

CHRISTMAS IN GRANTHAM

Greetings from the Isleys

ISLEY FAMILY NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2008

THERE'S A LOT I COULD SAY about a lot of things, but you just want to get to the juicy stuff, I know, but in case anyone cares, whenever you see this sign (*) I can expound on the subject if you like, just email me and I'll say as much as you care to hear or read.



Perry is a senior this year, (no way, right?) so we're doing the whole college visits and totally pestering him to get his application done, and ask for the transcripts, and all that. I am so ready for THAT to be done*. He's applying to Messiah and Ursinus*, and I'm seriously thinking about waiting to send this letter 'til we get acceptance letters, and can tell you what's happening in the fall. Seeing the college visit as a parent was a real trip!**

Where did the time go? How can we have been married 20 years already!? We decided to postpone our anniversary celebration until the spring,

and we're planning a trip to Paris! Dawn and I did travel a little together this year. We took a long weekend trip to the Oregon coast* and Portland in May, attended a conference in Denver* in September.

As a family we took our annual camping trip with the church group to Cape May in August, where I swam into the surf with my glasses on (and came out without them! - 'nuf said) We also drove across the border to Toronto to watch Micah (16) and the Bible Quizzing Team from Grantham Church compete for the denominational championship. They took 5th place, but were really



competitive, especially considering this was the first year quizzing for these guys (yes, all guys!*) Jamie was very impressed with the whole quizzing thing, so this fall he joined, and now the church has enough for two teams! Micah is singing in several choirs and playing his trumpet in high school.

Jamie became officially a teenager this year (well, he turned 12, and like I told him, that means he's finished year 12 and is working on 13 now), and joined the junior-high youth group at church. He spent his summer mostly playing with friends, but he did go for a week to Camp Hebron with a neighborhood friend, and a week of soccer camp at Messiah. He loves all the youth group activities and being a big kid. He's playing drums for the band, jazz

band, and singing in two choirs in the middle school.

This summer Dawn and Micah went to New Mexico for the youth group-missions trip close to the Navajo reservation*, and they helped run a VBS program and did a ton of yard work and construction projects around the BIC mission near Farmington. Dawn spent the week in the kitchen making 3 meals a day for the group of about 43 people, plus lunch every day for the 50 or so Navajo kids who normally would get a government provided lunch, but the official kitchen was closed for renovations that week!

Perry (18) stayed home and worked almost full-time at the UPS store again this summer, and Jamie was the chief puppet master for the church's 3-week God's Big Back Yard program in three different neighborhoods.



Cousins Cousins

We also organized and hosted an Isley family Cousin Camp at Camp Hebron for a long weekend in June. Everyone agreed that we could plan to have our Bash there next year! Just a few weeks later we were all together in New York for the *last* Birthday Bash at Grandma Isley's house. Almost all 18 grandchildren were there, plus the first great-grandchild. It was noisy and fun, but sad, since Grandma had decided to sell her house* and move further south. I worked with my mother to find a place that she could live with, and still be nearby – just in case she'd ever need any special care.



During the spring she came for some fact-finding field trips to visit various retirement communities in central PA, and when she



found one where she could have a gas range, she was ready to sign on the bottom line! She moved from Stuyvesant, N.Y. to Bethany Village on November first, and is starting to settle into her brand-new one-level "cottage" which is only 6 miles from my house!

Dawn had a really big year of changes, starting in January when she started her training as a Stephen Minister for our church's new caregiving program. She also took a graduate-level course towards her early-childhood certification at Millersville Univ. this fall semester (and got an A!) and was a sub for the local school district until December 1st when she was hired at Messiah College's Early Learning Center (a

combination lab school for education majors and Preschool/day-care for community children.) She works 30 hours a week (for the 9 months of the school year) as a teacher for the 3-4-year-olds in the day care center.



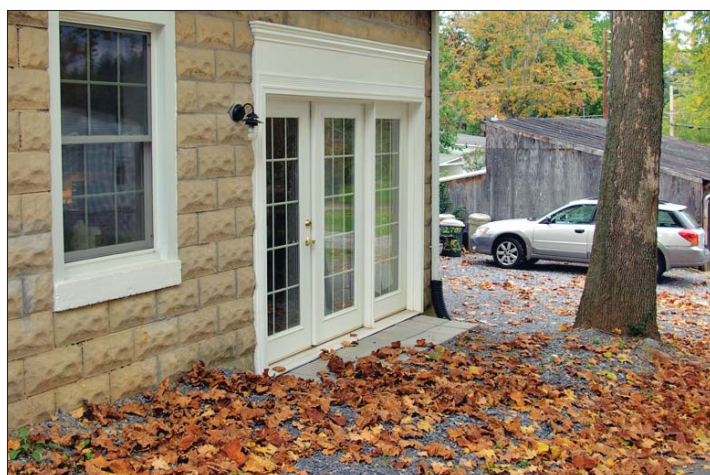
Geoff's Big Project this year was converting the old cement-block garage into studio space for my thriving in-home graphic design business and space to create art out in the garage,

where I can spread out and actually "leave the office" behind at the end of the day. (Don't get the wrong idea – Handyman Bob did the work, I wrote the checks.)

Over the summer I had my first solo exhibition in our church's art gallery, which I direct. It was a series of 25 photographs of various old *BodyBuilder* (church newsletter) covers and other shots of "body life" from the past 20 years since I have been taking pictures at most major events at church.

Happy Holidays

Since my mother is so much closer to three out of four of her children, we were almost all able to be together here in her new place on Thanksgiving. The farthest away now is my younger sister Colin – who became a grandmother this spring only six months after her eleventh child was born – a 6 hour drive. Her two oldest daughters – my nieces – were married this summer, so the family continues to grow!



We hope you are celebrating Jesus every day, but that you especially pay attention to the many ways he speaks to us in our daily lives if we're paying attention. **Let the wonder of the baby Christ child fill you with joy this Christmas season.**

With all our Love, the Isleys

P.S. Many more photos from our various exploits this year are posted to my website at www.isleydesign.com.