

THE WALA STREET JOURNAL

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Phil likes to write. Phil likes to use big words. It takes him a long time to write all those big words. That is why it has been three years since he wrote a Christmas letter. This year he will use small words. It will be easier to write. It will be easier to read. It will even be done before Christmas. He will tell you what we did since the last letter. Write, Phil, write!

We Like Our New House



For 27 years, we lived in Waseca. Then Phil's job moved near Minneapolis, and he had to drive 58 miles to work. That made him very tired. But we stayed in Waseca.

Then Stephanie started going to a big school in Minneapolis. It is called the University of Minnesota. It was 75 miles away, so she had to live there. But we stayed in Waseca.

Then Vonna got a job near Minneapolis. She had to drive 72 miles to get to work. So *then* the family moved. Now Phil and Vonna live close to work. And Stephanie can live at home while she goes to school.

We moved to a city called Savage, but that doesn't mean there are dangerous animals there. Savage was the last name of a man who owned a famous horse. The horse's name was Dan Patch. Dan Patch was the fastest horse in the world. Run, Dan Patch, run!

We have a very pretty house. It has a water garden with three waterfalls. It has a pond with lots of goldfish. The back yard has lots of trees. The back yard is big. It has a fence. The dogs like to run and play in the yard. The dogs are happy. We are happy. We like our new house. You should come to visit us. We will play and have fun.

Phil Is Shanghaied

Phil used to work for a company call ADC. Then another company bought ADC, and the company changed its name to Tyco. But then they decided they didn't like that name, so they changed it to TE. So now Phil works for TE. Phil makes things that help your cell phone work better. But if your cell phone doesn't work, don't blame Phil. It's probably not his fault.

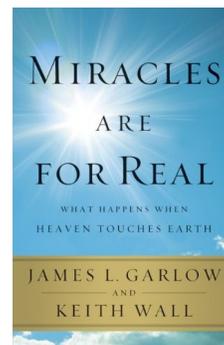
This year he went to a meeting in Shanghai. It is in China. It is very far away. There are many tall buildings there. In Shanghai, Phil saw Pizza Hut, Coldstone Creamery, Domino's, Dairy Queen, Starbucks and McDonald's, but not Leeann Chin. Shanghai doesn't sound very Chinese, does it?



Vonna's Story is in a Book

Vonna has a very good job. She works at a place called Nystrom and Associates. She is a marriage and family therapist, which means she helps people who are having problems. She is very busy helping people.

Vonna used to be very sick with something called M.S. She could not walk very well and had to use a wheelchair. Then eight and a half years ago, someone prayed for her, and that night, the MS suddenly went away and never came back. Some people don't believe in miracles, but this really happened. You can read more about what happened to Vonna in chapter 7 of a new book called "Miracles Are For Real". It is a good book. It does not have very many big words.



Jeremiah Likes School



When Jeremiah was a little boy, he wanted to be a doctor. But later he thought physics would be fun, too. So he went to a school in New York called Cornell.

But then he remembered about being a doctor. And he liked school so much, he started going to two schools at the same time. They are called Harvard Medical School and MIT. They are in Boston. Together, they teach him how to use physics

and medicine to help people get better. It is good that Jeremiah likes school, because he will be in school for a very, very long time.

Now Jeremiah uses big words like Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy. But you can just call it PML and he'll know what you're talking about.



Good-bye, Friends

Mandy was a very good dog. She lived to be almost 17 years old. That is not old for people, but it is very old for a dog. She became blind, and finally got very sick, and finally went to doggy heaven. We were sad.



Our cat Chip loved Mandy, but when we got a new dog, Chip did not want to be in the house. He wanted to run outside and chase mice. So he went to live on a farm. Sometimes when people say that they mean he died. But not this time. Chip didn't die. He went to a real farm.

That's good, because Phil says there is no such thing as kitty heaven.

Run, Booster, Run!



After Mandy went to doggy heaven, we needed a new dog to love. So we adopted a big dog named Booster. He loves to run and jump, so we train him for agility, which means running through tunnels, and jumping, and going up and down ramps. If he does well, he wins ribbons. When he is done, he gets tired. So he takes a nap.



Stephanie and Friends

Stephanie is almost done with college. She studies Biology, Society, and the Environment, which means she wants to help people take care of their animals and plants and each other. Stephanie worked for a long time watching dogs at a doggy day care, but now she wants a real grown-up job. She does not want to go to school forever, like *some* people.



One day, Stephanie wanted her very own dog to love, so she found a lovable little puppy named Eclipse. Eclipse loves

Booster, gives doggy kisses, and crawls under the covers to snuggle. Sometimes she toots under there, but she can't help it. Besides, it gives us someone to blame.

Stephanie's friend Corey is a fireman. He is very nice. If you live in Shakopee and your house is on fire, Corey will save you.



Thinking Doesn't Hurt

Some people think that believing in God means you can't use your brain. But that's just silly. Phil writes a blog called "Faith for Thinkers", where he tries to make people think. If you're not afraid to think, you should read what he writes at faithforthinkers.com.

This summer, leaders of a group of churches called the "Assemblies of God" decided they wanted their people to stop being afraid of science. So they asked Phil to come to Springfield, Missouri, to give a talk about how pastors can help the people in their churches to not be afraid to think. The leaders liked Phil's paper very much, and hope all the pastors will stop saying scientists are evil. Because most of them aren't. If you're not afraid of big words, you can read Phil's paper at <http://bit.ly/vZLZE5>.

Our New Church

After we moved, we started going to a church called Hosanna Lutheran Church. Do you know what Lutheran churches are like? Well, it's probably not like this one. There are over 5000 people in church on the weekend, and 1500 in Wednesday night youth group. The band sometimes plays Beatles or U2 music, and we have live camels and donkeys and the Minnesota Orchestra for Christmas.

But that stuff isn't really important. It's more important that even people who aren't sure what they believe can go there to find out more about God, and feel welcomed no matter how much they know, or the way they think, or who they are. Vonna is on a team that prays with people who want someone to pray with them. Phil leads Alpha groups for people who want to know more about the Bible, and Skepsis groups for people who want to discuss hard questions, and not just have someone tell them what to think. He's even starting a group for scientists who like to use big words.

We hope our newsletter made you smile, and that this Christmas, you will smile as you think about the love of the One who gives this holiday its meaning. Merry Christmas!

Phil & Vonna