



The McConico Times



January 2008
Vol15

Special events in our family's life:

Andrew went to Bagdad, got promoted to Sergeant, reenlisted, had 2 children and will be coming home soon

Simon moved to Milwaukee, took a job working for the Rescue Mission, quit the job, started a new one and is making money with his camera

Donna graduated from Northwestern College and is following in her father's footsteps teaching dance

Jon married Melody Ellis and joined the Air Force

Ron started full time as Executive Director of Youth Resources and became a Grandpa

Becky becomes a Grandma and care giver to Samantha and William

Individual Highlights:

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The photo is from Jon & Mel's Wedding
From the left: Angie & Samantha (Andrew's wife and daughter), Donna, Simon, Melody, Jonathan, Ron holding William, Becky and her mother Joyce

Happy New Year from our family to yours!

Our last newsletter was dated January 2006. We attempted to get this one in the mail before 2008.

With all the kids grown up now and living all over, it is a challenge to get their input to this publication. We attempted to write you last year, but it just didn't happen.

The House Addition: I'm sure you all think we are done by now, and we are closer. Three rooms upstairs are done. The rest of the upstairs needs trim and walls painted and new carpet. The new part in the basement is almost ready for floor to be laid, walls and trim to be painted and fixtures hung. In January, we hope to get the main floor cleared out and begin to finish that area. Hopefully this summer we can get a new fence and landscaping to finish the project! It has been a very long process and really hard living in a perpetual mess. Our faithful friend, Gary, has been a blessing to us in getting this done (thank You Gary), along with others who pop in from time to time. Gary is kind of spear heading the finishing work and keeps pushing us on. If you are in the neighborhood, stop in and see what God has done.

Becky's Blessings:

Trying to put all that has happened in the past two years into a couple of paragraphs is a huge challenge. Forgive me if I leave things out, but our life is anything but slow and boring. I will be SO happy when I no longer live in a "dust bowl" and can actually put curtains up! It will be nice to be able to finally "unpack" in our "new" house!

Up until October of this year, I was the caregiver for our two grandchildren: Samantha Donna, born Feb 14, 2006 and William Andrew, born May 17, 2007. It was a challenge doing day care when the house was under construction and I no longer had any baby things! But what a huge blessing to be a part of their earliest days on earth! We miss them SO much, along with their mom and dad! Speaking of Andrew, a Blue Star Mothers Club started in the Metro area soon after he joined the Army. I have been a part of this organization now for two years. Blue Star Mothers started during WWII but the first chapter in Minnesota started in 2003. I believe my Great Grandmother Donna Greene was a part of the WWII group in Wisconsin as I have some of her Blue Star jewelry with her son's initials on it. Anyways, it's a club for moms of kids who are in the military, particularly during war times. We have a meeting once a month, send out boxes to

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Ron's Ramblings:

In preparation for writing this newsletter I, like my wife, have reviewed our last newsletters. A lot has changed in the last two years. I've gone from having all my kids at home to all being independent. Andrew got married, joined the Army, became a father; Simon moved to Milwaukee; Donna graduated from college and is on her own; and Jon got married and joined the Air Force. It seems they all went from being my children to adults overnight.

Not only has a lot happened in my family, but a lot has happened in our ministry. What started as a project to encourage other youth workers and provide resources to do their jobs has now turned into a major effort to put more youth workers on the street (www.youthresources.ws). A large part of this success is due to the obedience of a young man named Beau Breems. In our last newsletter we told you about him and His Story, the book that he wrote and illustrated. Since then we have published and sold over 100,000 copies of the book. He has written two other books, the Promise and The Book of Hope. The Promise is the Christmas story. In this book Beau has really started to develop his artistic skills. The Book of Hope is a collaborative work between Campus Crusade for Christ/Here's Life

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Becky's Blessings: Cont.

the troops, support each other, and raise monies to send needed supplies to the troops. If you have ever seen a small flag in a home window or on a car with a blue star on a field of white with a red border, they have a loved one serving in the military somewhere. If the star is gold rather than blue, their loved one has passed away. We now have a two star flag in our window as Jonathan will be going off to boot camp soon.

I now have my own office – for the very first time! I still have boxes to unpack and organize but at least I can find the bill folder and stamps! Ron is determined to get me using the computer - I'd rather just have a typewriter.

Jon and Melody's wedding was beautiful, and a lot of work/stress for us all! She is such a blessing to all of us. We hosted the grooms dinner at our house and the gift opening gathering. The weather cooperated, but was very hot!

Since I was babysitting most days, my time in the garden or painting the house was very limited, but I am happy I was able to spend the time nurturing the grandkids! So for the last two years my life has pretty much revolved around the babies. The house is too quiet now and even our dog, Carmel, misses them greatly!

An empty nest? The nest may be empty of children, and the pace has slowed down a tiny bit, but there is still much to do. DeVos Urban Leadership Institute will be taking up a lot of our time during the next 15 months. Who knows, other than God, what will be happening next year? When

the house is done, hopefully it will have two guest rooms and be handicapped accessible. With some of our kids living out of state, we'll need to have someplace to put them when they visit!

When we changed churches last year, it was very hard for me to pull out of all the ministries we were involved in. Our new church would like us to be more involved than we are now, but we're taking it slowly. We are on the leadership committee and will be leading some classes in the spring. God hasn't given me the go-ahead to play keyboard/sing with the worship team, so I wait for a clear calling from Him. The rest has been needed, but hard to sit back at times.

We own five rental units now and it is quite a juggle for us to keep up with all of them plus our own house. This summer was a real stretch without all the units being rented and still having all the mortgages to pay. God is faithful though and even with Ron's job change mid-spring, we did not go without. Well, almost without – we don't have any health insurance yet!

Simon's Segment:

Hello everyone. I hope that you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am done at North Central University where I studied church music and am living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I disdain the Packers and it is kind of annoying every Sunday being around rabid Packer fans drinking beer and eating bratwursts...anyways. I am working at two churches doing music and any other thing that needs to be done. I am working at an urban church called First Love, which is my home church and I am in love with it. I am also playing guitar at another church in the evening which has been quite fun. I am working at a place called Intertechnique Services Americas where I am a customer service rep. My company manufactures parts for airplanes and I get to manage accounts for our customers.

Over the past year or so I have fallen in love with photography and have started to do photography as a side business. I am hoping to get a studio set up soon and start doing photo sessions a little more consistently. You can check out my photos at www.flickr.com/photos/simonmconico and soon I will have a business website up that will have some more of my photos on it.

I wish you all the best and hope that 2008 brings some amazing times with it. I am looking forward to growing as a photographer, musician, and man of God during this next year.

Andrew & Angie's Arrivals:

Andrew will be coming home from Iraq in early January from a 15 month deployment as an Army Medic. He recently earned the rank of Army Sergeant. He reenlisted for six years and plans to get his bachelor's degree to become an officer with the Army. He is stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas. Angie moved back to the base in October to set up house with their two children. She has a new job with Ft. Hood Casualty Assistance. Samantha loves her new friends and teachers at daycare and will be turning two years old in February. William is almost able to crawl and has a couple of teeth. Daddy will be home for his first birthday in May! Andrew was able to come to Minnesota for his R&R soon after Will was born. Angie's parents recently re-located to Dallas, which allows them to help with the babies sometimes. For more pictures go to picasaweb.

google.com/purr0006



Below is one of Simon Photos
See more at
www.flickr.com/photos/simonmconico



Donna's Dramas:

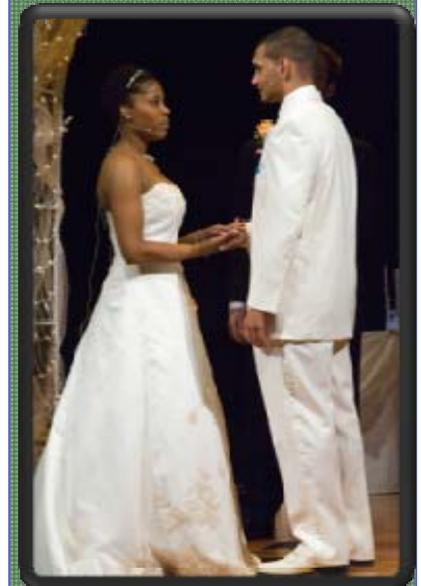
The last two years were definitely busy. The last half of my junior year I was Clarie in the play *Steal Magnolias*. I also directed the one act, *Through A Glass Darkly*. On top of these two plays, I also worked two jobs: the Mail Center at my college and Dunn Brothers Coffee. It was a very good semester but insanely busy! That summer five of my friends and I moved into a house about five minutes from campus. We had a blast hanging out and finding things to do. I was also in the Summer Shorts production at Theater Lumina in the short play *The Accident*. My senior year was also very busy. I only worked at the Mail Center, but I was stage manager for *Fiddler On The Roof*, the Weaver in *My Emperor's New Clothes*, Countess Olivia in *12th Night*, and Grandma in *American Dream!* Needless to say, I was almost never home. Also in March I started training to be a ballroom dance teacher at Arthur Murray's Dance Studio. I love it and could not have asked for a job that I like more! I ended up having to go back for one more semester part time to finish up my degree. This semester I have been working about 40 hours a week at Target and Arthur Murray and going to school. I also was in the Christmas Bathrobe Dramas. It's been ruff. But now, I am finally done with college! I graduated December 21st with a B.A. in Theater from Northwestern College. Finally, I am done and on to a new "stage" in my life.



The many faces of Donna

Jon and Melody's Year:

Well, what a year! There is not too much to say because a lot of the year was spent in preparation... for what? If you did not know, we got married this year on the 14th of July and officially added a new member to the McConico family! Her name is Melody Bethany Ellis McConico. So, as you can guess, our year had been busy with wedding plans. We were married in North Central University's sanctuary and it was a long and beautiful day, with our reception at Christ Church International. A week after the wedding, we went to Tampa, Florida for the Ellis family reunion. There we had the opportunity to meet many new family members from her side of the family. It was a blast! In October, Melody had the opportunity to sing background vocals for the Tim Bach Band at Minnesota Youth Convention in Rochester, MN. There was an audience of 5,000! She says it was one of the most fun times of her life as she was able to grow artistically and spiritually. I quit working at Dollar in November, am now working as a lifeguard, and am following up with some new jobs until April. The reason for this is that I joined the Air Force and am leaving on April 8. Melody just finished her seventh semester at North Central, with only two more left! We have both taken on a healthier life style with eating better and working out since October. We want to live for a long time and see our children's children grow up! Speaking of children... no Melody is not pregnant, but we now have two beautiful Godsons. Recently Mae Gruss, my God mom, asked us to be the Godparents of her and her husbands' two sons, Maxwell and Nikolas. With prayer and appreciation, we accepted the challenge. We have also been praying for a car and God answered that prayer when a close friend just gave us his car. Thank You JESUS! Well that is our year summed up very short. Have an awesome New Year.



Ron's Ramblings Cont:

Inner City and The Book of Hope USA. This book is more like a magazine, and we already have over 130,000 commitments for it.

At the writing of the last newsletter, I was the Outreach Coordinator with Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities. God has seen fit to move me on, and now I am the fulltime Executive Director of Youth Resources, the ministry that I started shortly after returning from a Chicago CCDA about eight years ago. To find out more about both of these ministries, you can visit their web sites: Burning Bush Creation at WWW.burningbushcreation.com and Youth Resources at www.YouthResources.ws

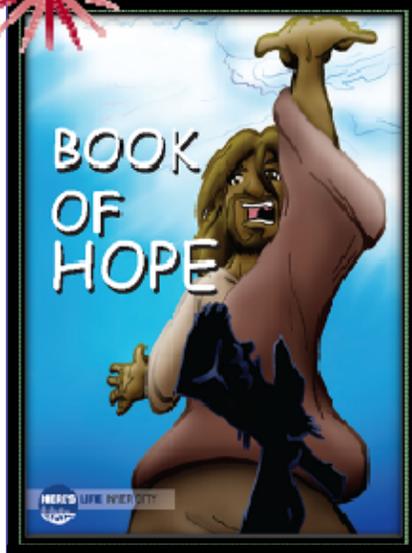
I'm still teaching at North Central University as an Adjunct Professor. The class I'm teaching is "Introduction to Microsoft Office 2007". I thoroughly enjoy the interaction with the college students in watching their dreams and visions come closer to reality. Along with all the things that we're doing, God saw fit to bring another opportunity our way. We've been chosen by the DeVos family to be a City Coordinator for the DeVos Urban Leadership Institute. We have the opportunity to walk through 15 months of training with 12 of the finest youth workers in Minneapolis/St. Paul to bring each of us to a whole new level of ministry.

I'd like to take a moment to talk to fathers. It's now been five years since my surgery and it made me focus on my role as a father. I see that my job (our job) as a father is one that can't be measured by inches, pounds, or dollars. Being a perfect father is impossible. I've messed up a bunch, but as I've watched my children these last two years, I realize that it's thru my successes and failures that they've come to be who they are today: my being there even when I'm preoccupied...my failures and shortcomings in teaching and leading them... has still been something they greatly

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Ron's Ramblings Cont: needed. Fathers - you need to be there! The cost of not having fathers in the home is the cost that North Minneapolis is paying today. The cost of not having a father in the home can be early pregnancy, illiteracy, imprisonment, divorce, anger and murder. We need to have the peoples' hearts touched by the power of the Holy Spirit so that the verse in Malachi will become true. In Malachi 4:6 "And by him the hearts of father's will be turned to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers" because if the first half of the verse doesn't become true, the second half will. The second half is "for fear that I may come and put the earth under a curse". This thing would be great if you could practice before you had to do it for real. But you can't, and if it hadn't been for my wife, whom I deeply love and cherish, I would've really blown it. Thank you Becky for all the times that you saved me from myself, for all the times that you stopped me when I was angry, and for all the times you encouraged me when I was lazy, discouraged, or lost hope.



Donna, what can I say? You graduated! Go girl!!! I also know that you'll far exceed even the greatest dreams you have now. Continue to hold your standards high, strive for the best, and make your brothers proud.



And Jonathan, my shepherd warrior, that name fits you so perfectly. With your heart of compassion and your competitive spirit, I'm positive that the things you will learn in the Air Force will make you a better husband, father, pastor or whatever you choose to do in the days to come.

And my new daughters - how can I be so fortunate to have two beautiful new daughters to grace the McConico name and make me proud? I love you girls and welcome you to the family.

I am but a human father, flawed and imperfect. I found this letter on youtube that I would like to share with you from our Perfect Heavenly Father. Jesus has been sent as an example of the love of the Father to us, and this says that in a clear way.

Take time to view this video at...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Q5T9RYLiG4

We at the McConico house want to say God bless you and We pray your year will be one of great blessings, new growth and a closer walk with God.

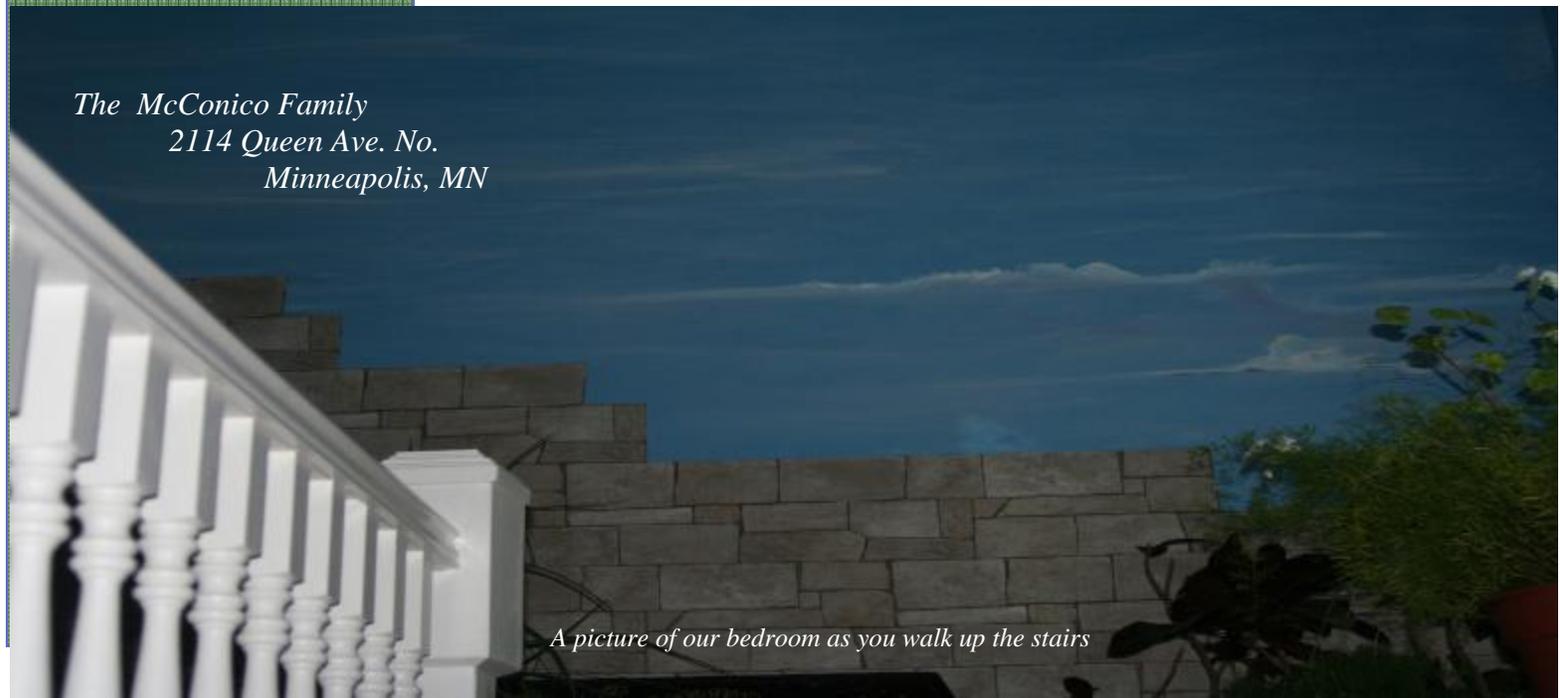


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Now, for the first time, my oldest son Andrew is a father. Andrew, I know you'll do well. You have a deep love for God that will steer you and guide you to be the father that you need to be to Samantha and William. I'm so glad you're coming back home to your children from a long stay in Baghdad. I know that you've grown and become a better man, father and husband. Andy, my prayers are with you, hoping you don't make the mistakes I did, but knowing that God will bring you through the mistakes you do make.

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A picture of our bedroom as you walk up the stairs