

# the Famlet monthly

March 25, 2012

Volume 15, Number 3

## Dear Family,

In hindsight, I think it was the thought of writing this letter that made me so sad during mile 22 of last Saturday's marathon. I feel somewhat better about things now.

I spent much of the week leading up to the race contemplating a variety of potential scenarios. The very best case scenario I envisioned involved majestically galloping across the finish line far enough under four hours that the race clock (which started 15 minutes before I did because I began way back with the slowpokes in corral 12) would still read 3 hours and something. I realized this was a total pipe dream, but it was nice to fantasize about. My next-best-case scenario had me simply finishing in under 4 hours. I didn't have any reason to believe this was likely to happen either, but it gave me something to shoot for.

At the other end of the spectrum, my worst-case scenario was collapsing and dying on the course. (I didn't think this was very likely either, though probably more likely than my crossing the finish line with the race clock reading 3-something.) My second worst-case scenario was finishing in 4 hours and 20 minutes. Every (non-dying) scenario I contemplated had me finishing somewhere in that fairly narrow band of time. Chalk it up to first-marathon naiveté, but it never even occurred to me that I might finish slower than 4:20.

I suppose that's why I reacted the way I did when the 4:25 pace team went by me on mile 22 along the Anacostia River. Even though I'd been walking intermittently since mile 17 (this was *not* part of the plan), my oxygen-deprived, sun-baked brain was still projecting a finishing time based on the assumption that I'd be able to cover the remaining distance at my usual pace. Getting caught by the 4:25 group liberated me from that whimsical notion. I struggled to keep up with them for a quarter-mile or so but soon realized that I wasn't going to be able to. And that's when I started to cry.

I can't bring myself to type my actual finishing time, but it's not difficult to look up if you care to. If I were the kind of emotionally insecure person who is inclined to make excuses for himself (which I am) I might blame the weather. It was an unbelievably beautiful day—sunny with temperatures in the mid-70s (absurdly warm for mid-March—the cherry blossoms were out two weeks early). Don't get me wrong, I'm as big a fan of the mid-70s as anybody, but not for running a marathon. That I'd done virtually all of my training in the 30s and 40s only seemed to make matters worse. I obviously wasn't the only person who struggled with the heat. When I finally brought myself to [look up my official finishing time](#), I was surprised to notice that just under a thousand of the 3,150 other finishers actually came in behind me. I still find that hard to believe, as it felt like I was one of the last ten people out there.

(And I almost forgot, Crystal, along with 16,320 other peo-

ple, completed the simultaneous half-marathon. She finished 2 seconds per mile faster than me and is very pleased with herself.)

Hannah, Sophie and Grace came to the race with Colby's wife and Grace-aged daughter. (Who's Colby? See first photo caption.) The girls spent most of the morning Metro-ing around town, trying to find us based on the automated text messages they received whenever we crossed various checkpoints. I don't think the girls actually saw any of us until the finish. The automated checkpoint notifications kind of backfired with me because the last one was at mile 20, and they didn't expect me to need 78 minutes to cover the last 6.2 miles. (Yeah, well, neither did I.) An ambulance was dispatched onto the course for somebody when I still had about two miles to go. The girls were convinced it was for me.

Anyway, I'm a little disappointed but not discouraged. I'm eager to apply what I think I've learned and look forward to having another go at the distance in Richmond this fall.

Sophie and Grace have announced that they now want to run marathons and have each taken to spending an hour at a time on the elliptical as evidence of their commitment and preparation. Hannah, who hates running, has no such ambitions and is content to confine her workouts to the bike and pool—the pool being where she earned the family's first varsity letter\* earlier this month. (I narrowly missed my two best opportunities for varsity letters when I was cut from the math team in 11th grade and from the bowling team in 12th.)

Lucy did not make it downtown for the race because she was in Rockville (thanks to Grandpa) with a group of classmates presenting their National History Day Contest entry on smallpox eradication to a panel of county judges (having been selected to represent their school there). They didn't move on to state (which probably would have conflicted with another race, anyway) but we're very proud of her.

I'd mostly come to terms with things by the next day when we had dinner at Grandma and Grandpa's house. We were joined there by some of favorite cousins (my favorite cousins read these letters): soon-to-be general aviation tycoon Reed Farnsworth (in from Southern California somewhere) and the Justin-and-Betsy-Mabey clan (in from Austin, Texas). They didn't make fun of my marathon time, so it was fun seeing and catching up with them.

I only wish I could catch up with more of you more often.

Love,

Tim, *et al*

p.s. I went to *The Hunger Games* on Friday with Hannah and Lucy. They've both read all the books and loved the movie. I haven't read any of the books and found the movie profoundly disturbing. Hannah, who's been trying to get me to read the books for years, tells me I need to read the books in order not to be disturbed by the movie. Somehow I don't see that happening.

\*Correction: Crystal would like it pointed out that she lettered in debate and drill team. Sorry, dear.

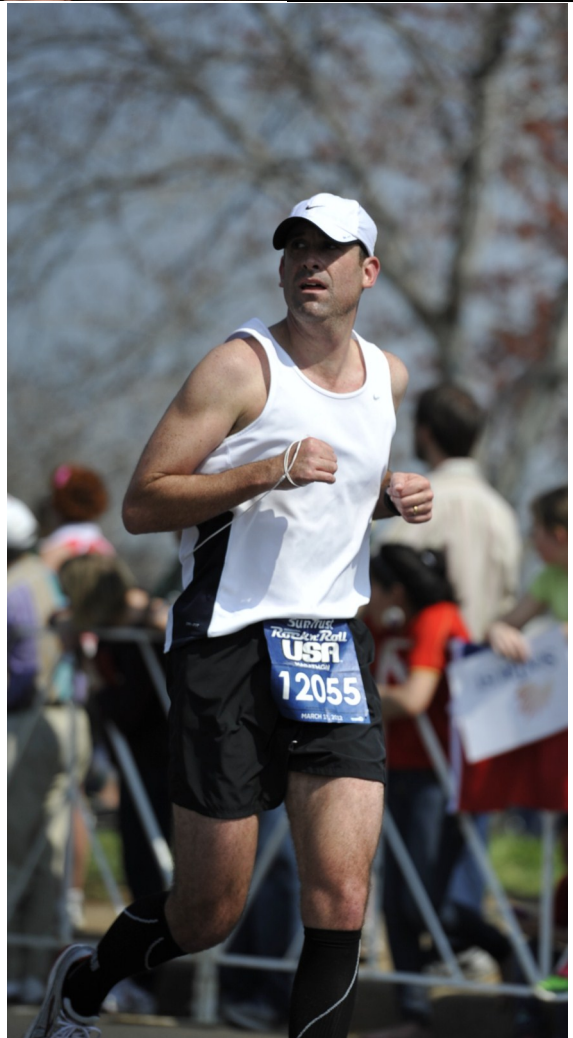




**Pre-race:**  
 Me, Crystal, and Colby. Colby is a West Point grad, former Green Beret and current stake clerk. He finished ahead of me but didn't make it to church the next day until the sacrament hymn.  
 I spent most of the rest of the meeting making faces at him from the stand.



**Mile 19:** I was pretty well gassed by this point, and I'm not even the focus of the shot—but I kind of like the backdrop.



**Mile 26:** It's hard to tell if I was still crying here, but I might have been.





**Post-race:**  
Everybody's happy and looking forward to the next one.





In writing my self-centered letter, I completely neglected to mention my youngest daughter's 7th birthday. Here are some pictures.



I'm not exactly sure what Grace is doing here, but this probably wouldn't have been the best time for the cops to show up.