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WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM!

Merry Christmas!!

How are you? We hope all is well. Another year has rolled around and we want to take this season to up date you on our family news and happenings. Last year my letter never got mailed so this year you get a long one since I only get around to writing to some of our dear friends once a year. It looks like a lot, but honestly, I still left out a lot.

The New Year started out with Bob and I going on a business trip to Detroit to visit Wayne State University. I had always wanted to see this University because my Great Aunt Barbara started and built an Occupational Therapy (OT) Department there. The people in the OT Department. were so kind to personally escort me around and they even showed me a scrapbook of my Aunt Barbara in the history of the OT Department.

In February we had our family reunion meeting in Disney World, Florida to celebrate my 40th birthday! At the last minute, everyone was able to come except for my brother Rick and Tammy and daughter, Jamie. We really missed them as we had such a wonderful time with them there last year at our Disney World family reunion.. My Dad, Charlie and Doris came as well as Bob's Dad & Mom, Jack and Lenore and his brother Ray. Another treat was Bob's Uncle Junior and Aunt Justine visiting us also. Staying at the Dolphin resort was quite an experience with 2 1/2 acres of water pools and lake and 5 minutes away from all the major Disney attractions. The men most enjoyed Universal Studios. With great sunshiny weather and minimal crowds, we have been remembering the fun all year long. I especially enjoyed Epcot Center with the Country Exhibits. China seemed especially timely and accurately portrayed as we had just recently returned from Beijing, China in November the year before. The water, light, laser, and music show was spectacular and well worth going to.

My 40th Birthday Party was really special! Charlie, Doris, Ray and the kids treated me out to dinner at a very special Chinese Restaurant. When we came back to the hotel, Jack, Lenore, Justine, and Junior had a surprise birthday party all set up for me. I was quite surprised and I felt very special.

We are now in our 8th year of homeschooling. Thank goodness all the children tested remarkably well. Jeremiah, who is now in 7th grade, has once again test scores which are actually outstanding. Joshua, who is in 4th grade, is doing very well this year. He got a perfect score in Math in his SAT test. His reading is greatly improved and he even enjoys reading a novel on his

own now. Marilee cheerfully completed first grade. She reached all of her first grade goals, such as learning more about Jesus, learning how to read to Mom and she is still working quite successfully on being able to write me little notes.

Home schooling is very challenging but quite rewarding for the children. We did an extensive unit on the Ancient Egyptians in our co-op school and we are continuing on with Ancient Greeks and Romans this year. The children were able to participate in a unit studies fair. Jeremiah enjoyed his space unit classes. He participated in the building of a space station and he organized and carried out quite a complicated experiment on "Oxygen in Action". He wrote a lengthy report with posters and presented this report in the class as well as at the science fair. He received a first place trophy.

One value we like to teach our children is that it is important to serve others and not think just of yourself. This year in homeschooling, we adopted a "Grandma Bee" at a nursing home. She is 92 and almost blind. She enjoys all the kids. They enjoyed finding ways to help her. They made gifts, such as their first lap quilt and planted flowers in a homemade heart shaped wooden planter. They read scriptures, played games, took her for strolls outside to get some fresh air, told her stories and found out about her life. We studied the aging process. In the spring, the homeschoolers put on a concert and Marilee even brought her turtles from the farm in West Virginia to share.

Jack and Lenore visited us for the Children's birthdays and Easter. We enjoyed their visit. Jack made us a wooden water wheel which is now going in our stream in our backyard. I like to look out and see it moving. It makes me feel like some work is really going on. Jack was great in helping to take the kids to some of their activities. I think he discovered he loves hockey. Lenore is always wonderful in helping me with their schooling. By the time they came, I really needed a little boost. Lenore started teaching Marilee cross stitch. She just loves it. We were so happy that they were able to see the children perform in their church choirs and to see Jeremiah in the special Easter Play production.

AWANAS is a very important part of the children's Bible memory program as well as a Church Club Activity with many of their friends. Jeremiah was able to attend Christa, a Christian Camp this summer. He really liked it, especially riding the motorbikes and riding the horses.

Horseback riding every Friday this year has been tremendous. Every month is games competition and the Mark's family does quite well in their placement.

All three children are still continuing on with piano lessons. Whenever we are short on money, Joshua volunteers to give up music lessons. He asks, "Don't the missionaries need more money this month?"

Marilee had the delightful experience of ice skating in her first competition this spring. She likes having her own skates. She even placed with a trophy. After this experience, I really can admire the commitment that the Olympic Ice skaters families have. She also did her fourth year in Ballet this year culminating with a lovely dance recital.

All 3 children enjoyed their second year of swim team. I almost didn't sign them up for fear they would be water logged with swimming every morning and then every afternoon and evening in our own pool. However, it didn't dampen their swimming spirit. Tai Kwan Do is the new favorite sport for the Marks children this year. They started in March and have continued faithfully. They have worked very hard and have moved up to the yellow belt with a green stripe. I am glad they are learning self defense, but I haven't appreciated the kicking and screaming which have really increased at our house this year.

Ice Hockey, the boys favorite sport, ended in April and started again in June. Jeremiah moved up to a new level last year where they allow checking. We, especially me, was concerned about this, so I watched with apprehension his first game as he got slammed up against the boards and knocked down crashing into the sides. When the game was over, thankfully, he runs up to me and says "Mom, it was great! It was the first time I needed every piece of my protective equipment! Pray that I can survive this sport. Both of their teams did extremely well and all the games were quite exciting to watch.

Joshua's highlight of the year would have to include being on a undefeated championship basketball team. I was the team mom on this exciting team. He is thrilled to be on it again this year.

Jeremiah enjoyed playing baseball with a team that has been together since first grade. This was their last year together. I was the team Mom, so I got to plan a nice end of year swim party. .

In May, Bob traveled to Italy to give an invited presentation and to England for some IEEE business. He enjoyed seeing Mount Vesuvius (sp?). The trip was not without its incidents. He lost his passport in Italy. It was found only after a small fortune was spent on Italian taxis running around and backtracking his path. Bob then got digestive irregularities on London water. Kind of like King George's revenge.

Bob went back to Florida in June to work on an IEEE conference. He was able to visit our friends Hal & Kathy Philipp. They took Bob to his first jazz club.

In July, the children and I bravely went tent camping at our church Family Camp. We loved the fellowship and the horse back riding, miniature golf, tennis, swimming, and outdoor cooking. Jeremiah was quite the young man helping me with the tent, fire, and cooking. Joshua loved flashlight gun tag. Marilee has never forgot the smores and having the freedom to ride her bike all around the Christian camp with her friends. She was very popular with her candy store. Candy reinforcements came from the Grandma's just in time.

We also spent some marvelous days visiting our friends, the Taylors, in Portland, OR. Cannon Beach was spectacular as well as the Columbia River Gorge and all the waterfalls. The children's mud bath fights were pretty amazing to watch too.. We even toured the Tillamook Cheese Factory and studied Oregon history through a Pageant Play. When we finished picking blueberries, we rushed home to get ready for 2 Japanese Boys as our guests for 5 days. Jeremiah said, "I really love our Church because we always get to have children from different countries come to visit us." The tour group coordinators came and video taped part of their stay with us for their school's promotion.

Another highlight of the year was attending Cameron and Marta Isaacs beautiful wedding in Corpus Christi, TX. I had a wonderful time visiting with Dad and Doris as well as seeing their lovely new home on the Oso.

In August, we enjoyed a vacation with the Newhouse family and several other homeschooled families at Ocean Shores. The boys really enjoyed playing war on the sand dunes. We enjoyed the singing around the campfire and listening to Marlin's Newhouse's stories.

School started out with a Homeschool field trip to visit Grandad Jack and Grandma Lenore and Uncle Ray in Ohio.

By the time we got there, Bob and I were exhausted so we really enjoyed the time to rest and catch up on our visiting. After a few days, we drove to the cabin at the farm in West Virginia. All of us enjoyed visiting the farm! The children exclaimed, "Why aren't we living here?" Highlights included riding on the 4 wheelers, and target shooting. Jack taught the children gun safety and management. The children were able to explore the oil wells and learn about the gas lines. They learned about how to live in the cabin. They worked at cutting trees and brush to build the big bonfires that we wanted at night. We studied many of the beautiful weeds and flowers. We walked the cemeteries and learned more about the Marks' family history. We saw how they cut the hay. Meeting Aunt Vivian, Bob's oldest living relative, was a special treat for Jeremiah as it really made history come alive. He talked to Vivian at length about life in Blackburn when she was a little girl. The whole family enjoyed worshipping at the Blackburn Church which is located on the Marks' farm. We loved going up on the 4-wheeler to Old Baldy. The view is spectacular. It felt like we were in a wild life preserve since we saw so many deer and beautiful trees. We will miss the trees when they are cut down next year. Bob had a special birthday party attended by his Uncle Junior, Aunt Justine, Cousin Karen (aka Kay Kay) and her husband Troy, Vivian and a bunch of other neat people. We had a big fire, roasted hot dogs & marshmallows and enjoyed each others company.

Bob, Lenore, and I drove to Morgantown to visit West Virginia University. We all hated to leave the beauty and freedom of the farm in West Virginia.

While in Ohio, the boys enjoyed playing on Uncle Ray's computer. Bob and I enjoyed seeing where Ray worked as a DJ. We were quite impressed with how organized he is and how well he can find any song the audience might request in a matter of seconds. We spent a lovely evening with Uncle Gene and Aunt Eula and their family. Joshua turned out to be a prodigy at dominoes. We were sad to leave the Marks' in Ohio, but we had another vacation to look forward to.

We flew to San Antonio, TX. where Grandpa Charlie and Grandma Doris picked us up. They showed us around San Antonio a little bit before driving us to their home in Corpus Christ, TX. We had a wonderful time visiting, swimming in their pool, fishing on their dock, and going to the beach on Padre Island. We were able to celebrate my Dad's birthday while we were there. They had a lovely barbecue for us and Doris's family. We really enjoyed seeing them. Jeremiah even caught some fish, which the crabs ate. Afterwards, we caught some crabs which we ate. Josh and Marilee had quite an adventure trying to get back to the dock on their little raft boat when the

wind picked up. After tears and prayers, Josh and Marilee got rescued in the Oso by a man and his two dogs.

Seeing the Lady Lux, a gigantic military ship, was quite impressive. At night, we all enjoyed playing intense card games of Rook.

We were very sorry though, that on this trip Grandma Doris was very ill. We all prayed for her and we hear she is doing somewhat better.

Next, along with Bob we explored San Antonio. We loved the River Walk, eating on the little canal boats, and seeing the Alamo and an Alamo movie on the IMAX. We wished we had more time to explore this historical city.

Amazingly we did manage to do a lot of our schoolwork on this 5 week trip. The children were very glad they could be home schooled to enjoy this special time with their grandparents and learn about the U.S. in a more memorable and exciting way.

We came home to Mom in a panic for all of us to catch up ---I am still assisting Bob as Editor of the IEEE Transactions on Neural Networks. We receive between one and two papers each day. Soccer for Josh and Marilee was started and Art Classes and Quest Science for Jeremiah and Home School Choir and on and on..... We know that your lives are very busy too! I wish for all of you this year a time to rest, a time to feel God's Peace.

One of Bob's PhD students, Payman Arabshahi, graduated and accepted a Professorship at the University of Huntsville in Alabama. Seho Oh, who got his PhD last year, went to a local company, Neopath, that applies advanced computational intelligence to bioengineering. Dr. Jai Choi continues at Boeing. Bob and he get together almost every week working on research. Bob's first PhD Graduate, Kwan Cheung, was married here in Seattle. We attended the wedding in a Seattle Chinese Church. It was marvelous! Bob was honored by being asked to sign the marriage certificate as a witness. Kwan is a Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Don Wunsch, Bob's PhD student in 1991, continues to do incredibly well at his Professorship at Texas Tech. He just landed a large NSF grant on neural networks.

Bob had a very successful year professionally. He was elected a Fellow of the IEEE. IEEE has 320,000+ members and is the world's largest professional society. Each year, IEEE gives the rank of Fellow to less than one half of one percent of its members. Needless to say, Bob felt honored. He was elected a Fellow of the Optical Society of America in 1987. Bob was also inducted into the Texas Tech Engineering Academy in 1993 and was named an Outstanding Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology Alumnus. Bob edited three books last year and this - (1) Advanced Topics in Shannon Sampling and Interpolation Theory, (Springer-Verlag, 1993); (2) Fuzzy Logic Technology and Applications, (IEEE Technical Activities Board, Piscataway, 1994); and (3) with two other co-editors, Computational Intelligence: Imitating Life, (IEEE Press, 1994).

aaaWe ask for all of your prayers as this year we will be involved in a Spiritual Battle. Campus Crusade for Christ is being attacked again, this time by a vicious homosexual with an agenda.+ He may be suing CCC on the basis of discrimination. Bob is the faculty advisor for

Campus Crusade for Christ and was involved with this tangle at the University of Washington. The stance of CCC is that all are open to membership, but only those that adhere to the teachings of scripture are eligible for leadership. A person, for example, who either practices or advocates adulteress affairs would be prohibited from such a role. So is one who advocates homosexual affairs. Having leanings toward sinning is something we all have. Whether or not we are repentant or advocates is a totally different manner. Some say evidence, yet incomplete, says homosexuality is genetic. Even if true, a genetic predisposition to pedophilia would not excuse its practice or advocacy. Anyway, at the UW, we have won the first battle, but there is more to come. We realize more and more how God is our protector and our refuge. When you call, ask me about the miracle that saved a life that happened to me!

Next year, Bob will be traveling to Perth, Australia, Yokohama Japan and, probably, back to Rostov-on-Don in Russia. Just before Christmas, Bob and I are flying to Taiwan. Jack and Lenore are coming to visit and to help with the children. So you will have to wait till next year's letter to find out what happens in Taiwan, unless of course you come for a visit --or at least give us a call. We would love to hear from you! You are in our hearts and in our prayers even if we don't write very often.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON!

Bob and Monika

Jeremiah, Joshua, Marilee