

the Famlet monthly

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Dear Family,

A few weeks ago I encountered Lucy about to leave the house wearing a red t-shirt and orange sweatpants. I've never been good at colors. At least once a week, it seems, I need to ask Crystal whether this shirt matches that tie or those slacks. These are questions my mother helped me with many years ago, and I seem to recall her telling me on at least one occasion that red and orange do not "go" together. I did not want Lucy to be embarrassed, and so I mentioned to her that some people don't think red and orange go well together. She looked at me quizzically and politely asked, "Is it culturally insensitive to wear these two colors together?" While I was thinking about how to respond to that she added, "I mean is it like I'm wearing a swastika and people are going to be offended?" I told her that I did not think it was anything like that, and she responded, "Well, I like how these colors look together." She calmly walked away from me and that was the end of that.

That exchange, which I can only remember because I started keeping a journal about eight months ago, took place on the day after Grace's 10th birthday. We're all in double-digits now. Grace's birthday, which fell on a Monday, was the conclusion of what shall hereafter be known as The Weekend Of Grace. It began with dinner Friday night at Masa, a Japanese hibachi steakhouse in Silver Spring that has recently become our family's go-to birthday place. We prefer it to Benihana for a variety of small reasons that I will not bore you with.

The celebration continued Saturday night at Grandma's with the "official" extended family celebration of Grace's birthday as well as Peter's. We were joined there by Uncle David Willis who was in town attending something related to his duties as a member of the local utility board in Springfield, Oregon, where he lives. I'm still not exactly sure what a utility board member does, but whatever it is, Uncle David juggles it with running an insurance agency and being a bishop. I really like Uncle David. It was fun catching up with him.

Speaking of multi-dimensional bishops, we left the birthday party in order to get to the temple visitors' center for a performance by our bishop's family's bluegrass band. In addition to his real job as an attorney with the [Becket Fund](#), our bishop joins his wife and their seven children in bringing the house down with multiple fiddles, a banjo, a guitar, a mandolin, and, on this occasion, grandma on electric bass. They're fabulous. We've known them for 15 years, and it's hard to think of anyone we're fonder of.

The Monday of Grace's actual birthday brought a trip to Claire's for ear piercing (something that associated with our older daughters' 12th birthdays; the age has come down over time) and to Build-A-Bear Workshop for yet another custom stuffed animal. It got Crystal and I to wondering whether this would be the last time she gets importuned for a trip to Build-A-Bear. It might be, at least until the grandkids.

A little more than a week after The Weekend Of Grace, she was in my bedroom crying because "everybody hates her" and "nobody wants her to be happy." These are fairly common complaints from Grace about which she typically chooses not to

elaborate. Fortunately, I have discovered a salve for Grace's wounded soul that brings fast relief almost every time: college basketball! I had originally resolved not to watch any more of the NCAA tournament after my alma mater's embarrassing display of defense on Tuesday. I may not have appreciated all the intricacies of it, but our strategy appeared to be to let the other team score quickly so as to get the ball back and throw it out of bounds as many times as possible. It did not feel like a winning strategy.

But I watched for Grace's sake until it got late and I told her she would have to go to bed at the next commercial. She agreed. The game went to break a short time later and I told Grace it was time. She protested that the commercial hadn't actually started yet, and indeed it hadn't, and so I waited two seconds for the commercial to begin. It was for an upcoming movie. ("Furious 7," I think it was. I'm not sure how missed the first six, but I did.) I again told Grace to go to bed. "This isn't a commercial," she told me, "it's a trailer." We argued about semantics for the entire duration of whatever the thing was for "Furious 7." A Samsung ad followed, which Grace grudgingly acknowledged was a bona fide commercial, and she went to bed.

Five minutes later she returned asking to have her hair braided. This is Grace's bedtime ritual. Forty-five minutes of stall.

Saturday, March 14th was the Rock 'n' Roll DC Marathon. I rode Metro downtown, arriving at the National Mall around 6:30 a.m. It was still pitch dark (stupid, stupid, *stupid* Daylight Saving Time). It was also thirty-something degrees and raining. I joined literally thousands of other runners huddled under various museum alcoves and porticos along Constitution Avenue. We looked like a giant mass of homeless people, and it surprised me that no one had set a garbage can on fire for warmth. I eventually stripped down to my singlet and running shorts and did my best to stave off hypothermia waiting for the 7:30 gun (and then waiting another 10 minutes for my corral to reach the starting line). I crossed the line a few minutes after dawn (stupid DST) and even though the rain never stopped and was heavy at times, I was never cold after the first half mile. The challenge was all the water. I managed to keep my feet mostly dry until mile 21 where I encountered a lake-sized puddle with no way around. I muttered a couple of bad words before splashing through the ankle-deep water and ran the last five miles in squishy wet shoes. My time of 4:07:28 was not a personal best, but I was content with it under the circumstances and for the first time I really felt like I did not leave anything out there. I still think I have a sub-4:00 marathon in me somewhere, but this was not going to be the day. I have now completed six marathons: three with hairy legs (average time: 4:35) and three with smooth legs (average time: 4:09). Applying climate science logic, I figure I ought to be able to get under 4 hours simply by removing the rest of my back hair. But it's pretty hard to reach.

In other sports news, Sophie joined Abby on the Olney Ward basketball team for the last month of Seneca Stake's basketball season because our stake does not have a YW league. (Please direct all complaints to the stake presidency counselor with responsibility over, among other things, stake activities and youth, whoever that idiot is.)

Love, Tim *et al*

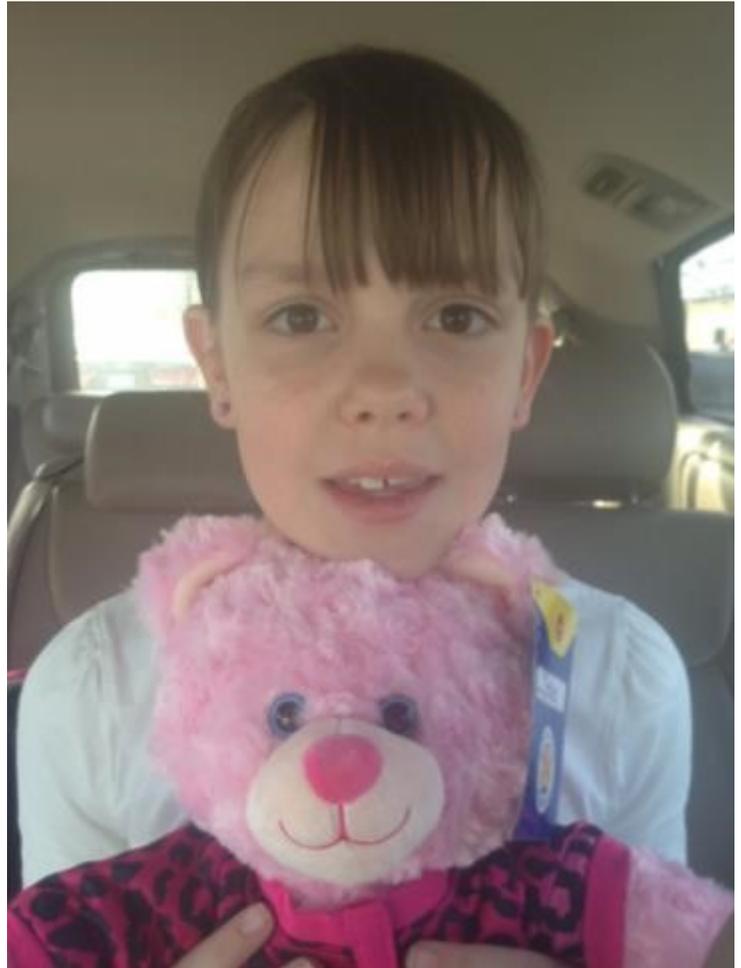


March 2015

Sophie & Abby: Olney Ward YW Basketball Team



Grace on her 10th birthday with new earrings and bear



It's been a slow month for pictures and so I'm resorting to pictures of rice noodles from H Mart (our local Asian grocery).

Saturday is now my night to cook. For the last two Saturdays I've tried my hand at Thai food (Thai pork and noodles two Saturdays ago; Pad Thai last Saturday).

I wouldn't call it restaurant quality, but it's okay and the girls eat it.

I have been using the "Medium" rice sticks. The others just seem like they would be too big.