

THE FAMLET MONTHLY



Dear Family,

Hannah got sick a couple of weeks ago. She texted that she'd had to take time off work and was struggling to walk more than 25 meters without losing her breath or having a coughing fit.

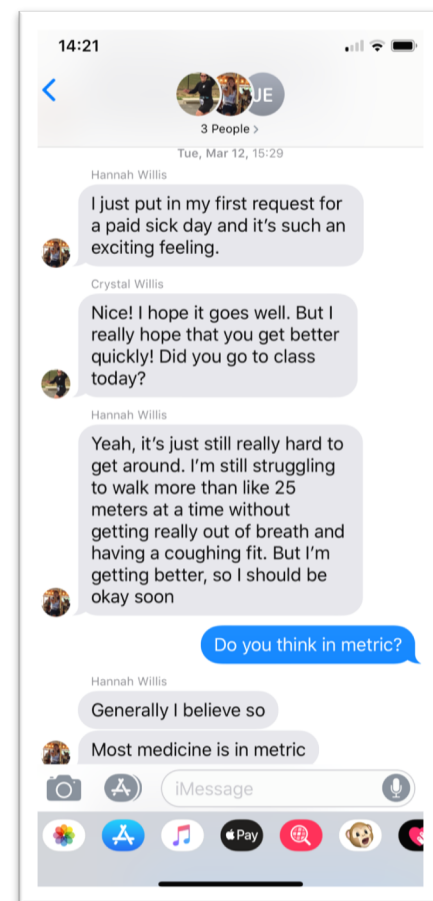
While Hannah's mother subsequently filled the text thread with concerned questions and wishes for her recovery, Hannah's father had just one question:

"Do you think in metric?"

She said she does, which makes me jealous. I'd like to think in metric, but imperial is a hard habit to break when you grew up with it and are surrounded by it. I *understand* metric and get that it's superior—the concept is French, after all. It's just hard to make myself think in those units.

And so, beginning now, for at least as long as it takes me to write this letter, I vow to communicate only in metric units. If for no other reason than it delights me to come across as even more pretentious than I actually am.

Hannah recovered from her illness and helped deliver a baby for the first time on Thursday. Hannah positioned the mother, administered her medication, counted for her during contractions, and talked her through *three hours* of pushing. Hannah said she cried when the baby was finally born and described it as "seriously one of the most amazing things I've ever been a part of." I can't really relate to that (I think childbirth is gross)



Sympathetic parent

but I'm glad that Hannah is going into something that makes her happy.

[Incidentally, I wasn't there, but my experience suggests that the mother's cervical dilation was almost certainly communicated to her in centimeters, while the size of the baby that subsequently passed through that opening was expressed in pounds and inches. Our confusion with units of measure in America begins at birth. This madness must stop.]

Apart from some recent challenges at work that have me wondering (yet again) why I haven't been fired, life has not dealt me very much to complain about this month. This typically makes for a fairly boring letter. I hope that my good fortune does not arouse any resentment in you. If it does, you can be assured that I don't feel deserving of anything good that has ever befallen me, and I live in near-constant worry of it all being taken away without warning.

For now, I'm just happy that Lucy appears to be enjoying her life in residence at the [Workforce and Technology Center](#), adjacent to the Morgan State University campus in northern Baltimore. Lucy is now four weeks into the 10-week Professional Animal Workers (PAWS) program there. She and I make the 69-km drive to the WTC every Sunday evening, and Crystal picks her up every Friday afternoon.

I don't know precisely what the training entails, but Lucy seems to like it. She texts home lots of pictures of interesting animals from pet stores, humane societies, and other places. She likes her roommate and probably appreciates the autonomy. It's hard to say where this will ultimately lead, but it feels like a positive development.

Yesterday ended Sophie's four-day run as Mother Superior in Northwood High School's production of *Sister Act: The Musical*. Mother Superior is the part Sophie was born to play. The character features more prominently in the musical than it does in the movie. I think Sophie did more singing than anyone else in the show, apart from Deloris Van Cartier, the central character of both the show and movie. Both girls sang spectacularly, as did the choir of nuns. It was a fun show.

With the play behind her, Sophie now turns her attention to tennis. She doesn't really know how to play, but she owns a racket, and apparently that's enough to get you on the Northwood team. More



Above: Lucy checks into the WTC.

Below: Grace's teeth without braces



college application padding. She did better on the SAT than on the ACT. We'll see what happens.

Grace's 14th birthday was three weeks ago, but the events marking it filled the month. These included dinner and cupcakes in Bethesda with our friends (and intellectual superiors—see [December's letter](#)) the Eskelsens. They had noted that Grace and their daughter would both be 14 for precisely 14 days this year and felt that the occasion should be acknowledged. And so we acknowledged it and had a pleasant evening. Grace also celebrated her birthday by taking a small group of school friends to Sophie's play—they sat behind us and formed a pleasantly boisterous cheering section for Sophie—and then coming home to spend the night. I don't know what they did, but they were so quiet that I forgot they were here, so I don't really care.

Grace might tell you that her best birthday presents (apart from the new phone—she goes through more phones than anyone else in our house) included getting her braces off and learning that her once-fractured ankle was sufficiently healed that she could walk again without crutches or boot. Her recovery means that she has now moved out of what I will always think of as Hannah's bedroom on the main floor, which now looks as though a gale blew through, and back upstairs to her own room, which I believe she recently vacuumed for perhaps the first time this year.

Sophie, Lucy, and Grace joined forces to perform the 1950's pop hit "Lollipop" at the ward talent show last weekend. They sounded good, but the video Crystal shot of it is more memorable for the group of kids who run back and forth in front of the stage a half-dozen times during the performance. It felt like church. I loved it.

Crystal's basketball team began league play this month, starting the season with three consecutive victories. The women's league consists of three teams from the great and powerful Washington DC Stake and one team from our considerably more modest stake, which borders that one. Most of Crystal's teammates are from our ward, with some strong contribution from the College Park Ward and a couple of ringers from Virginia. This is roughly what you'd expect the composition of a basketball team from our little stake to look like. A little unconventional, but they haven't lost any games yet. During a typical game, Crystal scores a couple of baskets, jams a couple of fingers,



Above: The girls after their "Lollipop" performance.

Below: Sophie as Mother Superior.



and tries to stay out of the better players' way. I think she's having a lot of fun with it.

March's highlights also included learning of Abby Willis's mission call to Calgary and being with her in the Philadelphia Temple (217 km northeast of here) while she received her endowment. We had fun reading the many billboards we encountered entering Philadelphia welcoming Bryce Harper to the Phillies. This was well before opening day when he went 0 for 3 with two strikeouts and got booed by his new hometown fans. I hope they enjoy his expensive hairdo up there, and I predict the Nationals will do better without him. (Oh, and I got distracted, sorry. I also predict that Abby will be a wonderful missionary.)

Finally, I participated in the "United Airlines Rock 'n' Roll Washington DC Marathon" this month. (The race bibs had to be roughly the size of computer monitors to fit all those words on them.)

I had a good race (for me), finishing in 523rd place. You'll have to do a little Googling to find out how good or bad that actually is. You can also join a select group of Huber relatives, Roland Kent, a couple of work colleagues, and some guy from Australia I've never met by following me on [Strava](#).

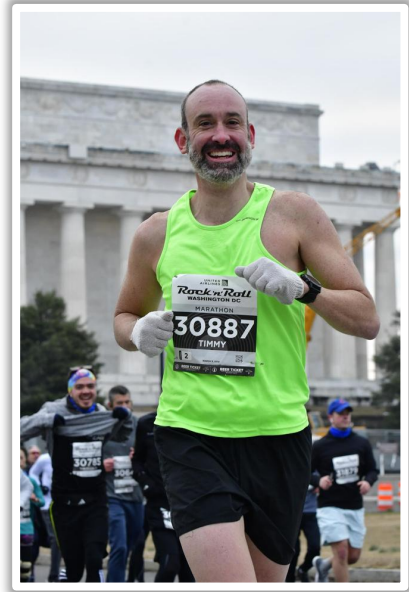
Many factors contributed to making this just about the perfect race for me. It began with the weather. The temperature started right around freezing (0 degrees C) and never got above 4. Perfect for a marathon (if you're me). Not having to worry about overheating helped me finish nearly four minutes faster than my previous personal marathon record (which I set on an even chillier day in pancake-flat Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, in December 2015).

I also think I may have finally hit on a fueling strategy that works for me. I realize that a lot of people go through life aspiring to one day finish a race in 523rd place, and so I thought you might be interested in knowing my secret—which turns out to be 170.4 ml of pure maple syrup. That's all I ate the entire race—one 28.4 ml dose of maple syrup (100 calories) every 6 km. (A marathon is 42.2 km.) I couldn't tell you whether there's any actual physiological benefit to it, but it's delicious, and the prospect of sucking down another packet of it was sufficient motivation to keep me moving. Maple syrup—it's the best!

It probably also helped that I'm about 6 kg lighter now than I was when I did [Ironman back in the fall](#). (Sorry for all this metric. If it helps, 6 kg is a little more than 0.9 stone.) I'm pretty sure I'd be faster if I were lighter still. I've started to dabble in intermittent fasting, and Crystal thinks I have an eating disorder. She might be right, but in a house with as many girls as ours, someone was bound to develop one. It may as well be me.

Love,

Tim (1.88 m, 82.5 kg), *et al*



Above: Effortlessly gliding past the Lincoln Memorial in one flattering photo among a sea of less-flattering ones.

Below: 28.4 ml of delicious maple syrup!

