

Christmas 2006

Greetings and felicitations from the Wenning family of Normal, Illinois! 2006 has been another **red-letter** year for our family, and we want to share some of our joys while updating you on the events out here in the “flat lands” of America. The biggest news of the year has to do with Rebecca and Chrystian. On April 28, Chrystian proposed to Rebecca, and she accepted! ☺ They are planning on a June 16, 2007, wedding, shortly after both Rebecca and Chrystian graduate from college. More details will become available closer to the date, but you are all welcome to attend. We find it hard to believe that Carl and Carolyn were married nearly a quarter of a century ago. We will celebrate our 25th anniversary on May 29, 2007, with a 9-day trip to Ireland.

Late last December, Chrystian was granted a student visa and began attending Western Illinois University (WIU) this past January as a transfer student from Querétaro, México. During his stay at WIU, he has been actively involved as a leader in university events, and is serving as an International Friendship Club executive as well as a senator in the WIU student government. On March 24 & 25, he, along with Rebecca, served as Mexican representatives for a booth at the annual International Bazaar. Chrystian remained with our family throughout the summer and took two trips – Disney World and Seattle. On September 27, Chrystian hosted the university’s first *Cultural Café* event of the semester. Some 136 students and faculty were in attendance to hear him speak about Mexico and sample native foods. WIU provided about \$1,000 in support of this very successful project. The following day, Chrystian was featured in a front-page article in the *Western Courier*. As part of his International Friendship Club responsibilities, during November he was sent to Peoria, IL, to



attend a three-day “arts” event to help sample and select commercial cultural events that can be brought to campus for next spring’s International Bazaar.

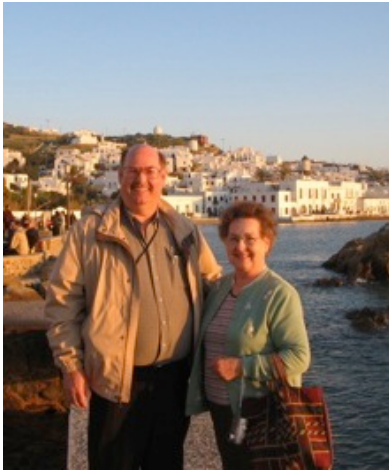
On February 3, Rebecca received notification that she had won the inaugural Laurine Reiske Scholarship from Illinois State University (ISU), the single largest cash scholarship that the College of Arts & Sciences has ever given out – \$9,000. On March 7, she received a phone call telling her that she had won a second scholarship from the Delta Kappa Gamma women educators’ society. She was selected from among all Illinois chapter award winners for 2005. Both prizes summed to \$3,012. A day later she was informed that she had been named to the 2007 edition of *Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges* – “a distinguished biographical volume that honors the nation’s most noteworthy students of higher learning.” On April 13, Rebecca found out that she would be recognized by ISU as one of 2006’s fourteen Bone Student Scholars – the highest academic accolade awarded by the university on the basis of scholarship, leadership, and service! The award is presented to the 14 best students in the junior class that consists of more than 3,000 students. Fewer than 300 students have been so recognized at ISU since the inception of the award more than 30 years ago. That puts Rebecca in the top half of 1% of all ISU students since that time. The cash prize associated with this award was \$3,300. On April 18, at the Physics Department’s annual awards ceremony, Rebecca was recognized as the top Undergraduate Teaching Assistant. Also in the month of April, Rebecca was sent on an all-expenses-paid trip to Anaheim, CA, to give a presentation at the National Science Teachers’ Association conference on behalf of the ISU PRISM teaching-fellows program to enhance science and math education. Also as part of PRISM, on June 21, 22, & 23, Rebecca presented three 2-hr. workshops for local science teachers on behalf of the PRISM program. On August 2, Rebecca was informed that she had won the ISU chapter’s Golden Key scholarship, and on August 3, her picture appeared as a full-color photograph inside the back cover of



Illinois State alumni magazine for her physics research. Rebecca's picture is also now in the "hall of fame" at the Bone Student Center on the ISU campus for her Bone Scholarship. Rebecca continues to honor her parents!

Teresa ended 2005 with a "bang." Shortly after our last Christmas letter, Teresa was recognized twice by the local Civil Air Patrol unit. She was named the Most Improved Cadet for 2005, and also was promoted to First Sergeant. As First Sergeant she officially became leader of all non-officer cadets in her unit. On April 4, she had her tonsils and adenoids removed after several weeks of sore throat – she stayed home from school for two weeks. From July 29 through August 6, Teresa spent time in Canada with her friend Brittany. Throughout the month of November, Teresa was involved as a student director of the one-act play "The Adventures of Captain Neato-Man" at University High School that the family enjoyed on the evening of December 2. Teresa continues to be a "typical" teenager, with her main interest in friends and social events.

From March 25 to April 2, Carl went on a trip to Greece and Turkey. On March 29, he, along with Agnes, his mother, and several friends from Illinois, observed a total solar eclipse from aboard a cruise ship in the eastern Mediterranean. Along the way they visited Athens, Crete's Heraclium (famed for the ruins of Knossos and the story of the Minotaur), the Greek islands of Mykonos and Patmos (visited the cave where the Book of Revelations was written), and the volcanic caldera known as Santorini. They also visited Kushadasi, Turkey, with its Biblical city of Ephesus, and toured the traditional home where Mary, the mother of Jesus is said to have lived with St. John after the crucifixion. They then concluded the trip with three days in Istanbul, Turkey. They just loved being called to prayer with songs in Arabic from Hagia Sophia's minarets at 4:45 a.m. each morning.



On June 9, Carl spent a full day in Ohio with Jerromy – nephew and godson. Jerromy was fond of pointing out on their return from the Columbus Zoo that Carl had been bitten by a "Children's Python" from northwest Australia that didn't really live up to its name. (No, it doesn't eat children either!) On June 19, Carl delivered an invited talk at Cornell University called *Repairing the Illinois High School Physics Teacher Pipeline*. Carl presided over two summer *Chicago ITQ Science Project* workshops during four weeks (June 19 – July 14) at Dominican University in the Chicago metropolitan area. On July 8, he had a one-day reunion in Chicago with several friends with whom he'd attended Michigan State University. During August, he purchased his first quality telescope after being an active amateur astronomer for more than 40 years. On September 17, he attended the Feltz Family Reunion in Coldwater, Ohio, where he really enjoyed seeing uncles, aunts, and cousins – many of whom he had not seen for many years. During September he was saddened by the news of the death of his Uncle Rich Miller in Ohio, and the heart problems of his niece Maria Wenning, also from Ohio.

On April 6, Carolyn worked her last day at the Bloomington Post Office where she had served for four years. She was only a temporary employee and lost her position when postal facilities in Peoria and Bloomington closed down operations and moved to her plant. On May 20, she started working at Wal-Mart. Since that time she has been moving around to different departments learning the "ropes" of the operation. She is currently a licensed pharmacy technician at Wal-Mart. She really likes this job that she started on November 6. With her dedication and effort, she hopes to move up to management. In July, Carolyn, Chrystian, and Rebecca took a nice two-day tour of Seattle, WA, and then visited Carolyn's sister Pam and her husband Gary at their new house on Whidbey Island. Carolyn continues to usher everyone around and often feels like a taxi driver. She enjoys the three family cats – Catarina, Phyllis, and Mystique (a.k.a. Stinky Winky or Binky). She enjoys feeding the toads and lizard (he bites!), and watching the wildlife outside the back door with the cats.

This year everyone will be staying home for Christmas. Rita, Carolyn's mom, will be coming for a visit. Having been away from home so many times at this time of year, being "home for the holidays" has a special meaning. 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! ☺

