

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

I'm beginning this letter late Sunday night (early Monday morning, actually). I have no idea when I'll finish.

I'm very tired but can't sleep because the house is so unimaginably hot and stuffy. We haven't had power since Friday night when the storm blew through. I have no reason to believe it will ever come back. It's been at or near 100 degrees each of the past three days. The forecast highs for the next three are 97, 99 and 102. By Friday the 6th, which, coincidentally, is the date by which Pepco's iPhone app estimates our power will be restored, a break in the heat is anticipated, with highs only expected to reach 90.

I despair. I'm too hot to be angry. I'm too hot to be anything other than lethargic and useless. I feel miserable.

I'm trying to figure out what it says about where we live that we can lose power on a Friday night and have people assume (and assume correctly) by Saturday afternoon that Sunday services will be cancelled.

Good news! I just checked Pepco's website. It says, "With power restoration completed to the region's major electricity infrastructure, Pepco is now focusing on restoring power to neighborhoods." How reassuring that it only took 48 hours to restore power to the "region's major electrical infrastructure." Presumably this infrastructure includes the very most important things (hospitals, fire and rescue, speed cameras, etc.) so I don't begrudge them their place in line. I just wish I weren't so hot.

I missed most of the storm Friday night because I was in Pennsylvania's Caledonia State Park for bishops' night at our stake's Young Women camp. And even though we had testimony meeting up there in a thunderstorm, it was nothing compared what we'd obviously missed here. Trees strewn across the Beltway created rush-hour-like traffic conditions at 1:00 in the morning. Hannah (who came home with me on Friday night because of her scheduled swim meet the following morning, which ultimately was cancelled because nobody's pools had power) and I finally arrived home to a dark and powerless house, and nothing has changed since.

Lucy and Crystal came home Saturday afternoon—with a week's worth of laundry from camp and no way to do it. (We ended up making use of Grant and Jen's washing machine. For some reason *they* have power.) It was Lucy's first YW camp and Crystal's first in five years. I think all three of them had a good time, but that all feels like such a long time ago.

Sophie, Grace and I made do in their absence, based principally on a reliable rotation of the Thai place in the food court at the mall, IHOP, Chick-fil-A and Fuddrucker's. This enabled us to keep the kitchen relatively clean, and we only needed to make one trip to the grocery store. (We picked up exactly one item: a box of Lucky Charms.)

It was fun being with them and picking up little things that I don't necessarily notice when Crystal's around and in charge.

Like the fact that Sophie and Grace have no idea how to open ordinary car doors. Crystal had the van at camp, and so Sophie, Grace and I got around in my Avalon. The girls, who are obviously accustomed to opening the van's sliding doors, are somewhat less proficient at gingerly opening a sedan door so as to avoid taking a divot out of the car in the neighboring parking space (or at least making sure to be careful when the owner of the other car is around). One time, Sophie flung her door open, launching it into the side of a car with the driver still inside. I gave the man a nervous smile, wiped my paint off his door with my shirt and walked away. I half-expected to find an angry, threatening note on my car when returned. I didn't.

The rest of the month is illustrated in the accompanying photos. In summary:

- Sophie and Grace both performed well in their school's talent show. Sophie joined a friend in singing "Do-Re-Mi" (from *The Sound of Music*, which the two of them saw together for the first time at the Olney Theatre last November). Grace joined a friend in singing "No Ordinary Girl," the theme song from the kind of cute, kind of annoying, Australian TV show *H₂O: Just Add Water*, brought to our home, like so many other odd bits, by the magic of Netflix instant streaming. I can't remember the last time our kids watched anything on live TV. If it weren't for sports, I'm not sure I'd still be paying for live TV.
- Sophie and Grace finished another year of Juniors and Daisies, respectively. Grace graduated from Daisies and is now a Brownie.
- Crystal is now a stroke-and-turn judge at swim meets. She has the dubious privilege of disqualifying children who can't do a legal dolphin kick (or fail to two-hand touch in breaststroke, or stay underwater too long in backstroke, or...).
- We returned to the Ocean City airshow with our friends the Warners, who, two weeks later, moved to San Diego with its more pleasant climate and (probably) more reliable power grid. We miss them.

It's now 2:54 a.m. We still don't have power and I can hear that our generator (powering our refrigerators, TV, internet connection and one fan) literally *just* ran out of gas.

Things may be uncomfortable, but, strangely, I feel better for having written about it.

Hope all is well in your world. If you need a lift, try to conjure an image of me in my underwear stumbling over patio furniture on a dark deck trying to pour gasoline into a generator. That's where I'm heading now.

Love, Tim *et al*



Sophie (right) and her friend perform "Do-Re-Mi"



Grace (left) with her friend and their teacher after performing "No Ordinary Girl"



Crystal Stroke-and-Turn Judge



Grace's Promotion From Daisies to Brownies



Ocean City, Md. — June 9, 2012
All in all, not a bad way to watch an air show (for free).

