

the Famlet monthly

August 31, 2014

Volume 17, Number 7

Dear Family,

My view of blessings on the food is that they should last somewhere between five and ten seconds and stray into no more than one subject other than the food at hand. I don't claim any moral high ground on this; it's simply my preference. If other people want to spend five minutes giving thanks for this, that, and the other thing, who am I to say they're wrong? I just like to eat my food while it's hot.

I need to tread carefully here because among those with a tendency to expand blessings into full-fledged family prayers are my own daughters. Take this past Tuesday, for instance, when Grace's blessing over the Papa Johns pizza we had just brought home included a plea that time would go fast between now and when we would be with Hannah again.

Feelings have been a little tender around here since Tuesday morning, when we kissed Hannah good-bye in Provo and the remaining five of us made our way north to the Salt Lake airport, returned our rented GMC Yukon, and boarded our flight home to Reagan National.

We had rented the Yukon a week earlier at the Spokane airport. Our trip there was occasioned by the wedding of Tawny Dunn, Crystal's youngest stepsister, to one Fernando Giraldo in the Spokane Washington Temple. Everything was lovely (in the good sense—mostly). Those who know me well are already aware that I find pretty much all weddings unbearable (not the weddings themselves, but, you know, all the attendant, celebratory nonsense). But my fondness of the people involved in this one made it tolerable.

The Saturday wedding was preceded by three mostly uneventful (though not in a bad way) days in Coeur d'Alene and followed by an evening reception at Grandma and Grandpa Kent's house. The following morning at a little past 6 we embarked, the Yukon laden with most of Hannah's earthly belongings, on the long drive to Utah.

We managed to hit a sacrament meeting along the way in Clinton, Montana, (population: 1,052) and pulled in to Dave and Florence Farnsworth's driveway in Centerville, Utah, in time for them to feed us dinner. Shortly thereafter, relatives from around the Salt Lake Valley and neighboring valleys began dropping in to say hello. I'm afraid to start a list for fear of omissions, but I'll try: Hales, Riches, Stevenses, Bingham, Borens, Dutsons (who brought Aunt Lucy, now cruising comfortably through her 10th decade—when I told her how good she looked, which she did, she attributed it to her fabulous purple blouse.) It was just great seeing everybody, and we were touched by how many people were willing to make the trip on the eve of the first day of school.

The gathering's plethora of friendly faces and stream of offers to help with "anything" (I'm hoping someone will be willing to drive her to the airport in December) reminded Hannah that she's part of a pretty-good-sized island and allayed any concerns she might have had about being abandoned so far from home.

The next morning, Monday, the Farnsworths fed us breakfast

and we made our way down to Provo. Hannah picked up her student ID and books and checked into Helaman Halls, where a magnificently nerdy "[Bag of Holding](#)", secretly purchased and shipped there by Lucy, was waiting for her. We spent the rest of the day getting stuff for her dorm room, wandering around campus, reminiscing about how much has and hasn't changed there in 18 years, and having dinner with Elizabeth Smart (not *that* Elizabeth Smart—Crystal's friend from Coeur d'Alene who lived near us for a while and is now a BYU librarian). We spent Monday night in Provo *chez* our friends the Hansens, former neighbors of ours until three years ago when he took a faculty position at BYU.

Which brings us to the Tuesday of seven paragraphs ago, when we all hugged for a really long time and left our firstborn daughter in a good place where I believe she is likely to be successful and happy. I just wish it weren't so far away. Sometimes at work I ping her phone on my Find Friends app and watch the little blue dot flash at me. "Brigham Young University: 1,832 miles away," the app says. It makes me happy and sad at the same time.

In a lot of ways the rest of August was Hannah's farewell tour. She spent the first half of the month with her Kent grandparents and cousin Noah on an Alaskan cruise. This was billed as a trip in celebration of her (and Noah's next year) graduation from high school. I wasn't there, but it sounds like they got the full Grandma and Grandpa treatment, coming home with considerably more in their suitcases than when they left. It's good to travel with Grandma and Grandpa Kent.

Hannah's final week here was a farewell-to-Maryland circuit that included dinners with Grandma and Grandpa (Willis) and Andrew and Jessica's family, one last day-trip to Ocean City, and, on the night before our flight out, an all-out Maryland festival at the pool, featuring [Smith Island Cake](#) (made by Crystal), a half-bushel of Maryland crabs (supplied by Grant and Jen's family) and Kentucky Fried Chicken (not technically a Maryland thing, but we bought it in Maryland, and it's good).

Our trip caused Lucy, Sophie, and Grace to miss the first two days of school. I think they'll be fine.

Sophie, now a 7th grader, has not yet taken the bus to school, opting instead to cover the 4.5 miles each way on her bicycle. Most of her route is along the Sligo Creek Trail, which separates her from the cars, but there are two at-grade crossings of busy roads (University Blvd. and Colesville Rd.) that make me nervous. Still, I take comfort in my belief that cycling is one of many things that is less dangerous than it appears—a risk assessment that I suspect will not resonate with the legions of parents who sit in their cars at bus stops and wait for their children to board the school bus before driving away. Sophie has also taken over the lawn mowing duties. I don't think I've mowed the lawn once since June. She's a dynamo.

And it's rubbing off on Grace, who, after spending six consecutive hours staining the deck on Friday, insisted on completing ten distinct tasks at chapel cleaning on Saturday. I'm not sure whether she made it to 10, but I did get her (along with Lucy) to clean the little bathroom in the stake offices that I don't think had seen a toilet brush since 2007. I figure that alone is worth five things. Love, Tim et al



Tubbs Hill, overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene.

Hannah telling her father not to push her in.



Five seconds later...



We stopped briefly in Salt Lake on the way from Centerville to Provo.



Left: Ocean City—part of the farewell-to-Maryland tour (Hannah’s friend Bianca is between Hannah and Sophie)

Below: Helaman Halls. Hannah’s bed—covered with the quilt tied for her at the 2013 Willis family reunion.

