

Crystal and I were lying in bed the other day with Grace in between us. She was just sitting there, happy and peaceful, content to smile and make faces at us. It prompted Crystal to start reciting Longfellow's immortal words:

*There was a little girl,
Who had a little curl,
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good,
She was very good indeed,
But when she was bad she was horrid.*

According to his son, it was Longfellow's second daughter who inspired the words, which he often sang while pacing with her.

I think I know how he felt.

Grace is two now, and shows no signs of wanting to turn three anytime soon. I could probably fill this entire page chronicling the variety of ear-piercing sounds she makes (and the inopportune moments when she makes them). Or perhaps I could go on about her uncanny ability to remove the allegedly child-proof cap from her favorite grape-flavored Dimetapp cough syrup (after climbing up on the counter to retrieve it from its latest home on the top shelf of something or other). But I'd prefer to focus on the happier times when she giggles and tries to put the few words and numbers she knows into coherent thoughts (and then gets frustrated when no one can figure out what she's saying). Like a lot of kids, she can now count to eleven or twelve, but runs into difficulty once she hits the teens. I think all our kids have had that problem; maybe it's because those numbers sound so much alike.

Anyway, when she's happy, I just like to listen to her babble. It helps me keep things in perspective.

Saturday was one of those perspective-lending days. It began with my watching the girls in the morning while Crystal gave a presentation on fitness and nutrition at a stake women's conference. (She feels she did well.) I had to turn the girls over to a babysitter before Crystal returned so I could go speak at the 1:00 funeral of 49-year-old ward member who died unexpectedly in her sleep. She was her family's only Church member, and the service was at the funeral home, but her parents still asked that I give the "religious talk." I got to know the parents pursuant to making what I thought would be an awkward phone call to ask them if we could dress their daughter in some "special ceremo-

nial clothing." Surprisingly (to me), they were fine with it.

I drove from the funeral to the temple to attend an endowment session with a ward member who was going through for the first time. (One of the unexpected perks I've discovered about being a bishop is the tremendous satisfaction that comes from witnessing the endowment of someone whose temple recommend I've signed.) I got home from the temple just in time to have dinner with a family in the ward whose father was baptized the previous Saturday after 15 years of no interest in the Church.

It was some kind of day. A fitting close to an eventful month that included:

- Dad's 65th birthday. With the arrival of Matt and Andra and family from Raleigh, all of Dad's progeny was in town to celebrate. A highlight of the celebration was 10 of us in Dad's favorite temple sealing room. The nine of us who aren't sealers took turns acting as proxies and witnesses while Dad officiated.
- A visit from Grandma and Grandpa Kent and Aunt Tawny (and a friend of Aunt Tawny's) for spring break. Hannah accompanied them during the first few days of the week, which was spent doing Washington stuff (touring the Capitol, visiting Mount Vernon, the Holocaust and other museums. The rest of us joined them early Monday morning at the cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin. *SOME LOCAL ADVICE:* If you're ever in town during cherry blossom season (i.e., during the first week or so of April), set your alarm and get down there before 7:00 A.M. No crowds; just the dawn's early light reflecting off the water. Absolutely breathtaking. Photos from my cheap camera don't do it justice, but I'll attach one anyway.

We all spent the end of the week in and around Williamsburg, at the Great Wolf Lodge, which has about the coolest indoor water park I've ever seen, and at Busch Gardens, which on Good Friday was a complete and utter zoo. But we all had a great time, and I'm happy the kids love all their grandparents so much.

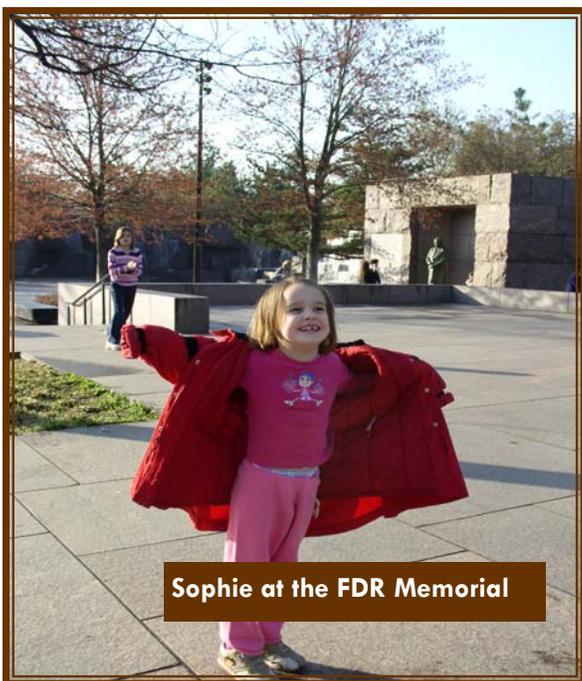
Other stuff doubtless happened, as well, but in the interest of space, I'll close by letting you know that Lucy has now taken to wearing some of her favorite pants backwards. She feels that if she can't see the holes in the knees (because they're on the backs of her legs) no one else can either. She's pretty cute.

We all send our love. Enjoy the May flowers.





Hannah, Lucy, and cherry blossoms at dawn



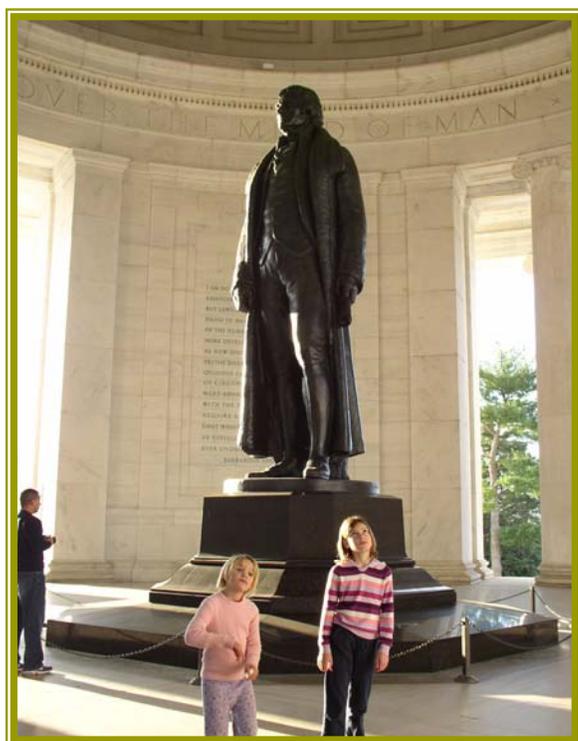
Sophie at the FDR Memorial



Grace looking to hurry things up at FDR (by pushing her own stroller)



Standing in a bread line at the FDR Memorial (next to the cherry blossoms). I had to include the close-up because I like Lucy's face so much.



Hannah and Lucy reading the walls at the Jefferson.

