

Dear Family:

Yesterday marked the "official" start of the National Cherry Blossom Festival.

(I use the word "official" in the same cynical way as the countless "Big Love" reviewers who seemed to enjoy pointing out that "the Mormon church "officially" discontinued the practice of polygamy in 1890.")



Sophie and I actually aren't cherry blossoms. But we parked here anyway without getting towed.

The festival began yesterday, but there were hardly any blooms yet, so we stayed long enough for the girls to run a couple of laps around the Jefferson Memorial, snapped this quick picture of the parking lot, and called it good. The festival runs for two weeks. Maybe we'll try again next Sunday morning before Conference.

We arrived home to discover that the next-door neighbors had rented an enormous pink castle-shaped Moon Bounce.

Millie, Michelle and Nicholas (next door) were eager to have Hannah, Lucy and

Sophie (along with the rest of the block) join in the excitement, so the afternoon wasn't a total loss.

Grace didn't venture into the Moon Bounce, but she did have her first birthday two weeks ago. Just 24 more weeks to nursery! Grace enjoys talking (in her way) and climbing the stairs (also in her way—she occasionally falls down them as well). She is standing with the help of objects. Grandma Carolyn was kind enough to bring Grace a push-toy ostensibly to aid her in learning to walk. What it turned out to be, however, was a loud noisemaker that Sophie delighted in pushing around the house. This lasted a day until, mercifully, she broke it.

The rest of Grandma's half-week visit was quiet—mainly because she lost her voice to illness sometime during the second night. But she still found the energy to take the girls swimming—which is important since she's their unofficial swim coach. Hannah still cherishes her autographed swim cap, bearing the signatures of Michael Phelps and some other Olympic swimmers whose names I can't remember (I only remember Phelps's because he's from Maryland) that Grandma gave her more than a year ago. She keeps wanting to wear it to meets. We keep trying to tell her that that's probably not such a good idea. (The ink might stain the pool.)

I need to break off here to run to the Visitors' Center where we, the "Washington Family Singers," are performing our Easter concert



Lucy, with friends Fern, Arthur and Nicholas in the Deluxe Moon Bounce

tonight. Easter isn't for a few weeks, but tonight was the best date we could get. We're always getting big-timed out of the prime scheduling slots by the better-known and longer-tenured "Mormon Choir of Washington, DC." I don't really harbor any ill will since they really are better than us (though I could easily be banned from the choir for even thinking such a thing).

Okay, I'm back. The concert went well. But it's late and I'm tired and can't make any promises about how the rest of this is going to turn out.

Grandma's visit also coincided with our monthly get-together (that hadn't happened in about six months) with Grant, Andrew and their families. These gatherings usually feature dinner and pointed discussions on why all Democrats and most Republicans (basically everybody except us) are pompous idiots while the children unite to destroy the basement. This month's soiree was made more enjoyable by the attendance of my cousin Reed Farnsworth and a buddy of his (who is also a Republican and intelligent (3rd year, Georgetown Law) so we didn't have to change the topic of discussion).

This month's milestones included Lucy's first lost teeth and my first ever experience volunteering at the "Clothes Closet." Our ward's most ambitious attempt at ecumenism is this second-hand clothing collection and distribution center that it operates in cooperation with a couple of dozen other local congregations. I'm embarrassed to admit that in 10 years in the ward I'd never even been there...until two Thursdays ago, when I was *assigned* to go. So I took the day off work and actually rather enjoyed myself. For a guy whose idea of volunteerism is writing a check for however much will get me out of having to do any actual work, this was actually quite rewarding.

We hope this finds you well.

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

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