

**Dear Family:**

Today is my 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. I've decided to celebrate by not going to church. Actually, nobody's going to church today because we got three inches of some funky kind of slushy snow-ice mix overnight that made even the walk to the end of the driveway to pick up the newspaper a very treacherous proposition. The National Weather Service has urged people to stay off the roads unless absolutely necessary, and, for a second consecutive week, church is cancelled.

Last week's cancellation came as the result of a more conventional six-inch snowstorm...*on Saturday morning*. Whatever. Utah natives roll their eyes in unison, but I'm never going to complain about *not* having to go to church. People around here reacted to the prospect of both storms in the same measured, rational way in which they react to so many other things—jamming the grocery stores on Friday to stock up on two year's worth of toilet paper and other essentials. I love it here.

By confining itself to weekends, the winter weather hasn't had the impact on school (and, therefore, seminary) schedules that it sometimes has. It's a mixed blessing when it does. Like I say, I'm never opposed to unscheduled days off. But as a teacher, I've come to appreciate the benefit of maintaining an uninterrupted rhythm. I hope my students (at least the handful who reliably stay awake) appreciate it also. I continue to find it difficult to elicit the kind of class participation that I'd like. Only two or three of them can be coaxed to contribute anything to the discussion with any regularity. I thought I'd broken through to another student earlier this month, on our 87<sup>th</sup> day of class, when Estuardo Jimenez raised his hand to say something for the first time. Turns out he just wanted to point out that my zipper was down. Still, I like teaching. And I think I'm much better at it than I would be at some of the more high-profile church jobs.

But seminary, though it consumes a lot of my life, is not my job. Hollister Group is still treating me well. We're a very small highly-specialized consulting firm consisting mainly of people who are smarter than me. If you're at all curious about what we do, I won't take up precious Famlet space with it, but feel free to

check us out at [www.hollisterllc.com](http://www.hollisterllc.com). (See if you can find all the typos!)

Crystal's holding together pretty well, under the circumstances. She still gets to the pool three times most weeks. She's slowing down, but she still swims faster than all the old people...and me. Probably her biggest challenge now is keeping up with Sophie (who's taken to calling me "Tim" now, by the way). She's entered a more destructive phase than I remember either of the other children ever going through. When she's not breaking stuff or writing on walls, she's dragging around large stools to gain access to the very highest kitchen cabinets (where the lollipops are "hidden"). But she's awfully cute and it's hard to stay mad at her for very long. I love watching her play hide and seek with her sisters. Her method of counting to ten consists of shouting out a string of random numbers ending in 10 (i.e., "nine, firteen, six, eleben, three, TEN! Ready of not, here I come!") How can you not love that! She's now in pre-school once a week.



**The Saturday night bath**  
(They're going to kill me for this.)

Her older sisters are busier and easier (most of the time). Hannah's back in swim team twice a week and, I think, is doing exceptionally well in school. (But what father doesn't think his eight-year-old daughter is brilliant?) Having completed all the Harry Potter books, she's now making her way through Narnia for the first time. She loves it. So do I. Lucy's mother, who volunteers regularly in both girls' classes, reports that Lucy is also doing especially well in kindergarten. She enjoys her weekly swim lesson (sometimes it seems like

we live at the pool) and has become more cuddly of late. She often tells me she loves me, and that makes me happy.

It's been a nice birthday. The Eagles gave me the nicest present I could have asked for a week early by finally breaking through and advancing to the Super Bowl (for the first time since I was Hannah's age) after three consecutive heart-rending failures. There's some debate as to who's going to spring for the big-screen TV. But, at any rate, I look forward to finally having a rooting interest in the game and to being able to watch it with Grant and Andrew. (Mom, you should cancel seminary on Monday and come down!)

Hope all is well with you. Go Iggles!



Love,  
T, C, H, L & S

100 HANNES STREET  
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20901