

Dear Family:

Trust me. This is actually the July letter.

I attribute its tardiness to our family's 10-day Utah trip that ended in earnest when the airport shuttle deposited us at home shortly before 2:00 A.M. on Sunday. I suppose I could have written the letter on Sunday. But, instead, I dedicated the Lord's Day to reading *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* in its entirety. I really had no choice as the alternative was to have Hannah—who finally finished it on the flight home—spoil it for me. "Dad, have you gotten to the part yet where...um...somebody...gets killed? It's really sad."

The Utah trip was occasioned principally by the biennial reunion of descendents of my paternal grandparents. We'd wanted to get the kids to Utah for some time, and this event provided a good enough reason.

The four-day Park City affair actually kicked-off in the Jordan River Temple. There we initially encountered a number of reunion attendees in the Celestial Room. How fitting is that? I recall wondering whether spirit world reunions, following years of veil-separation, will be like this.

The rest of the reunion was a near-perfect blend of uncluttered hanging-out time sprinkled with just the right number of structured activities. The mini-hike at Brighton was a lot of fun for us, even though Lucy demanded to be carried for part of the way, and even though the final destination was really nothing to write home about. Church at the Park City Ward, where visitors literally outnumbered ward members, was interesting, if a little annoying. I especially enjoyed getting in 27 holes of golf with Reed Farnsworth. These included 9 with Reed's dad, Reed's brother, Dan, and his brother-in-law, Jeff, on the Silver Course at Soldier Hollow. (Olympic die-hards may remember this as the venue for all those unwatchably boring cross-country skiing events—I only like the events that Americans win—at the 2002 Winter Games). Our talented fivesome played those 9 holes in a combined 412-over-par (give or take). More amazing was the utter lack of profanity—even after Jeff put 3 straight tee-shots in the water on 15. Forty-five aggregate holes of golf (9 holes times 5 players) and I didn't hear one curse word. That's got to be some kind of record.

Other reunion highlights included the opening night dinner at Rotary Park, where everybody's cars somehow fit into seven parking spaces and Hannah and Lucy drank buttermilk for the first time. Somebody has pictures of that. I'd like copies, please. Other evening activities had a distinct "home evening" feel to them (in a good way) and were quite pleasant. It turns out Robert Corry missed his calling as a game show host, and I think David Willis secretly rues not having followed the Professional Boy Scout career track.

Mostly I just enjoyed being around more than 70 people with whom I feel blessed to share a common heritage; people whom I admire more the older I get; people whose children I wish my children could interact with more often; in short, people I'd like to be more like. I think the inordinate number of past and present elders quorum presidents among members of my generation—just about all of whom are younger than me—is indicative of the kind of selfless, well-rounded, and centered people that characterize this family. Lest anyone view this as self-promoting, I should point out that I personally have never been in an elders quorum presidency. And it's

easy to acknowledge that I fall below the family median in a number of the most important respects. But I'm comforted in the knowledge that this family sets a pretty ambitious median.

Notwithstanding all the space I've given it here, the reunion accounted for just 40 percent of our trip. The rest of the time was spent (with Grandma, Grandpa, and Pete willingly in tow) introducing the girls to northern Utah. It was their first-ever trip to Salt Lake. They loved Temple Square and the Conference Center. They sort of enjoyed the Church History Museum, and got a kick out of Deseret Book. For the first time, Hannah noticed a stranger wearing a CTR ring. It was a lady working the counter at the Lion House. Hannah had to double-take and still felt like she needed confirmation from her mother. She thought that was *really* cool. We took 4 separate half-day trips from Park City into Salt Lake (half-days were about all we had the collective stamina for) and one to Provo. We hardly recognized BYU, which barely resembles the place we left 9+ years (and 4 kids) ago. We were able to catch up with Crystal's favorite philosophy professor and his wife at their home and then headed down to campus. It was kind of fun walking around and seeing all the changes once we got there. But they really ought to rip down the "Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve." sign at the entrance to campus and replace it with a new one: "No Parking." I finally gave up and left our crappy rented minivan in a faculty lot, half-hoping it'd get towed. It didn't.



LUCY DOING LAUNDRY – PIONEER STYLE

The highlight of the Salt Lake excursions would have to be our trip to the new (new to us) This Is the Place Heritage Park and Old Deseret Village. It's kind of like a scaled-down Williamsburg, but less expensive, less kitschy, and more kid-friendly. The girls enjoyed everything, from doing pioneer chores, to dancing around the maypole and riding in the

big wagon. They even liked attending pioneer school. Concerning lunch at the Huntsman Hotel, Lucy cheerfully remarked, "This is even better than a *real* restaurant because you get your food right away!" Too much to write, not enough room.

So this may be the July letter. But most of July was a long time ago and is kind of a blur. I do remember that we *finally* closed out the summer swim team season. Hannah qualified for Divisionals in backstroke and butterfly, which was good for her, and kind of good for me, except that it meant I had to attend the divisional meet, which was held at a pool way, way up-county where the houses are a little bit bigger and pro-Bush bumper stickers a little less scarce. She did reasonably well there, improving her backstroke time and finishing 4th. It wasn't her best butterfly race—she finished 9th—but she's slowly gaining confidence with the stroke (in which, I'm repeatedly told, her maternal grandmother held national records as a 13-year-old).

Was great seeing so many of you. Enjoy what's left of summer.

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

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