

Christmas 1999

Season's Greetings and a hearty Merry Christmas from the Wenning family of Normal, Illinois! We hope that all has been well in your home this year, and wish you a Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone -- so little time, so much to do. Here's the round up from our clan this year; we hope that you'll let us know how things have been with you and yours.

Teresa is now eight years old. She home schools at the 3-4 grade level, and continues to work diligently with her violin. She continues her involvement in Brownies, and this year joined 4-H. Teresa celebrated First Communion in May. Teresa is an excellent fisherman, now that she has gotten Dad out to put the worms on the hook. In June, during a fishing contest, Teresa took first place in size, and second place in the number of fish caught. She won a rod with reel, and a tackle box filled with fishing items.

Rebecca, now 14, has had a great year. She had the adventure of a lifetime when she traveled to Mexico with the Girl Scouts for 17 days this summer. She also served as a House Page in Springfield for Representative Bill Brady. Rebecca has left home schooling behind, and is now enrolled at University High School. During her SAT Explore assessment she placed in the 99th percentile among students nationally! High school is a new outlet for Rebecca who is now involved in orchestra, Key Club, and Speech Team. Rebecca continues with Junior Zookeeping, and volunteers as a Zookeepers Assistant at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. She participated in 4-H fair again this summer, and has given five beekeeping presentations to adult and youth groups.

Carolyn continues to home school Teresa. Both are involved in the local Catholic home educators group. Carolyn is in charge of household duties, including management of two cats (Catarina and Phyllis), one gecko ("The Lobster"), and a praying mantis. She often can be seen chauffeuring the kids or assisting with their activities. She and Carl continue to teach Natural Family Planning -- having done so for 17 years.

Carl has been as busy as ever. If his regular job as planetarium director and teacher education specialist at Illinois State University isn't enough, he always finds more things to do -- but just not his doctoral work. As Carl is so fond of saying, "I do what pays!" Nonetheless, he recently changed his dissertation topic to more closely align it with his day-to-day work at ISU. He now hopes to complete his doctoral work by the time Rebecca graduates from high school! Carl continues to work at Illinois Wesleyan University part time, this year teaching astronomy. Carl was named one of two "Champions" for the Prairie Aviation Museum's proposed Challenger Learning Center. Carl, along with one other Champion, will head up efforts to raise \$4 million for a new Bloomington center.

Beekeeping continues to be the family hobby. During January Rebecca and Carl traveled to Nashville, TN, for five days to attend the American Beekeeping Federation conference. Both worked the Federation's "Youth in Beekeeping" display, and Rebecca was shown on the evening television news. In February the whole family worked to host their 2nd Annual Beekeeping Course which 49 people attended. In June the "Wenning family beekeepers" were featured in Central Illinois Childhood magazine, a publication that goes out to some 30,000 homes. Later that month the family hosted the Summer Meeting of the Illinois State Beekeepers' Association. During August the family worked

the Illinois State Beekeepers' Association display at the Illinois State Fair, selling honey ice cream and explaining honey and bees. In November Rebecca, dressed as a beekeeper, was featured on the front cover of *The Clarionette*, the student newspaper at University High School. Carl began a career in freelance writing earlier in May. This year he has had eight articles accepted for publication in *American Bee Journal*. Carolyn continues to sell honey.

Our family has been blessed with a number of fun activities this year. In May we traveled to Chicago to visit "Medieval Times" and visit Brookfield Zoo. In June a family friend from Savannah, GA, Janet DiClaudio, visited with us for a few days. During July we had a wonderful visit from Carolyn's sister Pam and her son Gary who came all the way from Paulsbo, WA, to visit. The family went to Six Flags in August, after Carolyn won four passes for two day's free admission plus hotel accommodations in downtown St. Louis. We had a wonderful city tour. In August we traveled to Ohio for the Muhlenkamp family reunion at which we saw everyone from Carl's great uncles and aunts all the way down to cousins. In October we became a host family to an international student from Bangladesh -- Ahmed Tazmeen. Ahmed is a graduate student studying economics. During Thanksgiving the Wenning household resounded with joy as eight family members from Ohio and one from Illinois joined us for a fun-filled weekend.

The family will be departing for Mexico City on December 18th for a well-deserved 11-day vacation. Following two years of private lessons, Rebecca is now reasonably fluent in Spanish, and should be able to help us out in this city where very few people speak English. It should be quite an adventure. Feliz Navidad!