

\* \* \* \* \* New Year Greetings \* \* \* \* \*

Another year has drawn to a close for the Parks of Wisconsin. Music continued to play an important part in our lives during 1995. We had a successful 2nd annual Winter Musicale at our home on March 4th. The music began with an attempt by Bob to play a harmonica piece accompanied by our peek-a-poo dog howling along. Barbara sang, Mischa played a difficult flute sonatina accompanied by one of our Prairie Society pianists, and Robin played an original piano piece which he had composed for the occasion (Barb & Bob's belated birthday celebration).

Ian continues to improve on trombone and plays in his middle school's 7th grade band. We were saddened by the recent death of his band teacher, who had been on medical leave much of the fall semester.

Mischa continues to take private flute lessons, though this year saw his final piano recital as the years of piano lessons came to a close. He plays flute in the Honor Bands at his high school and, after getting the top rating in regional and statewide school music competitions, he began playing flute Saturday mornings on the UW campus this fall with one of the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras, so we have plenty of concerts to go to. We were pleased to have his contribution of flute music at our Prairie Christmas program as well. He takes the bus to the UW campus for a first hour calculus each school day, while taking the rest of his classes at West High. He got his driver's license in January. The highlight of his summer was 6 weeks in Costa Rica on a student exchange program, immersed in spanish. Following his return he resumed lessons in Hwa Rang Do with friends and has now passed his green belt. In addition, Wednesday evenings he has been sitting in on a class at the University on astronomy and the theories of Einstein.

Robin is in his 3rd year as a music composition major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and plans to take classical guitar lessons next semester in addition to continuing with his regular classes.

Barbara has continued as our choir director at Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society, and has again this year sung with both the Madison Symphony Chorus and the Madison Area Technical College Show Choir. The highlight of her summer was a week in Rome in June with the Show Choir, during which they sang for the pope (as part of a "private" audience with about 4000 other visitors) and in St. Peter's. Part of her group even got to sing in the catacombs. The Pope requested that they not sing religious music. They sang "Simple Gifts" and "Oh Shenandoah". The choir was joined on the trip by the Madison Municipal Band, which included Ian's band teacher. Barb is continuing as a ski patroller again this winter.

Robert has continued to sing bass in the Prairie choir and to experiment with computers and music. This summer he invested \$6 in a garage sale Amiga computer which he now has playing modular music files through a stereo in the basement music room. He is co-teaching the "Church Across the Street" curriculum to Ian's Sunday School class at Prairie this year, which involves discussing other religions and attending services at other churches in the area.

Casey and her boyfriend John are planning to move back to Wisconsin from Illinois in 1996. They and their cat and large dog spent Christmas with us.

On December 29 and 30 Barb and I and the 3 boys were pleased to be able to participate in the festivities surrounding the wedding of Warren's daughter Catherine to Benjamin Vail. More than 60 guests from as far away as Italy gathered for dinner at a vegetarian restaurant on the 29th, where we heard various testimonials from members of both families and old friends of the couple. The wedding was at the Twin Cities Friends Meeting House on the afternoon of the 30th, and included more words of praise and support for Catherine and Ben and two original piano pieces composed and played by Warren. That evening we celebrated with dinner and dancing at the University Club. There the fine group of musicians arranged for by Warren played a wide variety of music, including pieces from Warren's book of original piano compositions, Ancient Windows. Our year ended with a celebration of New Year's Eve at Warren's home, with James and Rita joining us, and they rejoined us the next day to begin 1996 with a wonderful New Year's Day dinner.