

## Christmas 2007

*Greetings and felicitations from the Carl and Carolyn Wenning family of Normal, Illinois!*

2007 has been yet another **red-letter** year for our family, and we want to share with you some of our joys while updating you on the events out here in the “ice belt” of America.

The top news of the year has to do with Rebecca and her new husband Chrystian Vieyra. They were wed on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Chrystian’s father – Pastor – was able to fly in from Mexico, but his mother – Maria Elena – was not able to attend the wedding due to an inability to obtain a travel visa in time. Someone with an identical name and a criminal record made that impossible, and it took several months to correct the situation with INS. Nevertheless, she finally did get her visa and was able to visit with the newlyweds during November. There was no time for a June honeymoon, for by Sunday evening Rebecca was off to Chicago to attend her father’s three-week *Modeling Method of Physics* workshop and then, after that, on to the University of Illinois at Chicago for a two-week engineering workshop! Rebecca and Chrystian plan on a belated honeymoon, as soon as both can find time to travel.



Chrystian graduates on December 15<sup>th</sup> from **Western Illinois University** with a degree in computer science. *Advanced Technology Services* of Peoria hired Chrystian late last summer to work part time while completing his final courses at the University. He hopes to work full time for this organization in the future.



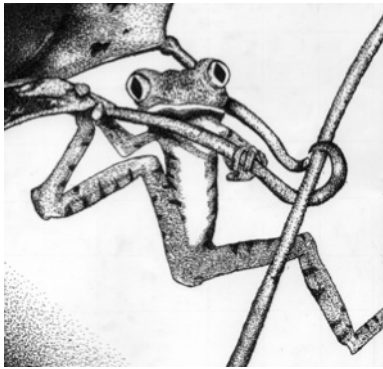
On April 17<sup>th</sup> Rebecca was recognized by the Illinois State University Physics Department as the 2007 **Outstanding Physics Graduate**. Rebecca graduated summa cum laude from ISU on May 11<sup>th</sup> with a bachelor’s degree in physics teacher education. She graduated at the top of her university-wide class and received – along with 13 others – the highest accolade given to an undergraduate student – the title of **Robert G. Bone Scholar**. From February through May she student taught physics, physical science, and chemistry at Clinton High School about 30 miles south of Normal. She later took a job as physics, physical science, and chemistry teacher at East Peoria High School about 40 miles west-northwest of Normal. She finds the job taxing but enjoyable and rewarding.

Carolyn and Carl celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> or **silver wedding anniversary** on May 29<sup>th</sup>. It’s hard to believe how fast a quarter century has come and gone. They traveled to **Ireland** from March 12<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> on an early second honeymoon. They started in Dublin and took a clockwise trek around the country seeing many interesting sights along the way. This included a visit to the Waterford Crystal Factory, and even a “blessing” of the famous **Blarney Stone** with a kiss that required scuttling out on one’s back over a castle battlement more than 50 feet high! They traveled round the Circle of Kerry, and took a jaunting cart ride to see famous castles in Killarney National Park. They spent St. Patrick’s Day in Galway attending a parade, and traveled past Donegal Bay where they encountered a ferocious ocean storm with terrific winds and waves. They even traveled through a bit of Northern Ireland on this leg of the trip. They saw plenty of green, lots of sheep, and bought woolen materials.

Carl finally finished his doctorate (having started in 1994) and will graduate with an Ed.D. in Curriculum & Instruction from **Illinois State University** on December 15<sup>th</sup> – the same day that Chrystian graduates from WIU. Unfortunately, with the two campuses 100 miles apart, not everyone will be able to be together for these events. A small family celebration is planned for later in the day. *Dr. Wenning’s* dissertation topic dealt with adapting the Delphi Technique (once a top secret strategy!) to develop two standards-compliant physics teaching textbook chapters. Carl hopes to publish a textbook (*Teaching High School Physics* – by *Wenning & Vieyra* – with plenty of contributions from Rebecca) before the summer of 2009. Ironically, Carl has decided to retire from ISU during May 2008 – after nearly 30 years on the job. He spent from 1978 to 2001 as ISU planetarium director, and from 1994 to 2008 as physics teaching program coordinator. He plans to continue working part time for the University until a

suitable full-time replacement worker can be found and fully trained. Part-time employment will allow him to continue his globetrotting, consulting, whiteboarding, and grant work. Four concurrent grants kept him extremely busy during the past year and added substantially to his retirement income. Carl was awarded yet a third year of funding for his *Chicago ITQ Science Project* during early 2007 amounting to \$125,000 (and totaling \$405,000 over the past three years) to continue working with 66 physics teachers, mostly in the Chicago metropolitan area.

It has been an extremely hectic business travel year for Carl. He gave invited talks and workshops in Seattle, WA, Boulder, CO, and in the South American country of Chile (Concepción, Santiago, and Valparaiso) from March 26<sup>th</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup> where he worked as a consultant for the Chilean Academy of Sciences. A couple of



weeks later he gave invited talks at Kennesaw, GA, and Greensboro, NC. He traveled to Moorhead, MN, in May where he was awarded the North Central Region Astronomical League award for contributions to amateur astronomy – which has once again become one of his passions after he stopped working at the ISU Planetarium. Carl likes to travel and is fond to point out that from March 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup> alone he traveled more than 25,000 miles!

Carolyn spends a huge amount of time taking care of everyone at home, but somehow still finds time to work at the Bloomington Wal-Mart pharmacy. She has been a pharmacy technician for one year now, and dearly loves her job despite the fact that she often has to deal with sick and often unhappy people. As a people person she naturally empathizes with those to whom she provides care. She really does like her job; she considers it a long-term career. Nonetheless, she'll have to find some time to travel with Carl once he's no longer tied down with a full-time job. The first such "accommodation" occurred over the November 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend (Carl's 55<sup>th</sup> birthday) when they flew down to Atlanta, GA, on a whim. Carl wanted to see the four whale sharks at the new Georgia Aquarium. He was not disappointed. In addition, the dynamic duo also visited the new Coca Cola Museum and the home of Margaret Mitchell, the author of *Gone with the Wind*.

During August Carolyn attended her International House reunion. International House is a residence hall where she lived in 1980-81 while attending ISU to earn a Mathematics degree. She, along with Carl, had a great time seeing some of their mutual friends. Carolyn naturally knew many more people than Carl, and thoroughly enjoyed herself over the course of two days.

Teresa is now traveling more than ever as well. She went on a class trip to New York City from March 27<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup> where she had the opportunity to sing with her high school choir. She is now enrolled at University High School as a Junior. She seems to have developed a knack for artwork. See to the right a portrait of Kurt Cobain done in pencil and above a frog done in pen. Carolyn arranged for the purchase of a used car for Teresa during May. Teresa is now rarely seen around the house, but the car is only part of the explanation. Teresa has a "steady" boyfriend and is presently working at Bob Evan's Restaurant in Normal. She also works part time in the family business *whiteboardsUSA.com*.



On August 18<sup>th</sup>, Carolyn helped

Teresa adopt a gray male tiger kitty for her boyfriend Cody. Romeo the cat is temporarily living with us as he has a number of very bad habits which made him unwelcome at the home of Cody's parents. Unfortunately (but amusingly), the cat's habits have only become worse over time (like drinking Pepsi out of a cup, stealing food from dinner plates, and walking on us as though we are pieces of furniture). Everyone (we humans at least) enjoys these antics, and we do not look forward to the day when Romeo has to leave. Romeo does not amuse our three female cats – Catarina, Phyllis, and Mystique. Nonetheless, their lives would be much less "rich" without the presence of "rambunctious Romeo" who really likes sneak attacks that always include running, jumping, and biting.

Well, that's about all there is to report from the Wenning household this year. 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. Please write us with your update if you get a chance.

**Merry Christmas** and **Happy New Year** from our family to yours! ©