

**Dear Family:**

AH, STAKE CONFERENCE – That weekend when we latter-day saints heed the divine charge to “meet together oft,” and proceed to take it to the most ridiculous possible extreme. Fortunately, as a lay member, I was only expected to attend three meetings between Friday evening and noon Sunday. People in authority get to pretty much block out the whole weekend. Fortunately, I think it’s been demonstrated that I’m not at any risk of joining *their* ranks. I thought I might have had a shot at it when the senior member of our stake high council unexpectedly died a few weeks ago. But he was replaced this morning by the only other male seminary teacher in our stake, so I guess the ship has sailed on that. I was awakened this morning by a five-minute Lucy tirade demanding that I “change the day to no church.” It’s funny how inclined I felt to share her desire at the time, and how much differently I feel for having gone.

If I had the power that Lucy would bestow on me, yesterday would have been an ideal candidate for reliving multiple times à la *Groundhog Day*. Seventy-two degrees with a slight breeze and not a cloud in the sky, the day began with Crystal’s hosting a baby shower/brunch for Sonja Barsky, my second cousin, which I understand was reasonably well attended. I hustled all three girls out of the house in advance of the event for breakfast at our dumpy local IHOP (as is becoming our Saturday tradition) followed by a drive downtown. The plan was to ascend the Washington Monument, but, by the time we arrived, all the day’s tickets had already been distributed. So, instead, we spent an hour or so sauntering around the Mall, where we caught our first live glimpse of the nearly completed World War II memorial. With Sophie riding happily in the backpack and Lucy complaining of broken legs only three times (a record low for a walk of that length), the whole daddy-daughter production went surprisingly smoothly. By the time we arrived home, shortly after noon, the only remaining shower guests were Sonja and Aunt Jen. It couldn’t have worked out better had we planned it, which is the only reason any of this is letter-worthy. (You don’t understand; this *never* happens.)



Hannah, who is losing baby teeth at an alarming rate (see photo), continues to do well in school, having particularly enjoyed the persuasive writing unit her second grade class just completed. I’m pretty sure I had no idea what persuasive writing *was* in second grade. But she reportedly received especially high marks on a piece (ostensibly targeting her parents) entitled “Why I should have a cell phone.” (I’m pretty sure I didn’t know what those were in second grade, either.) She makes some good arguments, but somehow she still doesn’t have a phone.

Hannah took part in her first Washington Family Theatre Singers concert last weekend when we performed our Easter program at the Visitors’ Center. (It was the week after Easter, but that’s okay.) She’s the youngest member of the ensemble and seems to enjoy performing almost as much as she dislikes rehearsal.

Aunt Coco hosted Easter dinner this year, and was a very good sport about allowing six small children to run wild through her place while Grant and I checked in on Phil Mickelson’s historic charge through the Back 9 at The Masters. (I may not have cried during our Easter service, but I freely admit having to wipe the tears away after watching that clutch birdie putt drop in on 18.)

Sophie turned 2 this month, and we celebrated the event with yet another pre-General Conference brunch attended by all the local relatives. She was showered with generous gifts from all parts, but has taken a particular liking to the sleeping-bag-cum-backpack from her maternal grandmother. She wears it around the house all the time, hates taking it off and frequently finds herself stuck in doorways and other odd places that, as it turns out, aren’t really compatible with back-borne sleeping bags.



She’s still talking less than either of her sisters were at her age—her preferred form of communication is to point at what she wants and wail unintelligibly—but she’s picking up more words all the time. She now refers to us as “Mommia” and “Daddia” (accentuating the final syllable so that both kind of rhyme with the incorrect way her older sisters pronounce “Sophia” – we think that’s where she’s getting it). Also, both of her sisters are “HI-yah.” She likes “doo-doo” as well (and excitedly announces every new batch).

She’s not saying “Lucy” yet, but Lucy doesn’t seem to mind. She still enjoys preschool and reports that the boys in her class think she’s funny, and that she likes that. Yet another way in which she is not at all like her older sister.

I made yet another career change this month, leaving Fannie Mae to become the eighth member of “The Hollister Group,” a tiny capital markets consultancy. The move came as something of a surprise even to me. I love what Fannie Mae does and loved working with the types of talented non-jerks (rare birds, indeed) who tend to gravitate there. But two former KPMG bosses of mine who left that firm two years ago to start Hollister, and who had been ping-pong me off and on ever since, finally made me an offer I couldn’t refuse. I’ll miss Fannie and wouldn’t be at all surprised to find myself back there someday. But I’m here now and am eager to learn what this opportunity will bring. We’ll see.

Hope this finds you well.

Love,
T, C, H, L & S

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