

January, 2006

## Happy New Year!!!!



Who are these people????

Yes, we know it has been over 4 years since we sent out any kind of letter. I was thinking this year that I should stop waiting for everything to be fine to write a letter, otherwise we will never get a letter out. As it turns out, the trial we were having has ended so now we have good news to share.

### Work Blues and Blessings

First, some background. In February of 2004, Geoff got laid off from his position of eleven-and-a-half years at Mission Research Corporation due to lack of work (they laid off several of their employees.) For the next 22 months, Geoff worked various short-term projects as an independent computer contractor while waiting for a more permanent position to work out. I (Rita) also worked a few very short-term jobs doing anything from clutter-busting a friend's office to various secretarial jobs. In general, I wasn't feeling led to pursue a more permanent job as it would interfere with my volunteer work (see below). Most of the jobs Geoff and I got were ones where people called us and asked us if we would work for them.

Well, the savings was nearing it's end, and Geoff was working on a project that ended up being a dead-end and we were starting to feel more of the stress of having Geoff out of work when he gets a phone call. He talked to an old friend of his from church on Monday, December 12th, about a position at his friend's work. On Thursday, Geoff went in for a three-hour interview that included lunch. By Friday, he was hired for the position and set to start work on the following Monday for Configuresoft, Inc. Whew. That was quick. After almost two years without steady work, our heads were spinning. But what a blessing right before Christmas to finally have a full-time position with steady income once again.



While it was a difficult time, it was evident that God was with us the whole time, though sometimes not as clearly as others. We saw His hand via people calling for work out of the blue. Like the time that a former church member called Geoff to see if he would be interested in building a website for the company he worked for. This guy had no idea that Geoff had been laid off. Coincidence?? Or the time that a friend of mine felt God was telling her to send us a check at the same time I was agonizing over having to spend \$200 on some medicine. The amount of the check? You guessed it - \$200! God IS good. It was a time for us to really get to know the Lord as Jehovah Jireh, our provider. It was also a time for us to grow closer in our marriage, since Geoff was around the house more often. At first I felt like he was invading my turf (the home, since I am a homemaker), but then I got used to having him around.

## Ways We Serve God

Besides the work situation, both of us are very active in our church, Fellowship Bible Church. Geoff still maintains the website ([www.fbccs.org](http://www.fbccs.org)) and still does sound for worship services on some Sunday mornings. To deal with the poor sound dispersion of the speakers at church, Geoff redesigned the alignment of the system and with the help of several other volunteers made a dramatic change to the sound quality in our auditorium. Four years ago, I started volunteering with the Caring Ministries at our church. I believe the church should be a place that ministers to peoples hurts and needs, and I wanted to get involved to see if I could make a difference. Once a week, I meet with the Pastoral Counselor on staff and a few other people on the Caring Ministry team to review the prayer list, and brainstorm on how the church could minister to those in need. I update the prayer list and email it out to our prayer teams. I also am highly involved in our adult Sunday school class, helping out wherever needed to keep the class running smoothly and occasionally teaching. In the fall of 2004, I joined the newly created women's leadership team to help launch a new women's ministry for our church. I ended up being responsible for the administrative needs for the women's ministry. Volunteering has been a great way to exercise my gifts and make new friends. I highly recommend it. In the summer of this year, I decided I was way too busy. Along with volunteering in these 3 ministries, my domestic responsibilities, my arts and crafts and gardening, I was also co-leading a Women's Bible Study on Wednesday mornings, a member of a rubber-stamping club and a member of a visual arts (painting and drawing) club. Something had to go.

After some prayer, I decided to leave the women's ministry. But right after I dropped that ministry, Geoff and I unwittingly found ourselves involved in a new, blossoming ministry in our church. A movie ministry. This was exciting. Geoff and I were finally doing a ministry together. The other thing I liked about this ministry was the opportunity for outreach. A friend, Bob, a big fan of movies, was the initiator of the whole thing. Early last summer, Bob was wondering about projecting movies on the side of our church using the lawn as the seating area. Bob called Geoff in to help with the technical aspects and in less than a week, the church was showing family movies on Friday nights complete with unending popcorn and lemonade. With the weather turning colder, a solution had to be made for bringing the movies indoors.



Dessert, Video, Dialogue

With a budget of less than \$100, Geoff and Bob designed and built a screen out of PVC pipe and canvas to use with the church's projector to project DVD movies and make them almost theatre size. Geoff worked on modifying the sound system to create 5.1 surround sound. A team was created to discuss the possibilities of holding conversations after the movies to discuss themes and ideas from the movies. Initially, I was thinking I wouldn't get involved, but soon found myself committed to the ministry. We brainstormed for a name for our ministry and came up with DVD, which, for us, stands for dessert, video and dialogue. Geoff suggested adding a word, and we became The DVD Players. The ministry is still evolving, but currently we are showing a movie one Saturday a month, following it with tasty desserts and discussions. We invite the people from our church, the families from the apartments near our church and the college students at the college across the street. Our biggest event yet was a showing of *The Polar Express* where we had Christmas cookies, hot chocolate and popcorn and 150 people in attendance. Not much discussion there, but it was a fun, family event.



### Green Thumbs

Geoff and I continue to enjoy our love of gardening. The summer of 2005 was a hot and dry one and some of the veggies that normally do well, didn't do as well, while other things thrived such as the green peppers, and we finally got a watermelon and a couple of cantaloupe. And, of course, we continue to modify and improve on things in the yard. We added a second vegetable garden area in 2004, and expanded it last summer and added a grape vine next to our rhubarb plant. Geoff added some steps leading from the side street, through his forest, down into our yard. We are a couple that puts more time into the outside of our house than the inside. Unfortunately, a couple of our azaleas died for some reason, so we'll have to replace them this spring.



### Trips and Visitors

Both our families are still long distance, so we continue to take trips to visit them. In the Spring of 2003, we were able to visit Geoff's grandmother in Southern California and Geoff has been able to see her on a few work trips out in that area, including a trip with the project that went nowhere last fall. She turned 97 in December. I visited my sister and her family in South Carolina last Spring (she bought me a plane ticket), where I "home schooled" her kids in art, which is really just a fancy way to say we made messes on my sister's dining room table. Last August, we made a last minute decision and drove up to Idaho to surprise Geoff's family on their annual camping/water skiing trip. For Christmas 2004 we visited Geoff's family in central Oregon, and for this last Christmas we traveled to Illinois to see my family.



In the fall of 2003, we drove to Branson, Missouri for a week-long vacation. We stayed at a nice Bed and Breakfast on Table Rock Lake, and saw a few shows while there. Mostly we did the scenic-type stuff, like canoeing on the Buffalo National River, riding on the Branson Scenic Railway, taking a dinner cruise on Table Rock Lake and driving around the hills of Mark Twain National Forest. On the drive out to Branson, we spent a weekend in Sedgwick, Kansas with some friends from our Glen Eyrie days, and then we stopped at the Precious Moments Chapel in Carthage, Missouri.



Some other traveling/visitor highlights over the last four years include:

**March 2002** – Geoff visits his family in Oregon for Easter.

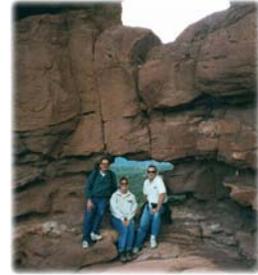
**April 2002** – Rita's brother's wedding in St. Paul, MN.

**May 2002** – Geoff's sister and husband visit us for a couple of days.



**September 2002** – Rehoboth Beach, DE at our favorite B&B; visiting Rita's Aunt and cousins in New Jersey; seeing New York City for the first time; and visiting Geoff's cousins in Virginia.

**October 2002** – Rita goes rock-climbing and rappelling and solo-camping in the woods on an Outward Bound weekend.



**Christmas 2002** – Christmas Eve in Colorado Springs; Geoff to Oregon and Rita to Illinois to visit families on Christmas Day through New Years Day.

**June 2003** – Rita to Illinois to help celebrate her niece's high school graduation.

**August 2003** – Rita's niece visits as part of her Eagle Lake Summer Camp trip.

**August 2003** – Rita's sister and new brother-in-law visit after their surprise wedding in the Grand Canyon.

**October 2003** – Rita to Illinois for her sister and brother-in-law's wedding reception.

**February 2004** – Geoff to Sunriver, OR to help his parents with the building of their new home.

**August 2004** – Geoff back to Sunriver, OR to help some more with the house building.



### Milestones

Some milestones we passed in the last four years were the big **40** for both of us. I helped Geoff celebrate his by attempting to throw him a surprise birthday luau, but I couldn't figure out how to hide all my preparations so I cracked and told him what I had been planning. We celebrated mine seven months later by having an ice-skating party at the local ice-skating rink where I got to ride on the Zamboni (who-hoo!). Also, I became a great-aunt in August of 2002 when my great-niece, Kayla, was born. My second great-niece was born on June 25<sup>th</sup> (same birthday as Geoff's) in 2005. (Boy, do I feel old.)



Well, we hope this catches everyone up. Maybe if we do a newsletter next year, we'll realize how much easier it is if you only have to cover one year. Oh, well. Hope you have a blessed 2006.

*Geoff & Rita*