

2003

THE FLYNNS' YEAR IN REVIEW

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."
(Luke 2:10-11)*

Greetings friends and family! Welcome to this year's belated edition of the Flynn Family Christmas newsletter! No, you weren't placed on the "naughty" list this year; we are simply a little behind on most everything this holiday season! So here we go: our year in review...

travels Our travels this year took us near and far. We visited with many dear friends and former classmates at Pepperdine's Homecoming in February. Later that same month, Carl took Chantal away for a few days "to show her Yosemite" (Carl has hiked Half Dome; Chantal isn't exactly the outdoors type). There was snow on the ground, but we stayed in the Yosemite Lodge (i.e., NOT camping) and were able to explore the Yosemite Valley floor. Carl even dragged Chantal on a "short" hike to Vernal Fall. We also enjoyed seeing many friends at the Pepperdine Bible Lectures in April. We made our semiannual pilgrimages to Lake Havasu for the Memorial and Labor Day weekends to spend time with Carl's family. In July, we traveled to Laguna Beach to experience our second "Pageant of the Masters" (where actors recreate art masterpieces). We went to Waco, Texas for a long weekend in August and saw many of our dear friends. In November, we attended Carl's annual professional conference in Atlanta, Georgia, where we stayed on the 54th floor of tallest hotel in the Western Hemisphere! This holiday season, Carl's Dad & Deb took a bunch of us in a stretch limo to see the "Glory of Christmas" at the Crystal Cathedral.

celebrations This past year we rejoiced in the pregnancies of many of our friends and the births of many of their babies. We hosted a "Lilo & Stitch"-themed birthday party for ourselves in June (#33). We rejoiced with our dear Waco friends John & Lisa Robinson on the successful adoption of a beautiful baby girl named Katie in September. Carl's brother Sean became engaged to Chevonne Brandon in October. We celebrated our 11th wedding anniversary on December 12. Since we could not get away for our actual anniversary weekend (due to finals grading), we traveled to Santa Barbara the following weekend, in conjunction with the wedding of our friend Sarah McLean to Jeff Henness.

visitor Our friend Wendy Neill (formerly of Waco, Texas) came to visit for a few days in June on a "mommy-away" weekend. We gave her the whirlwind tour of Southern California that began with a visit to Pepperdine's campus and ended with a tour of Warner Bros. Studios (Chantal, a "Gilmore Girls" fan, was particularly giddy when the tour took her to Lorelai and Rory's kitchen and living room!).

family On September 12, Carl's Dad successfully underwent quadruple bypass surgery. Dad has recovered and healed remarkably well. He is already back to work and doing many of the things he enjoyed prior to his surgery. Many of you prayed along with us for Dad's surgery and recovery. We thank you for your fellowship in prayer and for God's faithfulness in answering our cries to Him.

us We continue to worship with the University Church of Christ, which Carl has taken to calling the "church on the move," since it seems we meet in a different place every other week for classes and worship. Our relationships with Pepperdine students continue to be a blessing. We participate in graduation ceremonies (Carl marches as faculty and Chantal helps with the Dean's Office). We attend the college Care Group on

us Wednesday nights, the fall and spring Campus Ministry retreats, and student theater productions. We both serve on the Residential Emergency Response Team, which communicates to and directs students in the event that a disaster threatens the campus (this means that if we're on-campus already, we stay; if we're off-campus, we're notified and come to campus and stay). We also continue to be involved in the fight against breast cancer, and participated in the Revlon Run/Walk for Women in May and the Komen Foundation's L.A. Race for the Cure in November.

chantal Chantal successfully co-produced (whatever that means) the much-anticipated return of the Faculty/Staff (plus Alumni) group at Pepperdine's Songfest in March. The group received rave reviews (especially from Carl, who attended every performance!) and Chantal says it's the most fun she's ever had in her life. She hopes to do it all over again next spring. She was upgraded to Office Manager of the Seaver College Career Center as of August 1, and was awarded the Staff Member of the Month for Student Affairs for September. She proudly and enthusiastically represented her class of 1992 at Founder's Day Convocation this past September. She continues to practice yoga and successfully passed her CPR and First Aid certifications this fall. Chantal's goals for 2004 include a house and a puppy.

carl Carl continues to serve as Visiting Lecturer of Religion at Pepperdine University. In the spring he survived a grueling semester teaching four upper-division, writing courses (3 sections of "Religion & Culture"; 1 section of "The Christian Faith"). This fall he taught three sections of "New Testament Introduction" and co-taught a short course on film and theology in conjunction with the City of Angels Film Festival. He continues to enjoy teaching, finding his greatest joy in the ministry to students found through the classroom. Outside of the classroom, Carl participated in intramurals basketball and volleyball (his basketball team won the "B" league championship!). He also continues to serve as an assistant instructor in the Beginning Volleyball class. Carl's summer was dedicated to dissertation research and writing and, to be honest, did not go very well at all (see "Transitions" below...). In May, he officiated at the funeral of Steve Russell (Carl's stepmother's stepfather). While in Atlanta, Carl went to his first NFL football game (Falcons v. Titans). And, topping his achievements for the year, he took the grand prizes at Mike & Lydia Folkerts' baby shower by downing the most juice from a baby bottle and correctly identifying 8 out of 10 jars of unmarked baby food!

transitions We shift from "we" to "I" at this point, since this section is best expressed from Carl's perspective. I do not have the space to get into all of the gory details, so I'll cut to the chase: I am no longer pursuing a career as a university professor, either at Pepperdine or at any other institution. The process that has led to this decision has been more complex and agonizing than I could ever imagine. Suffice it to say that in October I came to a point where my life was literally spiraling out of control and I was unable to find a foothold. I was experiencing what I now know is a depression brought on by years and years of living a life that was not my own. In the midst of my grief I was led, graciously, to a counselor who is helping me to deal honestly with myself not only in regard to vocational issues, but also the deeper dimensions of this crisis. Where am I going from here? I don't quite know yet. What about the dissertation? My current intent is to finish it and graduate with my Ph.D., but I don't know when and I don't know exactly how. I am taking this time (especially during the Winter Break) to continue to explore my "internal life" and am committed to working toward a depth of self-understanding I've been too afraid to pursue for many, many years. I continue to work with a counselor to explore and understand the particular gifts, strengths, passions, interests and values God has blessed me with and how these frame various opportunities for my next move. I covet your prayers as I continue to move through to the other side of my depression and am hopeful that the Lord will bless this process of transition.

We hope that you enjoy a beautiful Christmas with your loved ones and have a wonderful 2004!

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."
(Numbers 6:24-26)

Carl & Chantal Flynn
2472 Vista Wood Circle #28
Thousand Oaks, California 91362
(805) 241-1835
carl.flynn@pepperdine.edu
c2flynn@yahoo.com



In Laguna Beach for the Pageant of the Masters