

THE FAMLET MONTHLY



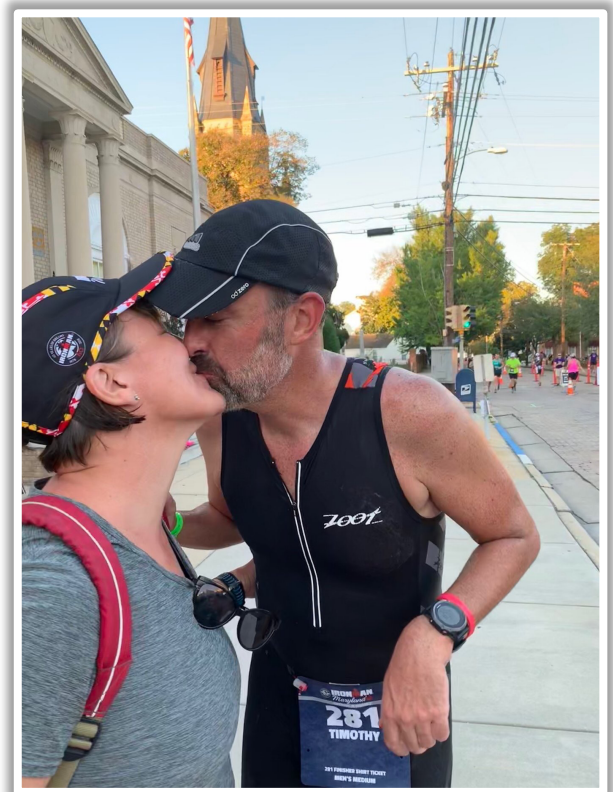
Dear Family,

At some point this month while driving to church in the rain (it's hard to pinpoint precisely which Sunday because so many of them were rainy) I boldly predicted that someone would offer a prayer and give thanks for "the moisture we are receiving."

This compelled Crystal to explain to the girls that, for reasons we don't fully understand, *moisture* is how people at church refer to rain when publicly addressing God. This tendency seems more prevalent among people who hail from the western United States (who clearly are familiar with the word *rain* and use it when not praying), but like many Latter-day Saint cultural tics, it tends to permeate wherever those people go.

I only had to wait until the opening prayer in sacrament meeting that morning for a lovely sister in the ward to express gratitude for "the moisture," at which point I exultantly uttered "nailed it" just loudly enough for my family and anyone else sitting within a two-pew radius to hear. After a dozen years of having my running commentary audible only to people sitting near me on the stand (and occasionally the speaker) Crystal and the girls are still readjusting to the weekly embarrassment of having me sit with them at church.

My penchant for making peanut gallery comments is not unique to church, however. I've been doing it in all manner of public gatherings since at least the 4th grade—and probably earlier, though my 4th-grade teacher, Mr. Robbie, is the first person I recall doing



Cambridge, Maryland – 29 Oct 2018

anything about it. One of the benefits of having a last name that starts with “W” is that when elementary school teachers sat us alphabetically (as they usually did) I tended to get a prime location on the back row. This lack of proximity to the teacher afforded me more or less free rein to run my yap as I pleased. Mr. Robbie, who I actually remember as one of my favorite teachers, didn’t appreciate this and told Mom and Dad in a parent-teacher conference not only that he had reassigned my seat to the front row but that he would be sending a note home with me every Friday summarizing my behavior from the past week.

Dad devised a reward system designed to incentivize me to earn multiple favorable notes in a row. No one who knows me well will be the least bit surprised to learn that I don’t recall earning many of these rewards. I’ve only grown more annoying as I’ve grown older and more confident in the wittiness of whatever I have to say.

If all goes as it should, Sophie will be a licensed driver by the time I write to you again. She has completed her state-required 20 hours of classroom instruction, 60 hours of behind-the-wheel practice, and 4 hours of formal behind-the-wheel training. All she needs now is 2 more hours in the car with an instructor and then to wait few more days to elapse so she can reach 9 months with her instructional permit and take the road test for her license. This test should not pose a problem for her. She may already be a better driver than I and is unquestionably a more careful and conscientious one. I’ve already reached the point where I feel safer in the car when she’s driving than when I am. This likely wasn’t true of Dad and me until I was 45 (and he was 75).

Lucy, who has heretofore expressed precisely zero interest in driving, this week on the way home from therapy mentioned that she might want to learn. This might have something do with her growing dog-walking business. She has one daily client who lives in the neighborhood and that she can get to fairly easily on foot. But other clients are not so conveniently located. Public transit isn’t always practical, and we prefer not to have to chauffeur her, and so we may have a thing here. Stay tuned.

September had five Saturdays. If you could see my Garmin training log (and you can if you look hard enough because it’s public) you’d see that my various bicycles and I made the most of them:



Grace (center) erecting a tent with fellow Girl Scouts at Harpers Ferry Labor Day weekend

First day of school



Saturday the 1st: 88-mile training ride

Saturday the 8th: Civil War Century (see below)

Saturday the 15th: 61-mile training ride (followed by 8-mile training run)

Saturday the 22nd: Giant Acorn Olympic Triathlon

Yesterday: Ironman Maryland (see below)

Civil War Century (8 Sept.): I signed up for this 104-mile ride through the mountains and countryside of northern Maryland and southern Pennsylvania at the invitation of Grant and Andrew who were doing it with a bunch of guys in their ward. The ride was strenuous in places and is said to include 7,000 feet of climbing (Andrew's phone and my Garmin independently measured 8,000 feet). The ride is so named because it winds through several Civil War battlefields and cemeteries, including Crampton's Gap, South Mountain, Antietam and Gettysburg. The intensity of the climbs and descents were more than what I'm accustomed to. The ascents slowed us down to as little as 5-6 MPH in places, and we got close to 50 MPH coming back down—on wet, at times winding mountain roads with moisture from heaven pelting and stinging our exposed arms, legs, and faces.

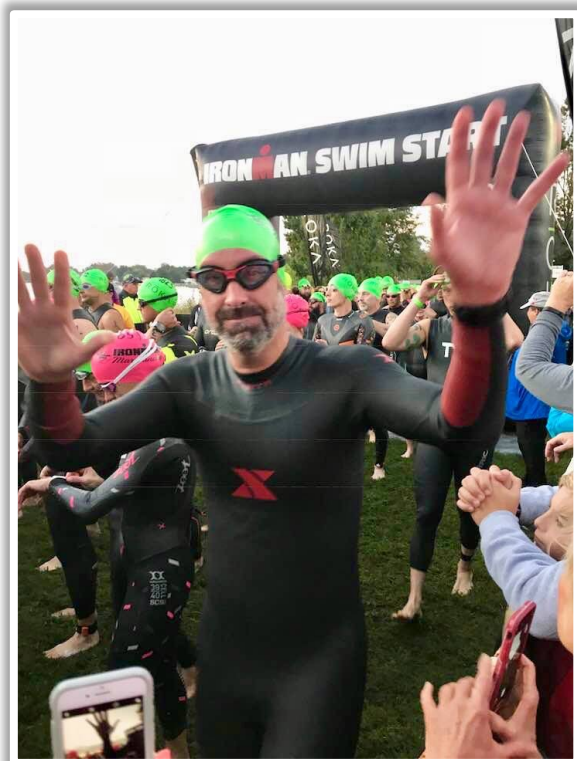
The incessant moisture prompted Grant and several others (most of whom had done the ride before) to bail out at the Mason-Dixon line (about 65 miles in) and take a shortcut home. Some of those who bailed out had previously assured Andrew and me (who had not done the ride before) that the last 40 miles were easy and "basically flat," and so the two of us and a couple of other guys decided to press on.

It would be uncharitable of me to write that these good brethren's characterization of the last 40 miles was "a load of crap," but it certainly wasn't accurate. Apart from the one remaining mountain between us and Gettysburg, I suppose it was sort of mostly flat-ish, but it quickly became clear why they all bailed out. Still, it was a fun ride and, as always, I enjoyed being with my brothers.

The century ride fit in well with final preparations for **Ironman Maryland** yesterday. For 40 years, Ironman's trademark slogan has been "Swim 2.4 Miles, Bike 112 Miles, Run 26.2 Miles, Brag for the Rest of your Life." I don't pretend to entirely understand all the complexities surrounding what motivated me to do



Civil War Century with Grant and Andrew. This was taken at South Mountain (I think).



Ironman starting line

this, but it would be dishonest of me to claim that the ability to boast had nothing to do with it.

Ironman finishers brag in different ways. A lot of them get tattoos. (I won't be doing that.) Some affix pretentious "140.6" stickers to their cars ($2.4 + 112 + 26.2 = 140.6$). I almost certainly *will* do that. Virtually all of them annoy their friends and acquaintances by dropping it into unrelated conversations. In that spirit:

The swim leg went okay. It took me an hour and 22 minutes, which is considerably longer than it takes me to cover the same distance in a pool. Swimming giant rectangles in a wide river (the Choptank in this case) is harder than swimming in a pool—if for no other reason than you don't get to flip and push off a wall every 25 seconds. I was content with the time. The bike leg took 5 hours and 46 minutes, which I was happy with. The marathon leg was an epic disaster, and I only narrowly averted the ultimate triathlon indignity of having a run time longer than my bike time, limping home in just under 5 hours and 19 minutes. This was all commensurate with my preparation. I was in no condition to run a marathon yesterday (even without the 7+ hours of swimming and biking that preceded it). My performance reflected that. Also, it was hot. If I were one to make excuses (and I am) I could blame the heat.

In the end, including transitions, the whole ordeal took me 12 hours and 39 minutes. I watched the sun rise from the river as I began the swim and watched it set as I finished the marathon. Both were beautiful sights.

I was hoping to finish in less than 12 hours and would have done it with a slightly less embarrassing marathon time. My overall time makes me a fairly average Ironman – 89th out of 198 finishers in my age group and 519th out of 1,390 finishers overall. I know Mom doesn't like to think of her boys as average, but in my case the numbers don't lie.

I believe I have found a new primary care physician that I like (or at least think I can tolerate) and had a physical this month for the first time in I can't remember how many years. The doctor isn't happy with my blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, or triglyceride levels and told me I should exercise more and eat less fat and sodium. I shared my training regimen with her and suggested that a lack of exercise was likely not the problem (she agreed) But I conceded that I should probably stop eating like a teenager. I believe she is mistaken about a high-fat diet being problematic, but there's plenty of other junk I should certainly cut back on, and I'm trying to start with my sugar addiction. I have no idea how I'm going to consume less sodium since it is ubiquitous in literally everything I like, but I've started keeping track of what I eat, and I'll let you know what happens. The app I've been using to do this just told me that if every day were like yesterday, I would weigh 89.2 pounds in 5 weeks. I suppose this could be true, depending on how long it takes a human corpse to decompose. Because if every day were like yesterday, then I'd be dead by Tuesday.

The doctor also recommended a colonoscopy because "they say you should get one at 45 now." I first tried explaining that I wasn't 45 anymore. When that didn't work, I asked who "they" were (the ones recommending them at an earlier age). As best I can tell, "they" are other doctors who sell colonoscopies for a living. It sounds like a scam to me, but

Ironman finish line (with Peter)



00:19 ↗



Diary Complete

If every day were like today...

You'd weigh

89.2 lbs

in 5 weeks*

I'll probably do it anyway, ideally before my deductible resets in December. The prospect of this does not delight me, but at least it'll give me something to write about.

We now enter Crystal's favorite month and season. What makes her happy makes me happy, and I hope you are happy as well.

Love,

Tim