



*Merry Christmas 2009
and Happy New Year 2010
from
the Berry - Hynes-Berry family*



What have we done this year? We seem to have been busy, but it was just one of those years where the running was mostly in place - did we even catch up? I don't think so! Did you? We hope you did!

But looking back to where we were a year ago, there has been lots of progress around us: both Mary and I have been rather insulated from the employment problems of so many people - the good fortune of having academic positions - it has been more difficult for our four sons and their families, but we are proud of all of them in finding ways forward in their own particular ways:

We might as well start with them, [just in brief]: (More about their wonderful children later in the letter...)

GEB continues successfully as Associate Vice-President at L'Oreale, in New York - **Alison**, his associate at home, is teaching - she drove to Chicago with her 2 boys and the 2 girls in July in their super-smooth "new/not-so-old" Cadillac, while GEB flew over later for a brief stay; perhaps they will buy a home while prices remain low!

Sebastien continues to teach in the Louisville public schools, while **Mia** is always in demand for her organizational and other skills keeping AT&T cell networks in shape; both moving right along...

Nico has had a harder time promoting his freelance design work, but continues to thrive, and help Simone at home; while **Sarah** goes from strength to strength, following up her 2-year scholarship with a 2-year teaching position at Stanford (started in September this Fall).

Daniel and **Anita**, with worries about being able to stay in Frankfurt, Germany, after the summer, worked thru visa problems finally, with their usual "true grit and determination" both found positions, and plan to stay there a year or two.

Our highlight of the year was the time of the visits of the five grand-girls in July: They were all together, waking up 5411 Harper for nearly a week. Together with Alison's two sons; most of them also got to the back-back of the South Bend garden (see the pics on the next page - click on them to enlarge). We were lucky to have Mireille and Savannah for an extra 10 days until Geb came - All seven of them tried their hand at sewing under Mary's expert tutelage. Of course, Mary happened to find an extra sewing machine to take back to Brooklyn, where they continue to sew avidly. Just a wonderful time for all of us. The older ones are such great readers - and they all play so well together - they enjoyed making mud pies on the front path - too bad we had to give them all back (children, not mud pies) to their far-away homes...amazing to think that Mireille is now 9 years old and Tyra and Simone are four.

Other visits: Mary has a wonderful new daughter - Qian stayed at Harper with Mary for 3 months in the Spring - she is an early childhood expert from Shanghai, on leave at the Erikson Institute. Other visits were shorter - Nico, Sarah and Simone came in June - they created a "designer-front step" - I suppose it makes up for the loss of the dragon painting on the back of the house. which disappeared when we converted last year to fiber-cement walls (no need to paint, and warmer!). Daniel and Anita came twice - once in July, when Anita's parents, Tito and Mary flew up from New Mexico - the four of them drove off to Mary's ancestral home in Alpena in north-east Michigan (land of the Nowakowski's); and then again for Thanksgiving - breaks from their now-busy German lives - can you imagine Daniel teaching English!

Mary and I will be having Christmas with them in Frankfurt on a fairly extended European jaunt - it starts sadly - our old friend (actually still "our age" as we used to say when we were all in our 20s-30s in Tucson) and physics colleague, Indrek Martinson, died suddenly at his home near Lund, Sweden - so we go first to his funeral (we'll arrive in Copenhagen as Barack solves the Global Warming problem there - don't we wish!) - then to Frankfurt, then New Year in England with John, JC., and Phil.

I must mention our new back-deck, and little back-door entry room - something Mary has wanted for years - all done by a father-son combo - it was a fascinating social experience, especially for the listening/watching Savannah, since they argued quite vociferously most of the time - they also put on a new garage roof and automatic door much to Mary's delight, especially now that the Chicago winter weather has shown up. Now we need a new dragon painting (hint) on the garage on the pristine white doors.

Mary and I have been enjoying giving a "physics colloquium" together at various places around the country - we call it "Milton meets Einstein; inquiring minds want to know" - and we get those physicists to wake up and do some hands-on learning - you can check out our slides on the website. It is quite remarkable that our areas of interest now overlap so well, and additionally that we discovered that **George Godfrey Berry** (grandpa Berry's older brother) taught Bertrand Russell a thing or two about paradoxes - since he never published, mathematics philosophers had wondered what happened to him (all in the talk).

Finally, can we fit in all the rest? Two graduations attended - one with Obama at Notre Dame was a wonderful experience, the other had Mary in a gown (!) at Erikson. Mary has a publisher for her book (still writing) "**Don't Leave the Story in the Book**". The BBC spent a Sunday in the house filming my reminiscences of Steve Hawking - part of a tribute for when he dies - I hope I live to see it! On the health front, we were sad to have Mike Willette's funeral in the Spring; Mary's brother Hilary had a stroke but is recovering, Mary's brother Patrick had his teeth re-arranged (parts from a cow), but is talking again - makes my double hernia operation in October seem minimal, but I certainly notice not being as fast and nimble... So finally, we urge you to forget the old Irish proverb I found recently: "Beware of the horns of a bull, of the heels of a horse, and of the smile of an Englishman"....

