

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

Hannah's mission is nearly 6 percent over and I have not yet figured out the best way of communicating her news to those who care to hear it. Some parents set up blogs where they post letters, and there's nothing wrong with that, but I don't see us doing it. For now I suppose I'll incorporate a couple of things I think are interesting into this letter. If you want more, Hannah has been writing a weekly letter to extended family and friends, and I expect she would be happy to add your email to the distribution if you were to send it to her. If you don't have her email address, then you can feel free to [email me](#) and I'll send it to you. (Or, if you know anything at all about missionary email addresses, you can almost certainly guess it.)

Hannah left the MTC for Arizona almost three weeks ago. She called us from the airport, which apparently is allowed and perhaps explains why SLC is the only airport I can think of that still has banks of pay phones. She bought a calling card (I had no idea those still existed) at the MTC bookstore, and we spoke for a half-hour or so. She sounded completely content and excited to get going. We appreciated hearing her voice.

She is currently assigned to three wards in the Goodyear Arizona Stake, about 20 miles west of Phoenix. Her companion is from Arkansas and they seem to get along. As the only member of the companionship with a driver's license, Hannah handles all of that. Having learned to drive around here, I don't imagine she finds navigating the streets of suburban Phoenix particularly intimidating. I gather from her letters that she and her companion are working hard and having a fair amount of success. A disproportionate amount of this success seems to be concentrated in apartment buildings she describes as "sketchy," which to anyone who has ever done any kind of missionary work, probably rings familiar.

On her first Sunday in one ward she was quickly recognized and greeted by two women whose families used to be in our ward. One of them had been Hannah's Primary teacher, though Hannah only vaguely remembered it. Crystal and I, of course, remember both women and their families well. Both women immediately connected with Crystal via Facebook to share pictures and ask what Hannah's favorite meals and treats are, and so this should work out well for her.

If you are Hannah's friend on Facebook, I guess you already know better than I that she has updated her profile (she is now "Sister-Hannah Willis") and photo there. This might be the impetus I need to finally get on Facebook, but I haven't done it yet.

Hannah loves the Arizona climate (who wouldn't?), the palm trees and other desert flora, and being able to wear knee-length skirts. She would have had a hard time wearing those around here this week. She was touched by the many solicitous local members asking whether her family in Maryland was surviving the blizzard. We came through it fine, though we continue to feel the after-effects a week later.

At the end of the storm on Sunday morning we measured 23 inches of snow on our patio table. This compared with official measurements of 29.3 inches at Dulles Airport (30 miles west of

said table) and 29.2 inches at Baltimore (30 miles northeast of it). It is difficult to explain how hard it is to deal with that much snow when it falls all at once.

Our little street was plowed (sort of—it's now basically a one-lane luge run) by Monday afternoon, and it sounds like we were among the lucky ones. This enabled us to take Ceres for her first walk in several days. She generally likes the snow, but it was too deep for her (or anyone) to really have any fun (or even move around) in. On the walk we encountered many neighbors we seldom see because literally everybody was home and many were outside cleaning up. Among these neighbors was a friendly couple, five houses down, who had just moved in a couple of weeks ago. Noticing the Minnesota license plates on their cars, I asked if the storm was making them feel at home. They told me they were actually from Montana but had lived in Minneapolis for the past eight years and had never seen anything like this.

Let me repeat those two places: *Montana. Minnesota.* "We've never seen anything like this."

It's fair to say that those places would probably have dealt better with the aftermath than we have. We've had abundant sunshine and melting since last Sunday, but everything is still a mess. Our newspaper started coming again on Wednesday morning, which is when the federal government re-opened and most people went back to work. We got mail for the first time on Thursday. Schools were closed all week; we're given to understand they'll open Monday. And traffic is still a nightmare. The mountains of snow piled into the outermost lanes of all our major surface streets (Colesville Road, University Blvd., and New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Georgia Avenues) has transformed these otherwise reliable six-lane arteries into four-lane parking lots.

We may not have been able to "make it into work" on Monday, but Grant, Jen, Andrew, and I still somehow managed to get downtown to the Wizards-Celtics game at Verizon Center, where Grant had somehow managed to get his firm's four floor seats adjacent to the Wizards' bench. It was awesome. We were on TV every time the ball was at our end of the floor. (We know this because the kids texted several times to tell us...and of course we recorded the game.) We high-fived the players as they came from the court to the bench, and Grant had an extended conversation with Kris Humphries about the relative virtues of Diet Pepsi versus a cocktail. (Our seats came with a server and unlimited food and drink, and Kris felt that Grant had made a poor beverage selection.) When Bradley Beal took a forearm to the face under our basket in the second quarter, the blood from his broken nose fell inches from my shoe. (I took a picture.)

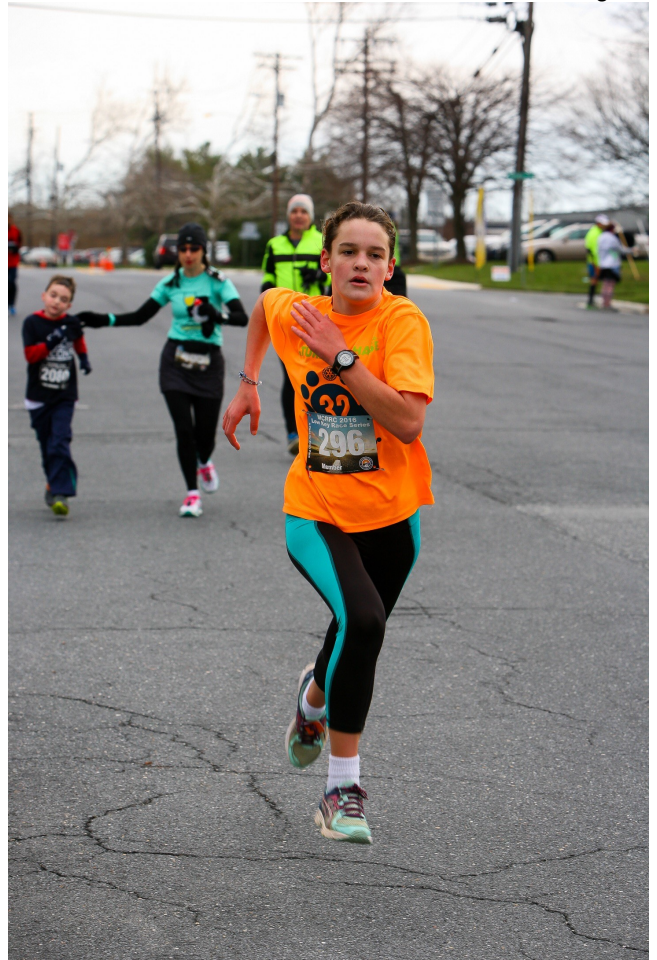
In other (pre-storm) downtown adventures, on Martin Luther King Day we took our first trip to the newly renovated Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum where we saw a truly amazing new exhibit called [Wonder](#). The exhibit is temporary and apparently this was everybody's idea that day, as parking was almost impossible to find and the line to get in stretched around the block. Waiting in line was made even more pleasant by the 21-degree temperature and wind, but the girls loved it once we got in, and so I think it was probably worth it, and we're calling it a win.

We hope this finds you warm and happy. Love, Tim, et al.





Sister Hannah Willis.



Sophie approaches the finish line at the New Year's Day 5K



Lucy, Sophie, Grace, and Crystal outside the Renwick Gallery — 18 Jan

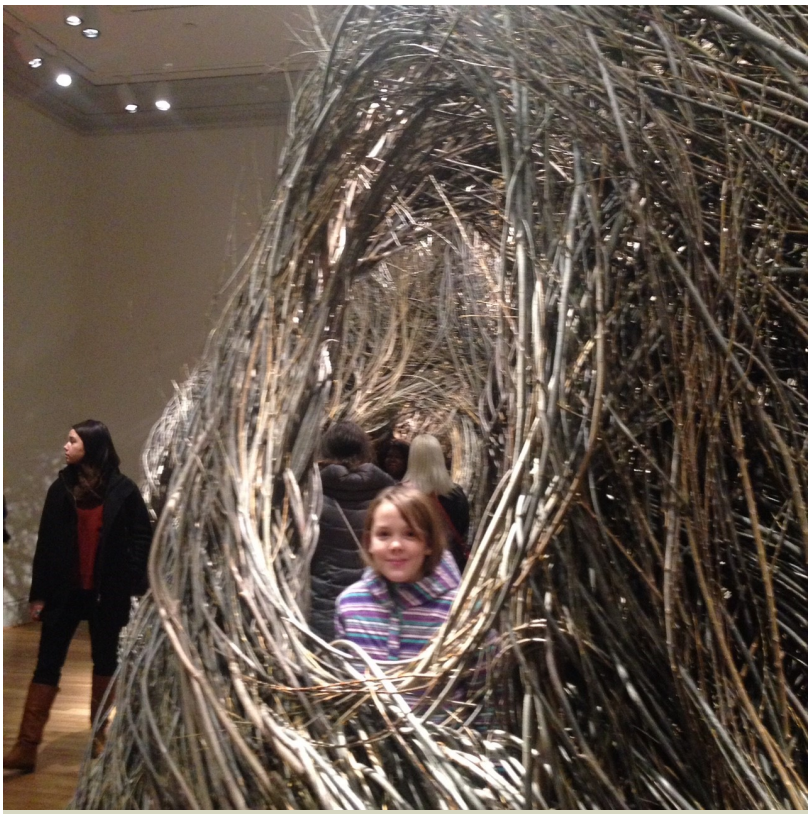


Grace and Sophie inside the Renwick Gallery. (All these photos are from the "Wonder" exhibit. (The mountains behind Sophie, lower right, are made from styrene index cards.)





More from the Renwick Gallery. Lucy and Sophie and a nest.



Grace in the nest



Sophie and I gaze at the ceiling of the Renwick Gallery.



The entrance to the church early last week. (That handsome building that looks like a warehouse with a steeple next to it is our stake center.) No, we did not have church last Sunday.



On Friday, 29 Jan, Grace holds the newspaper from Sunday, 24 Jan, which was delivered on Wednesday, 27 Jan.



25 Jan. Verizon Center. Half of my face, John Wall, and Otto Porter.