

Seasons Greetings and Joyous Felicitations from the

Carl & Carolyn Wenning Family of Normal, Illinois!

It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone already. It seems that it wasn't all that long ago that we sat down to write last year's letter. This year was a good year for our whole family, and we want to share our joy with you at this most wonderful time of year.

Eleven-year-old Teresa is now enrolled in the 6th grade. She has completely adapted to the public school setting, and is fully engaged with new friends and school activities. She has shown a real knack with music, and plays violin, clarinet, and keyboard. Teresa is an accomplished violinist with multiple skills, and even plays the viola parts on her violin in the school orchestra. That is no mean feat! Starting with the clarinet this past October, she was able to catch up with more than a year of training in just two months! In December, just a few days ago, she was admitted to the school band. She practices the clarinet and violin out of joy; she is a self-trained keyboard player. Her 5th grade academic grades were all A's making both of her parents proud. Teresa is the social extrovert and keeps involved with all sorts of social activities. In addition to being a musician, she is also an artist. During the autumn she stole the show with her pottery display featuring a human face in the form of a mime. She is currently enrolled in her sixth year of Girl Scouts, and finished her third years of 4-H (through which she entered a cat and cake in the county fair) and cheerleading. In March Teresa traveled with her Dad, Grandmas Rita and Agnes, Aunt Beverly, and cousin Jessica to New York City for a week in the 'Big Apple.' During June she traveled with her Dad to Woodstock, Illinois, to visit the new Challenger Learning Center (a smaller version of Space Camp) as the sole representative of the 57,000 fifth graders in Central Illinois. There she participated in a mission and, with her Dad, flew a \$100,000 Boeing 737 flight simulator. (Fortunately, Dad was able to land the airplane, but skidded off the runway at O'Hare International Airport.) During June Teresa spent a week at Camp Ondessonk in southern Illinois. During July she was on the road again, spending a week in Virginia with Dad and Grandma Agnes touring Civil War battlefields and the like. Early in the autumn, she participated in cheerleading camp. She now spends lots of time in chat rooms on the Internet where she continues to widen her circle of friends. As you read this, she is now in Mexico City with her sister Rebecca and Grandma Agnes.

Rebecca, too, is ever on the go. Rebecca started off the year in Mexico City. She departed for home on January 1st, and flew off two days later for three months in France. There she was enrolled in a high school in Dijon; she was hosted by the Lobry family, the family whose daughter, Fanny, stayed with us for three months last autumn. Rebecca is fluent in Spanish and French, and intent on a career in international affairs. She, like Teresa, will be in Mexico over Christmas again this year, but is staying a week longer than either Teresa or Grandma, to continue her visits with the friends and families that she knows there. Rebecca was named to Who's Who Among American High School Students for the second year. Only 1% of all the nation's students ever receive this degree of recognition. She continues to maintain a perfect 4.0 grade point average at University

High School. She was also inducted into the National Honor Society last spring. During December she was named an Illinois State Scholar by the State of Illinois. She officially enrolled at Illinois State University this autumn, even while being a senior in high school taking a large number of advanced placement courses. During July, Rebecca spent a week at Georgetown University just outside of Washington, DC, participating in the highly acclaimed Presidential Classroom program. In the month of August she spent a week in Sucre, Bolivia, on a mission trip with the Diocese of Joliet. She served as group interpreter, and worked with children in a variety of settings – from an orphanage to a hospital. Rebecca continues to participate in 4-H (now secretary of her club), and is working on her Girl Scout Gold Award (equivalent to the Eagle Scout award among Boy Scouts) where she has chosen for her community service work promotion of the upcoming Challenger Learning Center of Central Illinois. She is also very active in Key Club, National Honor Society, and a rocketry group at University High School. During the autumn Rebecca ‘graduated’ from Citizen’s Police Academy. She still works part-time at the Blair House retirement center in Normal.

With both of the girls now enrolled in public schools, Carolyn decided to return to the workforce. She now works pretty much full time for the U.S. Postal Service as a mail processor for the Bloomington office. She worked from January through June as a temporary employee, took off the required time from July through August when she worked as a ‘business-to-business’ telemarketer, and returned to the Post Office in September where she continues to work. She has been able to use her opportunity at the P.O. to sell the honey that Carl obtained from his six beehives during the summer. Unfortunately, Carolyn’s jobs prevented her from traveling this year with the rest of the family. Carolyn (along with Carl) ‘hosted’ the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Nara (ophthalmologist and artist respectively) from Asahikawa, Japan, where Rebecca had visited during 2001. Dr. Nara is head of the Asahikawa Sister Cities Committee, and a group of about 40 came from Japan to Normal to celebrate the 40th anniversary of that group.

Carl just turned 50 years old, and has chosen to take life a little less seriously. He continues to work at Illinois State University where he heads the nation’s largest physics teacher education program. He also directs the University’s Instructional Technology Passport System, and sits on a few other technology-oriented committees. During March he attended a ‘by invitation only’ workshop at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota sponsored by the National Science Foundation. He represented the education community, and helped lay the groundwork for the National Science Digital Library. During January Carl received two grants from the Illinois Board of Higher Education to host two summer workshops. He will do this in addition to his usual workshop hosting for the American Association of Physics Teachers. Carl continues to be actively involved in beekeeping. This past November he had his 40th feature article published in American Bee Journal. During March he was the keynote speaker at the Tri-State Beekeeper’s Meeting (Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois) that proved to be the largest beekeepers’ meeting in the nation’s history with over 470 registrants. Like Teresa and Rebecca, Carl continues to be actively involved with the up and coming Challenger Learning Center of Central Illinois. He has served in various administrative and fund raising capacities in the project, and looks

forward to seeing the facility become a reality during 2003. Grand opening is slated for December 17, 2003.

Just this month we were able to pay off our mortgage, and now our cats (Catarina and Phyllis) truly can be said to own the house. This makes for a very merry Christmas indeed! We wish you a merry Christmas and a blessed and joy-filled New Year as well.

The Wenning Family

Carl
Carolyn
Rebecca
Teresa