

THE WALA STREET JOURNAL

Christmas 2003

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Welcome to another edition of the "Wala Street Journal", published irregularly (usually about the time we start to feel guilty for not sending out Christmas cards). This time, it's been nearly three years — so here's an update on some of the "New's" in the Wala household in the last triennium.



New Address

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By the summer of 2002, the progressive multiple sclerosis attacking Vonna's body was making living in a split level home increasingly difficult. So, after 15 years on 14th Avenue NW, we made the big cross country move – to 13th Avenue NW. This 4½ block move provided us with a single level home with main floor bedrooms and laundry, meaning fewer trips up and down the stairs, and main floor wheelchair accessibility.

While we miss our old location adjacent to the nature preserve, (and Phil feels is somewhat chagrined over leaving behind all the remodeling done at the old house), the new home gives us considerably more room, and as a bonus has a large downstairs area with room for a pool/ping pong table, and Phil's home office.

New Commute



Three years ago, ADC Telecommunications couldn't build new factories fast enough. Then, the telecom bubble burst, and ADC bore the brunt. Stock plummeted from \$49 to \$1.10, 75% of its more than 23,000 employees were laid off, and decisions were made to shut down facilities, including the

Waseca office. Phil and many other employees from Waseca managed to survive, but their jobs are now in Shakopee (Minneapolis suburb), meaning an hour long (each way) commute. A car pool, and the ability to work at home 1-2 days a week make things a little easier, as we wait for the telecom industry to recover.

In his spare time, Phil enjoys restoring old recordings and photographs, enhancing his vocabulary, and investigating the harmony of scripture and recent scientific discoveries (see www.reasons.org). He is also addicted to the humor of Jack Benny, Bob and Ray, Vic and Sade, and Bullwinkle, and has made it his goal to record and watch every episode of the original (1950-67) "What's My Line?".

New Car

As the mileage on our Sable wagon surpassed 180,000, we knew it wasn't long for this world. But there was one final goal to achieve. So we waited until the mileage finally reached our goal of 186282.4 miles before having it hauled away (10 points if you can figure out the significance of that goal without looking at the answer on the other side!)

In the meantime, a homeless green monstrosity had been sitting on a local dealer's lot for months, being scorned by passers-by. Yet our research kept pointing to this object of scorn as being the only model with all the features we wanted — so we closed our eyes and adopted the green Pontiac Aztek, and have grown to absolutely love it



(even the way it looks). 43,000 miles later, it's still the best vehicle we've ever owned.



When the vehicle was new, Phil especially enjoyed seeing all the heads turn to see the first Aztek in the area — but what would you expect from someone who goes to the bank and requests all his cash in \$2 bills and half dollars?

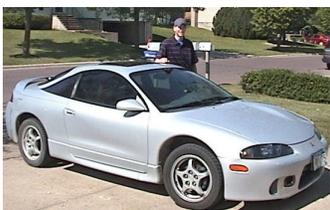
New Driver



Jeremiah, now a junior in high school, turned 16 in April. Upon that occasion, he took the money he'd been saving from two years of working at the HyVee grocery store, and bought himself a 1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse.

He has become quite the percussion artist, playing the tenor (quad) drums in Waseca High School's award winning marching band, and the trap set for the High School Jazz Band and the church worship team. His academic interests lean towards physics and astronomy, and he's already begun looking at colleges.

At 6'3" he now towers over both his parents, who are proud to have a son they can look up to (literally).



New Teenager



Stephanie, now in 8th grade, turned 13 in May, becoming the – kind of teenager of which any parent would be proud. With her sense of humor, she's just fun to be around, even if we do occasionally catch

her listening to questionable music (the Christian rock is OK, but we have doubts about those Bing Crosby Christmas tunes).

In her spare time she enjoys junior high gymnastics and volleyball, and can even beat her dad at Scrabble. And to offset the curse of being born in Minnesota, she has decorated her room in full Hawaiian beach décor.



New Mystery



Vonna goes to the local Salvation Army store, and comes home

with a plastic bag full of these small (1½ inch) rubbery figures which, for lack of a better description, we refer to as the "Chicken on a Banana". What are they? Where did they come from? How did they end up in a Salvation Army store in Waseca? Why did Vonna feel compelled to buy them?

We decide that none of these questions have answers. Even the curator of the Banana Museum near Seattle was stumped. But while we search for answers, these strange figures have become quite the object of awe and wonder at Phil's work-place, where they are used as rarely bestowed awards of tremendous prestige.

New Church



After several years in rented facilities, Waseca Christian Assembly purchased land late in 2002, and began work on its

own facility. We were committed to doing much of the work ourselves, and by late December we were putting up the first walls. With everyone working together on evenings, weekends and vacation days, the task was accomplished, and on 28 September 2003 we held the first services in the new building, constructed with 80% volunteer labor! More exciting than the building, though, is the ongoing construction work going on in people's lives as we continue to see more and more people touched by the miracle-working, life-changing power of God.



New Body

Of course, many of you already know the biggest news story of the year in the Wala family. But we never grow tired of sharing the news of the most tangible proof we could imagine that God is real and still answers prayer.

For four years, Vonna suffered progressively advancing multiple sclerosis. Numbness, fatigue and eye pain worsened and led to increasing difficulty walking. Canes and leg braces led to walkers and electric wheelchairs. We moved to a handicap accessible house and Vonna was forced to close her counseling practice. All treatment options had been exhausted, with no relief. Then, on Sunday, June 8, 2003, after a prayer service at our church, Vonna was **instantly and completely healed** of MS by the same Great Physician who came to this earth in human form on that first Christmas over 2000 years ago.

Christmas is not a story or legend — Jesus still lives, and He has graciously given us this opportunity to experience His love and power and to share it with others. Our hope is that in the coming year, you too will receive all the love, healing and forgiveness He has stored up for you!

