

## *Christmas 2003*

**Merry Christmas from the Carl & Carolyn Wenning family of Normal, Illinois!** The past twelve months have turned into another great year. We thank God for His many blessings, and pray that you and yours are blessed in a similar fashion. There is much to tell, and hopefully you'll enjoy this little update. Living out here in Illinois, far from many of our family members and friends, it's only once or so a year that we get word out to many of you. We want to use this family "newsletter" to let you know what we've been up to since we last communicated.

Teresa "graduated" from elementary school and moved on to junior high this year. She continues to do well in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, having earned A's in all academic subjects during autumn term. Teresa joined Civil Air Patrol during the summer. She looks forward to taking up Dad on his offer to let her learn how to fly a private plane. She's thinking about a career in the Air Force, and has mentioned several times the possibility of applying for the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. This past summer Teresa spent a week at Camp Ondessonk in southern Illinois. She, along with the rest of the family, spent 16 days in England and Wales, and then traveled on with Rebecca to France while Dad, Mom, and Grandma Agnes returned to the United States. Teresa and Rebecca toured Paris and Dijon for 10 days to see the country and visit with the Lobry family near Dijon where Rebecca studied last year.



*Teresa, Carl, Carolyn, and Rebecca in London, England*

Unfortunately, the girls got "caught" in the August 14<sup>th</sup> power outage that affected the East Coast and Detroit where they were to enter the U.S. upon returning from London. They were diverted to Minneapolis before returning home a day later. Teresa and Carolyn were interviewed by a local television station about the events. Teresa told a bit about her adventure; Carolyn told about her concerns. Not quite as traumatic, Teresa started orthodontic treatment few months ago. She will probably have to wear braces for about two years. She spends all of her free time with friends, but continues to play the violin and clarinet. During the autumn she was named concertmistress (first violin) of the seventh grade orchestra. Recently she joined a drama club at Chiddix Jr. High; she's already a good "actress," and it should be interesting to see what develops.

Rebecca graduated in May as co-valedictorian of University High School (UHS) with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Upon enrolling in college, she had 31 semester hours of university-level credit for taking Advanced Placement exams and a couple of university courses during her senior year. Rebecca was named for the fourth consecutive year to *Who's Who Among American High School Students*. She received a host of scholarships for having done so well. These included Illinois State University's Provost Scholar (worth \$10,000), the ISU Physics Department's Dale Shulaw Award (worth \$1,000), the Mosbacher Award from 4-H (worth \$1,500), and the Illinois Scholars Award (worth \$1,000). She is also attending ISU for half-price tuition (worth \$12,000). Rebecca received a signal honor from the UHS faculty when she was the one 2003 graduating senior selected to have her nearly life-sized portrait mounted prominently in the school's library. Unfortunately, Rebecca wasn't able to attend her high school graduation ceremony because at the time she was in Moscow, Russia! In addition to spending time in Russia, Great Britain, and France, Rebecca spent June and July in Mexico working at the Waldemar Julsrud Anthropological Museum in Acámbaro. Quite to the surprise and delight of Dad, Rebecca unexpectedly declared that she intended to major in Physics Teacher Education at Illinois State University. She started university life during the autumn as a sophomore. Always the leader, Rebecca helped to organize and was elected the first

president of two new university student associations – *ISU National Science Teacher Association Student Chapter* and *Rotaract* – a Rotary International student affiliate. In October, she received seven 4-H awards that included the 4-H Congress State Award (the highest 4-H award available). She attended the four-day National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia, right after Thanksgiving. Rebecca also earned the “Gold Award,” the highest honor any Girl Scout can receive, along with an \$500 monetary award. Rebecca’s project was to promote the Challenger Learning Center at the Prairie Aviation Museum that will officially open on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Rebecca gave numerous public talks, and made several television appearances, some as long as 20 minutes.

Carolyn has worked for the U.S. Postal Service as a mail processor for over a year now. In her spare time she serves as taxi driver, caretaker for the family along with the cats Catarina and Phyllis, and tutor for Teresa. On November 15<sup>th</sup> Carolyn and Carl were honored by the Catholic Diocese of Peoria when they received the Mary Ann Heinz Award from the Office of Family Life. Carolyn and Carl retired from teaching Natural Family Planning after having taught the course for over 20 years. In Carl’s mind, Carolyn did most of the work that merited them the award. She spent untold hours on the phone making reminder calls, counseling, and responding to requests for information. She also co-taught some 40+ four-part courses involving over 140 engaged and married couples.

Carl is approaching the end of what has been four years as a writer of beekeeping articles. Since July 1999, he has had more than 50 articles published in commercial beekeeping journals around the world. Because of his active record of writing, Carl received several requests to present talks. Rebecca, Carl, and Carl’s mother Agnes, traveled to Moscow, Russia, from May 20 – 26 after Carl was asked by the Russian Beekeepers Association to give two talks – one at the Moscow Veterinary Academy and the other at the Scientific Research Institute of Beekeeping at Ribnoye, Russia. Carl spoke with veterinarians and scientific researchers about his series of beekeeping articles “Reduced Chemical Beekeeping” that appeared in *American Bee Journal* during early 2002. Two articles in the Russian beekeeping magazine *Pchelovodstvo*, and one article in the newspaper *Pchelovodny Vestnic*, followed his week-long visit. Carl also received and accepted invitations to speak at the Eastern Apicultural Society meeting in Maine on August 8<sup>th</sup>, and in Jefferson County Missouri in Eureka, on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Earlier this year Carl received two grants from the Illinois Board of Higher Education totaling \$64,000, along with 3 additional years of funding to serve as Regional Coordinator for the Rural PTRAs (Physics Teaching Resource Agents) Initiative run by the American Association of Physics Teachers of Washington, DC. Carl received the President’s Merit Award from the Prairie Aviation Museum on April 11<sup>th</sup> for nearly four years of dedicated efforts on behalf of the Challenger Learning Center. Carl has served on the Museum’s education committee, capital campaign committee, project task force, and was President of the Executive Advisory Committee. He has been invited to have a semi-private breakfast with June Scobee Rogers – wife of the mission commander from the ill-fated 1986 Challenger mission – on December 15<sup>th</sup>.



*Rebecca and Chrystian at Festival of Trees in Bloomington*

Our family was visited by Carolyn’s sister Pam during July, and by Carl’s friend Janet DiClaudio during September. During mid-November, Rebecca’s 19-year-old friend, Chrystian Viera Cortes, came from Mexico for a seven-week stay. Coming from a warmer climate, Chrystian has never had an opportunity to see snowfall or build a snowman. Neither has he ever experienced temperatures lower than 40 degrees Fahrenheit! We’ve been doing what we can to break him in to the colder northern climate. Chrystian is a computer engineering student from Acámbaro. He goes to school in Querétaro, about four hours west of Mexico City. He and Rebecca met over three years ago; they’ve been communicating with the aid of a computer every night ever since.

So that’s 2003 in review. It’s been many a year since we’ve heard from some of you. Don’t hesitate to give us a call, write a letter, send an e-mail, or stop in for a visit. We’ll leave a light on for you. We hope and pray that you and yours will have a most Merry of Christmases, and a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!