asked if we could go see President Bush. I have never met President Bush and so I did not feel comfortable going to see him. Flat Stanley kept saying he wanted to meet President Bush so I tried to call him up. The phone call went directly to voicemail. When I tried again about an hour later, the telephone went directly to voicemail again. Flat Stanley was disappointed, but I told him there were a lot more things to do and see in Waco. He still felt bad. So I got an idea. We got the computer and I found a picture of George W. Bush that looked like Flat Stanley. Flat Stanley got in front of the computer screen and we took the picture you see here. It was not as good as meeting and talking to George W. Bush, but it was still a lot of fun.



Figure 4: Flat Stanley and I went back outside to talk some more. We were sitting on the bench when all of a sudden one of our dogs, a Dalmatian named Revel, came to me for attention. Flat Stanley did not like this and moved away on the bench. He asked for me to get rid of Revel so I did. We decided that Flat Stanley would feel more comfortable if he were in my shirt pocket. So as you can see, I put him in my shirt pocket. He said his legs were really warm but over all it was okay. Since he was in my shirt pocket, the dogs could not get him.



Figure 5: Flat Stanley and I went to look at the river. It's the river called *The Middle Bosque*. It gets very dry in Texas during the summer. It's very dry this summer and you can see the river is drying up. The puddles of water are full of fish who have nowhere else to go. So when it's really really dry it is easy to catch fish. The river also has turtles. It also has snakes. But most of the snakes are water snakes and are not poisonous. At Gracie's home, there's Moore's Run, Indian Fork and Rocky Fork. These are great creeks and I asked Flat Stanley if he ever went fishing in them. He's so small, a minnow would make a hearty meal for him. He said no. I asked Flat Stanley if he wanted to go fishing in the Middle Bosque, but he was afraid that if he was holding a fishing rod and a fish bit that the fish would pull him into the water. Flat Stanley is probably right. He is too light. So we did not go fishing.



Figure 6: My brother Ray walked out to the river and began to talk to Flat Stanley and me. Flat Stanley said he would like to ride around in Ray's shirt pocket for a while. My pocket, he said, was getting too warm. So Ray put Flat Stanley in his pocket. But Ray had some old chewing gum in the bottom of his pocket. It felt really yucky to Flat Stanley. He thought it might be some kind of bug that was going to bite him. So flat Stanley jumped out of Ray's pocket. Ray caught him in mid air. I learned that Flat Stanley does not fall like a person. He falls like a leaf.



Figure 7: I work at Baylor University in Waco Texas. I took Flat Stanley with me to work. I am a Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. I love working here. It's mostly the people. The professors at Baylor are supposed to be Christians. It is wonderful to work with people who love Jesus and have prayed to Him to forgive their sins and invite Him to come and live in their heart. Flat Stanley really liked Baylor's campus. He said the campus was beautiful and he's right. He wanted me to take a picture of him in front of Baylor's Science Building. I told him the building was too big and he was too little. But he really wanted me to take the picture. Here it is. You can barely see Flat Stanley. So I put in an arrow that points to him.



Figure 8: I drove Flat Stanley around Baylor showing him some of the different buildings and the new football stadium. One thing about Waco. It's hot. You can see Stanley by the thermometer in the car. The temperature is 93° . Usually in the summer the temperatures are 100° or hotter. I like it. It's kind of like Hawaii but without the water. We parked and went up to my office. I carried Stanley in my pocket like before. The warmth from being in my pocket was nothing compared to the outside temperature. Flat Stanley did not complain at all about this anymore.



Figure 9: The first thing I did when we got to my office is show Flat Stanley my new book. Although I opened the book and even read to him, he didn't seem to like it. He said one of his favorite things to do was to be a bookmark. This sounded very boring to me, but I suppose flat people might enjoy being bookmarks. It's one of the few things they can do better than people that aren't flat. So I let Stanley be a bookmark. After a while, he asked if I could turn out the lights so that he could have quiet time like when he was in the envelope. I had work to do and told him I couldn't do that. So I took flat Stanley out of the book and let him play with a toy bear in my change bowl. Baylor's mascot is a bear. You can see Flat Stanley was in the change bowl with the bear and Baylor Engineering is written on its side. Stanley thought the bear might be real and spent a little time trying to talk to it. But the bear is just a toy. The change bowl is made out of a bunch of pennies glued together with dollar coins glued on the top. It's very heavy. Flat Stanley said it was probably worth a lot of money and wanted me to give it to him. I said no.



Figure 10: I teach a graduate class called *Introduction to Information Theory*. Since Flat Stanley was with me for the day, I took him with me. I have five students in the class and they all enjoyed getting to know Flat Stanley. In the picture you see, Willis Troy put rabbit ears behind Flat Stanley's head when the picture was taken. Willis is a teaser. Flat Stanley didn't know Willis was doing this until I showed him this picture later. The other students from left to right are Iwan Sandjaja, Matthew Fellows, Yan Shi and Yanqing Liu. Yan Shi and Yanqing Liu are from China. Matthew Fellows works for Professor Charles Baylis. We'll have a picture of Dr. Baylis in a few pages. After class was over I had a research meeting with Iwan (pronounced *eee-wand* without the *d* on the end). Flat Stanley had a lot of questions for Iwan. I thought the questions might be about engineering, but Stanley wanted to know more about where Iwan was from. Iwan is from Indonesia. Indonesia is an country made up of over seventeen thousand islands. Over 238 million people live there. Iwan is one of them. In all the countries the world, Indonesia has the world's fourth most people. Iwan does research with me. Flat Stanley joked that since Iwan was in the United States, Indonesia had 237,999,999 people living there. I was impressed that Flat Stanley made a joke about arithmetic that was kind of funny.



Figure 11: After talking with Iwan, I went to another research meeting. The leader of the meeting was Professor Randall Jean on the far left. The man talking, Brandon Herrera, is one of Dr. Jean's graduate students. Flat Stanley was bored during the meeting. He started making little "beep beep" sounds like a truck backing up. You can see the annoyed look on the faces of both Dr. Jean and Brandon. I had to take Flat Stanley off the table and put him in my rear pocket. I thought he would be mad but he told me later it was okay. He took a quick nap. After the meeting we went and saw Professor Michael Thompson who has an office next to mine. Dr. Thompson let Flat Stanley play with his toy bear. His toy bear looks a lot like mine. I think they might be twins. Dr. Thompson was afraid the bear might attack Flat Stanley, so kept his hand ready to grab the bear in case that happened. The bear was very interested in Flat Stanley and just stood there staring at him. The bear didn't even move.



Figure 12: After work on Fridays, I go to an exercise place called *The Super Slow Zone*. You can see me here on the left exercising while Flat Stanley watches from my shirt pocket. Flat Stanley started to make fun of me because I have weak arms. I got a little mad at him after I was done with my exercise and made him sit in the chair. I wanted him to do the exercise too, but his arms were too short. I was still angry when I told him “At least my arms aren’t flat!” As soon as the words came out of my mouth, I was sorry I said them. Flat Stanley’s feelings were hurt. I said I was sorry and put him back in my shirt pocket.



Figure 13: You can see from the picture on the left that Flat Stanley was pretty sad. After *Super Slow*, we went back to *River Ranch* and watched *Duck Dynasty* videos on YouTube. I first saw *Duck Dynasty* when I visited Gracie a few months ago. Flat Stanley really liked it a lot and told me he had decided he was going to grow a long beard like the *Duck Commander*. Flat Stanley was happy again and said he forgave me for making fun of his flat arms. I made a nice bed for Flat Stanley to sleep in that night, but he said he would rather just be a bookmark. So I made him a bookmark in one of my books like you see here. We both slept very well that night except Flat Stanley woke up with a kink in his neck.



Figure 14: When we got up on Saturday morning, Flat Stanley and I went outside and my wiener dog Ringo was digging a hole. There's lots of oil in Texas and Ringo thinks if he digs enough he will find some. Then he might become the richest dog in the world. I don't think he'll ever do that, but Ringo keeps trying. Flat Stanley said that Gracie had told him about Ringo because Ringo visited with her in West Virginia. On Saturday mornings our family likes to go to *The Coffee Shop* in McGregor. But, like I said, my wife Monika was in Corpus Christi with her Dad Charlie, Marilee's husband Kris was coaching soccer and Ringo was too dirty because he was digging holes. So only Ray, my daughter Marilee, my son Joshua, Joshua's friend Doug Smith, Flat Stanley and me went. Flat Stanley was in very good humor. He told jokes and teased the waitresses and had everybody laughing until their sides hurt. Here, he jumped into a mug and said in a loud voice "Would you like to join me in a cup of coffee?" Everybody laughed.



Figure 15: My son Joshua Marks and his friend Doug Smith also had fun with Flat Stanley at *The Coffee Shop*. Doug is from Australia and has an Australian accent which is fun to listen to. With a name like Smith, Doug must be part British. But his mother, although living in Australia for three or so generations, is Chinese. Flat Stanley said he was very glad he wasn't born in China because he didn't know how to speak Chinese. Everybody laughed. Then Flat Stanley said he had written new lyrics to the old Tiny Tim song *Tiptoe Through the Tulips*. His new song was *Tiptoe Through the Sugar Substitutes*. As he sang it, he danced in the container that held all of the sugar substitutes that people put in their coffee. Doug gave Flat Stanley rabbit ears while he danced. Everybody laughed and laughed because the song was so stupid. After the dance, we thought Flat Stanley should be out of breath. He wasn't. We asked Flat Stanley why he wasn't out of breath and why his chest didn't move when he breathed. Flat Stanley said he only needed one big breath in the morning to last him all day. I thought how nice it be if I only had to breathe one time in the morning and didn't have to worry about it for the rest of the day. Joshua said he didn't believe Flat Stanley, so Flat Stanley decided he would show us by putting his head in coffee for a long long time. That's what you see in the right picture. Flat Stanley held his head in the coffee for over 45 minutes while the rest of us finished eating lunch. When he finally came up for air, he wasn't even breathing hard. I guess when you're really small and flat, you don't have to breathe a lot.



Figure 16: On Saturday afternoon I took flat Stanley to downtown Waco. One of the places I wanted to take him was the Dr Pepper Museum in Waco, but Flat Stanley did not want to go. Dr Pepper was invented in Waco. Flat Stanley said drinking Dr Pepper made him feel not flat. And he didn't like that there was no period after the "Dr". He said it should be "Dr. Pepper" and not "Dr Pepper" and people that didn't know how to use a period were stupid. He didn't want to drink a soda pop made by somebody who was stupid. So instead, we went down to the Brazos River that runs through Waco. Flat Stanley was tired of me carrying him around and wanted me to put him on a tree. I told him this was not a good idea since he would blow away since he was flat. Flat Stanley had done this before though. He told me to look for a tree with sap on it and stick him to the sap. Tree sap is sticky. So I found a tree with some sap and it worked really well. As you can see, Flat Stanley was very happy. The tree and Flat Stanley are shown next to *The Waco Suspension Bridge* finished in 1870. It's 475 feet long and is made of about 3 million bricks. Before it opened, crossing the Brazos River was hard and dangerous. *The Golden Gate Bridge* in San Francisco is also a suspension bridge and opened in 1937. This was over 60 years later. *The Golden Gate Bridge* is much bigger though.



Figure 17: At the *Waco Suspension Bridge* there are statues of cowboys and cattle. Cowboys used to bring cattle this way to cross the Brazos River. Flat Stanley wanted to me to put him on one of the steers. I found a place that was sticky and did it.



Figure 18: There was a big football game on Saturday between the Baylor Bears and the Buffalo Bulls. Flat Stanley normally doesn't like football, but said he wanted to watch this game because he had never seen two teams with so many B's in their name. I took the picture on the left because Flat Stanley wanted Gracie to see a picture of him with the football game on in the background. After the picture, Flat Stanley got a comfortable seat and we watched Baylor beat Buffalo 70 to 13. It turns out that West Virginia and Baylor are both in the Big 12 conference and will play each other in football later this year on October 5. Flat Stanley wants West Virginia to win. Although I love West Virginia, my boss says I have to root for Baylor. So Flat Stanley and I made a wager about the upcoming game between West Virginia and Baylor. Whoever loses has to give the winner a half hour foot massage using virgin olive oil.



Figure 19: On Sunday morning, Flat Stanley and I went to church. Flat Stanley can be ornery. During the service he reached up and made a curl on the back of a bald man's head. You can see it here. When he did it, the man felt something on the back of his head but thought it was a fly. So he just shooed it away. After the service I was going to tell the man what Flat Stanley did and make Flat Stanley apologize. But I forgot to. If you look real close at the left picture, you can see the piano player in the front. He's Charles Baylis who happens to be a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering in my department. You might remember a few pages back we introduced Matthew Fellows who is Professor Baylis's graduate student. It turns out Dr. Baylis is not only a great electrical engineering professor, but also is a great piano player. After the service, I took Flat Stanley up to the front to meet Prof. Baylis. The three of us sat around singing some old hymns. It was a grand time! Flat Stanley told us a joke. When he was a smaller boy, one of his favorite hymns was "Gladly the Cross I'd Bear." But Flat Stanley was too young to understand and thought the title of the song was "Glad Lee, the Cross-Eyed Bear." We all thought his joke was funny.

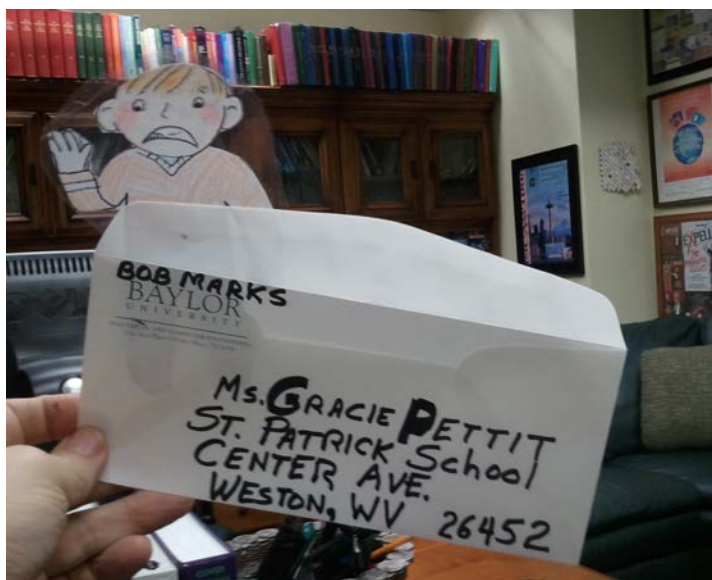


Figure 20: We went home and I spent some time massaging Flat Stanley's neck where he had the kink. It's really hard to massage the shoulders of someone who is flat, but I did the best I could. The next day it was finally time for Flat Stanley to leave and go back to Gracie. I learned that Flat Stanley stayed up all night so he would have no problem sleeping in the envelope. He looked really tired. I asked Flat Stanley if he wanted to stay in Texas with me. Flat Stanley said he really liked Texas and especially all of the good people. But he missed Gracie and wanted to go home to be with her. He said West Virginia is also full of good people. I told him I agreed. So I addressed an envelope and, as you see here, put Flat Stanley in the envelope to mail him back to Gracie. It was the only time during the visit that I saw Flat Stanley not smile. He looked really sad that he was leaving Texas. But he said he was happy inside that he was going back to West Virginia. When I go back to West Virginia to visit Gracie, I hope Flat Stanley is still there so I can spend more time with him.