

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

By my reckoning, it took less than two weeks for the response to the question, "Who will take the dog out?" to evolve from a chorus of "me," followed by bickering over who got to do it last time, to a chorus of "not it," followed by competing individual assertions from girls claiming to have done it in the past half-hour.

The principal objective in taking Ceres out, of course, is to prevent her from pooping in the house. This strategy has met with intermittent success. It was originally explained to me that Ceres's designated, approved pooping place was a specific, remote corner of the yard (to the extent any part of our relatively small yard can be described as "remote"). The approved area has since been expanded slightly to include pretty much anyplace that isn't carpeted. It promises to be an exciting first lawn mow of the season in a couple of weeks.

As one would expect, Ceres behaved perfectly for Grandma Carolyn during her visit here three weeks ago. Grandma's trip here from her home in Wenatchee, Wash., was occasioned by Grace's eighth birthday and baptism. Grandma Carolyn was joined here by Grandma and Grandpa Kent, who made the trek from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, by Grandma and Grandpa Willis, who voyaged from seven miles north of here, and by Marci, Noah, Emma and Kaisa Kent, who journeyed from Suffolk, Va. (Dr. Roland Kent, CDR, USN, was unable to join us on account of his being in Afghanistan applying his skills as an orthopaedic surgeon to soldiers who come through the hospital there. But we were able to Face Time with him once, so that was cool. It sounds like he's back to running 50+ miles per week at something resembling my 5K pace, so assuming he hasn't forgotten how to ride a bike and swim, it shouldn't be too hard for him to resume his triathlete lifestyle when he comes home in September.)

Grace's baptism was very nice. She was the only child in our ward turning eight this month, and so she had the service all to herself. Even if you weren't there, the picture you have in your mind of what transpired is probably accurate. Grandparents prayed and spoke, girls sang, and it was all very touching. In response to my request to write what she remembered about how she felt, Grace quickly jotted down the following on a piece of paper and handed it to me: "*I remember getting put into the water and I felt really wet but really proud of myself and I was very happy.*" I asked her to elaborate on why she was happy, but she made it clear that I had gotten what I was going to get. And so that's that. I had a poignant moment just before confirming Grace when it occurred to me that, if all goes according to plan, this will be the last saving ordinance I perform on my posterity. (Not that anything in life ever goes according to plan.)

Two weeks after Marci's family came to visit us, Hannah returned the favor by riding the Metro from Silver Spring to Union Station (20 minutes) and boarding an Amtrak train from Washington to Norfolk (4 hours). The Kents picked her up at the train station on their end and took her with them on what seems to have been a fun long weekend in Myrtle Beach, S.C. I realize it isn't any particular accomplishment for a 16-year-old

to navigate the Metro and Amtrak on her own, but it is nevertheless one more thing reminding me that my children are growing up faster than I ever could have imagined.

Sophie also went south for spring break, joining her Girl Scout troop on an excursion to visit Juliette Gordon Low's birthplace in Savannah, Ga. (Juliette Gordon Low is the founder of the Girl Scouts.) The four-day trip included two days of driving (one each way), one day at the house, and one day exploring Savannah, a charming-sounding place I've never been.

Sophie's troop includes some very nice girls and several of Sophie's best friends. Some of these friends apparently have some high-society connections, as Sophie is frequently invited to some fairly upscale places.

The first of these invitations came several months ago when Sophie and her friends dressed up in their Sunday best for high tea at the Willard. The Willard is a swanky hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue with a fancy lobby which, based on a series of historically dubious accounts of President Ulysses S. Grant's unending frustration at being pestered by various favor-seekers while attempting to enjoy a drink and a cigar there, claims to have given rise to the term "lobbying." A 30-second Google search exposes this claim as totally bogus, but that doesn't prevent the Willard from shamelessly promoting the story.

Of course, anyone can dress up for high tea at the Willard. But not just anyone can have lunch at the [Cosmos Club](#), as Sophie did with her friends a short time later, followed by a private tour of [The Phillips Collection](#), where the mother of one of her friends is somebody important. These strike me as good friends to have.

Speaking of Washington, after two full marathons last year, I retreated back to 13.1 miles this month in the Rock 'n' Roll USA half marathon. I almost blew it off but was seduced by the course, which started on Constitution Avenue, almost exactly between the Washington Monument and the White House, and then proceeded west on Constitution to the Lincoln Memorial, across Memorial Bridge, around that big traffic circle in front of the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery, back across Memorial Bridge toward the Lincoln Memorial (again), past the Kennedy Center and the Watergate, down into Rock Creek Park for 3 miles, up a brutal hill at Calvert and Connecticut to get out of the park, past the old Washington Ward at Harvard and 16th Streets (where I understand Mom and Dad met), east through Howard University to North Capitol Street, south almost to the Capitol before cutting east again and winding over to the finish line between the DC Armory and RFK Stadium. Other than the last four miles, which are nothing special, and the fact that the finish is uphill from the start, that's one awesome race course! (Oh, and I ran a personal record, 1:50:10, so how about that?)

Finally, nine days ago, several of us gathered at Andrew's and Jessica's house to celebrate Peter's 30th birthday. From the magic show to the "over the hill" birthday cake from Costco (per Peter's request) it couldn't have been a better party. After 30 years, I think I feel comfortable saying that of my four brothers, all of whom I love, Pete's my favorite.

And I imagine Matthew, Grant and Andrew feel the same way. We love you, Pete!

We love you, too. Tim *et al*





Grace's Baptism — 9 March 2013
Below: Between grandfathers, getting a hug from Uncle Peter, who participated in the confirmation



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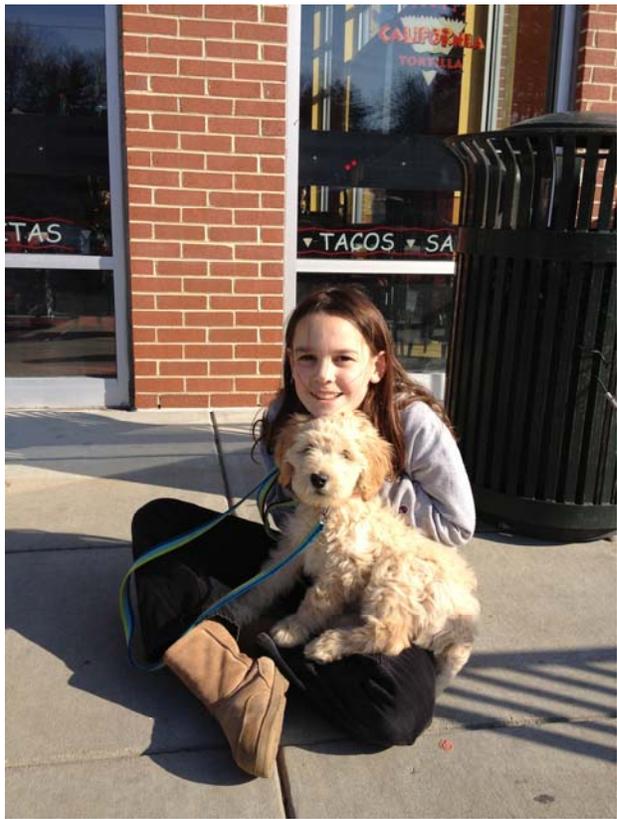
Sophie as George Washington Carver in her school's Wax Museum exposition



Sophie, Grace and Ceres on the Northwest Branch Trail (which runs behind our house)



Happy Birthday, Peter!



Sophie and Ceres