

# Happy Holidays! 2005

Greetings from the frozen tundra of Wisconsin. Once again the Gardiner family has moved and this time back to the land of cheese and Packer fans. Our move took place on January 1, 2005 and it turned out to be an incredibly wise transition. Lesley is now fulfilling her vocation full-time. She is a nurse practitioner for Aurora Health Care in the *Quick Care* clinics. She is also teaching for Marquette University and Alverno College in their nursing schools. Richard took a position as the Chair of the Social Studies Department at Catholic Central High School in Burlington and is enjoying every minute of it.



Family Trip to New York City for Thanksgiving 2004.

Mary is attending college in the Czech Republic and apparently having the time of her life. She travels a great deal and is teaching English as a side job. Somewhere in all that fun, we hope she is attending classes and learning something about other cultures and life.

Our year has been a very busy one. Even though we moved to Wisconsin in January, we needed to move again to accommodate our various jobs. We started off on the north side of Milwaukee before moving to Sturtevant (20 minutes south of Milwaukee) in July. In the midst of these transitions, Richard finished his Ph.D. in American History after several years of hard work and completion of the dissertation in May. Donna Gardiner, Mary Gardiner, and Scott and Paula Boaz all made the trip up for the graduation ceremony. Lesley was admitted to Marquette University this fall to continue working toward a Ph.D. in nursing. She anticipates graduating in three years.



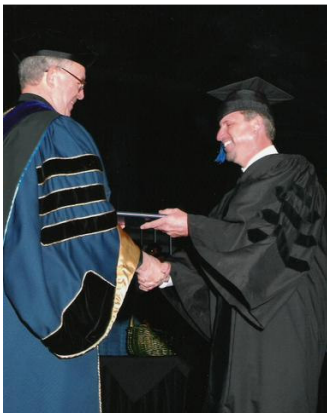
Top: Mary and a friend in Europe. Under: Post-graduation tour of St. Joan of Arc Chapel at Marquette University

Our ferrets, Obi and Féanor, are still with us. Féanor underwent surgery in October to repair her anterior cruciate ligament. She is doing very well now and continues to be hyper and jumpy. During the summer we enjoyed a trip to Florida to visit with Richard's father in celebration of his

70<sup>th</sup> year. During our time there Lesley and Mary swam with manatees – truly an outstanding experience. The sheer size of these creatures is intimidating but they are gentle and curious and enjoyed having their bellies scratched by divers.



Rick and a teaching colleague (Todd Willems) dressed as Blues Brothers for Spirit Week at CCHS. Below: President Wild hands Rick a Ph.D. Degree.





No motorized vehicles are permitted on Mackinac Island, where we went biking this summer.

Living in Wisconsin affords us many opportunities for entertainment and recreation. We had a lovely sailing trip in Milwaukee and drove around Lake Michigan on the Circle Tour, stopping off at Mackinac Island for the day. Concerts were aplenty and included Michael Buble, George Jones, Kenny Chesney, Gretchen Wilson, Brad Paisley, and Elton John. We are able to use our bikes more now that the landscape is flat and even rode from Manitowoc to Sturtevant in a grueling one-day trip over 70 miles – a bit longer than



anticipated but we were proud we actually finished. Lesley also attended FilmCon in Madison recently. For our ten year wedding anniversary, we traveled to Nashville and watched the Grand Ole Opry as well as took in

some other sights around town and conducted a bit of genealogy. The grave sites of some of Lesley's ancestors were found.



Pretending to be Johnny Rich, Rick tugged on the Ryman auditorium door in downtown Nashville



We will be journeying to Arkansas to be with the Boaz family for Christmas this year. As we have been shocked and mistreated over the last few years by the unscrupulous behavior of various leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we've had difficulty maintaining ongoing ministry in that denomination. But we remain big fans of the sovereign graciousness of God, whose love is our only hope in life, in marriage, and in death. Our greatest Christmas gift is the fact that God has preserved us as each other's best friend in the midst of this year's many transitions, difficulties, and achievements.

May Jesus' birth bring you contentment,

*Rick, Lesley, Marybeth, Obi, & Féanor Gardiner*