



Dear Family:

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, LUCY IS not familiar with the basic premise of "Saturday's Warrior." (If I have my way, she never will be.) But her latest protest device would suggest otherwise. See, Lucy seems to believe that she is actually a member of some other family somewhere and that she's just living with us until her real family comes back for her. She bases this view, in part, on being the only member of *this* family with "yellow" hair. Not surprisingly, she sulks for her real family whenever her hateful legal guardians compel her to do anything she'd prefer not to do. Take this morning for example, when Lucy enhanced her regularly scheduled I-don't-want-to-go-to-church tirade with, "I wish this horrible dream would end and my real family would come back. *They* wouldn't make me go to church." This prompted Crystal to relate to Lucy many of the details surrounding her birth, culminating with, "...and when you came out of my tummy and the doctor handed you to me, I saw a beautiful little Lucy face." It was a very tender moment to which Lucy sweetly replied, "It wasn't me." At times, when she's not furious with me, I broach the subject of her other family with her. In those moments she admits that there is no other family, nor would she want there to be. Like an idiot, I've tried using that testimony against her whenever she's mad at me and starts screaming for the other family. It never works.

IN AN EFFORT TO SWEETEN the deal for Lucy should she be given the option of joining another family, our new second level, which, with its master suite and four* kid bedrooms, will enable Lucy to have her own space, is now framed and, for the most part, roughed in. There are no walls yet, but children still enjoy hanging out up there (see photo). Aside from the occasional workman's boot or two-by-four through the ceiling, the work up to now hasn't much affected our ability to live downstairs. But that's all about to change as the men move on to the phase of the project that will effectively gut 75 percent of the main level, rendering the entire house (save the basement) virtually unlivable for the next 5 weeks or so.

CRYSTAL AND THE GIRLS WILL escape the chaos when they flee to the Pacific Northwest this Saturday for basically all of July. There, as I understand it, they will shuttle between Crystal's father in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (reasonably near Spokane) and Crystal's mother in Wenatchee, Washington (reasonably near absolutely nothing at all, but roughly equidistant from Spokane and Seattle). Crystal's understandable aversion to connecting flights while traveling alone with three small children dictated that they fly to Seattle—the only non-stop option between the real Washington and that other Washington. What I'll do (other than spend a lot of time in the basement) is still in the air. Work responsibilities will keep me local for most of July, but it's looking like I'll join them somewhere

out there during the last weekend of July and the first few days of August. Next month's letter might have to be another of my classic on-the-plane jobs. Haven't written one of those in a while.

The upside to all this is that, for the next month, I'll be able to play golf whenever I want without asking permission or feeling guilty. (In fairness, I am virtually always granted permission.) And I'll be able to get to all this year's summer movies without paying for a babysitter or more than one ticket (unless Coco wants to be my date).

I won't get into all the aspects of the downside, which considerably outweigh those of the upside, except to say that it makes me sad that Hannah will miss 60 percent of the swim team season. We expect her grandmother, Wenatchee's number-one swim team coach, to fill most of that breach. Hannah has thoroughly enjoyed the season thus far, swimming backstroke in A-meets and freestyle and a not-quite-legal variant of breaststroke in B-meets.

HANNAH FINISHED THE SCHOOL YEAR strong, having especially enjoyed her class's unit on economics. She regularly spices up dinner conversation with her latest theories on opportunity cost, scarcity and the use of decision trees. When she asked the other day how much we were paying for the addition/remodel, I was reluctant to tell her, fearing she would crunch the numbers and come back to me with an analysis suggesting that what we're doing makes no economic sense, (as if I need an economist to tell me that) and that we should just cash out and buy a bigger place out in the boonies or in the flyover states like so many people in our ward are doing. (Our stake as presently drawn is on course for a demographic—

and I don't mean ethnic—disaster in the very near future, but that's neither here nor there.) Anyway, back to Hannah, we haven't told her, but she's been classified as "high gifted and talented." I don't exactly know what that means—I was certainly never called anything like that—but it sounds like something worth bragging about in a family letter (which she obviously doesn't read). She is a voracious reader who takes pleasure in likening herself to Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* and is a really big fan of "Nancy Drew Notebooks." She's started mimicking the girls on her primary song CD and singing with a fake vibrato that's pretty annoying. But other than that she's perfect.



"Playing" in what will be Lucy's room

ALL OF US ENJOYED SEEING Aunt Mimi (Crystal's sister-in-law) last Saturday. A documentary filmmaker by profession from Venice, California, she was in town for Silver Spring's second annual Silverdocs documentary festival. But she pulled herself away long enough to attend Hannah's swim meet (an away meet at that) and to have a fabulous lunch with us at Friendly's. We enjoy being seen in public with Mimi as she makes any group look cool.

We send our best to my cousins Michael and Jenny as we continue to pray for fast and full recoveries. Good month to all.

Love,
T, C, H, L & S

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* The astute reader might be able to discern something about our family planning by the number of kid bedrooms.