

# the Famlet monthly

July 28, 2013

Volume 16, Number 7

## Dear Family,

Notwithstanding the obliteration of traditional gender roles in our increasingly absurd world that now holds men and women to be completely interchangeable, cooking in our house still remains principally the province of Crystal. There are a number of practical reasons for this, not least of which is that she is very good at it. But there is one occasion on which Crystal consistently cedes the kitchen to me: when it's time to make crêpes.

I should perhaps clarify that crêpes, in our house, refers to dessert crêpes—the sweet kind that you fill with Nutella, cookie butter, peanut butter, jam, ice cream, whipped cream, marshmallow fluff, fruit (if you're into that) and other similarly delectable things. I realize there are people who make so-called "savory" crêpes and fill them with meat, vegetables, and various things made with cream of mushroom soup. There's nothing wrong with that sort of crêpe, I suppose, but it's not how we roll.

Within an hour of the end of church, every surface in our kitchen is littered with the remnants of crêpe preparation, plus at least 17 open containers of every sweet thing in the entire house. Crêpes used to be kind of a sporadic thing for us. They evolved into an every-Sunday-afternoon tradition only recently—shortly after I was released as bishop and, for the first time that Grace or Sophie could remember, started coming home from church at the same time as the rest of my family. I like to say that I learned to make crêpes while I was living in France, which is technically true. But a couple of years ago, I abandoned the batter recipe I learned in France for Alton Brown's, which I like better. (Also, Alton is another one of my man-crushes.) But at the end of the day, a crêpe recipe is a crêpe recipe, and mixing the batter is the easy part.

Sophie has a particular affinity for this particular tradition and bristles whenever there is talk of suspending it, even for a week. This posed more of a challenge than usual today, when we had to leave almost immediately after church to drive Sophie and a friend to Girl Scout "sleep-away camp" for the week. (I'm still learning all the funny terminology, but "sleep-away camp" appears to be the term used by Girl Scouts for what Boy Scouts call "camp." Sophie is spending this week in the "Quidditch Adventures" program at Camp Coles Trip on Aquia Creek, near Stafford, Va. Fortunately for Sophie, this means a week of Hogwarts-themed activities—"Potions" and "Herbology" classes and Quidditch in the creek (with kayaks instead of brooms). Unfortunately for me, this means that we had to drive Sophie to Virginia. And Virginia, for whatever its virtues may be, is one giant perpetual traffic jam. Today was no exception. Stafford is less than 40 miles south of town, but it still took nearly two hours to get there. Many hours have passed, and I'm *still* angry about it.

I hope Sophie is having a good time because I miss her already. As we pulled into the parking lot, we were greeted by four older teenage girls in green staff shirts waving at us and smiling. (I don't remember anything like that at Scout camp.) From there we accompanied Sophie and her gear to registration and the health cabin for a lice check. (I don't remember that from Scout camp, either.) Fortunately, both Sophie and her friend passed inspection. I don't know what we would have

done if they hadn't.

In other camp news, Hannah is departing in the morning for "yearbook camp" (seriously, *yearbook camp*) at Gettysburg College. Because Gettysburg is in Pennsylvania, as opposed to Virginia, the 80-mile drive there will likely not take nearly as long as today's "shorter" run down to Stafford. There are people who live in Stafford (and even further south) who actually commute into D.C. every day. I guess they do this because you get a lot more house for your money that far from civilization. And I can see the appeal of that. But, seriously, I would kill myself if I had to make today's drive with any frequency. (See, even more time has passed, and I'm *still* upset about it.)

Hannah will come home from Yearbook Camp in time for youth conference, which begins on Thursday. This will be the first youth conference I have had any role in planning. If only half of the 250 different things that might go wrong actually go wrong, I'll consider it a success. I'll try to remember to let you know how it goes.

Summer swim team wrapped last weekend for Grace, Sophie, and Hannah. Hannah struggled through much the regular season, gasping and struggling to breathe after 100-meter races, until one of the swim team dads (a pediatrician) diagnosed her on the deck after one particularly difficult race as having exercise-induced asthma. We took her to our pediatrician, who confirmed the diagnosis and prescribed an inhaler. After a couple of weeks of trial and error with using the inhaler before races, she broke through at the divisional championship meet, swimming the backstroke leg of the winning medley relay team, and finishing 2nd in butterfly, 4th in backstroke, 5th in IM, and 6th in freestyle, dropping time in every individual event. She received the annual "Coach's Award" at the season-ending banquet, and all is well.

For the first time in probably 15 years Crystal persuaded me to venture downtown for the July 4th fireworks. (She does not share my view that watching them on TV from the comfort of my air conditioned bedroom is just as good as shoehorning oneself onto the National Mall with half a million other hot, sweaty people, all of whom will leave at precisely the same moment.) The good news is I think I figured out how to do it. We parked at Washington Harbour in Georgetown and walked a little more than a mile down Rock Creek Parkway to the Lincoln Memorial. The walk took a little longer than I anticipated because I'm accustomed to covering that stretch of road by myself on my bike, not on foot with Grace. But we still got there in plenty of time. And even though we found the place totally packed—the steps were completely covered with people, and virtually every square inch of white marble with a vantage point of the Washington Monument had a butt on it—we were still able to find a perfectly suitable square of grass a few yards south of the steps and watch from there. They shoot them off from either side of the reflecting pool between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. It's a pretty good show, and, I had to admit, better in person than on TV. Afterward, we made the mile-long walk back to Georgetown and slipped out of town virtually unimpeded via a very dark and lightly traveled Rock Creek Parkway. I never thought I'd say this, but it couldn't have gone any better, and I might go again next year.

Come join us. We'll show you just where to park!

Love, Tim et al





Sunday afternoon, 1:30 p.m.  
Welcome to @#\$% Virginia!



**Ocean City, Maryland**  
*Right: Grace*  
*Below: Lucy and Sophie*



Grace, Hannah, and Sophie with their swim team trophies.



Sophie's "tent"  
I guess it's a tent — it just happens to be built on a wooden floor under a shelter and have beds in it.



A counselor (green shirt, broken glasses, lightning bolt scar) leads Sophie (purple shirt) and her friend to "Quidditch Adventures" camp.

