

# the Famlet monthly

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## Dear Family,

I'm looking forward to having a "dog" rather than a "puppy." I don't know exactly where that line is, but I'm assuming we will have crossed it once Ceres stops jumping all over people and relieving herself all over the house. Training could probably accelerate this process, but that's clearly not our thing. The girls are generally pretty good at dealing with the little packages Ceres leaves before I notice them and start shouting (at everybody yet no one in particular), but they are not as good as noticing (or dealing with it) when she takes a whiz in the middle of the carpet. As Grace put it just a few minutes ago, "I'm not really very good at cleaning pee. I'm more of a poop person."

I reported in last month's letter that Hannah and Lucy constituted the entirety of the Mormon population at Montgomery Blair High School. That is no longer true.

It's a pretty cool story, and it's not mine to tell, but I figure I'm safe in repeating what has been related in multiple public settings. It's about a girl who is now a junior in Blair's rigorous Communication Arts Program (CAP)—the same program in which Hannah is now a senior. The story begins during the run-up to last year's presidential election. It probably won't surprise you to learn that the political leanings of CAP students are manifestly (and outspokenly) left of center, and a fair amount of classroom discussion last year centered around the unmitigated evil embodied by the Republican nominee (and by anybody unenlightened enough to support him). Such polemics, which Hannah confirms are consistent with what went on in her CAP classes, were frequently seasoned with considerable misinformation about the candidate's religion. The girl had a hard time believing that all the unflattering things she was hearing about Mormons could actually be true, and so she began her own online investigation. That investigation eventually led her to The Book of Mormon and the missionaries, and she was baptized three weeks ago.

Hannah, Lucy, and I now pick her up for seminary every morning and for young women activities on Tuesday nights. And all of this happens with the consent of parents who attended her baptism (and confirmation the following Sunday) and appear to be far more supportive of all this than I would likely be if one of *my* daughters were to announce that she wanted to join some other church.

In testimony meeting this morning she spoke movingly of, among other things, how she felt the gospel had increased her capacity to love. It helped confirm to me (again) the amazingness of this thing we're all a part of

and caused me marvel (again) at my astoundingly good fortune to have been born into it.

In related news, Hannah went to Homecoming last weekend with a boy who is planning to get baptized in November. "The boy" (I'm not sure why I am so reluctant to use names in this letter—I guess I'm more sensitive about other children's privacy than I am about that of my own children) is a senior at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School. Hannah was initially nervous about going to the dance and being perceived as the wicked Mormon seductress who is luring a good Catholic boy away from his foundation (she's not, by the way—they are not an item, and his interest in the Church predates his knowing Hannah) but everybody was nice to her and she had a good time. By the way, I understand he asked her to homecoming via Facebook. Or it might have been via text message. It was one of those. Kids these days. It kind of makes you wonder how her first marriage proposal will be delivered. I wonder if there will be a way to copy her mother and me on it.

Lucy and Sophie both seem to be settling nicely into their new schools. Sophie's favorite classes include English and French, while Lucy is having a good time with Japanese. No one is taking Spanish. (We apparently have limited interest in learning to communicate with a large number of people who actually live here.) Hannah claims to be done with languages, but she's taking another truckload of AP courses this year. Unlike some of us, who let off the gas a little during our senior year, Hannah seems hell-bent on starting college as a sophomore.

Finally, Crystal and I returned to Deep Creek Lake in beautiful Western Maryland for another go at the SavageMan triathlon. As you may recall, we ran this event last September with Grant and were joined out there by his whole family, plus Mom, Dad and Pete. Grant opted out this year, choosing instead to participate in the preceding weekend's "Civil War Century" 103-mile bike through some of Maryland's and Pennsylvania's most scenic battlefields—Gettysburg, Antietam, and Crampton's Gap/South Mountain. Maybe next year we'll join him. But this year it was back to SavageMan, accompanied only by Sophie and Grace. (Hannah had driving school, and Lucy had other things she wanted to do—I can't remember what. I believe this was our first time leaving any of our children home alone overnight. Grandma and Grandpa helped, and everyone survived.) The race went well. I finished 52 seconds faster than last year, despite a slower swim and ridiculously slow transitions. Crystal dropped over 5 minutes and finished 2nd in the "Athena" division. (I'll let you look up what that means if you don't already know.)

Love, Tim *et al*



# SAVAGEMAN—14 SEPTEMBER 2013



**Counter-clockwise from left:**

Crystal between Sophie and Grace; Crystal with husband; Crystal between other top Athena finishers



Hannah (and a nice Catholic boy) head off to Homecoming



Because every family has to try to make baked Alaska at least one time, here was our first attempt at it last Monday night.

It turned out surprisingly well.

