

the Famlet monthly

April 29, 2014

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Dear Family,

As the crow flies, I believe the second-closest grocery to our house (after Trader Joe's, half a mile through the woods) is Shalom Kosher, a mile and a half away in Kemp Mill. It's fine, but it isn't where we usually shop—not unless we're looking for babka or challah, which we aren't often, though Shalom's are pretty good. (Their bagels are overrated. They're from H&H in New York, which means they started good, but by the time they get here they're essentially day-olds. People swear by them anyway. People are dumb.) Recently, when we found ourselves needing to buy something on a Sunday (I don't recall whose ox was in which mire) Crystal decided to get it at Shalom because they close on Saturday. Somehow this made us feel less guilty about the transaction. They typically have almost anything you'd need—except this month, during Passover, when the pickings get pretty slim. The snack food aisle was stripped down to little more than potato chips and just one or two brands of soda.

It just so happens that I spent most of Passover in St. Paul, Minnesota, (where I had no trouble finding chametz) on an unfortunately timed work trip that happened to coincide with Spring break. I made the mistake in mid-April of believing that winter was over and failed to pack any cold-weather running gear. As a result, I logged a total of 22 miles over three days along the Mississippi River at an average temperature of around 30 degrees in a short-sleeve technical shirt and running shorts. I did bring gloves, which helped, but I realize I probably looked a little silly. Fortunately, the downtown St. Paul YMCA let me swim in their very nice 25-meter pool (yes, *meters*, even though it was indoors—I never quite got used to that) on account of my membership at the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. I thought that was awfully nice of them. Despite being nearly a mile from my hotel, I was able to get to the Y without setting foot outside by using the city's very cool Skyway system.

The Skyway also linked me to the client's office, and I could have made it the entire week without exposing myself to so much as a molecule of outside air (other than to run) if I hadn't met up for dinner on Thursday night with my cousin Grant Boren who lives in Minneapolis. (Minneapolis is to St. Paul what Dallas is to Fort Worth or what San Francisco is to Oakland...or perhaps what Provo is to Orem, but I may have that one wrong.) Grant took me to a place called The Nook, a splendid dive whose specialties include deep-fried cheese curds and a local invention known as a Jucy Lucy. (You should Google it if you don't know what it is.) It was all very good, but it left me craving ice cream, which for some reason is difficult to find in St. Paul during the winter, which now appears to run until Memorial Day.

At home I missed my family's annual Spring break rite of visiting the Tidal Basin to see the cherry blossoms, which were absurdly late this year, presumably the result of our

long, harsh winter. I suppose it is fitting that on the day after they saw the blossoms, it snowed, both in Washington and Minnesota. We think winter is over now, but we've been conned into thinking that before.

I returned home from Minnesota on Good Friday, in time to join Crystal and the girls at Coco's place on Saturday to silk-dye Easter eggs. We went to church together the next morning (what with it being Easter and all). It was my only visit to our ward during April and I even got to play the organ because the regular organist was ill. (Playing Easter hymns on our aging building's big old pipe organ is the best!) We then spent the afternoon with all the local relatives, plus John and Audrey Dyer, at grandma's house. There we celebrated all the month's birthdays, had Easter dinner, and stood with my brother Grant as he ordained his oldest son Alex a deacon. It was all very nice.

Sophie's 12th birthday was one of those recognized *en masse* at grandma's on Easter. She now has been to the temple for the first time (which I missed—out of town), given her first sacrament meeting talk (which I missed—visiting the College Park Ward), and launched full bore into Personal Progress. She is a happy and cute little Beehive. (Aren't they all?)

The following day was "Easter Monday," which sounds made-up to me and is traditionally the last day of Spring break for us. It wasn't this year because the school district needs to make up a couple of the 10 snow days we've had. Hannah was reportedly one of 1,200 Blair students who called in sick that day. Her sisters all went to school and may not have thought this was fair. But when they are seniors in high school, if they have been awarded a scholarship to the university they plan to attend, and if the school district cancels a day off because of too many snow days, then I'll let them cut school that day too. (Hannah's half-tuition scholarship to BYU may be only half of what she deserves, but we'll take it.)

I failed to mention in last month's letter, though I have alluded to it in this one, that I'm a counselor in the stake presidency now. So there's that. Our stake president is eight years into his tenure, and so I may not have a very long go at this. But for now I'm just readjusting to my old life of not seeing much of my family on Sundays and adjusting for the first time to the awkwardness of conducting temple recommend interviews with people I have never met before.

Fortunately, I feel like I am seeing my family more during the week these days. Notwithstanding the trip to St. Paul (an anomaly) and the fact that I am writing this letter on an airplane at the end of my second day-trip to Detroit in five days, I really don't have much to rightfully complain about.

As Crystal often says after dropping into bed, even after an arduous day, which she seems to be having more of lately, "It's a good life."

We hope you feel that way, too.

Love, Tim *et al*



Silk-dying
Easter eggs at
Coco's.



Grace, the Tidal
Basin, and some
cherry trees
slightly past
peak.





Sophie and a friend from Church



Grace and another (obviously related) friend