

# the Famlet monthly

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## Dear Family,

I don't usually accompany Crystal and the girls when they go shopping at the thrift store. In fact, I rarely accompany them when they go shopping anywhere. But I went with them on Monday because it was ostensibly a family home evening activity. The objective was to find Halloween costume components. Each of them wanted to dress as a different character from *Fullmetal Alchemist*, a Japanese manga with which I am completely and blissfully unfamiliar, other than occasionally tripping over the books in the hallway and encountering episodes of the show in my Netflix "Recently Watched" bin.

I followed them around the store as they looked through other people's old clothes for as long as I could stand it (about three minutes) and spent the next half-hour or so talking to Hannah on the phone. I wandered up and down the aisles, sharing with her the details of the many things that I found amusing. I particularly liked the group of shelves labeled "Collectibles," which was right next to another group of shelves labeled "Figurines," and across the aisle from a third group of shelves labeled "Knick-Knacks." I personally was not able to differentiate among the three different kinds of junk, but presumably those distinctions are meaningful to somebody.

I made disparaging comments about the thrift store to Hannah for several minutes before she told me that she had just bought two skirts for her mission from Deseret Industries, a Utah-based chain of thrift stores, and that she liked her skirts, liked shopping at D.I., and I should shove it. And so I shoved it.

The reality of Hannah's call to the Arizona Phoenix Mission is settling in. Looking at the map, it appears that of the six Arizona missions, five (Phoenix, Gilbert, Mesa, Scottsdale, and Tempe) are headquartered in the Phoenix suburbs and fan out in different directions from there. Hannah's mission office is in Glendale, nine miles northwest of Phoenix, and the mission covers a large swath of the state north and west of the city. It includes Prescott, Flagstaff, and many other places I have never heard of, including one called "Mormon Lake," where no one appears to live. Her mission is bounded on the north by the Colorado River as it passes through the Grand Canyon.

We sometimes talk of how her mission president has no idea how lucky he is to be getting her. That probably is not an unusual thing for the parent of a missionary to think, but in Hannah's case it is objectively true. She will enter the Provo Missionary Training Center on December 30th, less than three weeks after her 19th birthday. It has occurred to me for many years that one or more of my daughters would choose to serve a mission; it never would have occurred to me until very recently, however, that one of them would begin at a younger age than I did. (I was just shy of 19 and a half.) She will nevertheless begin her service with a great deal more maturity and preparation than I. We are beyond excited for her.

Hannah learned on Friday that she had been admitted to BYU's nursing program. She had been fretting about this for the past several weeks, even though any person familiar with her transcript would have known she was a lock. She was delighted by the news, and immediately replied with a request to defer until

fall semester of 2017. The university, which has some familiarity with students in Hannah's position, accepted this request. We look forward to seeing her in three weeks when she comes home for Thanksgiving and to receive her endowment in the Washington D.C. Temple.

Sophie's softball season is over. I made it to all but one of her games. She played every inning at catcher and did a fine job. Many girls on her team and the teams they played seemed new to the game and were unfamiliar with many of the basic rules. Caught fly balls frequently resulted in double plays, no matter how many times I heard the coach tell base runners to wait. And fielding and throwing skills are still developing. A ground ball to the left side of the infield was almost always at least a single, and frequently more when the throw to first was errant, as it almost always was. I watched enough innings to conclude that the statistically optimal play on a cleanly fielded ground ball to third or short with no one on base would be to walk the ball back to the pitcher, but I can understand why they did not do that. Nearly any hit that reached the outfield went for extra bases and often a "home run" (a single or double, actually, followed by a string of dubious fielding decisions and errors enabling the batter to round the bases). One of my favorite defensive plays of the year was a ground ball to first with the bases loaded. The first baseman fielded it cleanly and stepped on first to get the batter out and then promptly uncorked a series of throwing errors that enabled every one on base to score. I had never seen a bases-clearing ground ball to first before.

In addition to catching well, Sophie was also one of the team's more consistent hitters. She usually reached base one way or another and did not seem to remember strikeouts. I was talking to her after one game during which she reached base twice, scored once, and struck out once, and it became clear to me that she only remembered having batted twice. She literally could not recall having struck out. Maybe that's why she seems so happy all the time. She just forgets all the bad things that happen to her. Sometimes I wish I could do that.

We marked Lucy's 16th birthday with dinner at Café Rio followed by dessert at Rita's (in lieu of cake, at her request). Eleven days later Lucy hosted a Doctor Who birthday party attended by a large group of friends that required Crystal to make a soufflé, fish sticks and custard, Dalek-shaped potatoes (or something), a very large Tardis cake, and several other themed foods that would have been meaningful to me if I ever watched Doctor Who. (I don't.)

Sometime between Lucy's birthday and her birthday party Grace had her adenoids removed. This was a source of great anxiety for her, but she survived. The resulting sore throat caused/permitted her to miss the next several days of school, but she somehow managed to recover in time to make it to her Girl Scout troop's camping trip four nights later. I believe this was her first such trip without the family, and she insisted on packing everything herself without any help. It therefore seems unlikely to me that she brushed her teeth at any point, but it sounds like she had a great time.

We love you.

Tim, et al.



October 2015



Grace (as May Chang, with Xiao-Mei on her shoulder) and Sophie (as Fan Lan) on Halloween.

Lucy (age 16) with her Tardis birthday cake (and Tardis dress) and the resulting very messy kitchen.



Grace and several cousins on Grandma's front porch, just before trick-or-treating in Grandma's neighborhood.



Sophie playing Catcher at Silver Spring International Middle School. (Check out how I caught the pitch in mid-flight!)



Sophie (carrying the white bag) and other members of her softball team.