

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

My most embarrassing moment at Girls Camp came late Thursday night when I was attempting to download a podcast to my tablet because my phone was about to die. Instead of downloading it, however, I inadvertently started streaming it. And because my ear-phones were not attached, it started playing out loud. And because the volume was all the way up, it became my privilege to broadcast to the entire campsite this particular podcast's standard opening disclaimer: *THE FOLLOWING PODCAST CONTAINS EXPLICIT LANGUAGE.*

Which is just the sort of thing you expect to hear emanating from the hammock of the visiting stake presidency counselor. I expected to have to explain myself the following morning, but nobody said anything to me about it. I was away from all the girls' tents, and so I guess it's possible no one heard it.

I suppose if it embarrasses me to have it known that I listen to something, then I probably ought to stop listening to it. But in reality, it's only the disclaimer that embarrasses me. And since you're now wondering, the podcast is called [The Gist](#) with Mike Pesca. Feel free to look it up and judge for yourself. Or don't. I think Pesca's pretty clever, but he does curse occasionally.

My time at Girls Camp (technically "Young Women Camp," but no one ever calls it that) was occasioned by the last-minute loss of one of the two men we had asked to provide priesthood support. The required number of priesthood brethren and their role at Girls Camp is a matter of local interpretation and judgment. The Handbook does not address it, but the [Young Women Camp Manual](#) holds that "an adequate number of adult priesthood leaders must be available at all times during young women overnight activities to provide support and protection."

In the judgment of the stake Young Women Camp Director, currently one Crystal Willis, "an appropriate number" is somewhere between zero and one. But the tradition in our stake is two, and tradition is hard to break, and so we have two. And because it's hard to find a second guy who can take a week off at the last minute to go to camp, the second guy was me.

Well, sort of. Camp was at Pocomoke River State Park on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and I did not actually get out there until Wednesday. Upon arriving I was informed that Crystal had just taken Lucy to an urgent care facility with what appeared to be a rash on her arms, neck, and face. The rash was diagnosed by the urgent care physician as "definitely viral" and "probably chicken pox." And so, having been at camp just long enough to set up my new, splendid [Hennessy Hammock](#), I was making the 2.5-hour drive back with Lucy, and the two of us spent Wednesday night at home. The following morning, I dropped Lucy at Grandma's and, for the third time in 18 hours, crossed the [anxiety-inducing Bay Bridge](#) to return to camp.

Apart from suffocating dew points, which climbed into the low 70s at times, the rest of the week was pleasant. I missed the heaviest rain on Tuesday, and we somehow worked swimming and canoeing around another band of thunderstorms on Friday. You don't typically get much in the way of politics at Girls Camp, but by my count, three of the six independently written skits used Donald Trump as a metaphor for evil.

Lucy seems to be getting better. It was my understanding that she

had been vaccinated for chicken pox, and I'm not sure how she got whatever she has. At this point we're just hoping she gets all the way better and none of the rest of us gets it.

June also brought the predictably annoying "promotion" ceremonies associated with Sophie's and Grace's respective completion of middle and elementary school. That I played the piano at each of them made them only slightly less unbearable.

At the middle school promotion, I accompanied Sophie and her friend Abby who together sang the duet "For Good" from *Wicked*. The program mistitled the number as "For the Good," an inexcusable and fatal error since the point of the song plays with the multiple meanings of the phrase "for good." I'm still annoyed about it. The girls sang nicely, though. At Grace's ceremony, I accompanied the fifth graders in singing "We Will," a catchy and optimistic tune with which I was previously unfamiliar, written by Jim Papoulis, whom I've never heard of, shortly after the September 11th attacks.

These fifth graders weren't yet born on 9/11. Many of them were shocked when they visited the 9/11 exhibit on a recent field trip to the [Newseum](#). Several asked whether that had really happened. Hannah was just two weeks into kindergarten on that day, and we've had an unending string of daughters attending Forest Knolls Elementary School ever since. Until now. It's been a great place for us, and after 15 happy years, it's a bit startling to be officially out of the elementary school business.

In connection with finishing their respective schools, Grace graduated from Girl Scout "Juniors" and earned her Bronze Award, and Sophie completed "Cadettes" and earned her Silver Award. Sophie's troop (now Girl Scout "Seniors") traveled to Los Angeles the week after school ended. They stayed in the USC dorms (Sophie's grandma's alma mater—Sophie thought it was really nice and concluded it must be a "rich person school") and did every possible touristy thing short of attending a taping of *The Price Is Right*, which is what I would have done. They even went to a Nationals-Dodgers game at Dodger Stadium. They wore Nationals gear and left in the eighth with the Nats ahead 3-2. (The Dodgers won on a three-base error by the Nationals' centerfielder in the ninth.) It seems they had a good time anyway.

Aiding my transition into geezer-hood, in June I joined and began attending meetings of our neighborhood civic association. I'd been enjoying their well-written newsletter for years and thought it was time I finally attended a meeting. With the exception of a couple who came in late, I was perhaps the youngest person there by 20 years. It was fabulous. There was a 30-minute slide show on the 160-year history of the neighborhood and some quality schmoozing by our county councilmember. But my favorite part was Q&A with the police officer. An elderly gentleman politely asked if anything could be done about all the carjacking going on in the neighborhood. Carjacking? The man said he'd been carjacked twice in the past month, which I found both shocking and disturbing. Further questioning by the police officer revealed that this man's definition of *carjacking* was "having things stolen out of your parked car." The officer clarified that the term for this particular crime is *theft from vehicle* and the best prevention is to lock your car and not leave valuable stuff in it. She somehow managed to explain this without laughing at the guy. She's clearly a pro. I couldn't have done it.

I love old people. I hope to be one some day.

Love, Tim





Grace and friends show off their Girl Scout Bronze Awards



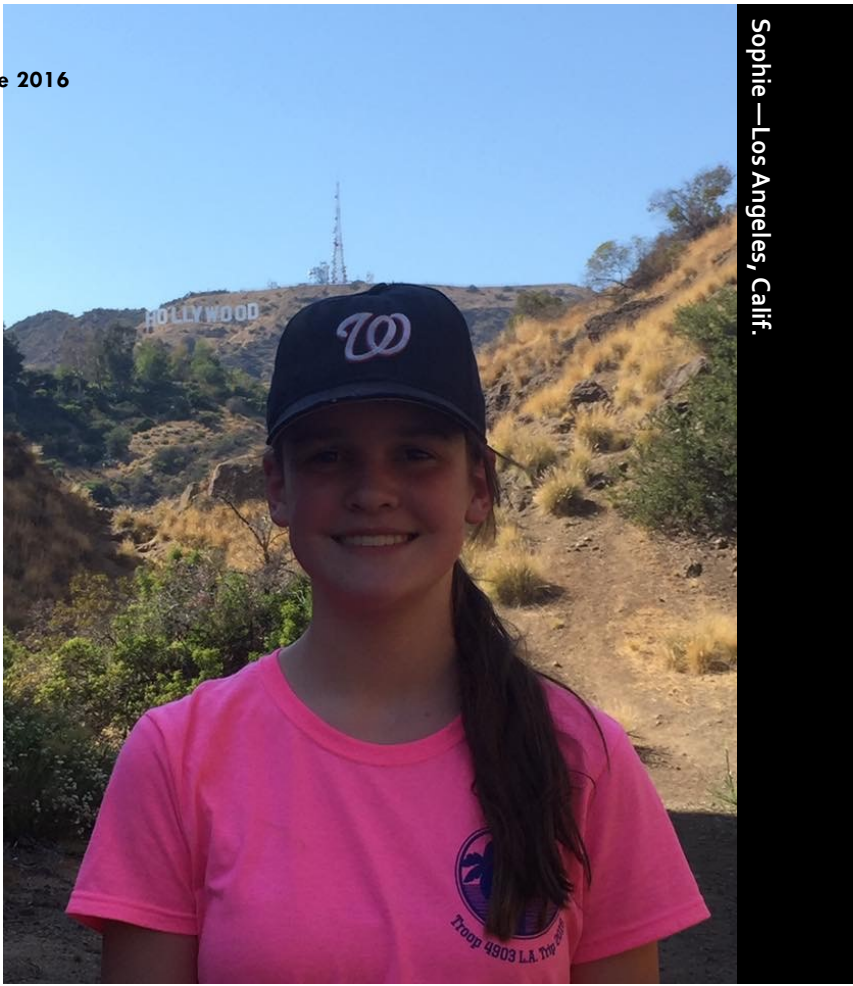
Sophie (center) receives her Girl Scout Silver Award



Sophie exits the stage after receiving a piece of paper denoting her successful completion of 8th grade.



My favorite picture from Girls Camp. Morning scripture study—Sophie in the middle resting her head on her left hand.



Sophie—Los Angeles, Calif.



Nats fans at Dodger Stadium—Sophie in blue cap



Sophie (3rd from left) and members of her troop. Los Angeles, Calif.