

December 2003

Joe Ritchey Family Christmas Letter 2003

Dear Friends and Family,

We trust that this letter finds you full of the Christmas Spirit. We are now getting use to the fact that summer hardly ends and the Christmas season has begun. With family and friends a long way from home serving in the military, we again think of the great joy we have of reporting that our family is well and growing and changing year after year.

James is a senior at Cedarville University with plans to graduate in August. He is majoring in Broadcast Production. He is looking forward to being in the winter play, "The Masque of Beauty and the Beast."

Tim is a sophomore also at Cedarville. He is majoring in Computer Science. He is spending his winter break reading through the Chronicles of Narnia and just enjoying being with friends. It is a pleasure having them home for the break.

John has plans to graduate from high school in January 2005. He has been working hard to complete the credits he needs to do that. John was chosen to be on the Ohio Youth Leader Corp, which has given him an opportunity to go on a mission trip to Japan next summer. He hopes to complete his Boy Scout Eagle Award in the next month or two. Beware! He is praying for another winter like last year so that he will be able to get in as much snowboarding as possible.

Joe continues to work hard at the Portsmouth Uranium Enrichment Plant. He continues to pursue his goal of running in marathons. He ran in Cincinnati in April and New York City in October. Though Joe's time wasn't his best, he finished ahead of P. Diddy passing him in the last 200 yards of the race. The family (less James and Tim) traveled to New York for the event with Joe's brother Steve. We had the added bonus of being able to spend Halloween (Friday night) in Greenwich Village. What a Hoot! In January (sorry to go back in time) Joe and Darlene enjoyed a trip to Albuquerque, NM as part of Joe's work with ASTM. Joe's friend Jim Studer set up a hot air balloon ride for us, which was the highlight of our trip. We also enjoyed visiting friends and attending our past churches.

Darlene has been busier than ever now completing her first year as Children's Ministry Director at our church. Everyone has been thrilled with her work and she is slowly redecorating all of the youth classrooms in the education wing of the church. In October Darlene and John made a road trip to Ashtabula to visit some of her cousins, then to Champaign IL to visit the Ellis family, and then on to Kansas City to visit the Crosley family.

This fall Darlene and Joe joined the church's hand-bell choir, which was a reminder of our past lives in Toledo in the early 1990's. We don't remember it being so complicated; guess we're just slowing down.

We're not going to say much about the future. We've now been in Chillicothe for FIVE years, which is a record for us. We are trying something new, too. We are going to drop our "land-line" and go to all cell phones: Darlene's number is 740/703-4134. But, the best way to get us is: ritcheyj@adelphia.net.

As we close out another year we will leave you with the words of the angel to the shepherds "*I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*" [Luke 2:10-11].

Best wishes,

The Ritchey Family