

2013 Christmas Greetings!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Greetings and felicitations from the Carl and Carolyn Wenning of Normal, Illinois!

This has been another busy year for us. Who knows if and when we will slow down? As long as we are blessed with good health and a steady income, we plan to live life to the fullest. Since our family newsletter near the end of 2012, we went on a Caribbean cruise and returned home just before Christmas. We traveled to the Bahamas, St. Maarten, St. Thomas (USVI), and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Upon our return to Ft. Lauderdale we visited the Everglades National Park and saw some amazing gardens. One of the reasons we took this trip was because we were ending 2012 with our kitchen in our living room, literally. Major remodeling of our kitchen took place during our absence, and continued for several weeks after our return.

On January 22nd, Carl picked up Arif Hidayat from O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. Carl first met Arif in Jakarta, Indonesia, during his visit to Bandung during October 2011. Arif (with the red shirt on in the image below) was returning the visit and stayed 3 months, living in our new basement apartment. On Sunday, February 24th we had an "Indonesia Night" along with Arif and several Indonesian friends he met while attending religious services at the Bloomington Mosque.

On March 11th Carl presented a colloquium at the University of Missouri in Columbia. As part of that day's activities, Arif and Carl met in the office of and had dinner with NASA astronaut Linda Godwin (wife of astronaut Steve Nagel who helped inspire Rebecca to learn science when she was young), veteran of four Space Shuttle flights and a space walk. Over dinner Carl and Linda were talking about travel when Linda mentioned that she really hadn't traveled that much during her life. Carl quickly reminded her of her four Shuttle flights including a space walk... They both had a good laugh. During the following days, Arif and Carl traveled to Ohio to meet some of our family – Agnes, Dennis, and Tim. Arif returned to Indonesia on April 17th.

On Thursday, March 21st, our family received a phone call from Carl's mother Agnes noting that her sister (Carl's Aunt Mary Moeller) had passed away. Another phone call from Agnes to Carl indicated that his Uncle Ernie Wenning had died on April 17th. Carl was unable to attend either funeral due to the great distance and other work commitments. On March 29th, long-time family friends Mitch and Loraine Luman from Evansville, IN, visited. Mitch returned for a follow-up visit on October 19th. During May, Carl traveled with his mother Agnes to Virginia to visit family friend Shirley Joslin and to South Carolina to visit Agnes' brother Norb. Agnes and Norb talked late into the night each evening, reliving their past.

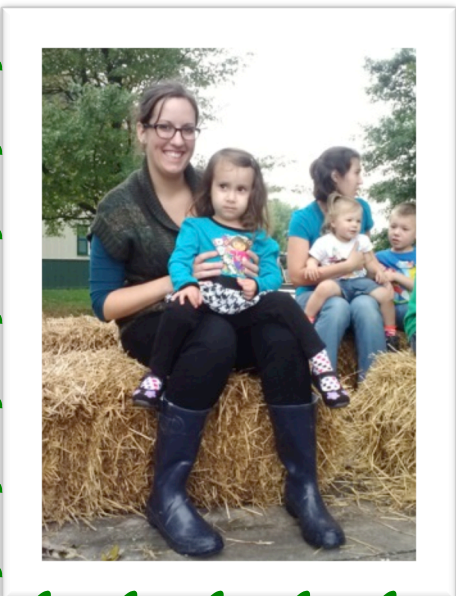
Carl returned to Indonesia on June 14th where he stayed for two weeks visiting Surakarta, Bandung, Lambang, and Jakarta presenting two 3-day workshops and giving several talks. He received an inside tour of Bosscha Observatory and gave an invited talk to the Bandung Institute of Technology. During this trip Carl worked for SEAMEO, the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization. He returned home on July 1st following a 48-hour slog. He passed through China, Malaysia, and Japan during his travels. Our daughter Rebecca has been formally invited to spend June 10-20, 2014, in Bandung working in the graduate school at *Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia* – the nation's school for teacher preparation.

Carolyn and Teresa started visiting a health club on April 20th. Carl jumped on the bandwagon after his return from Indonesia and lost some 25 pounds from early July through early December. Carolyn has lost about 20 pounds.

The whole family was together for the first time in a long while over the July 4th weekend. Teresa made a surprise announcement the next day. She told everyone that she was expecting a child. Isaac Joseph is due March 8, and Carolyn has been busying herself ever since assisting Teresa with the preparations. Teresa has now completed all her course work for her BS degree in Medical Lab Science, and is currently in her internship at OSF St. Joseph Hospital in Bloomington. She's delighted with her career choice and already has a job lined up there after graduation in May.

Our family helped in creating the astronomy club's new Prairie Sky Observatory as a payback to the community for years of employment as ISU's planetarium director. The observatory's foundation was laid during June, and the structure was started on July 20th and completed four days later. It was then outfitted with a collection of telescopes prior to the grand opening on September 28th. The TCAA now has one of the most advanced amateur observatories in the nation.

Carolyn flew out to Washington State during July 14th through the 20th to visit her sister and brother-in-law, Pam and Gary, and also her nephew Gary



Adrian. Observing farm life (goats, chickens, geese, ducks, bees, and huge garden), whale watching, exercising, walking along the beach, and visiting historic places were enjoyed.

On August 10th, Carl and Carolyn attended the 42nd year class reunion of Immaculate Conception High School in Celina, Ohio. At the

reunion Carl visited with friends he'd not seen for years – some of them not since graduation day!

Everyone had a great time thanks to our hosts Janet (Ley) Pike and her husband David.

September 21st saw the Wenning family's first annual *Oktoberfest* in the backyard. Some 20 friends – both new and old – attended the event. Carolyn entertained and served drinks while Carl cooked about half a dozen German entrées. Not that he isn't busy enough, Carl continues to teach PHYSICS 102 – *Atoms to Galaxies*. He recently announced to the Physics Department that he would re-retire at the end of spring semester 2014 so he can “finally get some work done”. His first retirement was May 31, 2008, but somehow never stopped teaching. Always having time for astronomical observing, Carl completed observing programs dealing with planetary nebulas and carbon stars near the end of the year. He continues to use his Celestron 11” computer-driven telescope purchased in 2006.

October is always Carl's busiest month of the year. On October 3rd he was present for the grand opening of the new *Maple Sirup and Honey House* at Sugar Grove Nature Center. Carl, working with the Illinois State University Beekeeping Club (which he also advises), obtained a \$20,500 grant to pay for the structure's materials. Carl and his colleagues hosted the October 4/5 fall meeting of the Illinois Section of the American Association of Physics Teachers using the facilities of Heartland Community College.

On October 9th Carl was named a Fulbright Specialist Candidate by the U.S. State Department making him eligible to receive Federal funding for 2-6 weeks of international travel each year (for the next five years) working in the area of physics education and teacher preparation. Carl and Rebecca have nearly completed their book

High School Physics on which they have been working for several years.

Teaching

On October 10-11 Carl traveled with his friend Bob Finnigan to Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay, WI. They were invited there to assist with the development of a plan for adapting the world's largest refracting telescope (1.02-meter lens, 19 meters long, and resting under a 144-ton dome) to modern photographic techniques. They were given complete access to the 40” telescope over the course of two days in order to help understand the problems needing to be solved. They completed a 10-page analysis with recommendations in the days following. On the way back from Wisconsin, Carl and Bob stopped by Chrystian and Rebecca's home in Crystal Lake, IL, to celebrate the 3rd birthday of granddaughter Thérèse. Carolyn was also there and remained until Tuesday, October 15th. She observed Thérèse in Montessori school and attended a Sri Baba Indian celebration with Rebecca, Chrystian, and Therese. Rebecca's co-worker invited them to the celebration.

During October it was announced that Rebecca had been selected as a finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. This is the nation's most prestigious award for teaching, and we are hoping that she will receive it. She recently applied to be an Einstein Fellow so she can spend the 2014-2015 academic year in Washington, DC, advising Congress, the National Science Foundation, or the departments of Energy or Education. Chrystian, Rebecca's husband, continues work as a computer engineer writing software for large corporations. He has formed his own company, *Vieryasoft*, and has become well recognized for his many applications such as Physics Toolbox. He recently was hired by Columbia University to write a program for them as well.

On November 16th, Carolyn attended her first Ohio State football game with Carl in which they beat the University of Illinois. Carolyn and Teresa attended their first country music concert by seeing Brad Paisley in Springfield, IL, on November 21st. Carl, Rebecca, Chrystian, and 3-year-old Therese visited Great Grandma Wenning over the Thanksgiving weekend.

Carolyn has been a Wal-Mart pharmacy technician for seven years now, and she will be retiring on February 28th. She now will be able to spend more time with her grandchildren and family, and be able to travel more with Carl. Carolyn heroically managed the work associated with rebuilding our basement over the past few years, and now we are nearly finished with this phase of home improvement. This coming summer we will completely rebuild the family room in the basement including the installation of an egress window. The basement apartment will then be entirely finished for use by guests. It now contains the family room with wet bar, kitchenette, laundry, full bathroom, bedroom, office, and storage space – just perfect for those who would like to visit with us.





From our family to yours, *Merry Christmas* and *Happy New Year!*

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