

Refior News Bulletin

February 1, 1997

HAPPY GREETINGS FROM THE REFIORES !

Our last *BULLETIN* was sent right after we returned from the Atlanta Olympics last August. Many happy times and important events have occurred with the Refiores since then.

Because Cedarville College starts so late (late September) we had the blessing of Laura being at home for several weeks before she went to Ohio to begin her junior year of college. It seems like Laura is a "natural" as a teacher. She is doing extremely well in her elementary education courses. She is excelling in the "methods" classes and in her actual classroom work. The second half of this quarter will be full-time in the classroom. Laura's combination of high intelligence, creativity, artistic talent, sense of humor, personality, and love for children are ideal for this chosen vocation.

Pam and I have easily fit into the role as grandparents. It is amazing that a year ago I hardly noticed whether any little tyke was cutting a tooth or crawling or attempting to walk. In these months since Luke was born such events have been recognized as earth shattering "biggies." It certainly is fun and heart warming to have our interaction with our children and now also with our grandson (we include Jonathan in "our children"). On February 6 Luke will be ten months old. He is a very strong and precocious (of course) little guy. Now that he is walking he is presenting new challenges to Nikki and Jon. We were glad that Laura had the opportunity to spend some time with Nikki's family there in Otterbein before going back to Cedarville. Pam and I have enjoyed so much observing our own daughter in the role of MOTHER. Nikki and Jon are outstanding parents who take the role of parents as a high responsibility and privilege. We commend them for their continued godly walk with the Lord, involvement with Christian ministries at their church, excellent marriage, hard work, and performance as young parents.

Jon continues with his lab work toward a PhD in biochemistry. He is hoping to be completed in another two and a half years or so. An exciting development has recently materialized. Nikki and Jon attend Faith Baptist Church in Lafayette which decided to start a Christian high school commencing the fall of 1997. They had approached Jon about starting the chemistry program at the high school. A number of things had to fall in place for that to be possible, including the agreement by the professors at Purdue University, financial arrangements, etc. Everything has worked together nicely and Jon accepted a contract to head the science department at the new high school while he continues his work on his PhD. Nikki continues her work as a *Beauty Control*

consultant. She enjoys the interaction she has with the ladies, including the seminars she attends, and this has provided some needed income for the family. In addition, Nikki was asked by Purdue University to resume her teaching of French last semester. She enjoyed getting back into college teaching, but it really taxed their schedule because they only have one car and Otterbein is more than ten miles from Purdue University. With Nikki's responsibilities as wife and mother, she was relieved when the semester ended. Nikki and Jon are really enjoying their house on the edge of country fields. It is a beautiful farm view. Recently when there was a large amount of snow with high winds they were socked in with huge drifts which made it impossible to get out of the house for school or other trips.

Shortly after taking Laura back to Cedarville in September Pam and I went to the National Lawyers Association Conference in Chicago. I became upset with the American Bar Association when it shifted emphasis away from being a professional organization and it became a liberal political organization - even taking a formal pro-death stand favoring abortion, for example. There can be benefit from an organization of attorneys for professional networking, fellowship, and the like, but I had pretty much assumed that I would not be active in a bar association in light of its "good old boy systems" and its political stances. The American Trial Lawyers Association similarly is led by very liberal individuals with a very liberal agenda, as evidence by the huge contribution to the Democratic candidates in the last election. I say all of that to get to the point that I was very pleased to be introduced to, and now to be a part the National Lawyers Association. It intends to refrain from spending money on large buildings and expensive hierarchies and bureaucracies. It is an organization that intends to take advantage of new technologies and to a great extent to be a "virtual organization," using the Internet for much of its communication, and even transmission of publications. Pam and I, in addition to attending that conference of the NLA, had a delightful honeymoon there in Chicago. We have always enjoyed the times that we have spent in downtown Chicago.

To celebrate Nikki's 26th birthday we went to Lafayette and we took Nikki, Jonathan, and Luke to the Purdue-Minnesota football game. That was Luke's first Big Ten football game. *We are getting Luke started on the right foot!* It was perfect weather for football and we had a wonderful time.

I learned about a group of avid Iowa Hawkeyes fans in Fort Wayne. I communicated with them and we arranged to caravan with that group down to the Iowa-Indiana game in Bloomington. Once again we had ideal weather for the game - Iowa won, of course. We then went from Bloomington over to Cedarville to assist Laura and then spend time with her. This year Laura is very active in her college student government. She was in charge of the homecoming dinner and we arrived in time to help her, and a number of other hard-working college kids, tear down the decorations and restore tables, chairs, and other furniture to their proper places. Continuing these neat

opportunities to get together as a family, Laura came home the last weekend in October and we celebrated her 21st birthday.

In mid November we traveled to Iowa City to meet Kurt and Julie Swaim and attend the Iowa-Wisconsin football game. Iowa totally thrashed Wisconsin 31-0 ! In fact, I might as well brag a little bit about Iowa at this point. Despite some "doubters" along the way, Hayden Fry and the great Iowa Hawkeyes football team impressed the Big Ten and the entire football world with their stellar 9 and 3 record. They beat Penn State AT PENN STATE. Even though they gave away the first quarter to Ohio State, Iowa played outstanding football against the Buckeyes in a losing effort in that game. They finished tied for third in the Big Ten with Penn State. The Hawkeyes went to the Alamo Bowl and proved that they were far superior with their 27-0 victory over Texas Tech. They finished the season ranked 18th in the country (13th nationally with the Sagarin computer rankings) and a lot of smiles in the state of Iowa. WAY TO GO HAYDEN ! THANK YOU, HAWKEYES ! My passion is the football team, but I also am delighted to report that the Iowa basketball team is surprising everyone with their second place standings in the Big Ten race (16-5, 7-2). Furthermore, I expect the Hawkeyes to be national champions AGAIN in wrestling this year. I received a telephone call from WHO radio, Des Moines, telling me that I had been selected as the "Fan of the Week," and arrangements were made for me to be on the radio (by telephone) with Hayden Fry. I enjoyed that experience a great deal. That was a little bit of "Hawkeye heaven" for this die-hard Hawkeye fan. Additionally, because I have such personal affinity and respect for Hayden Fry, it was a pleasure and a treat for me to be on Hayden Fry's show in that way.

We had the delight and privilege of Laura coming home for Thanksgiving (Nikki was with Jon's family in Missouri). Our family tradition is to put up our Christmas tree and decorations the weekend following Thanksgiving. We again went out to cut down our Christmas tree and upon completion the decorations were more beautiful than ever. We all love the holiday season. It was simply a warm and fun time. We went together to see Carol Channing in "Hello Dolly."

Since Luke was born we need to get our "Luke fix" with some regularity. Pam is able to go down more often than I. She may go down from time to time for day or two. For the most part we have been able to see Luke in Otterbein or Warsaw about every other week. The changes during this first year of life are so fast. It is a matter of high interest as we observe Luke's development. It is so wonderful that Luke is such a happy baby. He has the biggest grin and the most contagious giggles. Pam and I went down to West Lafayette to meet Nikki and Jon to see Purdue's world famous "Christmas show." It was breathtaking, outstanding, and inspiring. We were surprised and appreciative that after the first part of the program the director announced that they were moving into the sacred program and therefore people were requested to NOT clap, but instead to concentrate on the message of the true meaning of Christmas (this

is at a state university !) The sacred concert of Christmas hymns was something we will never forget.

This year we started a new Refior family Christmas tradition. I spent a considerable amount of time in Bible study and production of our "Best Gifts." I took a 6x6-inch piece of oak board and then I dropped red ink drops onto that on one side. After it dried I did the same on the other side but then tipped it up so that it would run. The result was that the oak boards looked like they were blood-stained. Then on the front of the board I affixed a statement in calligraphy which reads, "Because of Jesus you have a GIFT of infinite value - more precious than anything money can buy. JESUS GIVES YOU...Adoption into the Family of God." On the back side I affixed a paper with several verses which specifically declare the truths from the Bible about that gift from the Lord. That same process was duplicated for a series of other "Best Gifts," including God's Joy, God's Peace, God's Faithfulness, A Fruitful Life, His Eternal Union, Salvation, Nearness to God, His Abundant Life, Fellowship with God, Eternal Life, His Bearing of Your Sins, God's Teaching, and the Lord's Intercession. These "Best Gifts" were individually wrapped and on the outside was a label saying "From: Jesus...To: _____ (name was written in) and to all true Christians." Each year before opening presents on Christmas morning I read the Biblical accounts of the first Christmas and then give a devotional from the Bible. At the close of this year's devotional I presented and introduced our new tradition of these "Best Gifts." I had hoped that this activity would serve as a continuing reminder of the true meaning of Christmas while opening presents, and as a means of the entire family continuing to have our thoughts drawn to our best gifts from the Lord, who Himself is "the indescribable gift." All praise to God, we did realize those hoped-for blessings and benefits while we had a very, very, very, warm and wonderful time together as a family opening Christmas presents.

Speaking of Christmas, Nikki, Jon, and Luke came, Laura was home, Grandma Henricks (Pam's 95-year-old grandmother) came up from Kokomo, Pam's parents were there, and then Tim, Ann, Paul, and Hannah came over and joined us for the latter part of our family time, including our dessert together. We even had the special dinner music played by Paul Petro on his saxophone.

A little update about the Tim Petro family. For some time Ann Petro has been working with E.J. and Shirley Petro in their court reporting business, Petro Reporting Service. Tim decided to resign from his job and participate full time with the court reporting business. They are living in Fort Wayne and rapidly developing the Fort Wayne market. We went to see Hannah perform at their choral concert. Paul is now a freshman in college majoring in performing music.

I still have "Millie," my faithful black labrador, there with me at the office. She is a very special friend. Bill Fawley keeps saying that Millie is gaining weight, but I think that she is simply showing the natural results of being spayed. You may recall that

Millie was an extremely expensive, champion dog that was located and purchased for breeding purposes, and then the veterinarian - through gross negligence - switched Millie with a different dog and instead of performing the requested hip x-rays, the veterinarian neutered her ! (...in fact that case which I was handling on behalf of the breeders was just settled a week ago).

Pam and I continue to teach our precious second grade Sunday school class. Pam is greatly blessed by her Tuesday morning accountability group with three other ladies from Pleasant View Bible Church. I have the rich benefits and blessings of meeting regularly with outstanding brothers in Christ. Al Buhler and I have met every Tuesday for years. Al is a tremendous man of God and I am edified by our meetings and inspired by his Godly example. I have a weekly meeting early in the morning with Larry Zuiderveen. We have had such thrilling times of digging deep into the Word of God and challenging each other in the application of God's truths into our lives and families. Every other Friday morning I have an hour-long accountability group over the telephone with my dear brother, David Brown. (Dave and Donna Brown and their kids were in Takamatsu, Japan during the time when we were serving in Japan. The Browns now are at TEAM headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois.) Although telephone connections are not as good as being together in person, it is very real sharing in things of the Lord and times of delightful prayer together. One of my goals this year is to actually get started in effective and regular communications with missionaries around the world over the Internet. Over a year ago I started sharing some thoughts from Scripture with missionary friends, but in the crush of time I quickly lapsed out of that. I want to invest the time and exercise the discipline necessary to re-start this type communication and encouragement with e-mail. I also am writing three books that are partially completed. I would like to finish them this year, but that is probably unrealistically ambitious. Perhaps I will be able to finish one of them this year.

I am sure that you are all totally interested in the Warsaw High School Tigers. Last year the boys' basketball team made it to the FINAL FOUR of "Hoosier Hysteria." They lost all five starting seniors from last year's team (including Indiana's Mr. Basketball) and people expected that this would be a rebuilding year. At the present year, they are 13-2 and are in first place in the conference and ranked in the state...not bad ! In fact, we are truly enjoying this year's team because of their teamwork, sheer determination, and work ethic.

This BULLETIN is being dictated while traveling home from Flint, Michigan, where Pam and I were involved in a Word of Life leaders conference. One seminar was based upon the material presented in my book **IT'S YOUR CHOICE - A HAPPY AND GOD-HONORING MARRIAGE.** The other seminar was concerning the legal aspects of working with children and youth.

We would love to hear from each of you. Our e-mail addresses are:
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Sincerely in love,



[Those of you who are pastors, Christian workers, and missionaries, will you please note the enclosed prayer information sheet. I respectfully request that if you desire to provide specific information for our use in more effectively praying for you and communicating with you, will you complete the enclosed form and send it back at your earliest convenience. Would you please be sure to include you e-mail address, and if you have a recent photograph that would be appreciated as well. Thanks]

[Enclosed are some photocopies of family pictures.]



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