



*Merry Christmas 2009
From
Ross & Karin Olson
and grandchildren*

December 2009

Merry Christmas,

It's not a blog. It's not a tweet. It's a Christmas letter in the ongoing series of epic Olson sagas. The processed and condensed events of an entire year will hopefully not make the clan look any better or worse than it is but provide insight for the interested and interest for the insightful. (I wonder what THAT means?)

2009 marked the end of an era when Ross's Dad, Stanley Olson, died suddenly in February at age 90, the last of his generation of Olsons. His great legacy and the challenge to those who remain is on our web site www.rossolson.org. Our only remaining parent, Karin's mom, Edythe Falck, has had several falls, some serious, and a heart attack, but is very resilient and we appreciate her presence and prayers for us more than ever. She still lives with Tim and Heidi Erickson but often "vacations" at our house.

Jeff and Rachel, busy raising their three girls, are now expecting yet another daughter — OK, Karin, you can stop praying for granddaughters. Jeff continues to work for Thompson Reuters (www.thomsonreuters.com), as a lead programmer on the Checkpoint® tax research website, which received rave reviews from trade journals. His job to this point has been preserved. Laura (6) is being homeschooled and is an avid reader. Rachel simultaneously cares for Helen (4) who is receiving services for speech and motor skills and Esther (1) who is finding her niche in the family as the typical little sister. The new sibling will change the mix in April. Jeff is the secretary of the Council at First Evangelical Free Church and is both webmaster and cyber supervisor. It sort of reminds me of the Scandinavian lumberjacks who, in their spare time, would stack logs....

Susan and Eric (Anderson) have also been able to stay employed and busy. Eric drives a courier vehicle for Quicksilver and does some engineering consulting work. Susan works for McDonalds and does house cleaning. They are still involved with Quixtar. Look them up at www.Hensman-Intl.ltdteam.com (password is "nutrition") if you are doing any on-line shopping.

Jason and Tami have gone through some rough times and are currently separated. Although Tami and the kids live in Scandia, 45 miles away, she has made it possible for the kids to see Jason and us regularly and continue to go to First Free Church where they have really bonded. Tami continues to home school. Christopher (13) has become somewhat of a celebrity in the rarified world of Rubik's Cube competition. He consistently solves a randomized cube in 17 seconds and has hit 4 seconds at least once. Patrick (10) is a good student and especially likes math. He plays tennis in the summer. Aizec (8) is an orange belt in Judo and is very creative with all sorts of experiments. Annika (almost 4) loves to come to Bible Study Fellowship with Grandma and cousin Helen. Jason's union job doing commercial flat roofs disappeared but he has been working for Carpenter Construction doing residential roofs and is going to be sent to Denver when the roofing season ends here in Minnesota.

KaWan continues to reserve teach in the Minneapolis Public Schools, all grades, mostly working with EBD and Special Education departments, and at times fusing her background of visual art. She is also growing a photography business serving a local modeling agency, families, and internationals. Check out www.Kosuraphotography.com. Note: she took our Christmas picture this year. KaWan has contracted with a magazine for photographic work on an article about human trafficking. She moved in July to an apartment next door to her friend, Christy Fleming.

Ross & Karin keep plugging along, maybe at a slightly slower clip than before, but with no intention of stopping. Ross helps support Karin's ministry of hospitality. He completed a backyard deck in June (and has the slowly healing injuries to prove it.) Karin hosted many events on the deck as well as in the house and Ross does the unskilled jobs, such as set up and clean up. We have also had many using our guest room over the year. Karin had cataract surgery this summer and for the first time since grade school, does not need glasses. She continues to lead a discussion group at Bible Study Fellowship, and brings the two little girls (who stay over and thus spend over 24 hours each week with grandma and grandpa). She especially likes dressing them in identical outfits and loves the "Are they twins?" questions. Karin also is a Mentor Mom for a Mothers of Pre-Schoolers group at our church and is in her 7th year of teaching Kindergarten Sunday School. Together we continue to host Chinese students, attend China Outreach Ministry meetings (www.comumn.org) and include our Chinese friends in family activities as they are able. We got away for most of a week to Bob's Cabins on the North Shore for pure relaxation and reading, reading and more reading.

Ross teaches Junior church, grades 4 - 6, and takes the kids on semi-annual hikes by the river, the most recent group numbering about 70 including all the helpers. He has begun teaching Creation Science to the Kingdom Builders home school co-op and is on the board of Twin Cities Creation Science Association where he also manages the web site www.tccsa.tc. He is Chair of the Outreach Commission at church, charged with promoting both missions and evangelism. Ross volunteered to write the history and develop a pictorial history of First Free Church for its 125th Anniversary (and aged about 125 years in the process.) He runs the website for Outpost Ministries www.outpostministries.org and Chairs the board. He attempts to follow the advice of a wise activist who said "Spend 90% of your time doing good and 10% fighting evil." But that 10% can get really interesting. By being involved in setting up a debate at the University of Minnesota and placing posts on the blog of a prominent atheist, the vigorous ad hominem attacks achieved enough name recognition and notoriety to probably be electable for any office in Chicago. There have been fun times with the grandchildren including a trip to the Spam Museum in Austin, Minnesota with the grandsons and a trip to Chicago with Laura.

We are awed by all the opportunities God has given us to be involved in influencing the lives of so many people. We can love because God first loved us and sent His Son.



With love to you,

Karin & Ross Olson