

# Happy Holidays!

## 2009 Wood Family Newsletter

Welcome to our fourth annual newsletter! The year started out with a challenge for **Jenny**. She was called to be Relief Society President for her ward. The Relief Society is the women's organization of the LDS church, providing weekly lessons, monthly home visits, and other forms of support to help church families. Jenny loves her calling, which provides an opportunity to learn how to delegate tasks while always focusing on how to help her sisters in faith. It's a humbling job, but a fulfilling one as well.

Jenny also enjoyed lots of chances to travel this year. Along with the annual family summer trip (described in Andy's section), she cherished the opportunity to spend three magical weekends away from normal life. In spring Jenny and Andy went to southern Utah's Monument Valley, where they drove Andy's beloved Highway 163 and hiked around the giant monuments that jut out of the desert like alien monoliths. For some odd reason, Jenny loves things that tower over her, so Monument Valley is one of her favorite places. For that same reason, she also loves Yosemite National Park. So Jenny and Andy traveled to the valley in the fall, riding cruiser bikes through the meadows, stopping to see deer along the way, and "enjoying" an exhausting hike up to Vernal Falls. It was like a honeymoon (everything but the hike, actually).



*Vienna, Jenny, and Andy in Vermont on Diner Tour*



*Jenny, Andy, Mary, and Craig at Key West, Florida*

Also in fall, Jenny and Andy flew for a weekend trip to Key West, Florida, surprisingly the first time that they'd seen that part of the state where they were born. Spending time with their good friends **Mary** and **Craig Napoli**, they snorkeled in the blue water (though Jenny got really seasick for some inexplicable reason), celebrated gorgeous sunsets in Mallory Square, lounged by the pool at their awesome B&B, and perused the shops along Duval Street. The best part, though, was spending time with friends, laughing and building great memories together. It was a terrific experience.

Jenny and Andy also started classes at Cabrillo College on Wednesday nights. Jenny's class was Voice and the Musical Stage, which is just her style. She dedicated most of her class time to singing, enjoying the talents of others, and learning new vocal techniques. Her two performance pieces this semester were "I Could've Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady* and "There are Worse Things I Could Do" from *Grease*.

Throughout the year, Jenny has maintained her real estate empire, managing four properties and one that is yet to be built. She's checked Facebook daily to stay connected with old friends. And she accepted a district PTA position as Communication Chair. Of course, Jenny still works in Seagate's tax department (and she's truly grateful for a secure job during these tough times for the economy). Jenny had a great year, and she looks forward to 2010.

**Andy** reports that this was likely his most complex and busy year in his job at San José State University, where he was promoted to full professor. He's glad to anticipate a few weeks over winter when he can enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation. He's wrapping up his third and final year as director of the campus Peer Mentor Program, where he works with an amazing group of student leaders, and he is slowly beginning to realize how much he'll miss the thrill of helping young people grow in such a direct and meaningful way. But he's also excited to get back to the classroom, especially for the chance to teach graduate students again. He even looks forward to directing theses again!



Andy and Jenny at Vernal Falls, Yellowstone National Park

His newest book, *City Ubiquitous*, finally hit the shelves after years of research, writing, and revision. And it's made quite a splash. Andy was invited to speak before several local groups off-campus, and he traveled to Phoenix to present a talk before SJSU alumni. He's even been invited to be the keynote speaker at the Rocky Mountain States Communication Association's annual meeting in spring of next year. Best of all, *City Ubiquitous* received the Urban Communication Foundation's 2009 Jane Jacobs book award, which included a lovely statue, a nice check, and special recognition at the National Communication Association's meeting in Chicago. What's his next project? Andy hasn't decided yet, and he's in no rush to start.



Andy and friend at roadside zoo

Andy also loved the chance to organize the family's summer roadtrip. This year's theme: The Wood Family Diner Tour, a two-week gastronomical tour of the best diners in New England. The trip focused on chrome streamliners, but it also included Maine lobster rolls, spicy hot dogs, greasy cheesesteaks, and a side-visit to Montreal where the Woods savored al fresco dining in the French tradition. Want to relive the trip online? Visit this website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/2009dinertour/>

One final journey involved the professor going back to school. As SJSU responded to its fiscal woes by implementing furloughs, Andy found enough extra time in his schedule to register for a class in modern art history at nearby Cabrillo College. So he and Jenny spent their Wednesday evenings this fall enjoying tasty BBQ in Aptos, driving to campus for their classes, and chatting about what they learned on the way home. Jenny talked about show tunes and Andy practiced telling the difference between Monet and Manet. Like Jenny, Andy loves learning new things. Check out his blog to share his adventures: <http://www.woodlandshoppersparadise.com>



This year, **Vienna** began her studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz (*Go Banana Slugs!*) after completing her freshman year Reed College in Portland, Oregon. She loved Reed, earning excellent grades, enjoying a wonderful job, and partying at Renn Fayre (a campus bacchanal for seniors who submit their theses). But ultimately she decided that her home is in California. So she made the switch in schools but kept her academic focus on psychology. So far she knows she made the right call.



*Vienna at Renn Fayre, Reed College*

Along with a dorm room of memories, Vienna returned to California with a new pet that she named **Pericles** (after the famed first citizen of Athens). She met her new friend in an Introduction to Psychology class, where she and psychology classmates trained animals to complete simple tasks for food. Yes, our family now includes a lab rat. He's friendly and fairly smart, and he loves to climb and explore. Vienna couldn't bear to part with him, so Pericles lives happily under her bed, keeping a wary eye on our two curious cats and venturing out to visit whenever he thinks Vienna is bringing food.

Between school and work (a good part-time office job to help pay for gas and food) Vienna tries to make time for reading, cooking, and some semblance of a social life. She's even begun to follow in her parents' footsteps recently, entering her first *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign. Playing the character of a dwarf cleric, Vienna escapes the pressures of school by fighting goblins and capturing magical items.

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Despite all the changes, one other happy thing remains constant: Vienna and her boyfriend **Michael Beck** celebrated their *third anniversary*. Since her return to California, they've have had a lovely time together, trading books, trying out recipes, working at the same office, and goofing off whenever they get the chance. It's been an exciting time for Vienna as she continues in her college adventures (somehow never seeming to escape those dreaded liberal hippie schools) and having a marvelous time. Vienna will turn 20 this month, and then the real fun begins! The Wood family can't wait to see what happens next.



*Photo by Gail Pomare*



*We wish you a joyous holiday season  
and a happy, healthy new year!*