



**Merry Christmas 2007
From Ross & Karin Olson
And Grandchildren**

Ross & Karin Olson, Christmas 2007

Dear Family and Friends,

The year has been eventful. It began with a burst pipe on New Year's Eve and ended with Ross going on Medicare. A 70 year old house and a 65 year old retiree can no longer deny their age. The ancient plumbing, in cross section, looked like those TV ads that say, "Ask your doctor about Lipitor." Ross's arteries are still patent, although his medicine cabinet might soon need shelf reinforcement.

The highlight of the year was a July trip to southern China with our oldest son, Jeff, daughter in law, Rachel and granddaughter, Laura, to bring Helen home. We went to the city of Nanchang to meet this adorable little 21 month old with a correctable heart problem (ventricular septal defect.) She has since had her surgery, is developing her delayed motor skills and is in the running for the world's happiest little girl – in public at least. To her parents she occasionally shows another facet of her personality. On the way to get her, we all had a chance to visit old friends and show Laura many of the places familiar to her daddy as he grew up in Hong Kong. Laura's red hair was quite a sensation in mainland China.

Son, Jeff, got a promotion to lead software engineer with Thomson Tax and Accounting (www.thomson.com/solutions/taxacct) working on a program called Checkpoint®. (He refused to tell me how to find loopholes unless I bought the service – I guess working with lawyers all those years had an effect.) He is the volunteer computer guru for First Free Church (www.firstfreechurch.org.) and serves on the Council. Rachel had to step out of Bible Study Fellowship and her leadership role in MOPS but still participates in a group. She is beginning to home-school 4 year old Laura who is eager to learn and is also a good helper with Helen. And as if taking care of 2 children is not enough, she babysits Ryan and Molly McWilliams 2 days a week. Both Jeff and Rachel belong to a small group and share taking Laura to her gymnastics and swimming classes. Laura goes to Bible Study Fellowship with grandma and stays overnight the day before.

Daughter, Susan and her husband Eric are settled in their St. Louis Park apartment. Eric drives a courier for QuickSilver and does consulting engineering work for an old colleague. Susan works at the nearby McDonalds and especially enjoys serving the "old timers" who regularly come for breakfast. She has always had a heart for the elderly, including not only her grandparents, but her rapidly aging parents. She now gets benefits through work. She does house cleaning on the side. They attend Cross of Glory Church in Fridley. They have an internet Quixtar business and you can access their website at www.Hensman-Intl.ltdteam.com (password is "nutrition".)

Son, Jason and his wife Tami are busy with four active children. Jason does commercial roofs for Ettel and Franz (www.ettelfranz.com) and residential roofs when he has spare time. Tami continues to take portraits of children and was exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair. You can see some of her work at <http://smg.photobucket.com/albums/v117/mommo>. Christopher (11) has become a good tennis player and a budding magician. Patrick (8) is big on origami, skateboarding and wants to try gymnastics. Aizec (6) has progressed rapidly in Judo, placed second in the state tournament and may be getting his orange belt before he turns 7. Annika (almost 2) gave everyone anxiety attacks with her reflux and feeding problems but is doing well now if she stays away from dairy. She runs like the wind and follows her brothers everywhere. Although with each other, they are like rugby players, they have learned to be very gentle with little sister (and cousin Helen.)

Daughter, KaWan, is learning a great deal in the Master of Art Education program at the University of Minnesota. She really enjoys the teaching experience at Edison High and Cornelia Elementary, getting a taste of both the inner city – where she has substituted for the last two years -- and suburbia – which increasingly in the Twin Cities includes immigrants and other minorities. She attends

Christ Church International (www.ccimn.com) where she has more opportunity to participate in urban ministries. Pray for KaWan as she continues to keep heightened discernment and dependence on the Lord while dealing with spiritually dark situations in the public schools. Many students she interacts with have gone through incredibly difficult circumstances.

Karin continues to lead a Bible Study Fellowship (www.bsfinternational.org) discussion group, serve as a "Mentor Mom" for Mothers of Preschoolers (www.mops.org) and teach Kindergarten Sunday School at First Free Church. She has had no recent problems with her numb feet and the only other major complication of nearly 40 years of Type I Diabetes, is intestinal, leading to a very slowly emptying stomach with acid reflux and cough. In August, shortly after returning from China, she agreed to go with Ross and the grandsons to Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown and Kitty Hawk. The boys were most impressed that people were once able to live in the wilderness without videogames. Karin has also flown to L'Anse for her Uncle Jim's funeral, then to Tucson to help care for twin boys, born to former sister-in-law, Denise Kusch.

Ross has been retired for two years, is drawing Social Security and on Medicare – hoping to get some return from it before the system goes broke. He is still regularly teaching Junior Church at First Free (www.firstfreechurch.org/ministries/childrens_church), running the website for Twin Cities Creation Science Association (www.tccsa.tc) and serving on the board of Outpost Ministries (www.outpostministries.org). He occasionally writes and speaks on social issues and creation/intelligent design topics. He and Karin flew to Portland in October for a wedding and then stayed to see the beautiful Columbia River Gorge, the spectacular Oregon Coast as well as visit old friends from Hong Kong days.

Our guest room has been busy this year. Niece Sharonda Scott was here just before New Year. Sisters of Sheryll Erickson stayed here during Sheryll's final illness and funeral. Edythe – walker and all – stayed while her apartment was being finished. Denise stayed while exploring a move back to Minnesota. Sheryll's niece, Kristin Erickson, house-sat while we were in China. Chinese student, Bo lived here awaiting his permanent housing. He was a lot of help when the basement flooded during a downpour. Then he and a Chinese friend, Jerry, house-sat (a first for us to leave Chinese unfamiliar with an American house in charge) while we went to Williamsburg. Denise with her twins will be here for Christmas. We have now been in this house for over 25 years.

This year Karin's mom, Edythe Falck, moved in with Tim and Heidi Erickson, her middle daughter and son-in-law. Mom Falck is a great encouragement to all and a wonderful example of the joy that comes from the Lord despite deteriorating eyesight and a recently broken leg – now healing. She also added her 8th grandchild, Katie (younger than the youngest great grandchild), born to her youngest son, Tim 49, and his wife, Laurel 38, who are now first time parents. Ross's dad, Stan Olson, moved to a beautiful one bedroom apartment at Gideon Pond Terrace which is an independent living section of a complex that also offers meals and other services as needed, a small store, transportation and the ambience of a fine hotel.

The collapse of the 35W bridge in August reminds us that every year is a gift and we are so thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ, Who came as a baby 2000 years ago into a most unlikely setting, has given opportunity for us, imperfect and ordinary people, to be involved in His program of reaching out to people He loves with the good news. Do you know Him? Have you given Him first place in your heart? There is no satisfaction or security in any other pursuit and the time to decide may soon be over as the world totters on the brink of potential disasters on every side. Your Creator wants to be your Savior before He returns as your Judge.

Merry Christmas,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ross & Karin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed text "Merry Christmas,".