

Now that the small mass in her right breast has finally been diagnosed as benign, Crystal is free to focus her attention on other important matters—like re-writing the Maryland state song. Like most normal people, I don't know that many state songs. But Crystal has a thing for them, and still insists on singing "[Here We Have Idaho](#)" every time we enter that state. It's a pretty awful song, but "[Maryland, My Maryland](#)" is much worse. Sung to the tune of "O Tannenbaum" it's essentially a Civil War ballad *in support of the losers*. Maryland has the odd distinction of being one of four slave states that remained (officially, at least) with the winning squad during the Civil War. The song, which refers to Lincoln (not by name) as a tyrant and a despot, is evidence that not all Marylanders of the day were down with the decision to stay. Here's the finale:

*She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb-
Huzza! She spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come! She'll come!
Maryland! My Maryland!*

For all nine crappy stanzas, click on the hyperlink above (or [here](#)). The Naval Academy Chorus somehow finds four or five inoffensive lines to sing at the Preakness every year. I don't know how they do it. The entire poem's a train wreck.

When she's not attempting to foment crusades against odious state song lyrics, Crystal is most likely either jogging or at the YMCA, where her name now graces the Wall of Fame outside the FitLinx room. You should really see her delts. She enjoys feeling powerful and I occasionally catch her flexing in front of the mirror and singing "I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar."

She's also gotten me into running (ok, jogging). We "ran" a 5K together in Frederick a couple of weeks ago, and both averaged sub-10-minute miles, which is *really* good for us. I've figured out that it's easier to run faster when I'm running with a big group of other people. When I get tired while running by myself, I just slow down. But fortunately, during this race, I had Fat Guy In Red Shorts (not his real name) to keep me motivated. Whenever FGIRS passed me up, I knew I had to crank it up a gear, and I did. I ended up beating FGIRS (barely) and establishing a new personal best time of 12 seconds slower than my cousin-in-law Jeff Stevens ran the last 5K of his [marathon](#). He averaged sub-9-minute miles overall, a pace I am wholly unfamiliar with except when running downhill. A guy in our ward ran the 5K in like 18 minutes, which was good for third place overall. But he weighs a lot less than me and was captain of the MIT swim team, so I don't feel too badly about it. We're set to do a 10K downtown next month with Grant and Jen. (Mom, Dad, can you watch our kids?) Stay tuned.

Enough about the grown-ups. Both Hannah and Lucy figured prominently in the Forest Knolls Elementary School talent show last weekend. (Okay, maybe not prominently, but they were in it.) Hannah and three friends did a cute little dancing number to the *Grease* tune "You're the One that I Want". And Lucy and five friends did the "It's a Hard Knock Life" scene from *Annie*. In my unbiased opinion, they were the stars of the evening. The rest of the program was dreck, but it was worth sitting through to see my cuties steal the show.

Hannah and Lucy also had a piano recital this month. They were good in that, too.

A somber highlight of the month came on the Thursday before Mother's Day, as all of us traveled to Lusby (near [Solomons Island](#) in southern Maryland) to mark the passing of Richard and JoAnn Henrichsen's infant daughter, SarahLyn. (For the benefit of those who don't know my entire family tree—but have still somehow managed to read this far—Richard is my oldest first cousin on my mother's side. We were roommates at BYU during the year after my mission.) Sarah, Richard and JoAnn's fifth child, lived for about an hour on Friday, May 4. The duration of Sarah's life was not a surprise. Her parents were apprised of her condition—one that I can neither spell nor pronounce—early in JoAnn's pregnancy. They nevertheless elected to carry the child to term. Richard asked me to give the "what does this all mean" talk at the funeral, which turned out to be more difficult than I thought it would be. I'd spoken at three other funerals in the past year and given essentially the same talk each time. It wasn't until after I hung up with Richard that I realized that this one was going to have to be different. As I prepared my remarks, I was overwhelmed with feelings of profound gratitude—in a way I'd never felt before, even following the deaths of my four grandparents—for the reality of the Plan; for the perspective and meaning that it lends in times such as this, and for its miraculous covenants that bind us all together. Notwithstanding the painful circumstances, it was nice being with so many of you there.

To close on a lighter note, we went to a [Bowie Baysox](#) game for home evening last Monday, and Hannah caught a foul ball. Actually, *I* caught it and gave it to Hannah (the other girls were in the bathroom), which sparked intense debate among the girls over who actually owns the ball—I think it's currently in backyard awaiting consumption by the lawn mower. Even though the odds of catching a foul ball at a sparsely attended minor league baseball game are about the same as the odds of having your windshield smashed by one at a Little League game (roughly 6 to 1 against), it was just one of those little things that makes life a little more fun.

Oh, and we went to a farm. (See Page Deux.) Have a nice month.





Mild-mannered school girl during the week...



...transforms into "Super Lucy" most Saturday mornings.

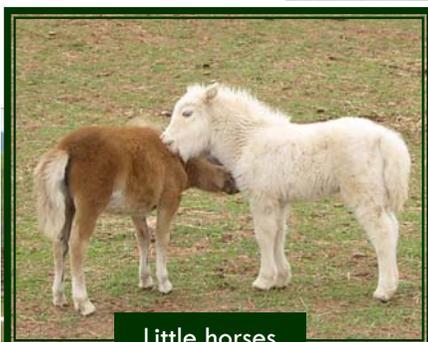
Quote of the Month

SOPHIE: Mom, Hannah told me to shut up!
HANNAH: She's lying!...I only mouthed it.



Placeholder for a photo of my two counselors and me on the day before our first anniversary as a bishopric. I meant to have the picture taken at church today.

Didn't happen.



Little horses



Hannah stumbled on a newspaper article about a miniature horse named Thumbelina that's touring the country and coming to town this month. Her father wasn't up to waiting in those lines, so, a couple of Saturdays ago, we found a local farm that had miniature foals and looked at them instead...



...while Grace picked dandelions...



...and Sophie fed a calf.