

Joe Ritchey Family Christmas Letter 1998

A Glimpse of 1998 With the Ritchey's

by Joe

As we wrap up the year and our Christmas presents, we think of the many great people and experiences we've had. We won't cover much ground, but the following paragraphs should give you a snap shot of some of our travels.

Our Pre-Spring Trip to Yosemite

by James

In March, our family with Grandma and Grandpa Ritchey traveled to Yosemite National Park. We found the mountains covered with snow, with patches on the valley floor. There were plenty of waterfalls and only a few visitors. We arrived at the park late afternoon. We saw most things at a distance, but we were still able to walk to a few landmarks, such as Bridal Veil Falls.

The next morning, we woke up early, ate a quick breakfast, and headed back to the park. We continued where we left off the previous afternoon, touring falls and rock formations, including Half Dome and El Capitan. After a lunch, we hiked to Mirror Lake, which gave a popular view of Half Dome. After taking many pictures, as tourists commonly do, we headed back to our van. We took a different path back and suffered the consequences, as we became lost. What was at first a two-mile hike turned out to be a three-mile hike, but eventually we all made it back. We stopped at Yosemite Falls on the way back to the hotel and finished the day with a nice dinner. We all slept well that night.

The third day, we drove to the northern portion of the park; a valley known as Hetch Hetchy. This valley was flooded after a dam was built, in part to provide drinking water to San Francisco. John Muir said that Hetch Hetchy was nearly as beautiful as the Yosemite Valley. Later, we drove to a grove of giant sequoia trees. It was a mile down a path, with over a foot of snow covering the ground. I was a little disappointed with the size of the trees. The trees were not as large as the ones you see in the pictures with the cars driving through them, but the size was still impressive.

The next morning after dropping Grandma and Grandpa off at the airport in Fresno, we returned back home to Chino.

Heading East This Time

by Darlene

I know most of you have been wondering where the Ritchey Family will move to next. Well, in June, Joe was transferred to the Piketon, OH office of ARCADIS Geraghty & Miller. In August, we moved into a 4-year old house in the country near Chillicothe.

Chillicothe is about 45 mile south of Columbus. It is known for being the first state capitol, which was later moved to Columbus.

This has been a difficult move for us as we all enjoyed living in Southern California. We admit it is nice being closer to family. We were able to spend Thanksgiving with them and plan a quick trip up before Christmas. My mom will be coming back to spend the holidays with us.

We are attending an American Baptist Church at this time. The youth pastor is from California, so the boys have developed a good relationship with him. The Boy Scout troop here is small, but the

boys seem to be settling in. James is waiting for his board of review for his eagle award. We have met many families through the homeschool support group and have gone on a few interesting field trips including a whistle factory and the mayor's office. John has been taking swimming lessons at the YMCA.

Train Trip to Ohio

by John

To make the move to Ohio, we decided to travel by train. Grandma Froelich and our cousins, Ryan and Steven, had been visiting us in Chino for 2 weeks and came back with us on the train. We left in mid-July, the day after Tim and I returned from a week at Boy Scout camp.

Our first stop was in San Francisco, where we stayed an extra day. We visited Muir Woods and took a ferry around the island of Alcatraz and under the Golden Gate Bridge. It was cool and foggy there.

We left the next day for Chicago. The train was slowed because of hot weather, so it was nighttime crossing the Rocky Mountains in CO, which was a disappointment. There are many things to do on the train, like playing cards, watching movies, talking, listening to music, and just watching out the windows in the lounge car.

Because of the delay arriving in Chicago, we missed our connection to Cleveland. We had to wait until the next afternoon, so we were able to go to the Natural History Museum and the Sears Tower. Although the trip took longer than it should have, we still had a great time.

Trip to Gettysburg

by Tim

In late October, we traveled to the Gettysburg National Battlefield in PA. We had just finished studying the Civil War in school. We hired a personal guide to tour the park. The tour was about 3 hours long and the guide told us a great deal of what happened there in 1863. On Saturday, we met friends from VA. Later we went shopping and then went back to our motel. The following day, we packed up and left for home. We enjoyed it thoroughly.

Our family wishes you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!