

THE CHAN FAMILY'S 1999-AT-A-GLANCE

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS!

The long-awaited Behrens/Spokane street closure became reality in March.

With God's help and many friends and relatives pitching in, we successfully moved out of our house in California, then not once but *twice* into apartments in Washington.

Our house in El Cerrito was rented out in June to a very nice family with two young kids. They appreciate both the house and the neighborhood, and have done a great job of transforming the backyard into a pleasant place for play and relaxation.

Without interruption in work, Gilbert took a Bechtel position in a project in Richland, and began commuting to Washington in February.

WELCOME TO THE TRI-CITIES:

Made up of Richland, Kennewick and Pasco. Located two hours drive east of the Cascades, it does *not* rain much here. There is greenery due to its proximity to the Columbia River. People here warn that this place "grows on you." Many have moved to this area with intentions of staying for a couple of years only to find themselves still here after as many as 24 years!

Family moved up in April, when it was still chilly and windy (perhaps more windy than Chicago in the summer and winter). But that gave way in the summer to temperatures averaging in the 80s and exceeding 102 degrees Fahrenheit-- thank God it was a DRY heat.

With fewer daylight hours came refreshing fall colors in some of the relatively sparse (for Washington state) number of trees. Fun seeing and trampling through piles of dry leaves without having to rake any! Deciduous trees "disappearing," revealing the stark horizon for miles around. Flat except for a few token hills. Sky appears incredibly BIG. More rain expected, perhaps even a bit of snow, as winter approaches. Air can get so dry that cars, doorknobs and rugs give electric shocks.

THANKFUL FOR FUN . . .

We made some use of the swimming pool and exercise equipment at the apartment complex we first stayed at, and we all did some form of dancing throughout the year.

Gilbert participated in a dance demo for a work Christmas party. Winnie was in a fashion show. Josiah and Mommy got photographed one windy day by a local newspaper photographer.

. . . & RECREATION

Gilbert got to play some organized volleyball for the first time in many years during the spring, then played on a softball team with some co-workers during the summer. Because the project has a British company as prime contractor, about half the softball team had not played before and the early games were moral victories when we went consecutive innings without the opposition batting around. As the losing streak was well on its way to double digits, Gilbert was certain it would not go on forever after one night when the previous game was called due to rain (a rarity) and he grabbed some bats and said "Let's take batting practice" and the entire team followed to practice for over an hour in the rain. A couple of late-season wins probably stopped the opposition from laughing and a first-round playoff win avoided a last-place finish.

CELEBRATIONS

Winnie celebrated her 40th birthday in this desert, but she hopes it's not the first of 40 years in the "wilderness" as the Israelites had before entering the promised land.

For Josiah's 3rd birthday, we went to a nearby truck stop where he could enjoy watching big rigs lumber around and park all in rows. Instead of regular birthday cake, he got strawberries and whipped cream topped with three donut holes doubling as candle holders. He liked the car tent we got him for his twin mattress, and the Brio starter set from our former neighbors in El Cerrito.

In October we joined Gilbert's family for a 10-day Mexican Riviera cruise—thanks, Dad!☺ Upon arrival in San Diego to board the ship, an earthquake served as a 3AM wake up call. The cruise was fun and Gilbert's Mom was surprised with her early 70th birthday celebration. Josiah played with Mexican beach sand and ate strawberries and "chocolates that say 'Good night'."

Gilbert and Winnie celebrated 6 years of marriage in November!

PRAISE GOD FOR HOUSING

In October, en route to the airport, we made a last-minute change of which apartment to move to. In early November, we traded a big 2-bedroom 1-bath apartment at a complex with cats and a few dogs for a 3-bedroom 2-bath place with ducks and a beautiful swan in a man-made lake at Clearwater Bay Apartments. The "laughing duck" is funny.



Formal night aboard the cruise ship Statendam

NEW CHURCH INVOLVEMENTS

Plugged into a growing church and small group. Gilbert helped with the new Bethel Church building project (to be occupied by February, 2000). Bethel's Bible teaching is solid and relevant, fellowship opportunities are plentiful, and the care group we're in is challenging and also includes childcare. Josiah is in the children's program during Sunday worship services. Sermons are suddenly easier to understand!

Gilbert is part of "Cross Training," a men's accountability group that meets at Bethel before 6AM on Tuesdays. Winnie went to "Joy in the Morning" gatherings (with plenty of sharing and crying...), a women's group that meets later on Tuesday mornings.

Our care group meets Tuesday nights. We've gone through Larry Burkett's *How to Manage Your Money*, and have found some major areas for application (i.e., budget, will/living trust, life insurance). Presently, our care group is focusing on the importance of praying effectively and regularly.

LEARNING CORNER

Winnie is still learning after all these years. "Nothing like waiting for a 3-year-old to put on socks and shoes to go out, get his teeth brushed, or ready for bed at the end of the day, to realize just how impatient I can be. Also, having read Philip Yancey's *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, I see some of the many ways God's grace needs to be poured out into the world through His people, and how I (we) fail so immensely because of pride, self-righteousness, lack of compassion, and plain old thoughtlessness.

"Sometimes I feel like such a failure. Then I throw myself at God's feet and weep. How wonderful it is to have such a patient and forgiving Father in heaven who understands my weaknesses and covers me with love and mercy!"

CLOSING REMARKS

Josiah still likes construction "work-things," had a dinosaur phase and a Thomas the Tank Engine period, and is now wild about Veggie Tales and silly songs.

Josiah's faithful and nearly inseparable companion, Davey, the brown dog puppet says, "Sometimes I talk for him and also brush his teeth. I am very patient and don't mind being sat on, strangled, thrown or banged around. I don't like it when people call me a teddy bear but I don't bark at them. I've been washed twice, but the worst part is hanging upside-down to dry."

One of our return visits home providentially coincided with Mari's first visit to San Francisco. Mari and Winnie were roommates in China 13 years ago! So Mari and her family, Gilbert and Winnie were able to meet together and enjoy watching the S.F. Giants beat the Phillies in baseball (Mari's favorite team is also the Giants, the Yomiuri Giants from Tokyo).

Why the second move in Washington? Our things in storage were being delivered and we needed another room to put the big furniture in. More importantly, we are expecting a new sibling for Josiah by mid-January, 2000! (And Winnie's Mom is planning to come stay with us after Christmas until baby's at least a month old.) ☺

We live about 4 hours drive east of Portland and Seattle, and 2 hours southwest of Spokane. Come visit us if you're in the area! For more details and more photos, see our website at <http://www.geocities.com/heartland/village/1273>.

We thank God for being with us through all the various changes and challenges this past year. May you be blessed with a heartwarming Christmas season and new year filled with love and thanksgiving.

Gilbert, Winnie, Josiah and (?) Chan

5225 W. Clearwater Ave. Apt A-5

Kennewick, WA 99336

Telephone: (509) 734-2446

E-mail: gwjchan@juno.com