

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

I had never taken such a keen interest in Delta Airlines' online "Flight Tracker" feature as I did two Sundays ago.

Hannah sat for her last final exam of the semester on Thursday, December 18th. However, because she had already arranged to attend a [Piano Guys](#) concert in Salt Lake on the evening of Saturday, December 20th, her flight home was not until Sunday the 21st.

When I say that Hannah "arranged to attend" the concert, what I mean is that she had obtained a ticket. As with a number of other things during the semester, the logistics depended on the kindness of local relatives. This time it was Aunt Florence. To quote the text Hannah sent me on the Saturday before the concert, "So Florence asked what my plans were for getting home and she OFFERED to let Emma and me stay at her place Saturday night and pick us up from the concert and drive us to the airport. So she's an angel." We agree.

This time it was Aunt Florence, and this wasn't the only time it was Aunt Florence, but Aunt Florence was just one in of a sea of helpful relatives who shuttled Hannah to and from various family gatherings and other places during her first semester at BYU. For this we are very grateful.

We are likewise grateful to have her home for these two weeks, which brings me back to the afternoon of Sunday, the 21st. I probably refreshed the flight tracker on my phone's Delta app 25 times as I watched the little airplane icon representing flight 1189 from Salt Lake to BWI work its way across the country. I made regular, annoying, announcements to anyone within earshot: "She's over Nebraska now..." Had anyone else done this, it would have driven me nuts. The missionaries were over that afternoon for Sunday dinner (we get them on the third Sunday of every month) and at one point during the meal I mentioned that Hannah was passing by Des Moines, which prompted one of the elders to ask, "Where's Des Moines?" Love those elders.

Sophie went with me to the airport while Crystal stayed home with the other girls to make final preparations for a small gathering of choir members and other friends of Hannah's we'd invited over to say hello. I actually parked the car in the garage (can't remember the last time I did *that* on an airport pickup) so Sophie and I could go into the terminal and wait for Hannah outside security. We positioned ourselves there and, after several minutes, she eventually emerged and gave us big hugs. We accompanied her down to bag claim and encountered more strangers wearing BYU and BYU-Idaho gear than I have probably ever seen in any one place other than a sporting event. It would seem that DL1189 from SLC to BWI was a popular flight for returning students.

It's been great having Hannah around. She continues to swim most days. I went with her once, and Crystal, who is now out of her walking boot and slowing resuming her exercise regimen, has been with her multiple times. I could easily fill the rest of this page (and several more) recounting the good times we've had with Hannah these past ten days. But that would not leave sufficient space for the real focus of every letter I write, which

is me.

Partially in response to the mild dissatisfaction I felt with my performance in October's Baltimore Marathon, I registered at the last minute for this month's Rehoboth Beach Seashore Marathon. (Elders note: Rehoboth Beach is in Delaware, about 120 miles from here. I have tended to blame my disappointing performances in previous marathons on some combination of heat, humidity and hills. I knew that this race, a mostly flat seaside course in December, would disabuse me of all my usual excuses. I did manage to finish nearly 12 minutes faster than I did in Baltimore and was still on pace to come in under 4 hours when I crossed the 22-mile mat, but I was already falling apart by then and from there I could barely manage to shuffle. It seems like in every marathon I've done there's always some kid holding a poster of a Super Mario Invincibility Star, inviting runners to "Touch Star For More Power." I always tap the star. If the kid and his poster are near the beginning of the race, I do it to make the kid feel good and figure it's good karma for me. If he's near the end (as I recall, he was somewhere around mile 20 in Rehoboth) I tap it because I'm delirious enough to believe that touching a poster might actually give me the strength I need to maintain my pace. It never actually works. I missed my goal by 5 minutes and am now 0 for 5 in my quest for a sub-4:00 marathon. Attempt 6 is in mid-March. Stay tuned.

Without the weather or terrain to blame, I am forced to turn inward and acknowledge that marathons are just hard and I probably need to change something in my training. Then there's the issue of my diet, which is a joke. I really like donuts and Crystal is a major-league enabler. Earlier this month she and a friend made a special trip to [Astro Donuts](#) and brought back boxes of crème brûlée and PB&J donuts (voted DC's best donut and third-best donut, respectively, by readers of the Washington Post). It's fortunate that I don't work near Astro Donuts. It's fashionable this time of year to resolve to begin eating better. But in about a month there will be about 600 boxes of Girl Scout cookies in our house, and so I have no illusions that that's going to happen.

Sophie and Grace continue to thrive in Girl Scouts and at school. Grace recently learned that one of her classmates is a member of the Church. Our elementary school straddles the boundary between our stake and the Washington DC Stake, and so we don't know all the Church members at school. But a classmate noticed Grace's BYU sweatshirt a few weeks ago and asked whether Grace was a Mormon. Grace replied that she was. The girls were initially skeptical of one another because neither had seen the other at church. And so Grace said they spent lunch quizzing each other about "the Articles of Faith and latter-day prophets." This was enough to convince each girl that the other was legit. If only there were a secret handshake or something.

Christmas was totally chill. After spending Christmas Eve afternoon building gingerbread houses with local relatives at JenGrant's house, we exchanged gifts with Grandma/pa, Coco and Pete for about an hour on Christmas morning at our house and spent the rest of the afternoon chillaxing. We broke out the fryer and made Monte Cristo sandwiches and fried Oreos (see "diet" paragraph, above) and it was all very tranquil and pleasant. I might never go to another traditional Christmas dinner again.

May your New Year be prosperous. Love, Tim et al





Top: Grace with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the ward Christmas party
Bottom: Lucy (center) and two other young women working as Santa's elves at the ward Christmas party.



Top: Christmas morning: Hannah and her present from Coco ("The Girl Who Waited" is a Doctor Who reference, but her friend Ben enters the MTC on Wednesday.) Only Grace could be in tears while opening a present.
Bottom: After the Rehoboth Beach Seashore Marathon, with Sophie and Grace

