

Dear Family,

Every Sunday evening (and sometimes more often) we receive automated telephone and e-mail messages from Lucy's principal containing information about the coming week and other things the school wants to make parents and students aware of. These messages range from the funny ("As we've already used our allotment of snow days this year, please refrain from performing the 'pajama dance' or any other ritual designed to bring about school-cancelling inclement weather...") to the useful ("with the increase in temperatures, we've noticed quite an odor emanating from the school body and remind all students to bathe frequently and wear deodorant...") and everything in between. My all-time favorite message was two weeks ago. I still haven't deleted the e-mail:

Gentlemen, pants that hang low and show your underwear are not appropriate for school. The shirts that you think are covering up your underwear are not working. Please choose pants that stay at your waist so that your underwear can remain covered at all times.

I don't know why, but I've read that paragraph at least a dozen times now and *still* can't do it without giggling.

Imagine a clever segue here.

Adding to the mountain of evidence that I'm not a particularly good husband, an alert at our credit card issuer was tripped earlier this month after Crystal made a modest Mothers' Day purchase (for her mother) from Helzberg Diamonds. Apparently the fraud model concluded that any jewelry purchase was so far outside of our typical spending profile that an alert was warranted.

It's been a few weeks, so I honestly can't remember what, if anything, I gave Crystal for Mothers' Day—I know it wasn't jewelry—but fortunately for me, she was too immersed in mental preparation for her first triathlon to notice.

The triathlon was held in Annapolis on Saturday, May 14.

There's a lot to like about Annapolis even though we don't go there very often. Upon learning that her mother would be racing there, Sophie asked, "Isn't that our state capital or something?" Indeed it is. We're among the relatively small segment of the country's population that lives closer to the national capital (4 miles south of us) than to our state capital (30 miles east). Even though I like both places, they couldn't be more dissimilar. While Washington is, well, a city, Annapolis is more of a quaint little town whose residents, I imagine, were simply delighted to have the loud, obnoxious infrastructure that accompanies a triathlon into town. (Triathlons are almost as much of a pox on the land as wind turbines. I'd explain why, but that wouldn't leave any room to write about Crystal's exploits.)

Annapolis is close enough that it wasn't any trouble for Crystal and I to drive over the evening before to pick up her race packet (and a carbo-loading dinner based around Maryland crab cakes—can't go to Annapolis without having the crab cakes) and then back again the following morning for the race.

Actually, Crystal drove over *early* Saturday by herself to get

her bike and other transition-area items situated. Sophie and I came a little later, but still in time for the 7 a.m. start (which was also when the rain began). Sophie's sisters opted to stay home.

It was a short-distance "sprint" triathlon—a gateway drug to longer-distance events, and it appears Crystal is now hooked. She was the fourth-fastest swimmer in her 50-person "wave" of 40-to-44-year-old women and passed several swimmers in the waves ahead of her. (Because the swim leg went off from a relatively small city dock, the competitors departed in a dozen or so waves.) Crystal emerged from the Chesapeake Bay and mounted her bike for a quick 12-mile ride across the Naval Academy Bridge, past the Annapolis stake center, and along the Severn River (that's when Sophie and I had breakfast) followed by a five-kilometer run around town. (Like I said, it's not a very big town.) The fastest person finished in just under an hour, the fastest woman in about 70 minutes. Crystal came in in an hour, 37 minutes and 46 seconds—right in the middle of the pack.

She really enjoyed herself and I can't remember a time when I felt happier for her. Even though the swim was by far her strongest leg (she comes by that naturally) she reported with some pride having passed many riders (from earlier waves) on the bike course who were on better bikes than hers. This has led her to speculate how much better she could do if only she had a good bike. (This gives me pause not only because she already rides a much nicer bike than mine—not that that's saying much—but also because she has this brother whose idea of a "good bike" is one that costs more than many cars. It all causes me to wonder whether her uncomplaining acceptance of not getting any jewelry from me all these years has simply been part of her master plan to score a really nice bike. Stay tuned to see how all this plays out.)

Yesterday marked both our 17th wedding anniversary and the 5th anniversary of my sustaining as the bishop of the White Oak Ward. I don't quite know what to make of that second anniversary. There's this mythical notion that a bishop's term is five years, but I've never read that in any authoritative source (nor do I think it makes much sense). At the same time, looking around, I can't help but notice that not only am I the longest-tenured bishop in the stake (though still the second-youngest) but also the longest-tenured bishop in the (admittedly brief) 31-year history of our ward. So I don't know what five years portends for me, but at this point I believe I'll be more sad than relieved when it ends.

As for the anniversary that actually matters, Crystal and I went for a run together and had dinner at a quirky little restaurant in town called Buck's Fishing and Camping. We don't usually do anniversary gifts, but this year it was Crystal's idea to give ourselves his and hers RoadID bracelets so that first responders will know whom to call in the event one of us should drop dead while running or biking. (Crystal, not to mention our mothers, would probably prefer that I replace "drop dead" in the previous sentence with "lose consciousness." If my view of things is more macabre than most, it's only because I've probably spoken at more funerals than 99 percent of the population—and probably 99.99 percent of people under 40.)

I also do weddings.

Have a great month! Love, Tim *et al*





Triathlon Start: It turns out that 50 white women ages 40 to 44 wearing pink swim caps and black wetsuits all look pretty much alike. That's Crystal in the middle.

(My cousin Holley probably knows what those buildings in the background are, but I don't—they (the buildings) are on the campus of the United States Naval Academy.)

Chesapeake Bay: Crystal's one of those dots.



Crystal loses the wetsuit and heads for her bike. (I didn't actually get any pictures of her on the bike—she was going too fast.)



Crystal starts the run (and blows a kiss to Sophie).



Heading for the finish line.