

Dear Family:

Saturday morning. This is our first "uneventful" weekend in a month. I say uneventful even though I begin this sitting in a deck chair at a swim meet. It's an away meet, which means instead of hustling Hannah out the door to walk the block and a half by herself to our pool (and then walk over myself just for her events), I had to participate in what must have been a 30-car caravan transporting swimmers to the opponents' pool. The caravan consisted mainly of distressed minivans decked out with streamers with encouraging messages (e.g., "Swim fast, Caitlyn") written in (presumably erasable) marker on the windows. Naturally I had too much pride in my vehicle—a 1999 Hyundai with deer-related front-end damage—to allow it to be subjected to that kind of defacement. Away meets mean that I not only have to stick around for every event—a boring enough proposition—but for *warm-ups* as well. It's about 8 am. If everything goes right we'll be out by noon. The opponent is Wheaton Woods. They look to have a much bigger team than us. I have a feeling we're going to get creamed.

The warm-ups are now over, and the teams have begun the traditional battling chants. I recognize some of the old-school ones: "We're Forest Knolls and we couldn't be prouder..." But most of them are new to me. The other team just yelled something about Ex-Lax. (I didn't understand all of it.) So now our team has to respond...

This may seem like an undue amount of ink to devote to the 45 minutes leading up to a swim meet—particularly in light of how busy this month has been. But you have to understand that this is pretty much our whole life in June and July (when we're in town). Every Saturday morning and Wednesday evening is spent this way. (It makes it hard to get any quality time in on the golf course.)

For the uninitiated, Saturday morning meets are the "A" meets. These count toward league standings and feature the teams' best swimmers. Hannah, mainly by virtue of being an 8-year-old in the 8-and-under division, swims in these meets. Wednesday night meets are the "B" meets. They don't count, but give swimmers who don't have "A" meet times a chance to compete. We have a small enough team that a lot of our kids—including Hannah—swim in both kinds of meets.

But Lucy is exclusively a B meet girl. She swam her first race—25-meter freestyle—this past Wednesday. The winning time (posted by Hannah, coincidentally) was around 23 seconds. Lucy took about a minute and a half. It was about the coolest thing I've ever seen. With everyone else long-finished and waiting patiently at the wall, all the attention switched to Lucy, laboring down her lane, taking a couple of strokes, then rolling onto her back to breathe, followed by a couple more strokes and another roll. The cheering at swim meets gets pretty intense. But if you could have heard the screaming—from members of both teams—encouraging Lucy all the way to the wall, it might have been enough to make you cry (if you're anything like me).

It's now Sunday evening. I was a good parent and closed the laptop when the meet actually started and stayed reasonably engaged during most of it. (Though I did manage to get most of the newspaper read.) We lost the meet by a wide margin. But Hannah did well; winning her backstroke event and placing third in freestyle.

Now for the rest of the month.

The first weekend was built around a trip to Roland and Marci's continuously evolving waterfront property in Suffolk, Virginia. Don't know where Suffolk is? Nobody does. It's near Norfolk (an actual city). The trip was occasioned by Noah's baptism, which was enjoyable. (Ordinarily I would try to say something funny here. But nothing's coming to mind, so I'll move on.)

The next weekend was the big wedding reception in Louisville for Crystal's sister, Liz, and her new husband, Keith Payne. We missed the wedding, which happened in April in Akiak, Alaska. So we were happy for this opportunity to celebrate the event. Liz and Keith have a lot in common. For example, they both hail from cities with French names (Louisville and Coeur d'Alene—places that are inhabited almost exclusively by people who have no idea how to pronounce where they live and become indignant when out-of-towners depart from the locally accepted bastardizations: 'LOO-vul' and 'Cord-Elaine', respectively). It's enough to make this French major flinch. Perhaps even more significant than that, they're both teachers in the Alaska bush. And they're also both beloved of our children.

It was a fun, however brief, trip to Louisville. It's a charming little city. We made the 9½-hour drive there on Friday. We then spent Saturday morning in downtown Louisville, mainly at the Louisville Slugger factory/museum, which is very cool by the way, with Roland and Marci's family and Grandma and Grandpa Magee. The reception was Saturday afternoon at Keith's sister's house. It featured a variety of artery-clogging, down-home fare that was all very good. The keg didn't get quite the workout it might have gotten if a bunch of Mormons hadn't descended on the place. But it still saw some action.

(On a related note, like many hotel rooms, ours in Louisville included a Bible and a coffee maker. Lucy found this confusing, and asked incredulously, "Is there anybody who reads the Bible AND drinks coffee?" See? You don't have to live in Utah to have a sheltered existence.)

We left first thing Sunday morning, which enabled me to get home in time for Seminary graduation. (After which the bishop asked me to come back and teach for a third year. The request was not unexpected. I said yes. I hope I survive.)

Liz and Keith followed us back a few days later and stayed almost through the following weekend. They did Washington stuff and hung out with us some. They even attended the first swim meet of the season, which, when you don't have a kid swimming, goes way above and beyond the call. It was fun having them here.

We've enjoyed seeing so many of you and look forward to seeing many more of you soon.



With Uncle Keith at the National Museum of the American Indian

Love,  
 T, C, H, L, S & G

100 HANNES STREET  
 SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20901