

# Merry Christmas from the Gardiners

*O holy night! The something something distant  
It is the night with the Christmas trees and pie.  
Jesus was born and so I get presents.  
Thank you, Jesus for being born.*

-Eric Cartman



Lesley was the author last year, so it's my turn to write another one of these cheesy family updates. We've been writing these epistles since we were married. Why quit now? 2007 was certainly not boring for us. We engaged in a good deal of travel, work, education, and plain old fun. Our trips included Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Watertown, South Dakota; Arlington, Virginia; Annapolis, Maryland; Mackinac Island, Michigan; Yellowstone, Wyoming; Normal, Illinois; and Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.



Lesley went fishing with friends

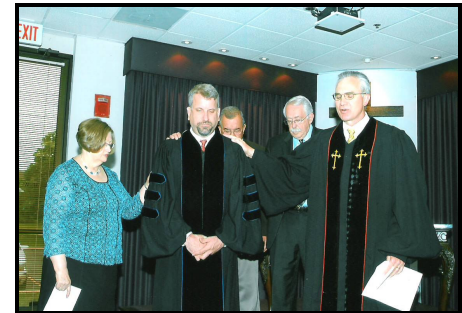
Lesley has now finished her coursework toward a Ph.D. and will likely graduate in 2008. She continues to teach at Marquette and to practice nursing for Aurora Quick Care throughout southeastern Wisconsin. She has tightened her connections with her "Milwookie" friends and she is now training for strongwoman competition. Lesley became a big fan of the Milwaukee Brewers this year, attending opening day and a multitude of other games. With Prince Fielder, Ryan Braun, and J.J. Hardy leading the crew, the Brewers very



Lesley at Miller Park, sitting  
In front of Bob Eucker

nearly made it to the playoffs this year. They were really fun to watch and Lesley already has her tickets for next year. She says that she would love Brewers' clothes and weight training equipment for Christmas. Lesley's ferrets, Feanor and Obi, are still with us. Obi is ancient.

I was installed as the Assistant Pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church this year. This church is one of the most delightful I've ever been associated with. I preach once every month or two and lead adult bible study every Sunday. The church recently purchased new property and will be relocating in January. We're all pretty excited about it. I'm now in my third year as the Social Studies department chairman at Catholic Central High School. I took the juniors back to Gettysburg in February and continue to lead the student re-enactors club. I also serve as advisor to the senior class and coordinate the graduation ceremony. I was pleased to recruit U.S. Congressman Paul

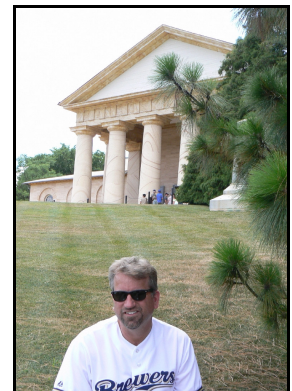


Rick being installed as Assistant Pastor



The CCHS re-enactors' club; Rick is the 4<sup>th</sup>  
from the left; Mary is 2<sup>nd</sup> from the right

Ryan to give the commencement address this year. During the summer, I took a few trips: I visited an old high school friend in South Dakota, and while there saw the actual Laura Ingalls "Little House on the Prairie." I also went to D.C. during the anniversary of Bull Run and toured Arlington. When I had to travel to Maryland on an unexpected medical visit with mom at Thanksgiving, I had the chance to take a quick tour of the Annapolis State House where the Continental Congress met during 1783.



Together, Lesley and I traveled to Mackinac Island where bicycles are the only transportation permitted on the island. This is one of our favorite destinations and we had a very nice stay. In August, we joined Lesley's whole family at Yellowstone, Wyoming. We saw a lot of buffalo, a bear, many waterfalls, and several geysers including Old Faithful. Lesley went horseback riding while I rented a bicycle.



Mackinac Island



Mary started a Master's Degree at Illinois State University in January. She got engaged in the summer and will be getting married in Cape May, New Jersey on December 29, 2007. We all traveled to Juniata College, in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, to watch Mary graduate with her class in May. After her wedding, Mary and Scott are going to Europe for a while, and then next summer, they'll be given an assignment in the Peace Corps.



THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE  
IS REQUESTED AT THE MARRIAGE OF

*Mary Elizabeth Gardiner*  
TO  
*Scott Richard Stephan*

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH OF DECEMBER  
TWO THOUSAND AND SEVEN  
AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

AT CAPE MAY FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
780 SEASHORE ROAD  
CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW  
UNION PARK RESTAURANT  
727 BEACH AVE

It's our hope that this Christmas will be a blessed time for you. Through the gift of the baby Jesus, may you come to a more complete understanding of God's infinite grace. Every year that goes by, every year that Lesley and I get closer to our eternal destiny, we marvel more at the way in which God's love and grace are the only elements that will sustain our marriage, our souls, and our lives. All that we have, all that we are, all that we will be are the result of God's graciousness. May you, too, come to the profound realization that the grace of God is always more comprehensive than you think.

If you get a chance, send us a response. We like to keep in touch.

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