

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

Today officially begins my seventh year as the bishop of the White Oak Ward. (It's also our 18th wedding anniversary.) I think I'm still doing okay, and, other than Primary piano guy or ward organist, there isn't really another calling that I'd rather have. That said, I came this close to asking a person I was interviewing yesterday if it would be okay if we took a short break so I could just close my eyes for five minutes. Seriously, I almost asked. But I'm pretty sure my sleepiness had more to do with a camping trip earlier in the weekend (more on that later) than with the rigors of bishoping (or marriage, for that matter).

I've lost track of how many funerals I've conducted over my six years—it's probably somewhere north of a dozen. Last week's funeral of Charles Goodman, however, was my first in some time and my first ever to culminate with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. The whole production was something to behold. The Goodmans were friends of Mom's parents, but it had obviously been a while. When I introduced myself to one of the daughters, her eyes lit up and she exclaimed, "Oh, you're Colleen's brother-in-law!" (which means she thought I was Dad). It happens. I suppose there are worse things.

Two years ago, as I'm certain you'll recall, I wrote about a meeting I attended at the Washington DC Stake center with a couple hundred other bishops and stake presidency members and Elder Holland. This month featured another such meeting, this time with Elder Bednar. I'm not usually one for four-and-a-half-hour meetings on a Saturday, but I was pretty excited about this one and it didn't disappoint. I was also delighted that, for the second time in a row, they were nice enough to convene a meeting that brought in bishops from all of Maryland and DC, much of Virginia, and parts of West Virginia and Pennsylvania in a building just four miles from my house.

I was asked to play the organ again, which I guess means that I didn't do too bad a job last time. (Okay, enough false modesty—I was really good last time; and I don't know anything about your bishop, but I'm probably a better organist than he is.) I was pretty good this time, too, but it almost cost me a chance to shake Elder Bednar's hand.

That's because this time (like last time) everyone was in his seat at least 20 minutes before the start of the meeting. Unlike last time, Elder Bednar also arrived early—about 15 minutes before the start. As is custom when an apostle enters the room, everybody arose and stood reverently while he made his way up to the stand. Everybody, that is, except me, because I was playing the prelude. I've done this a handful of times now, and it's always the same. The place goes from quiet to dead silent—except for the organ, from which every note suddenly sounds crisper and more distinct. It's very, very cool to be the guy playing at that moment. I first noticed this phenomenon at a Silver Spring Maryland Stake conference in early 1997 when Elder Eyring was visiting and I was playing. The first thing that struck me was that I was the only person seated (other than the two old ladies with oxygen tanks on the back pew). The other thing was how different the organ sounded. I was accustomed to practicing in an empty (and therefore otherwise silent) room, but organs sound different when people

are in the room, and when those people are silent, it's almost surreal. [On a side note, 1997 was during my younger, more brash phase when I felt that the purpose of postlude was to chase the people out of the room by playing so loudly as to dislodge the doors at the back of the cultural hall. (I've mellowed some since then.) I still remember a woman coming up to me that day during the postlude, I assumed to pay me a compliment. As I leaned over to hear her, she shouted in my ear that people were trying to converse with Elder Eyring but that nobody could hear him because the organ was too damn loud.]

So anyway, prior to the start of the meeting, Elder Bednar invites everybody to come up and shake his hand. Every man came forward in an orderly manner, row by row as directed and was greeted by the apostle. Every man, that is, except me, because I was playing prelude. I was deflated. I've had a total man-crush on Elder Bednar for eight years, and here was my first (and likely only) chance I'd ever have to meet him, and I was going to end up being the only person in the room who didn't. I didn't think much about it again until the closing hymn, when I started trying to devise ways I might button-hole him before he slipped out the funeral door at the front of the chapel. But I couldn't think of a way to do that while playing postlude, and so I resigned myself to my sad fate. Then, after the benediction, I started playing as everybody else stood for Elder Bednar to leave. I watched as he shook the hands of all the important people on the stand, but then, instead of heading out the funeral door, he turned and started to walk back toward me. He'd made it about two-thirds of the way to the organ before I abruptly stopped playing (mid-measure), literally leapt off the bench and grabbed his hand. He smiled and said thank you. I put my hand on his shoulder and, almost giggling, told him how happy I was to have been able to shake his hand.

I was a total and complete dork. But I was happy.

In this month's non-me news, Hannah successfully completed life-guard training. She's hoping to land a part-time position at our neighborhood pool this summer and, in the meantime, has been hired to coach the swim team "pre-team" (mainly little kids between 5 and 7). Hannah also successfully competed in her school's film festival, "CAP Hollywood." Her group's short film was nominated for a number of awards and won for best musical score. I don't have a copy of *that* film, but if you're interested in another sample of her work, she's particularly proud of [this trailer](#). (It's a trailer for a movie that doesn't actually exist, so don't try too hard to figure it out. Also, the girl in the blue hoodie is Sophie.)

Going to CAP Hollywood meant I had to miss Sophie's first orchestra concert, where she played the cello. I have a picture though.

Finally, a bunch of us with daughters finally revolted against the tyranny of Church-sponsored fathers-and-sons outings and launched our own bootleg daddy-daughter campout this weekend at the Foulger-Pratt farm (at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain, right on the Montgomery-Frederick County line). Things were going swimmingly until Grace peed on me in the middle of the night. I didn't get much sleep after that, but I'd still deem the overall outing a success. I'm attaching pictures.

Happy Summer. Love,

Tim *et al*





Daddy-Daughter Camp at the Foulger-Pratt farm at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain in Dickerson, Md. 34 miles away, at home, Crystal had a quiet night.



Grace eats a s'more. She ate about 15 of them.



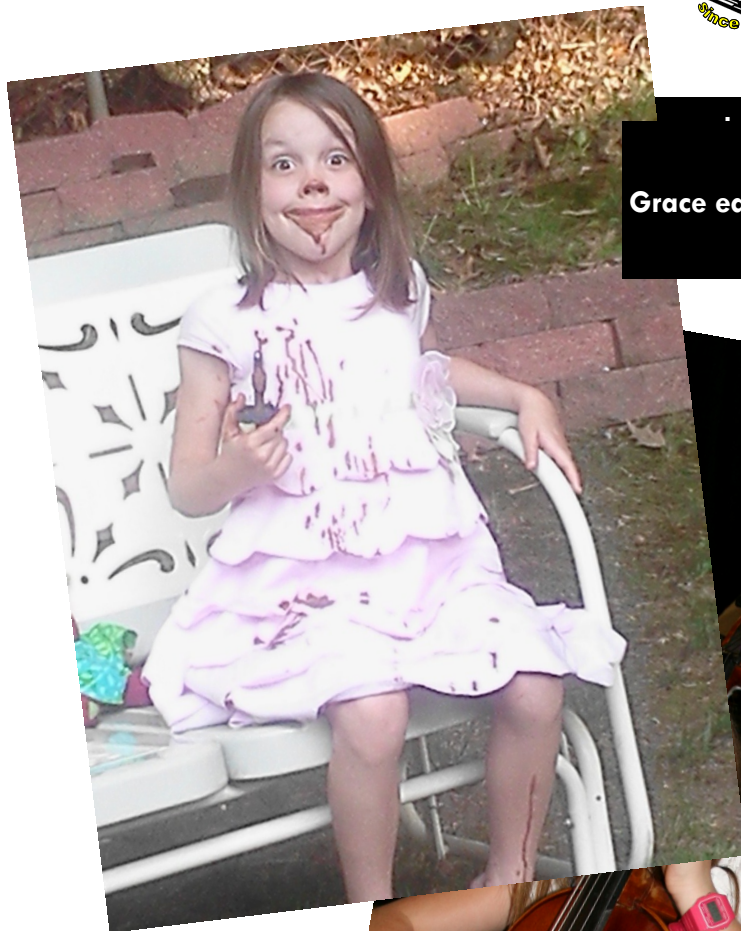
Miniature Horses Hannah with 2 girls you don't know.



Sophie and Grace ride the little horses.



Sometimes they have stake dances in this barn. It's all fancy and lacquered up inside. If I didn't hate dances so much, I'd think it was pretty cool.



Grace eats (and wears) a fudge-side



Sophia's first orchestra concert