

## Joe & Darlene Ritchey – Los Alamos NM 2006 Christmas Letter

We have great pleasure in sending you this brief report of our comings and goings this past year. We trust that you take some joy in knowing that we have survived the year with smiles on our faces. If we haven't already heard from you we hope that all is well in your world.

What happened to 2006? We've been told that as you get older time appears to go faster. Not being or getting older is part of our current vocabulary so there must be some other process that is controlling the universe. Regardless here is our annual progress report.

This has been our first complete year in Los Alamos, NM. It is a grand place with so many things to do that we can't tell you of all of the new experiences. Hikes and bike rides are not uncommon. The Los Alamos aquatic center is a fabulous Olympic size swimming pool, which has been a newer form of exercise for us.

The real change this year for us, and we know that it is minor compared to changes for most of you, is that we purchased his and her motorcycles. Now for those of you that this comes as a surprise we'll eliminate some of the drama by saying that they are "play" bikes primarily for off-road use. Joe's (426cc) was purchased from Joe's friend and associate Mark Thacker, that was followed by Darlene's (125cc) that was purchased from a dealer. Darlene's bike was to enable her to cover more ground with less effort than via mountain bike and to provide a means for the "my three sons" to learn if interested. Actually James was able to borrow one of Mark's other bikes and spend a day riding in north central NM in July. Some say the real reason Joe bought Darlene a bike was to employ a version of the old adage if you can't beat-em join-em. Others say it was because Joe can't keep up with Mark and friends and needed someone to lead rather than always eat dust. Yet another of the world's unresolved mysteries.



The Bikes December 2006

Joe's work has gone undeservingly well this year. This is testimony to Joe's associates at work Shanon Goldberg, Pat Torpy, Rebecca Hollis, and Todd Clark to name a few. Work at the "Laboratory" took an interesting twist when Pro2Serve (the company that employ's Joe) won a piece of the security engineering contract with Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) contract change from the University of California (UC) to a private company headed by UC and Bechtel Corporation. This should ensure Pro2Serve work at the Lab for at least seven years into the future. That doesn't directly benefit Joe, but every company win helps in the long run. Joe's biggest accomplishment was taking and passing the Project Management Professional exam in September, which lets him put PMP after his title. Please don't be impressed Darlene still has to balance the checkbook and prepare annual tax forms.

Darlene's work has been a continuing adjustment for all of us. She substitute taught in the Los Alamos public school system through the spring. She worked probably three days a week plus working on Monday's for Pastor Paul Cunningham at our church. Darlene took much of the summer off traveling to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas (more of that in a minute). This fall she resumed teaching though limited her classes to primary and middle school and still working for Pastor Paul on Mondays. This year Darlene also helped with Vacation Bible School, AWANA (a bible-based children's program) and began a puppet ministry.

Maybe you are more interested in what James, Tim, and John are doing. We suggest you e-mail them. Their contact information is provided at the end. James is working for Joe in his office and continues to live on the first floor of our house. The arrangement continues to work well and we're happy to have him nearby. James' work put him out "in the field" this summer experiencing site characterization activities and hazardous and radioactive waste first hand. James took a photography class this fall and has been spending time in the

University of New Mexico – Los Alamos branch dark room. James continues to purchase and play guitars and plays bass guitar in the church's worship band.

Tim returned to college at Cedarville in Ohio this past winter after a semester working in the fall of 2005. He continued by taking some courses in the summer. Our friend's (good friends) from Chillicothe (the McCorkel's) were gracious enough to house Tim while not at school. Tim took several excursions during the summer including a trip to Florida with a friend. Tim returned to Cedarville in the fall. We expect Tim to graduate this next year. Yea!

Let's see there's one more - John. In the spring John finished his freshman year at Judson College in Elgin IL. From all reports he had a good experience and learned a few things along the way. During the summer he was a camp counselor at Twin Lakes Camp west of Indianapolis IN. John came out to Los Alamos for a visit in May.

For those interested in our travels we began in January with a trip to Phoenix to one of Joe's ASTM meetings. We were able to stop in the Petrified Forest National Park (NP) followed by a very cool restored Titan missile base south of Tucson. We also made our way east to Gila Cliff Dwellings NP and stayed overnight at Faywood Hot Springs (highly recommended). The June ASTM meetings were in Toronto, Ontario Canada. We combined this trip with a stop at Niagara Falls with Jim Rumbaugh and family. Darlene stayed east for a month to travel to Chillicothe with stops at John's summer camp, the Ellis family in Champaign, IL and the Crosley family in Kansas City. In August we headed to Alaska for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Camp Woody on Kodiak Island. This is the camp that Joe visited in 1975. Additional stops included staying with Mike Galambush and family in Cordova and then to Denali for some light backpacking. Yes it was one of the rainiest August on record in Alaska and no we didn't see Mount McKinley.

On other family notes: Joe's dad and step-mom are doing fine, they came to Los Alamos for a pre-Thanksgiving visit. Darlene's mom also is doing well and celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in October. We were able to visit with Joe and Darlene's brothers and families in June.



Denali National Park August 2006

Finally, we are having another blessing this Christmas-time by having Tim and John return for the holidays. John's girl friend Stephanie came out for a week so we took a day at the hot-springs in Pagosa Colorado.

We wish the best for you and your family as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Here is our contact info:  
Joe and Darlene: ritcheyjd@comcast.net  
James: optimaljimmy@gmail.com  
Tim: tsritchey@cedarville.edu  
John: 1jritchey@judson.edu

Send us a note and let us know how you are doing.



The Gang at Pagosa Springs, Co December 2006

**The Ritchey Gang**