

Dear Family,

So I guess Hannah's on Facebook now.

I began to become aware of this when I read an e-mail on the morning of the last day of school. It was one of those system-generated messages we all receive from time to time advising us that so-and-so has "set up a Facebook profile... and I want to add you as a friend, yada, yada, yada." Each of these messages also condescendingly explains to non-Facebookers like me that "First, you need to join Facebook!" (Emphasis mine; superfluous exclamation point theirs.)

While I'm always flattered and touched by these personal, system-generated invitations, they always go unheeded. Unlike Andrew and Jessica's soon-to-be-former bishop, who uses the social network to spy on his ward's youth, I've never felt the need to get on board. To explain why would overwhelm the space I allot to this letter, but suffice it to say that it's just one of those things (like texting, hybrid cars and "organic" food) that I'm going to relentlessly mock right up until the moment I adopt it. (Recall that I used to deride bicyclists; I rode 85 miles last week.)

The Facebook invitation from Hannah gave me pause, however, because she hadn't told me she was doing it. The invite hit my inbox at 2:15 A.M., when, theoretically, she would have been sleeping, and by the time I read it, she had already left for school. Unable to confirm facts with her, I began to hypothesize that someone had stolen her identity. I suggested to Crystal that she might want to set up a Facebook account (since I wouldn't) so she could see what was on Hannah's page. While Crystal was getting around to that, I placed a call to Hannah's cell phone to ask whether the page was, in fact, hers. I thought I'd be able to catch her before school began, and grew so impatient when she didn't pick up that I did something I'd never done before: I picked up my BlackBerry and I sent my daughter a text message.

My message read as follows: **Hannah, did you set up a Facebook account?** (Note the correct use of spelling, punctuation and capitalization.)

Her reply was instantaneous: **Yes. & congrats u can txt.**

I still don't know what she's got on there. But presumably her paternal grandmother (who I'm fairly certain put her up to it) will notify me of any inappropriate content. Crystal's on, too, so I guess we've got the place surrounded.

If I were Hannah, I'd post some pictures taken at Young Women camp at Caledonia State Park (near Gettysburg) from which she returned yesterday afternoon. By all accounts (including hers) she had a great time. I hope she'll get around to writing about it (here or on her Facebook page). It was an odd feeling dropping her off at the church Tuesday morning. I used to get homesick at scout camp in the summer. I'd forgotten what that felt like, but it all came back to me as she blew me a kiss while I got

back in my car and drove home. I don't get the sense that she missed us much, but I spent the rest of the week looking forward to Friday and driving up for Bishops' Night. When I arrived, Hannah seemed almost as excited to see me as I was to see her, and that made me happy. I did one of my little talking spiels, stuck around for the testimony meeting and then— notwithstanding myriad threats from the girls—spent a prank-free night in the Priesthood tent. (I was assured that the girls had nothing to do with my assigned cot breaking at 4 A.M.. The stake president's air mattress had blown out the night before; I'm told the girls had nothing to do with *that*, either.)

Hannah's week at camp meant missing two swim meets, including, alas, one "A" meet. Hannah typically brings home blue ribbons from the 100-meter I.M. and 50-meter butterfly events. Lucy and Sophie compete in backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle events. I continue to stand in awe of the dedication put forth by other swimmers' parents who work tirelessly as meet officials and staffing the café. Sometimes I wonder whether these devoted parents view me in the same way I view less active members of my ward. I was on a roll at the start of the season, working as a timer at the first two meets before missing the next two entirely. I can just imagine the discussion in Swim Team Council (if there were such a thing): "You know, Brother Tim was making so much progress there for a while; I wonder what we can do to bring him back..." Crystal, for her part, makes weekly runs to Costco to keep the café stocked—which makes me feel even more like the less-active husband in our otherwise faithful family.

I credit faithful Primary attendance (and some genetic help from their mother) for the girls' continuing development into above-average singers. Hannah's talent was on display this month as Veruca Salt in the Silver Spring International Middle School production of "Willy Wonka Junior," while, Lucy did a spot-on job singing "Tomorrow" at the Forest Knolls Elementary School talent show. (At least it sounded spot-on from my perch at the piano.)

Willy Wonka was memorable. Sophie laughed out loud for nearly the entire show. In a touching show of support, the YW presidency arranged for all of Hannah's fellow young women to attend the opening night performance, and the relief society president and her visiting mother came on closing night. As one might expect of a middle school musical production, most of the girls sang quite well, while a lot of the boys struggled to find an octave that worked consistently. Hannah portrayed the spoiled-rotten Veruca to near perfection, while the boy portraying her father wore the tie I was married in. Pursuant to a mad prop scramble for a white tie—"Does anyone have a white tie?" "Why would anyone own a white tie?"—and without explaining why every adult Mormon male worth his salt has at least one white tie (it turns out I have three—but two of them are bow ties, and one of those is really more ivory, and I wear it in the temple only because it drives Crystal nuts) I willingly parted with mine, and it was fun seeing it in its new context.

Looking forward to being with many of you in the coming months. Love, Tim et al





Left: Lucy sings “Tomorrow” at the Forest Knolls Elementary School Talent Show

Below: Afterward, Lucy hugs her proud accompanist



Above: Grace eats one of the fabulous Alton Brown soft pretzels that we made as a family yesterday. (We love Alton Brown.)

Right: Sophie was still laughing even when Willy Wonka ended.





Hannah, as the incorrigible Veruca Salt, gives Willy Wonka the business.

After the performance:
Veruca Salt and her father. Hey, that's my tie!
(You can't tell, but it has a nice, very subtle paisley pattern.)

