

Christmas Greetings from the Carl and Carolyn Wenning family!

It's hard to believe that another year has already come and gone. 1996 has been a joyful and peace-filled year here. We hope that the peace and joy of this Christmas will stay with everyone at your household during the coming new year.

The Wenning family -- Teresa, Rebecca, Carolyn, & Carl -- has been involved in all manner of things this year. Relaxing from a taxing work schedule, we all traveled to the Seattle, WA, area to visit with Pam, Carolyn's sister, in August. We also took the time to visit with some friends in Lumby, BC, and Lebanon, OR. In September we welcomed a new member into our immediate family -- Catarina, a calico cat. Also in September we added another member to our extended family, Tenzin Tupten Rabgya, a 13-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk living in India. Tenzin joins Hermelinda Mendoza Osequera who we "adopted" years ago through the Christian Children's Fund.

Home schooling continues to be the biggest family project. Rebecca, now 11 years old, is in her seventh year of schooling and continues to excel. Teresa, now 5 years old, started her first year of home schooling, and now has two teachers -- Carolyn and Rebecca. During the year we became the first home schooling family in McLean County to participate in the 4-H Chick-It-Out program. We hatched three chicks using an incubator provided by the Cooperative Extension Service of McLean County.

Teresa started home schooling this year, and she also joined the Daisy Girl Scouts. She's involved in Children's Church, and swims regularly at the YMCA where she is a "minnow." Her favorite past times are playing with her Barbie dolls, and rollerblading through the house. Teresa has a musical flare, and loves to sing and dance along with the songs from movies. She was a winner in a Halloween competition in which she was awarded a \$10 prize for being dressed up like a black cat. Perhaps she'll choose a career in stage work.

Rebecca continues to excel in music and math. Earlier this year she shared the position with another girl as "solo" violinist. Though she's only working at sixth-grade level in home schooling, she is working through high school algebra. Rebecca has dropped out of tap dancing, but has shown many other interests. Among these are reading "Goosebumps" and "Little House on the Prairie." In May Rebecca spent three days at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center near Milwaukee contemplating the religious life. Nonetheless, Rebecca is keen on marine biology, and has an especial interest in jellyfish. Joining 4-H this year, Rebecca is currently working on plans to put up a bee hive. Rebecca is also receiving accolades for her work at the Miller Park Zoo through the Junior Zookeepers Program. Knitting, latch-hook, and cross-stitch fill up her spare time. She also enjoys writing short stories.

Besides running the kids back and forth to their innumerable events, Carolyn continues working away at home schooling with the kids. Carolyn has also arranged a number of exciting field trips for the Catholic Home School group in which we are all involved. Only this past week we attended and participated in a "German" Christmas celebration that featured a wide variety of German foods and a visit by Bishop St. Nicholas. Carolyn is currently sewing a "Mary costume" for Rebecca who has been invited to play the mother of Jesus at midnight Mass on Christmas. As an indirect event of Carl and Carolyn's 14th wedding anniversary on May 29, Carolyn ended up the summer by purchasing a new car. As if on queue, Carl's 13-year-old Mazda bit the dust on May 29 allowing Carolyn to purchase a 1995 Mercury Mystique that has provided her with a lot of joy. It's now harder than ever to keep her home!

Carl continues to be overly-involved in his graduate studies and physics department work. About this time next year he will be finished with the bulk of his Ed.D. course work; he should then be able to commence the dissertation portion of his doctorate. He finds great joy in his work as program director for the physics teacher education program at Illinois State University. Carl continues as planetarium director. During June Carl was keynote speaker for the 100th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Emerson McMillin Observatory at Ohio State University. In October Carl was elected as president of the Illinois Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers. At the end of November Carl, along with Carolyn, attended his 25th anniversary reunion of his Immaculate Conception High School class in Celina, OH. Carl was deeply saddened by the deaths of his cousin and classmate Sylvia Bricker, and of his professor, friend, and mentor from Ohio State -- Walter Mitchell. God rest their souls.

So, that about wraps up another year at the Wenning household in Normal. We hope that your household also knows the joy and consolation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and pray that the heartfelt Christmas joy of the *resurrected* Ebenezer Scrooge fills your heart throughout the coming new year.