

THE FAMLET MONTHLY



Dear Family,

With 24 nieces and nephews spread across four time zones, it seems unlikely that I will make it (or even be invited) to all their weddings, but for now I'm batting a thousand—1 for 1—having had the privilege of attending Noah Kent's marriage to Amber Norris in the Provo City Center Temple earlier this month.

Crystal, Lucy, Grace, and I (Sophie didn't feel comfortable cutting school and consequently had the house to herself for four days) arrived in Provo on the Wednesday evening before General Conference and met Hannah and JT for dinner at some burger dive (called CHOM, I think—it didn't exist in my day) where Hannah and JT apparently always ask their visiting parents and grandparents to take them. Visitors always offer to take them someplace nicer, but I'm told they always opt for the burger place. It was pretty good.

The people I work with who thought it strange that my daughter's wedding was on a Friday morning had perhaps been conditioned not to be surprised that I was attending my nephew's wedding on a Thursday afternoon. One of the cultural side-effects of temple marriages, which are attended by relatively few people, is that we can hold them any odd time we want. I won't get into the confluence of reasons why Thursday afternoon made sense in this circumstance, but it did.

The afternoon wedding meant Crystal and I had Thursday morning to guide Lucy and Grace around our



Grace, Lucy and Crystal at BYU — 4 Oct 2018

old alma mater—mostly the bookstore, the art museum, and the library, where we dropped in on Crystal’s childhood friend and former BYU roommate Elizabeth Smart (not *that* Elizabeth Smart) who is now the Humanities and Media Librarian and has a fancy (and quiet) office on the fifth floor overlooking the quad. Campus felt both familiar and new and it was fun to be back there, if only for half a day.

We had lunch at some bakery near campus with good food and friendly but lousy service. (A clever person once told me that Provo’s motto ought to be whatever the Latin equivalent of “Incompetence with a Smile” is.) We then changed into our nice clothes and made our way downtown for the wedding.

The last time I was in the building that is now the Provo City Center Temple was nearly a quarter-century ago when it was the Provo Tabernacle. It was for a stake conference and (unless I’m conflating two memories, which is entirely possible) I believe I played the organ. It was a lovely place then; it’s a different kind of lovely now. The sealing room was at the west end of the building (roughly where the choir loft used to be, if memory serves). The ceremony contained no surprises and everything went off as it should.

The wedding was followed by approximately 17 hours of pictures and then dinner catered by Ohana Grill—a nod to the bride’s Hawaiian heritage—which was fabulous. It turns out that meat made with lots and lots of sugar in it is *really* good!

We spent the entire next day—Friday, also Lucy’s 19th birthday—getting from Provo to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, in Noah’s family’s motorhome. We didn’t have a cake for Lucy, but Elizabeth Smart bailed us out by having a whole bunch of birthday pastries delivered to our hotel room while we were at the wedding. The pastries made it into the motorhome and almost lasted all the way to Coeur d’Alene, but not quite.

(We held Lucy’s official birthday dinner after returning home—at the Silver Spring Sweetgreen. I can think of no greater way of expressing my love to my vegetarian daughter than by eating a salad and calling it “dinner.” I doubled up on the falafel, which was pretty good and made it so that I actually left the restaurant *less* hungry than when I entered, which isn’t always how it works at places like that.)

The reception was Saturday night at Noah’s family’s lovely home on Hayden Lake. I can’t really describe

Amber and Noah exit the Provo City Center Temple - 4 Oct 2018



Lucy and Grandpa Kent outside the Provo City Center Temple



how beautiful everything was. However nice your place is, chances are theirs is nicer. The trip was brief and exhausting but satisfying.

In other our-family-is-growing news, Hannah and JT, who apparently feel that their lives as married undergraduates with jobs are not complicated enough, have adopted a rescue dog and named him Sparks. There is some question as to whether pets are technically allowed in their apartment complex, but given Provo's unofficial motto, I doubt anything will come of it. He looks like a cute dog and seems to make them happy.

As predicted in last month's letter, Sophie passed her state-administered road test and is now the proud owner of a Maryland driver's license.

The most notable change to the test since Hannah got her license in 2013 is that prospective drivers no longer have to demonstrate that they can parallel park. Like many things in life, this change annoys me. I suppose the people who make these sorts of decisions know what they're doing, but it seems to me that one way we could address traffic congestion would be to *raise* the bar for driver's licenses rather than lowering it. The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's stated rationale for dropping the parallel parking requirement was that prospective drivers are already required to perform a "reverse two-point turnabout" (the technical term for what everyone in the world calls "backing into a parking space") and that parallel parking and backing into a perpendicular parking space are essentially the same skill. Everyone rolls their eyes at this explanation (because it's absurd) but whatever.

Parallel parking is actually an important skill, as many times no other option is available. The only people who back into perpendicular parking spaces are 1) bank robbers who need to make a quick getaway, and 2) old geezers who are in no hurry and have no compunction about holding up the flow of traffic in the already-cramped Trader Joe's parking lot while they throw it into reverse and v-e-r-y cautiously back that sucker in one...inch...at...a...time.

I'm still in the stage where I get nervous when Sophie goes driving on her own, but this is irrational. She's actually a very good and careful driver—much more so than I. She stops at *all* the Stop signs. (I obey Stop signs situationally.) She always engages the emergency brake when parking. (I never do.) And she *always* uses her turn signal, even when backing out of parking



Lucy (left) and Crystal (between her parents) outside the temple



Lucy celebrates her 19th birthday with a mini key lime pie from Elizabeth Smart the Kent motorhome (somewhere in Utah, Idaho, or Montana)



One of the decks at Roland and Marci's place on Hayden Lake - ready for the reception - 6 Oct 2018

spaces. (I didn't even know you were *supposed* to do that.)

And, most important, she has not struck any cyclists. Which is more than I can say for the young woman who hit me at the intersection of Key Blvd. and N. Nash St. in Arlington (two blocks from my office) a few weeks ago. She was on Key (which has a Stop sign) and I was on Nash (which doesn't). She had stopped at the Stop sign but apparently didn't see me turning left from Nash onto Key because she drove right into me. I was moving pretty fast and had already started banking into my turn when the car started moving. I had reached that point where gravity was preventing me from doing anything other than completing the turn, and all I could do was shout, brace myself, and watch everything unfold seemingly in slow motion.

Ultimately, the collision was forceful enough to knock me off my bike but not enough to dislodge the AirPods from my ears—so it couldn't have been *that* bad.

The first emotion I recall feeling after hitting the pavement was anger. The anger subsided as I ran a quick diagnostic check of my various joints and appendages and found them all to be in working order. A couple of minor scrapes was all. More important, my bike was okay. I then felt guilty for having gotten angry. I apologized to the driver for having shouted at her; she apologized for hitting me and we both went on our way, no worse for the wear.

The next day, as my bike and I zipped through the backed-up vehicles in Georgetown and on Key Bridge and then passed the intersection where the previous day's drama had unfolded, it occurred to me that I honestly think I'd rather get hit by a car than sit in traffic.

I've started feeling badly for the occasional driver who honks and swears at me as they go past. The most common thing shouted at me is "glass bowl" -- that, or possibly a vulgar reference to a body part that rhymes with *glass bowl*—sometimes it's hard to make out exactly what they're shouting. Hurling insults at a cyclist from a moving car is one of the most cowardly acts I can think of. Cowardly and shortsighted—because if it's rush hour, there's at least a 50/50 chance *I'll* be passing *them* sometime in the next two minutes. When this happens (and I have my wits about me) I ring my bell, smile, and wave as I go by—all in the hope that this only enrages them further.



Crystal and Lucy at Roland and Marci's place - Hayden Lake, Idaho



Amber and Noah - Hayden Lake



Crystal celebrates her 40-somethingth birthday by biking the entire 40-something-mile length of the Washington & Old Dominion Trail with a friend.

I feel some obligation to point out, however, that the honkers, shouters, and middle-finger brandishers represent the tiniest minority of motorists. The overwhelming majority of drivers I encounter—irrespective of the frustration and anxiety my bike and I may be causing them—are nothing but courteous. They make room for me; they let me in; and I feel like they're on my side. All in all, this is a pretty great place to ride a bike.

Four days after my bike accident, Sophie and I set off on what was to have been a one-day, 50-mile hike along the C&O Canal. We were joined by our ward's Scoutmaster and five of our oldest Young Men—the only ones who wanted to go. (Sophie was the only Young Woman who was interested.) The hike began at 9:00 p.m. on Friday, and we needed to finish by 3:00 p.m. on Saturday in order to earn the coveted Amos Alonzo Stagg Physical Fitness Medal. I didn't think this would be any trouble for a man in my condition.

I was wrong. Sophie and I had a hard time staying awake through the night and by the time we reached the 25-mile checkpoint, my back was spasming (I attributed this to the bike accident, which probably wasn't true) and my whole body felt awful. Fortunately, we encountered one of my Young Men with a turned ankle at that checkpoint, which gave me an excuse to hail an Uber and accompany him home. Sophie came with us. I'd like to say that we would have finished if we'd kept going, but that's just an empty tautology and does not give appropriate respect to those who actually saw it through. Of our group, only the Scoutmaster and two of the boys earned the medal. (Our ward's finish rate of 37.5% was somewhat higher than the 15% who finished overall, but in hindsight, it annoys me not to have been among them. I'll be better prepared next year.

Following up on last month's colonoscopy story, I visited the gastroenterologist this month. You may recall that my primary care physician recommended that I get a colonoscopy because "they" are recommending them at 45 now. (I'm 46.) I subsequently learned that "they" isn't everyone, and while the gastroenterologist was more than happy to sell me one, without any family history of colon cancer, she didn't see any particular risk in my waiting until 50 and was skeptical that insurance would cover it before then. And so unless you know something about our family history relevant to this that I don't (and tell me before my deductible resets on the first of December) I'm probably going to hold off for a few more years.

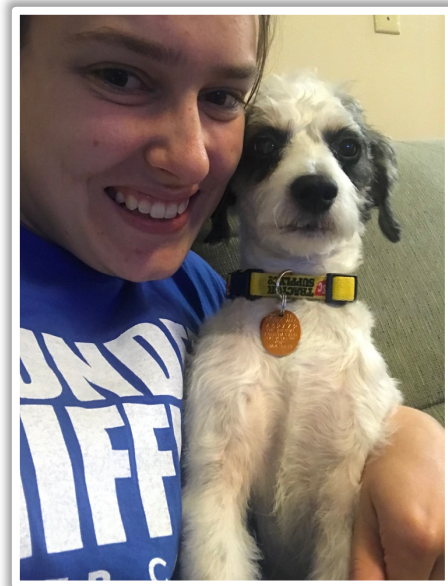
We all got flu shots this month, though. Aren't you proud of us?

Bring it on, world!

Love, Tim



Hannah brings Sparks home from the pound.



Hannah and Sparks (after grooming)