

Happy Holidays from the Ritchey Family 1995

Moving West

In April, Joe took a new job with Geraghty & Miller, Inc., in their Albuquerque, New Mexico office. The family moved on July th4. Albuquerque is New Mexico's largest city with a population of 300,999. Located on the west side of the Sandia Mountains and along the Rio Grande river valley, Albuquerque is about 50 miles south of Santa Fe, the capital city. The climate here is arid; this year has been particularly dry with about 5 inches of precipitation whereas normal is about 8 inches per year. The temperature climbs to 90's (deg. f) in the summer with evenings in the 60's and in the winter the highs are in the 50's with the lows in the tens and twenties. Albuquerque is one of the few places where you can ski in the mountains in the morning and play golf in the valley in the afternoon.

Joe

Geraghty & Miller, Inc. is a nation-wide environmental consulting firm specializing in ground water. I am working full time on the Uranium Mill tailings Remedial Action project, call UMTRA. This is department of Energy funded project cleaning up all the old uranium mills used for making bombs and other government uses. There are 24 UMTRA sites across the country, most are in Colorado. This is the last year of a five year contract period, so you may be hearing about something different next year. The project has been going on for about 10 years and has many years to go. Your and my tax dollars are hard at work. I've been told UMTRA is the best run DOE project, but I've only heard it from people on the UMTRA project.

I have continued to be active in ASTM. This year travel has taken me to ASTM headquarters in Philadelphia and meetings in Denver, Phoenix, and Ft. Lauderdale. I was co-chairman of a symposium on ground-water modeling and am now trying to complete the book containing the papers that were presented.

We successfully added a second computer to the family and networked the two together. Between our home school and a computer program that I am writing, our computer use is growing with us. We have also added a second e-mail account to get access to the World Wide Web.

You can reach us by e-mail via my Delphi account:
RITCHEYJD@DELPHI.COM or our account on American On-Line:
DRITCHEY@AOL.COM.

You will hear more about boy scouts, I will only say that we are now part of an active camping troop. This fall we have been able to camp at Philmont, go backpacking in the Pecos Mountains, and hike up 700 feet to some Native ruins that few people know about.

Darlene

I am enjoying teaching the boys at home. We have been studying the Civil War and geology along with our regular subjects. As always, I continue to learn along with the boys. I am refreshing my knowledge of algebra with Jamie, I enjoy seeing the boys get excited about the different things we are learning. It is definitely a challenge, but we see many benefits.

We have joined a large Southern Baptist church, called Hoffmantown. We attend the Saturday evening service and Bible study. On Sunday evening we attend another church, called Calvary Chapel. The pastor is teaching through the Bible verse by verse. We have just finished the book of Luke and started the book of Numbers. On Tuesday nights, Joe and I are working in Awana's (the children's program) with the 3rd-5th graders. John is happy to have his dad working with his group.

In July, my parents came out to help us unpack. My dad is doing fine. They celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary in September by taking a cruise. We are looking forward to them coming out later in the winter. I think they'll enjoy the milder weather.

Jamie

I am an 8th grader and will turn 14 this month. Tim and I are busy with boy scouts. We meet once a week to learn skills and then go camping each month to use them. I also enjoy the mid-school program at our church and I'm looking forward to going skiing in Colorado in January. My mom and I made buckeyes and baklava to sell at the bake sale for a fund raiser. My interests are collecting football cards and listening to Christian music (DC Talk, Guardian, and Audio Adrenaline). I am going to start lessons in January on my electric guitar, which I sold my snake to buy. I keep reminding my parents that I only have to be 15 to drive in New Mexico. Mom says it's all a dream!

Timothy

I'm a 6th grader, will be 12 in March. One of the things we done since moving is mountain hiking. As a family we hiked up to the top of the Sandia Crest which is 10,370 feet above sea level. The trail was 7 miles long and then we took the world's longest tram back down the mountain. I was in the lead most of the way; I think I just wanted to get it over with. Later in the month, we went to Toas and hiked up Wheeler's Peak (elev. 13,760 ft.), the tallest mountain in New Mexico. John and Mom only went about a third of the way, but Dad, Jamie, and I made it to the top, even though the last few miles were in snow.

I'm very interested in fossils, especially from sharks. I also collect rocks and baseball cards. Jamie and I are taking classes at a leather store and learning how to make some really cool things. John and I have a good time playing with the neighborhood kids.

John

John is doing third and fourth grade work this year. He turned 9 in August. He has really come out of his shell in the past year. Many of you will remember his shyness. John is a Weblo in the cub scout program. He was very successful in selling popcorn door to door in the neighborhood, a project he took on himself with no help from his family. He sold over \$100. There were a couple of the neighborhood girls that helped out at times. John enjoys Awana and is in the children's choir. They had a wonderful Christmas program this year. His spare time is spent playing with action figures and Legos.

Travels

Although we did not exactly take a vacation this year, we did do a lot of traveling. In the spring, we took a trip with Joe to Denver and then traveled on to Albuquerque to "check it out". the boys and I spent two weeks in Ohio visiting family and a week in Champaign, IL visiting friends. After moving out here we have mostly done day trips to some of the places. We did get a chance to go to Grand Junction, CO for a couple days with Joe on business. We stopped at the Arches and Mesa Verde national Parks on the way home.

Joe's dad and Mary Ellen came to visit us during the balloon fiesta in October. It is the largest hot air balloon event in the world with over 700 balloons participating. What a sight to see them all taking off.

Joe's younger brother, Mark and his wife, Gail, came the next week and w took them to see the Petrified Forest National Park and Canyon de Chelly National Monument. There are so many interesting places to see and explore.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We want to take a little space to tell you how much we treasure the friendships we have made over the years. God has blessed us with loving family and friends from all over the states and even in a few countries. This is one of the benefits of living in different places. Though we do not get a chance to visit or to write often, we want you to know we appreciate you.