

Dear Family,

I'm delighted to announce that I finished 8th (out of 2,222 entrants) in last week's prestigious U.S. Open Contest.

I should probably point out the U.S. Open Contest is not the same thing as the U.S. Open Championship, which I happened to attend on multiple days last week—more on that in the next paragraph. The Contest simply involved predicting the top ten finishers of the Championship. Four of my picks actually finished in the top ten: Rory McIlroy, naturally, as well as Jason Day, Lee Westwood and Johan Edfors—raise your hand if you had *Johan Edfors*; yeah, didn't think so. But I did. I would have finished higher if I hadn't picked Adam Scott, whom I picked only because he was using Tiger Woods's caddy, but that strategy obviously didn't pan out. My 8th-place finish won me a free round of golf, so I guess that's 60 bucks I'll have to waste on something else.

The 2011 U.S. Open Championship was contested at Congressional Country Club, about ten miles from here. It was last played locally in 1997. We lived here then, but I was a poor graduate student and couldn't afford to do anything. The time before that was 1964, seven and a half years before I was born. Conventional wisdom (and that alone) has it coming back here in 2026 in connection with our country's sescentennial, but I could be dead by then (or, worse, living in some part of the country where the Open never comes) so I didn't want to miss it this year. Walking through the gate onto the still-quiet, mostly empty course early Thursday morning, gazing at the iconic green USGA grandstands surrounding each green, red U.S. Open flags in every hole, I remarked to Hannah that it felt almost like a religious experience. She rolled her eyes and laughed at me. I guess she was right to. One difference between the U.S. Open and the temple is you can't bring your cell phone (or any other electronic device) into the U.S. Open. There's also substantially more beer available at the U.S. Open than at the temple. One nice thing about the cell phone ban is that it frees up an extra hand enabling spectators to pound two beers at a time. If you watch much golf on TV, you might notice there's always a chorus of idiots that screams "GET IN THE HOLE!" whenever any big-name player hits a shot from anywhere on the course. (Sometimes it's just a lone wolf shouting "ONE TIME!" as in [this clip from the 2008 Open](#). If you're not familiar with golf, "One time" and "Get in the hole" mean exactly the same thing.) Sometimes people shout "Mashed Potatoes," I'm not sure why. But one thing I now know, there's not a man who shouts that stuff who isn't holding at least one beer.

Hannah and I had a great time. We scored free parking right by the course (in a Potomac Ward member's driveway) thanks to a sweet Bill Elwell connection. (Bill preceded me as bishop of the White Oak Ward and is now in the stake presidency. His dad used to be the head pro at Congressional. *If that last sentence didn't make you pause, you need to read it again.* Bill, whose middle name is Casper, is named for two-time U.S. Open champion Billy Casper, who introduced his dad to the gospel.) Hannah and I only watched McIlroy for a couple holes. He was grouped with Phil Mickelson on the first two

days, which meant that 20,000 people were following him everywhere from the start. We stuck around long enough to watch Phil hit his very first shot of the tournament into the water (at which point I realized that I'd probably made a mistake picking him in my top ten) and spent most of our time following players you've probably never heard of. Obviously, I'd like to write much, much more, but this is probably enough. I hereby promise to write nothing more about the U.S. Open before 2026.

Hannah didn't come back to the Open with me on Saturday because she had to swim in the first A-meet of the season. All four girls are on the swim team this summer, which comes as a great relief to Crystal because it means that Grace is finally able to swim a full length of the pool. (That Grace turned 6 *without* being able to swim a single length of the pool, I think, had been a source of some consternation for her mother, but that's all behind us now.) The four little chlorine queens all seem to be enjoying themselves, even though three of them are at the young end of their respective age groups. Hannah is the exception; she's savoring her final year of success in the 13-14 age group (she won her I.M. event yesterday by almost six full seconds) before having to move up to the tough-as-nails 15-18s next year. Her success in yesterday's meet came despite having missed the entire week of practice so she could attend Young Women's camp, which she seems to have mostly enjoyed.

We blew off swim team time trials a couple of weeks ago to spend a day on the beach in Ocean City. (That'd be Ocean City, Maryland. I got used to adding the state when I was a kid so as to avoid giving the mistaken impression that my family was going to Ocean City, New Jersey. It probably isn't necessary to add the state since I no longer live in New Jersey, but old habits die hard.)

We went at the invitation of our friends, the Warners, who had learned of an air show there. Ordinarily, I'm not really an air show guy. My memory of air shows—and it had been literally decades since I'd been to one—is that you spend a really long time sitting around in a broiling hot, wide open space, surrounded by sweaty, smelly people, waiting for an occasional plane to fly by, do some tricks, blow some smoke and leave. And then it gets even hotter.

It turns out that my memory was essentially accurate, but it turns out that not only is the ocean surf a really fun vantage point from which to watch an air show, it also takes the edge off all the waiting. I didn't really know what any of the planes were (except for the B-2 stealth bomber, which was pretty cool) but Bill Warner (Annapolis grad, Navy doctor, and my high priests group leader) was able to explain everything to me. It's kind of a long day trip, here to Ocean City, but I can see us doing it again. The girls love the ocean. I don't think Lucy came out of the water more than twice, it appears Grace likes letting herself get knocked over by the waves, and everybody just seemed a little happier than usual (not that we're usually unhappy, but you know...). I guess that's why it's called a day at the beach.

Happy Summer.

Love,

Tim et al





Last Day of School Tradition:

Crystal and Emily (her friend) make a [Smith Island Cake](#) (Maryland's official state dessert) for their children to celebrate the end of school.

I don't think anybody in our house really likes Smith Island Cake all that much, but you can't mess with tradition.

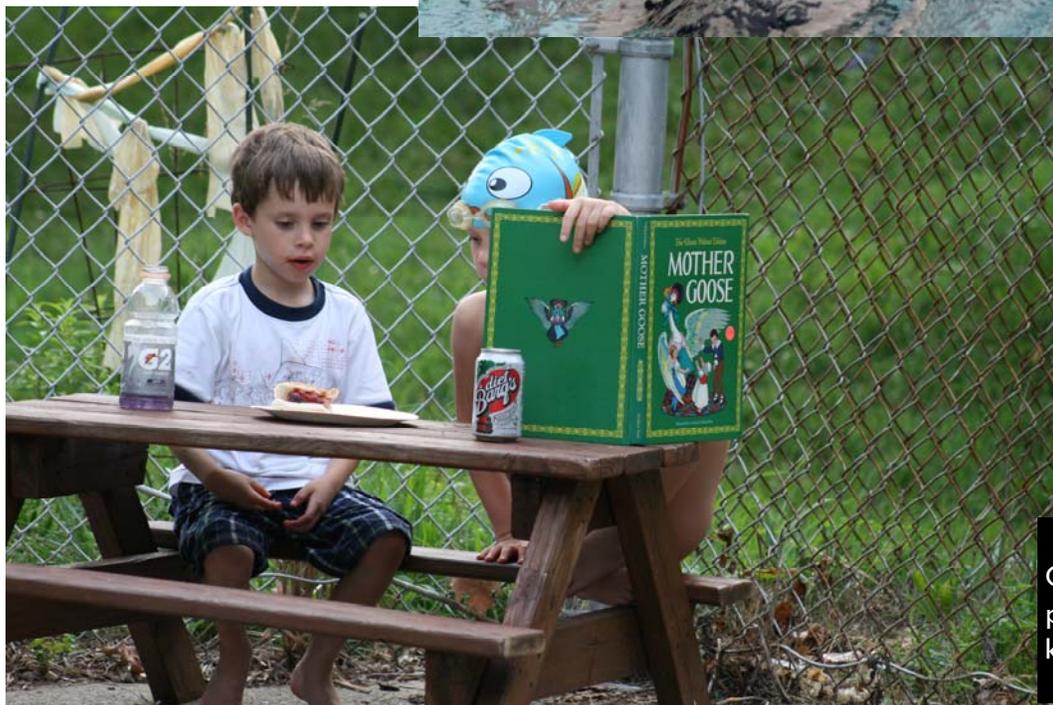


Grace and Sophie at Grace's first (I think) B-meet.



Lucy can't be bothered with details like a swim cap or goggles when she races.

Grace swims something resembling backstroke. (It's all legal as long as she stays on her back.)



Grace discovers the only proven method for effectively killing time at a swim meet.