

the Famlet monthly

February 26, 2012

Volume 15, Number 2

Dear Family,

In a recent letter I may have registered an opinion about the mediocrity of the food at Café Rio.

I'd like to issue a retraction.

Hannah, Grace and I returned there last weekend following Audrey Dyer's baptism at the Olney chapel, which is conveniently located just down the street from Café Rio. (An account of Audrey's baptism can be found on the plates of my father. If you're reading this you probably also have access to my father's record, even though it's not online.)

When we returned to the Rio this time I did *not* make the mistake of ordering something other than the pork. It's all about the pork at Café Rio. That and the salad dressing. But the pork is awesome. Now I know. And if I didn't despise Olney (and those uppity Olneyans) so much, I'd probably eat there more often.

At Café Rio we were not at all surprised to encounter the six sister missionaries who had also attended Audrey's service. I knew most of them—two currently serve in my ward, which borders the Olney Ward to the south—but they'd all been involved at some point in teaching Audrey, who lives two doors down from my father, who baptized her, and my mother, who gave a talk. Mom didn't believe me when I tried to tell her how well I thought she'd done. Hopefully she believed the mission president whom I overheard a short time later telling her that of the hundreds of baptism talks he'd heard in his life, hers was the very best.

I tried to pay for the sisters' dinners at Café Rio, but they told me it was already covered. Apparently missionaries always eat free there. I don't know if this is a policy of the restaurant or if it's because half the patrons in there at any given time are so obviously Mormon. But it's enough to make me want to throw on a dingy white shirt, tie and bike clip around my right pant leg, grab a backpack and my old nametag and see if I can score a free burrito.

To my utter delight (seriously), I was asked to be the organist at both Saturday sessions of stake conference yesterday. I played wearing my very attractive black and grey compression socks. (Real organists play in shoes. I am not a real organist, but I'm good enough to fool most people.)

I own two pairs of expensive compression socks: one pair was a Christmas gift from my wife, the other was a 40th birthday present (last month) from my mother-in-law. I rotate them, wearing one pair during long runs and the other pair for the remainder of the day. They supposedly work by promoting blood flow or something. It might all be junk science for all I know, but my legs do seem to feel better wearing them. So regardless of whether there's anything physiological going on, if I've somehow tricked my brain into thinking that that my legs aren't sore, that's good enough for me.

I was wearing the socks at conference because earlier in the day I'd completed my final long, long run in preparation for next month's marathon. It took me every bit of 3 hours and 17 minutes to complete [this 20.5-mile loop](#) of the Sligo Creek and

Northwest Branch trails, which means that my goal of completing my first marathon in four hours is now little more than a fleeting fantasy. (The [course](#) limit is 5.5 hours. I'm confident I'll beat that.) The race is three weeks from yesterday, and I've now officially entered the "taper" phase of my training. This probably wasn't the best week for my personal shipment of Girl Scout cookies to come in. I bottomed out last week at 188 pounds. Between my forthcoming reduced mileage and the 20 boxes of cookies now stashed in my office, I'm pretty much resigned to not staying there.

Note that I've reinstated my irritating practice of pretending that you're interested in my run routes. I stopped sending links to them a little while ago when, in response to sending my brothers a link to a 7-mile run along Lake Michigan (during a December business trip to Chicago) Andrew replied with [this link](#) of his 5-mile run around Rome the week before.

Lucy was our babysitter last night while Crystal and I were at conference because Hannah was at a birthday party. The party was scheduled for Saturday night because it was the only window during the weekend that didn't run afoul of Sabbath observance for both Hannah and the birthday girl's observant Jewish friends. It seems like we spend half our lives explaining to parents why our children can't go to birthday parties (or Girl Scout outings, or ...) on Sundays. This was a nice respite from that. Yesterday morning while running past the Orthodox synagogue on Arcola Avenue (twice!) I felt like I had to apologize to all the devout worshippers walking in and out. "It's okay," I wanted to shout as I ran by. "My Sabbath is tomorrow."

Incidentally, in leaving 7-year-old Grace in the care of 12-year-old Lucy, it's possible we were in violation of an obscure [People's Socialist Republic of Maryland statute](#), which is interpreted by some parents to mean that babysitters must be at least 13 years old. I personally don't read it that way and believe it all comes down to the meaning of the phrase "locked or confined," which the statute does not appear to define, and which does not in any way describe Grace's condition when she's anywhere in our house. Go ahead, click on the link and read the law. You'll see I'm right. And if I'm wrong, and the People's Republic of Maryland (official state motto: Don't Bother Raising Your Children; We'll Handle It) wants to try to hit me with a \$500/30-day misdemeanor, then bring it on. I've got nothing but time on my hands and I'm spoiling for a fight!

I don't really have time on my hands, and I'm not actually spoiling for a fight; that's just something I like to say.

Hannah just walked in and interrupted my train of thought to have me sign the permission slip (and attendant 87-dollar check) for her to take the AP U.S. Government & Politics exam. I told her that in my day sophomores didn't take AP exams. She shrugged and replied that she knew freshmen who were taking it. I don't know if this is commonplace everywhere now or just yet another instance of *Welcome to Montgomery County, where all the women are strong, very few of the men are good looking, but all of the children are compelled by force of law to be above average.*

I wish you an above-average month.

Love,

Tim et al





Sophie sings on the occasion of my 40th birthday. (This actually happened in January, but after that month's letter was published.)

Also pictured: My new favorite cake—the cookies and cream ice cream cake from Cold Stone.



A better picture of Sophie, at her class Valentine's Day party.

She won that heart-shaped tin full of gummy bears by guessing closest to the number of gummy bears in it.