

Christmas 2005

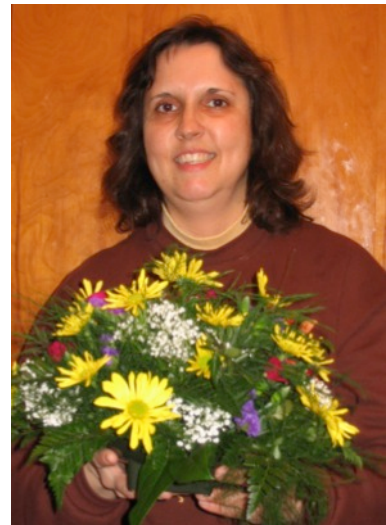
Christmas greetings and felicitations from the Wenning family of Normal, Illinois – Carolyn and Carl, Teresa and Rebecca. We hope that our family newsletter finds you in good health and great spirits! This is the season for reflection, thanks, and giving. With this newsletter we hope to embrace the spirit of Christmas by spreading the joy of the season around the world. Among the blessings we count you and the events of the past year. It has been another lively year to say the least.

During January, Teresa, now 14 years old, was recognized as *Cadet of Distinction* in Bloomington's chapter of Civil Air Patrol (CAP); she earned the red and white cord representing the highest monthly distinction achievable by CAP cadets. She was promoted from CAP Senior Airman to Staff Sergeant on March 9. On July 12 she was promoted yet again to Master Sergeant – only two ranks from officer status.



On February 26, Teresa participated in a junior high school music contest performing as part of a clarinet duet. She played bass clarinet in Clarinet Choir. This is rather amazing in light of the fact that she had only started playing bass clarinet in January. She is now working on playing electric guitar. A week before beginning high school, she began her employment career getting a part-time job at McDonalds. On August 22, Teresa began life as a high school student entering University High School – the same high school that Rebecca attended. Teresa was subsequently selected to join the Madrigal Court Singers the first week of class, and sang three banquet programs at *The Chateau* hotel in Bloomington November 27/28.

Carolyn (seen here with one of Rebecca's floral arrangements from a springtime college course) continued to work endlessly at the Post Office in Bloomington. During August, Carolyn worked with Carl to establish an Internet company – *whiteboardsUSA.com*. She is now president and owner of a manufacturing company making whiteboards for schools; for the time being, Carl does the manufacturing work. Visit our website to learn more. We started the company in anticipation of Carolyn possibly losing her job at the Post Office where she has worked as a "temp" for almost four years. Earlier this year, Carolyn was recognized by the Post Office for her perfect work attendance - missing only one day of work the whole time. Personnel transfers will result in nearly all temporary employees being laid off permanently at year's end. Still, returning to the "normal life" will allow for more family events that have been sorely missing the past few years. On January 27, Carolyn and Carl celebrated the 25th anniversary of their meeting. They have been happily married now for 23 years. ☺



On February 4, Carolyn's birthday, Rebecca (now 20 years old) was informed that she had won the Barbara Lotze Scholarship. The American Association of Physics Teacher confers the award only once each year. *It is given to the most worthy and promising physics teacher education major in the nation!* On April 3, Rebecca was inducted into the Red Tassel chapter of ISU's Mortar Board honor society. She was one of only 50 chosen out of a pool of some 2,000 eligible individuals. During April, Rebecca received a financial bonus for being a finalist in the Goldwater Scholarship competition for the most promising science majors, another award from Senior Professionals for leadership, and one more from the ISU Physics Department for being the year's Outstanding Undergraduate Physics Major. She was given a cash award by the American Physical Society and invited to the Division of Atomic, Molecular, and Optical Physicists meeting in Lincoln, NE, during May to deliver an invited research talk. She received an all-

expenses-paid trip, and was one of only six physics students nationwide to receive this prestigious award and invitation. She won the 1984 Scholarship from the ISU College of Education during summer. On August 19 she was informed that she had won the prestigious Hunter Scholarship. She won the K&I education honorary scholarship on October 18, and she gave an invited talk to K&I members on October 22. These awards sum to more than several thousand dollars. Rebecca continues to work with the PRISM project, having done lots of classroom teaching, and conducting an impressive and highly successful teaching research project dealing with whiteboards. During early July, Rebecca took a camping trip to South Dakota, having a number of "travel adventures" with her car along the way. Starting in September, Rebecca became a Sunday School teacher for 8th grade CCD students at St. Patrick's Church. And as if she wasn't already busy enough, on November 26 Rebecca, her grandma Rita (Carolyn's mother) and her boyfriend Chrystian Vieyra started a two-week trip to Italy. They will see Rome, Venice, Assisi, Florence and much, much more. Chrystian is expected to transfer to Western Illinois University as a computer science major with the start of next year if he can get a student visa from INS.

On February 4, Carl was recognized by the ISU College of Arts & Sciences when he received the first Distinguished Service Award ever conferred by the College. On February 17, Carl joined the president of Illinois State University at a Founder's Day ceremony to ring the Old Main bell three times in partial recognition of the 148 years of ISU's existence. Carl is looking forward to partial retirement from the University during its 150th year. Carl sadly ended his career in beekeeping on Sunday, March 6, when he pulled in his two remaining hives. He started beekeeping in 1997 and subsequently had over 50 feature articles published in *American Bee Journal*. Carl just "plum tuckered out." After moving his beekeeping equipment outside the garage, a colony of "wild" bees moved in on June 16. He then became an "accidental" beekeeper. Sadly, the bees didn't survive the summer.

Carl and Rebecca spent from March 17-31 in India where they toured the cities of New Delhi, Agra (Taj Mahal), Jaipur (Rajasthan Elephant Festival and Holi celebrations), Aurangabad (the Ellora and Ajanta Caves), and Bombay (Ghandi!). The week before that Rebecca was in Mexico for a ten-day visit with Chrystian. Carl continues to edit and publish *Journal of Physics Teacher Education Online*. This journal is giving him some international exposure. Both Carl and Rebecca were invited to present three workshops and a talk at Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla, about 100 miles east of Mexico City, from May 26-29. They were extremely well received, and were overwhelmed by the many requests for photographs and autographs from the 80 or so university and high school physics teachers in attendance.



After the conference, they traveled to Acámbaro, Mexico, to pick up Chrystian who remained in Normal for the early part of summer. On his way back home, his airplane flew through Hurricane Emily. Scary!

During January Carl received some \$20,000 in funding from the American Association of Physics Teachers to host his 5th annual PTRA Rural Institute for high school physics teachers during the summer. On February 23, the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, MD, announced that Carl and his team of writers had received a \$50,000 grant to prepare two sets of curricula for Challenger Learning Centers nationwide. During March, Carl received notification that he received a \$145,000 grant to fund the *Chicago ITQ Science Project*, to provide support for Chicago teachers learning to implement the Modeling Method of physics instruction. Carl's Physics Teacher Education program continues to grow rapidly. Right now the number of declared majors is at 40, up from 5 back in 1994 when he took over the program. This is probably the largest, fastest growing, and most innovative program for undergraduate physics teaching majors in the nation.

As you can see, 2005 has been another red-letter year for the Wenning family. We have lots planned for next year, and so 2006 promises much more to come. We hope that you and yours have been and will



be similarly blessed. May you, your family, and your loved ones enjoy a peaceful and joy-filled holiday season, and may your new year be full of God's blessings. ***Merry Christmas!*** ☺