

# the Famlet monthly

\*Clarification: I didn't mean to imply that the missionaries bring idiots to church—only that I live in constant fear of being a jerk, and then having a witness to my behavior show up to church and be introduced to me as the bishop

September 30, 2011

Volume 14, Number 9

## Dear Family,

I have road rage issues. It's a difficult thing for me to admit to the dozen or so of you who will read this letter, but it's my hope that doing so will be a first step toward reformation. It'd be easier if the roads weren't so clogged with idiots.

It would also be easier if my rage were confined to times when I'm actually driving. Last month, near the end of [this run](#) (I'm providing the link so Dad can see my route and everybody else can make fun of my pace) I was crossing Arcola Avenue on University Boulevard (in the crosswalk, with the light) when one of the aforementioned idiots made an abrupt right turn onto Arcola from *the center lane* of University. He was kind enough to jam on his brakes in time to stop the bumper of his large cargo van a few inches away from my legs. As you might expect, I responded to this in a measured and mature fashion: by pounding on the guy's hood and shouting like a lunatic. In rebuttal, the driver began honking, shouted something I couldn't understand (in Spanish, I think) and gave me the finger. At that point I figured we were even, and my head had cleared enough for me to conclude that it probably wasn't in my interest for this to escalate any further, and so I continued running along University, while he went up Arcola, leaning on his horn. I fully expected to see him sitting between the sister missionaries at church the following Sunday\*, but that hasn't happened yet.

My principal incentive for becoming a kinder and gentler driver has been the start of seminary. Every school morning, I drive three impressionable young students, including Hannah, from seminary to their respective high schools. We're a month in now, and I think I'm actually getting better at not reflexively hurling insults at drivers who, in my mind, could be doing a better job of not exacerbating suburban rush hour traffic. I'm hearing considerably less giggling in the back seat these days compared to at the start of the year, which I suppose could mean any number of things, but I choose to attribute it to my growing even-temperedness behind the wheel. Admittedly, I still have a little ways to go.

On the other hand, I run 5 miles most mornings during seminary (aren't you proud of me?) so it could also be that the students I transport are just giggling at the way I smell. I experimented with a variety of routes before landing on one that consistently gets me back to the church a minute or two before the end of class. (Dad, [here it is.](#)) It's hillier than I like, but I guess that's good for me.)

My running (I'm averaging 30-mile weeks these days—we'll see how much longer *that* lasts) is really just a lame attempt to keep up with Crystal. This past weekend, for the second consecutive year, she and 11 other crackpots teamed up to run [the Washington, DC installment of the Ragnar Relay Series](#). As reported in [last September's letter](#), Ragnar is a series of 12-person, 36-leg, 200-mile (more or less) relays carried out across various scenic stretches around the country. Crystal's team ("Dangerous Curves" — consisting of Crystal, Jen, a couple of women I kind of know, and several others I don't know at all) drove up to [Cumberland](#) on Thursday evening, where they spent the night in advance of Friday morning's start. They took turns running continuously all day Friday, all night, and

much of Saturday, finally arriving in National Harbor (a thoroughly annoying, entirely made-up place on the Maryland bank of the Potomac, just south of the D.C. line and across the river from Alexandria) late Saturday afternoon, in a time of 33 hours, 55 minutes and 48 seconds (two hours behind the team "Mormons Not Running for President," and two hours faster than "Mormons on the Run" —unlike "Dangerous Curves," both of those other teams included men). Crystal appears to have enjoyed herself again this time around despite having injured her calf in some manner. It's unclear at this point what effect the injury will have on her decision whether to do it again next year (or on the November half-marathon in Richmond for which she's registered). Stay tuned.

Some of you know that Sophie has been angling for a violin for some time now. You may recall that this desire was initially prompted by repeated visits to the home of our violinist friends, the Baxters. Before the word *violin* entered Sophie's vocabulary, she'd come home from the Baxters' place, find one of us, and declare while rubbing one of her index fingers perpendicularly across the other, "I want one of *these*."

For whatever reason (probably my fault) the violin thing never happened, but Sophie's interest never waned, and I'm happy to report that she appears happy with her new cello. (It's not really new, and it's not really hers, but for the next nine months, at least, it'll be residing in her bedroom.) It's been fun watching her get acquainted with it. Picking up her bow for the first time, she expressed surprise that it was composed of many individual strands. (She was expecting it to be a big rubber band or something.) Crystal told her it was horsehair, which sounded right when she said it, but I still had to look it up to be sure. (I play just enough piano to know the keys aren't actually made of ivory anymore...) Turns out she was right about the horsehair, as I'm sure you already knew.

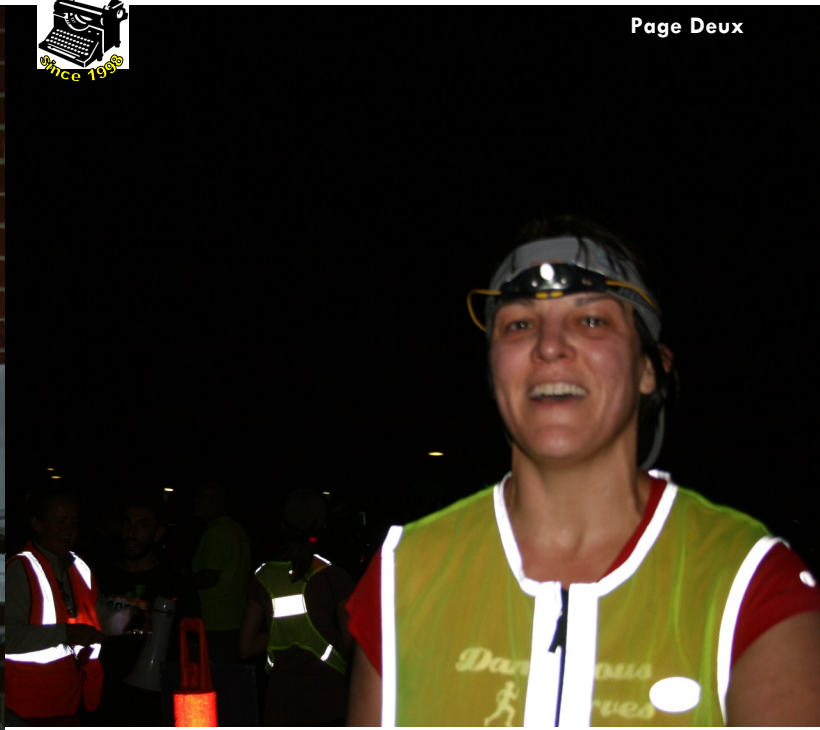
Sophie and her sisters appear to be settling into the new school year okay. Sophie's favorite subjects are lunch, recess, and math. Grace likes art. Hannah really likes her NSL (Government) teacher and is a big fan of some class called "Peace Studies," which sounds like an eye-roller to me, but she enjoys it. She often texts me with updates of how her day's going, which I like. I particularly appreciate the texts summarizing her journalism teacher's political rants in favor of various redistributionist and other progressive policies. (It's convenient that most arguments from that end of the political spectrum can be so easily distilled down to 160 characters.) But mostly I just like that my 10th-grade daughter still seems to enjoy keeping me apprised of what's going on in her life.

Lucy is more guarded about what she likes most at school, but she's holding her own on the bus. I'm told there was an incident a couple of weeks ago in which a boy used some very bad words in an attempt to persuade Lucy to move to a different seat. Lucy (her father's girl—see second paragraph) politely told the boy to go to hell. The boy slugged Lucy and got suspended. She didn't look any worse for the wear, but it reminded me of all the times I used to get beat up by boys in middle school. That's my girl!

I almost forgot—we went to Harpers Ferry again for Labor Day (just like [last year](#)). I'll add a few pictures.

Love, Tim *et al*





**Left:** Sophie and Grace on the first day of school.  
**Below:** Crystal's Ragnar team at the start (near Cumberland, Md.)—Crystal, Jen, Jen's sister and several women mostly from the Olney, Derwood, Laurel and Kensington Wards  
**Above:** Crystal after a night leg (that's a headlight on her visor)





**Above:** Grace next to Jefferson Rock in Harpers Ferry, W. Va. Behind her is the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. Jefferson wrote that the view from here is "worth a voyage across the Atlantic."  
**Below:** Grandma Christine with some of her grandchildren on her, ahem, 65th birthday.

