

Dear Family and Friends,

Merry Christmas! We hope that this season finds you joyful and warm, and we've had fun catching up with all of you through your letters and Christmas cards.

I (Arin) am looking for new and inventive ways of procrastinating from graduate school applications, and have therefore volunteered to write our family newsletter.

So, without further ado:

Dad's Language Software Development department issued three releases this year, one of them a major release of FieldWorks Language Explorer (FLEx). They improved its communication with their Translation Editor software, included a dissertation analyzer to increase readability of translated texts (the Psalms should still sound like poetry, just in a different language), and even updated the spellchecker. Currently, rework of the database foundations continues. This change will allow FieldWorks to run on different operating systems such as Mac and LINUX. November saw the department involved in the Computing Technical Conference with their counterparts from Waxhaw, North Carolina. They continue to receive positive, enthusiastic feedback from users in both academia and in the global missions field. Dad (Michael) and his department moved to a fourth-floor office while Wycliffe Associates replace the heating/cooling system in their usual haunt. Although somewhat cramped in their temporary space, the spears and blowguns on the walls make it much more thrilling. He's also been enjoying being the AWANA Pals director, continuing in Tae Kwon Do, and taking Ryan to Cub Scout meetings and campouts. He'll be managing the pack's Pinewood Derby this year. Mom (Ping) wrapped up teaching her physics class at Waxahachie Preparatory Academy and prepared materials for College Board AP audits, as she is teaching Lesley an AP (Advanced Placement) class. Both she and Dad are thrilled about our new refrigerator, a generous gift from our longtime supporters at Lighthouse Bible Church. Thank you! In the next few months, Mom looks forward to a less hectic schedule and a chance to catch up on correspondence and personal projects.

In May, I will graduate from Rice University in Houston, with a Mechanical Engineering degree. After surviving finals and the first semester of senior design, I am back at home for twelve days to celebrate Christmas and apply to pretentious grad schools, with the goal of taking an advanced Aerospace Engineering degree, specializing in propulsion. I'm excited to attend the Campus Crusade conference for the first four days in January ... and then it's back to school again. I've also become involved with my local church, playing violin with the worship band. Both Erica and I interned at Johnson Space Center this summer; she with a NASA space radiation group and I with the Lockheed Martin Orion contract. Due to the hospitality of a Wycliffe Associate and NASA engineer, we experienced an absolutely amazing summer. Erica continues with her Astrophysics major at Rice as a sophomore, living with two roommates off-campus. She still plays on "Miss Red", the Rice Ultimate Frisbee team, and traveled to tournaments in Denton and Arkansas this fall. Lesley, a junior in high school, is considering applying to nursing school. After a rigorous job lifeguarding

at the Wycliffe Center pool this summer, she enjoyed an action-packed weekend during the MK teens' annual Sky Ranch retreat. She relished her first taste of being a professional musician, playing in the pit orchestra of a local church's Christmas musical, a massive outreach event that drew over 2000 members of the community. She hasn't lost her love of soccer and volunteers at the Center museum.

Ryan faced a busy fall; between AWANA Pioneers, Cub Scouts, 4-H, Tae Kwon Do, and schoolwork, he still found time to garner an honorable mention from a computer game programming competition, hosted by CodePoint using the Greenfoot development environment. He also entered an essay in the "What If?" competition, a space-oriented challenge from the Ansari family. Currently, he is preparing for both the AWANA and Cub Scout Pinewood Derbies. He remains a talkative, game-loving sixth grader.

Our family website is at [www.lastufka.net](http://www.lastufka.net), and Wycliffe's is [www.wycliffe.org](http://www.wycliffe.org) (and my blog is at [aglassdarkly.wordpress.com](http://aglassdarkly.wordpress.com)). We hope to hear from you in the New Year; have the best of holidays and a blessed Christmas!

With much love,  
The Lastufka Family