

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11).

We know Jesus through the Bible, or we know him not at all. That is the urgent premise behind LAC's efforts to encourage personal Bible reading and systematic Bible study. We fervently hope that you will--

1. "Stand in the Rain" with us every day as we read through the Bible in three short years. Just go to **lockportalliance.org** and click on the man in the rain.

2. Attend one of these Bible-based classes this week—

"Study of Major Bible Themes"--Sunday at 9:45

"Diversified Biblical Topics"--Sunday at 9:45

"Beta"--Wednesday at 6:30

(Contact Franklyn Pfeil--pfeilmail@yahoo.com--with questions or comments.)

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### **"the pirates on the rock"**

*And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. (Acts 20:37-38)*

*As from the house your mother sees  
You playing round the garden trees,  
So you may see, if you will look  
Through the windows of this book,  
Another child, far, far away,  
And in another garden, play.  
But do not think you can at all,  
By knocking on the window, call  
That child to hear you. He intent  
Is all on his play-business bent.  
He does not hear, he will not look,  
Nor yet be lured out of this book.  
For, long ago, the truth to say,  
He has grown up and gone away,  
And it is but a child of air  
That lingers in the garden there.*

--Robert Louis Stevenson

I think 'Goodbye' is the hardest thing to say.

Saying 'No' is hard for some people, but it's never been hard for me. Lately, I've been practicing 'Sorry,' and I'm getting pretty good at it. But 'Goodbye' has never been easy.

We just returned from a week's vacation. Like many families, our vacations have become traditions; we always go to the same place, at the same time every year.

Every first week in July we pack our tents and bikes and running shoes and Frisbees and fishing poles. We squeeze Frankie, Eddy, and our dog Chip into whatever space is left. Then with light hearts and high hopes we head off to Wellesley Island State Park in the 1000 Islands region. It's 8 dollars per day for the campsite and another 8 dollars per day if we rent a boat slip. We love

that place so much that I'm pretty sure we'd pay 1000 dollars a day, if that's what they were asking.

We started going there when Frankie and Eddy were little, when Chip was a brand-new puppy; when time stretched out ahead of us in limitless supply.

But boys and puppies grow up; and as they did, the horizon drew nearer. This year, we bumped right up against it.

Frankie will graduate from high school next June. When he does, it's likely that he'll need a summer job to defray college expenses. As his future encroaches, Wellesley Island will recede farther and farther into our past.

Shelley warned me, a couple years ago, that the summer after Frankie's junior year might be the end for Wellesley Island as we knew it: with all of us together for a week at a time during the most sun-drenched days of the year. But I can bury realities like that into the deepest depths of forgetfulness. So I did.

However, it wasn't buried deep enough. When a big group of rowdy twenty-somethings pulled into the site next to ours, we knew it meant trouble. Not because they were high-spirited, but because they began to unload what must have been a full cord of firewood.

Eddy is super-sensitive to allergens and smoke and any other air-borne particulates you can think of. So Shelley watched with concern as they unloaded the wood. Then she looked to me with alarm as they lit a big campfire in the middle of the afternoon. The prevailing wind was carrying billows of smoke our way.

She didn't have to speak. Though it was a day before we were scheduled to leave, we both knew it was time to go. That much smoke would be a kind of hell for Eddy to endure over an entire day.

That's when the reality I'd buried resurfaced: *this is that* summer--the summer after Frankie's junior year--and now it was time to go. The last page of my favorite chapter in the whole story had already turned itself.

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And so we do what we can to hold on to our yesterdays as they slip away into the realm of memory. As Shelley and the boys gathered and packed our gear, I stole away on Frankie's bike for a tour of the past. I rode to our first-ever campsite, E-5. In the woods just behind stands a huge rock, about 15 feet long and 10 feet high, which two little boys once transformed into the deck of a pirate ship.

Then I went down to the marina, where we'd fished from the docks and wished for the boat we now have.

Then I went to E-59, the best campsite we ever had. A narrow road winds its way from there to the docks. Every morning we'd be on that road by 5:30, fishing poles in hand. The boys, ever eager to get started, always got way ahead of me as we walked.

And they were still there--still just 9 or 10 years old, still wearing their Little League baseball caps. Then they reached a bend, and were out of sight.

So I pushed down hard on the pedals. But when I rounded that curve, the road lay empty ahead.  
I pushed down harder still and flew down to the marina. But there were no boys on the dock.

So I tore back over to E-5. There were no pirates on the rock.

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I write, every day, about what Jesus says and does, and about what all of that means. But the best thing about Jesus is that we don't have to say 'Goodbye.' We might have to say 'Farewell' for a while, but only for the while.

So fare thee well, my ramblin' boys.  
May all your ramblin' bring you joy.

So soon--sooner than you think--time will turn you back this way. I'll see you then, by the Rock.

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