

Dear Family:

It's unlikely that anybody reading this attended a larger Thanksgiving gathering than we did.

Anything's possible, I suppose, but the 30 relatives (not counting the three unborn children) who crammed into Grant and Jen's ample living and dining rooms constituted one of the largest holiday get-togethers I've ever been part of. Joining our standard core group of 23 (2 grandparents, plus 5 sons, plus 4 wives, plus 11 grandchildren, plus Coco) were Reed Farnsworth (see last month's letter), and Richard and JoAnn Henrichsen's family of six (see last month's letter).

I'm still a little sore from the Thanksgiving morning Turkey Bowl, which pitted the five Willis boys against the five other adults who showed up from the Olney and Derwood wards. I'm pretty sure the teams were Grant's idea. But Grant's an idiot because we got killed. The game became slightly more enjoyable after the temperature crept above freezing, the sun burned the thin coating of snow off the field, and I regained feeling in my toes. But, even then, I somehow managed to throw more interceptions than pass completions. Team Willis would have benefited greatly from Reed's speed if only he'd opted to get out of bed that morning.

The previous Saturday morning, our family had taken the unorthodox approach of attempting to exercise off Thanksgiving dinner in advance by participating in the Fannie Mae Foundation's annual Help the Homeless walkathon around the National Mall and Tidal Basin. Hannah did fine (as always), Lucy did pretty well (as usual), Grace was happy, and Sophie had a couple of good moments. But it didn't take long to grow tired of her constant shifting from my shoulders to the stroller and back every 15 seconds. I'm confident she could have

walked the entire distance without much trouble if she'd wanted to. I figure she covers at least 3 miles every Sunday just running away from me at church. This morning during sacrament meeting she led me up onto the stand, through the choir seats behind the speaker, around the organ, down the steps at the *other* end of the stand, out the back door of the chapel and halfway down the hall before I caught up with her. I'm not very fast under the best circumstances. I was further slowed on this occasion because I was also carrying Grace. (Mom was busy.)

Sophie has also completed (with only limited time on my shoulders) the 4-mile one-way hike the girls and I periodically take through the woods behind our house (see photo) to Wheaton Regional Park, where, if we're all really, really good and don't fight, Mommy and Grace will meet us with fried chicken. (The threat if we're not good is that we'll have to walk all the way home without lunch. This has never happened.) So this is the long way of saying that I'm attributing Sophie's sub-par performance at the walkathon to her general obstinacy (see last month's letter).



ON THE TRAIL TO THE PARK (on an unusually warm November morning): This milestone, once called "Hannah's Rock," was later renamed "Hannah-Lucy Rock" and is now known as "HLS Rock"

After the walkathon, we joined Reed and Andrew at Grant's house to watch our alma mater mount an inspiring second-half comeback only to fall flat in overtime against one of the foremost public universities in all of Utah. Fortunately, Grant paid for the game, which was only available on pay-per-view, and Andrew and Reed brought the food, so all it cost me was an afternoon of my life. Still, it's a fun group of guys to watch a game with.

In other news, Grace is now officially mobile. She gets up on her hands and knees, but only rocks in that position. She gets around using this walrus-like commando-style crawl that's pretty funny to watch.

Happy holiday season.



BAD TURKEY



GOOD TURKEY

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

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