

Dear everybody, (December 8, 1999)

I can't believe that it's the second week in December, and I'm just starting on my Christmas cards! Usually it's much later before I do this! ☺

As I was trying to think of a theme for the year (other than "where in the h--- has all the time gone?"), I decided that I could categorize a lot of what happened this year as music. So... between each paragraph are statements that translate into common Christmas songs. See how well you can do! (And don't peep at the answers at the end!)

1. At Yuletide a singular yearning for twin anterior incisors
2. Seraphim we aurally detected in the stratosphere

Music in my house: I love my piano. I've finally paid it off (this month) and I love playing on it! It's also the favorite resting spot for Nefertiti and Tiffany (since they can see out the windows from that perch). Neff and Tiff still run the house. I'm just the lowly human who jumps at their every miaow. For being almost 10-year-old cats, they still have a lot of kitten in them. Tina is still relegated to the basement, but she has her favorite perching spots. (Including on top of the ductwork - weird sounds in the morning when she's pretending that she's an alarm clock!) The house is a mess, but I've got great plans for the living room during break. How can one miss with a wall and a half of windows, an ebony baby grand, and a fireplace?

3. In a distant location, the existence of an improvised unit of newborn children's slumber furniture normally perceived as a bovine feeding trough
4. Embellish the interior passageways

Lack of music in the house: I haven't heard the cheerful notes of water gurgling in the kitchen sink since last spring. The waste pipe in the basement rusted through, and I have to save up money before I call the plumber. For all of you who think that a computer science degree is the road to riches, become a plumber instead! Other than that, though, the house is holding up pretty well, and I'm so glad that I made this move to the neighborhood.

5. Obese personification fabricated on compressed mounds of minute crystals
6. Proceed forth declaring and enlightening upon a specific geological alpine formation

Lack of music outside the house: Oh, the melodic sounds of lawn mowers at 9:00 a.m. Saturday mornings. How they bring up visions of families working together to get their grass just perfect. How the smell of the freshly cut grass reminds one of spring. How the sound makes me feel guilty 'cause I never get out to cut my own grass. I even had a gal who rides the bus with me bring her mower over to

cut my lawn. <guilt trip> The weather currently is unseasonably warm. I think God is waiting for me to rake the leaves...(He/She might as well give up! ☺)

7. Omnipotent supreme being who elicits respite to ecstatic distinguished males
8. Virtuous royal philanthropist

Music at ISU: (o.k. this is stretching it. I'm now teaching the applications/literacy class for the majors. Get it? Major, as in major key? Never mind.) It's been a lot of fun working with these kids - I'll see even more of them next semester when I teach the Introduction to Programming class for them (C++ language). I'm still teaching COBOL. We finally opened up a night section with another instructor, so the upward trend in number of students is finally on a downward curve. Makes the class a lot more interesting when you can actually get to know some of the people in the class!

9. Listen, the celestial messengers harmonize
10. I observed my maternal parent osculating with a corpulent yuletide anthropological swain

Facing the music at ISU: No, I don't have the degree as yet. Only a year and a half left here before I have to leave ISU (or take a 20% work/pay decrease). I've got some serious thinking and work to do in the new year (and need all of the help I can get! Keep me in your prayers, o.k.?)

11. I'm fantasizing concerning a natal celebration devoid of color
12. The thing manifested itself at the onset of a transparent day

Happy Birthday music, Part I: My brother-in-law Kevin turned 40 in January. Gina put on a great party, even though it seemed like everyone had a winter cold. I thought, "Thank goodness I'm not married - I don't have to worry about a surprise 40th birthday party" (since it's traditionally put on by your spouse.)

13. Tintinnabulation of vacillating pendulums in inverted, metallic, resonant cups
14. Ecstasy excited by the acquisition or expectation of good given to the terrestrial sphere

Happy Birthday music, Part II: In May, my family threw me a surprise 40th birthday party. It was so nice to see almost everyone. Even Rob, who jets all over the country with his consulting business was able to make it. (Note to family: Thanks so much! I got two thank-you notes out - maybe I'll attempt the rest of them over the holidays...) They got me to Omaha because we had a baby shower for:

15. Permit frozen precipitation to commence; allow albino rain under 32° F to exist; give carte blanche to blanched tiny crystals
16. Allow tranquility upon the terrestrial sphere

Happy Birthday music, Part III: Drew Gustav Petersen arrived May 22. Jody and Kory are turning out to be great parents. We got to see the kid at

Thanksgiving, and he's huge. Obviously, a defensive player for Nebraska is growing up in Omaha. (And, speaking of Nebraska football, my jinx still holds: when I watch Nebraska games, the team loses. Every time. Every single time. I think that the only think that saved them in the Colorado game is that I was watching it in Humphrey, and left at half to head back to Iowa.) Drew is taking after his cousin Mark. Mark's team at Hastings College went all the way to the national semi-finals. Mark's a computer major at Hastings, but all I ever hear about is football. Trel's a sophomore there, and seems to be enjoying college life (including having papers due over Thanksgiving break. Oh, those *mean* professors! heh-heh...)

17. Diminutive masculine master of skin-covered percussion cylinders
 18. Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief

Musicals, Part I: Got to see Rent in February. Great music and wonderful concept for the show. Though it's not something to which I'd take Mom and Dad, it's now on my list of CD's to buy. I had been cutting down on the amount of theater I see; now I realize that I'm going to have to just bite the bullet and spend the money. (Which is why I probably don't pick up golf. I can see a movie for the price of a round of golf, and I'd *much* rather see a movie!)

19. In awe of the nocturnal time span characterized by religiosity
 20. Minuscule urban area south of Jerusalem

Musicals, Part II: I've gotten much more involved with the local community theater, ACTORS. In June, I was in the musical Once Upon A Mattress, based on The Princess and the Pea. I was a chambermaid and wench. I got to move set props around, get chased by the king, and be in a soft-shoe routine partnered with a mop. It was great fun! (no lines, though, and even with all that exercise, I didn't lose any weight ☺)

21. Valentino, the roseate proboscis wapiti
 22. Expectation of arrival to populated area by mythical, masculine perennial gift-giver.

Musicals, Part III: I had so much fun with the summer musical that I tried out for the fall production, Canterbury Tales, a musical about four of Chaucer's tales. I got to be a wench again (typecasting?), the Miller's Wife, and Queen Guinevere. All of our publicity stated that the show had adult themes (after all, it's Chaucer!) As the Miller's Wife, I got to get drunk, polka (thanks so much, Dad, for the polka lessons at all of the

Wemhoff weddings!), and have sex with a *student* (under a blanket, of course!) I even had lines - all in verse, though. None of the family were able to come see me, but hopefully, they will be at future shows.

23. Quiescent nocturnal period
 24. The primary carol

"Leavin' On A Jet Plane...": After summer session was over at ISU, I took my godson Ian with me for a trip to Connie, Don, and kids in California. It was so much fun! This was Ian's first plane trip (that he was old enough to remember) and he acted like the little pro. He spent the entire flight drawing pictures of the experience for his sister Kelly back in Omaha. He and Dustin and Darren played so well together. The Taylor boys had grown lots since we saw them last year. Lots. They're going to dances now. (I feel old...) When we got back, Gina said that she had taken Kelly to Humphrey for a couple of days to spend time with her cousin Jackie at Grandpa and Grandma's, so Megan got to be an only child for awhile. (Marcie and James are really good at making sure that their daughter gets to know her grandparents, and Mom and Dad are great at grandparenting!) (Except when Mom broke her ankle. But that's Mom's Christmas letter...)

25. Perambulating in a geographic state of fantasy during the season of Mother Nature's dormancy
 26. The first person nominative plural of a triumvirate of far eastern heads of state

Rejoicing at the Jubilee: I didn't get a chance to go to Appalachia this year since my Dad's youngest sister celebrated her Golden Jubilee in Humphrey at the beginning of August. A lot of the Wemhoff clan were in town to honor Sr. Ann on her special day. I didn't get to spend as much time talking with the relatives as I would have liked. Maybe in a year and a half at Mom and Dad's 50th, right?

27. Jovial yuletide desired for the second person singular or plural by us
 28. Query regarding identify of descendant

Music in Minnesota: In November, took a road trip with some friends to see a folk singer based out of the Twin Cities, Peter Mayer. (and I'm out of room!)

29. Endocarps vesicating in a conflagration
 30. During the time ovine caretakers supervised their charges

Did you cheat and look at the answers? These are my guesses. If you have a better solution (or some more puzzles since there's always next year!) you can write or email to wemhoff@cs.iastate.edu

Anyway, a very merry and blessed Christmas to all!

1. All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth 2. Angels We Have Heard On High 3. Away in a Manger 4. Deck the Halls 5. Frosty the Snowman 6. Go, Tell It On the Mountain 7. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 8. Good King Wenceslaus 9. Hark, the Herald Angels Sing 10. I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus 11. I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas 12. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear 13. Jingle Bells 14. Joy to the World 15. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! 16. Let There Be Peace on Earth 17. Little Drummer Boy 18. O Come All Ye Faithful 19. O Holy Night 20. O Little Town of Bethlehem 21. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer 22. Santa Claus is Coming to Town 23. Silent Night 24. The First Noel 25. Walking in a Winter Wonderland 26. We Three Kings 27. We Wish You a Merry Christmas 28. What Child Is This? 29. Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire 30. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night