



Our Family Tree

A Newsletter For The Employees and Friends Of Wright Tree Service

VOLUME 8
NUMBER 4
WINTER, 2002

O CHRISTMAS TREE
O Tannenbaum

Moderato German Folk Song

1. O Christ-mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree! Thy leaves are so un - chang - ing;
2. O Christ-mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree! Much plea - sure thou can't give me;
3. O Christ-mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree! Thy can - dles shine so bright - lyl
4. O Christ-mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree! How rich - ly God has decked thee!

Of all the Christmas symbols, none is more familiar than the Christmas tree. The decorating of the tree is one of the most beloved of Christmas customs, and prevails whenever trees are available in either living or artificial form.

The history of the Christmas tree dates back to the earliest of times when the ancients held nature in great reverence. Some would say that our own Christmas tree decorations are symbolic of the celestial sun tree of the ancient pagans: the lights represent lightning; the decorations, the sun, moon and stars; while the little animals hung in the branches represent the sacrifices of animals made to the sun god.

It did not become common practice to decorate Christmas trees in the homes until the 16th century. This practice sprang up in Germany and from there spread to other countries. For Christians, the tree today has become a symbol of Christ as the Tree of Life, offering His beneficences as Light, Life and Wisdom.

Today many have succumbed to the artificial tree, with its “come-in-a-box-ready-to-assemble” temptation, promising never to drop a leaf or need watering or cause a fire hazard. But for those of us who remember our childhood and the special treat of “going to pick out the Christmas tree;” who like the fresh smell of the pine boughs; and who don’t mind a needle dropping here or there, the real Christmas tree is the answer. (Tree experts tell us that the Fraiser Fir is the best kind to buy. It holds its needles the longest, retains that wonderful pine smell throughout its indoor life and has a beautiful real-tree green.)

But no matter how you celebrate your customs, traditions and family activities, we wish you the best of everything that is good and loving, generous, sharing and caring about this holiday season.

—The Editors

News from our

CENTRAL

Clean Ravine In Moline

A MidAmerican Energy customer in Moline, IL wrote a letter to the utility to express her appreciation to a WTS crew “for the excellent job in clearing trees and brush.” The letter continued: “The trees in the ravine were getting badly overgrown and causing power failures. The crew cleaned the area neatly, burned the brush and left the ravine in an orderly fashion. In addition, they were polite and courteous to all the people in the neighborhood.” At the receiving end of this praise are **Foreman Terry Barrett** and **Trimmers Jacob Fruh, Mike Parsons** and **Chuck Thompson**. Their **General Foreman** is **Roger Hagen**.

Good News, Sad News

Trimmer Lawrence Eisermann writes us that his first great, great grandchild, Harley Davidson Bennett, was born in September, weighing in at a hefty 10 lbs., 3 oz. Unfortunately, this good news was accompanied by some sadness. Lawrence’s oldest grandson, Gary Richard Bennett, was killed in November. He was 38 years old. Our congratulations to Lawrence on the birth of his grandchild and our deepest sympathies to him on the death of his grandson.

More Sad News!

Trimmer Chris Lenhardt and his wife Tiffany lost their daughter, Jada Rae, on her three-month birthday, October 1st. According to Chris, Jada was born prematurely and “was just not able to pull through. We are coping the best they can through the love of

family, friends, co-workers and the grace of God.” Our sincerest condolences and prayers to Chris and Tiffany.

Church Bulletin!

General Foreman John Church received his certification as an arborist by the International Society of Arboriculture last June. Congratulations, John!

NORTH

Lost – And Found!

Work Coordinator Steve Hollister received a very grateful note from a Fort Atkinson, WI woman whose camera Steve found and returned. “Thank you so much for putting my camera on the porch,” the note read. “It apparently was dropped when my husband was packing for our trip to Oshkosh. I was so relieved when we came home and found it on the davenport where our neighbor put it along with the mail. I didn’t realize until I opened it to take a picture and found your card that you had returned it. Thank you again. I really appreciate it. It has taken many pictures of our grandchildren.” Our thanks also go out to you, Steve, for proving once again that WTS employees are a cut above the rest. We only have one question: Do you think her husband was really to blame? **Wayne Fancher** is Steve’s **General Foreman**.

Kane’s Crew Comes Through!

An email from WE Energies’ Robert Kozelek made its way to our WE Energies contact Mike Bognar who shared the good news with **General**

Foreman Jeff Wood and his crew, **Foreman Ray Kane** and **Trimmers John Bodamer, Jeremy Cobbs** and **Joel Zolecki**. The email concerned a phone call which the utility had received from one of its Milwaukee, WI customers. The customer “was so impressed with the speed and politeness of the workers, she just had to call and tell us,” according to the email. Although it was late in the day when the crew arrived, the customer attested that the crew worked diligently, trimming and cleaning up the branches. “They even raked up branches in the neighbor’s yard who,” according to the customer, “would walk over garbage before picking it up.” Doesn’t sound like too friendly a neighborhood, does it? Anyway, let us add our raves to Ray and all of his hard-working crew.

The Bells Are Ringing...

...but the parson’s not waiting any more. **Foreman Mike Williams II** was married in late September. Our congratulations to Mike and his bride!

SOUTHWEST

Soon To Be A Sooner?

In his spare time, **Foreman John Childress** helped coach his son’s Little League third and fourth grade football team. The team made the playoffs, losing in the second round with a respectable record of 8 and 2. (See picture elsewhere in this issue.)

Bloch Builds Residential Business

With editorial style ads in a local shopper, **Division Supervisor Scott Bloch** is handing out good advice on

Branches

planting and preserving trees while establishing Wright Tree Service as the company to call for residential service. Scott's latest article gave advice on how to protect trees when one is considering a construction project around the home.

MT.STATES

Accolades From Colorado!

A Bailey, CO customer of the Intermountain Rural Electric Association (IREA) wrote the utility "to acknowledge the fantastic job Wright Tree Service provided" on the utility's behalf. **WTS Work Coordinator Dennis Green** explained the scope of the job to the customer and a WTS crew made up of **Foreman Steve Baylock** and **Trimmer Mike Correll** delivered "above and beyond expectations," according to the letter. The letter concluded: "We would like to extend thanks to IREA, Dennis Green and the crew for a job well done! It's a pleasure to work with a company that takes pride in serving its customers." IREA's Conifer District Manager Dennis Williams replied to the customer's letter, assuring the customer that IREA is "proud to employ professional service contractors for specialized work in our service territory. We have found Wright Tree Service to be exemplary in this regard. Their personnel are professional and particularly customer-oriented." Thank you for these kind words – we will continually strive to live up to your expectations. And thanks to you, Dennis and Steve, for satisfying this customer's need so superbly. Their **General Foreman** is **O. J. Feay**. **Wows From Wyoming!**

Excel Energy's Erica Oreskovich passed along a customer compliment to Dennis Fallon, Excel's Vegetation Management Coordinator, who in turn emailed the home office. Unfortunately, we do not know the names of the crew members but "they did a wonderful job trimming and also did a great job cleaning up brush in the neighborhood," according to the customer.

MINNKOTA

"Great Job" Card

A Minnesota Power & Light customer sent a "Great Job" greeting card to the utility for "a job well done." According to **General Foreman Ken Venzke**, the customer was very skeptical about WTS trimming his trees. Judging from the card and Ken's notation on it, the crew did an exceptional job. The crew was made up of **Foreman Darnell King** and **Trimmers Jake Burgener, Ron Lotten** and **Michael** and **Richard Nelson**. Thanks to the crew for making the customer a believer in the professionalism of WTS.

A Man Of Few Words

A Minnesota Power & Light customer in Nisswa, MN phoned the utility to thank it for "the good job done on trimming his trees." And we thank Bob Hendrickson of MPL for relaying the compliment to the crew's **General Foreman Ken Venzke**. The crew consisted of **Foreman Gene Wiess** and **Trimmer Brian Dempsey**. The **Work Planner** was **Steve Janousek**. Nice going, guys – we appreciate all commendations, even when they're short and sweet.

Tree Of Knowledge?

Thank you, **Foreman Keith Smith**, for sharing this thoughtful article with us which was clipped from a local newspaper. It's called *The Trouble Tree*:

"The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

"On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

"Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

'Oh that's my trouble tree', he replied. 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again.'"

Hanson Gets Hooked!

Trimmer Dave Hanson and Nicole Goodrich were married in late October. Our congratulations to the newlyweds!

“Sprucing Up” Duluth



A private resident donated a 50' Balsam Spruce evergreen to Minnesota Power & Light Co. and the city of Duluth MN to be used as a Christmas Tree on a courtyard in downtown Duluth. To accomplish this feat, a WTS crew from the Minnkota Division was requested to help move the tree from the resident's property. In addition to our equipment, a crane and flatbed trailer were used. In top photo, left to right, **Foreman Tim Frink, General Foreman Ken Venzke and Foreman Dave Swanstrom.** In next photo, the “floating tree” was lifted onto a flatbed trailer and, in next photo, the tree is on its way to its new home in downtown Duluth. In final photo, the tree is being lifted by the crane into its new location.



P.S. After the tree was in place, Tim and Dave were assigned the task of decorating the tree with thousands of lights.

From The Treetop

By Scott Packard, President



Scott Packard

As we approach the holiday season, the true spirit of the occasion sometimes gets sidelined in the frantic pace we impose on ourselves.

The time to reflect on the past year, to acknowledge the blessings bestowed, and things to be thankful for, become adrift in the myriad of holiday crowds, jammed parking lots and holiday gatherings.

Two events of major significance have marked this past year at Wright Tree Service. First, our newly adopted Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) will allow our employees to participate in the ownership of our company for the first time in its 70-year history. Secondly, the shock and immeasurable grief we all felt over the untimely death of our beloved Chairman and CEO, John R. It was a tragic loss personally and to the company.

In 2003, we will reach an impressive milestone: The 70th

anniversary of Wright Tree Service! From our humble beginnings with John L. and Harriet Wright, today we have nearly 1,200 employees in hundreds of cities and towns from Indiana to Wyoming and Texas to Minnesota. Today, Wright Tree Service has grown to become one of the largest and most respected “tree companies” in the United States. All of you have played a vital role in the character of who we are and the job we do.

We all have dreams for the future – the anticipation of what may come to be. I’m confident that whatever challenges lie ahead, the people of Wright Tree Service will make the difference. For that, I would like to extend my personal thank you for all of the effort that you think may have gone unrecognized – the long hours, the weekends and the loyalty.

May the spirit of the holidays be with you and your families all through the year. I wish you a safe and happy holiday and a prosperous new year.

ork for John and WTS.”

— *Randy Faust*
Former General Foreman

“...a wonderful person, a very down-to-earth man who always treated me with respect...”

“My name is Randy Faust. Some of you might remember me when I worked for WTS for 16 years, starting as a Groundman in 1980 and working my way up to General Foreman under Phil Heinz on the Com-Ed contract. My dad, Ron Faust, also worked for WTS around 1948 and again, from 1980 until his retirement in 1993. I just wanted to say to you and the Wright family how sorry I am for your loss. John Wright was a great man and it was an honor to work for John and WTS. I got to know John personally and I felt that he was a wonderful person, a very down-to-earth man who always treated me with respect, no matter what my position was in the company. People like John are very rare in this industry today. WTS started out as a “mom-and-pop” operation that treated the employee like family, but both John L. and John R. also believed in quality and professionalism as a way to do business. I miss that and I will miss John. Thanks for everything I learned from WTS. God bless!”

— *Randy Faust*
(Randy was formerly a General Foreman, East Division)

“He will remain someone I admire...”

“I was deeply appreciative of the letter you (Scott Packard) wrote NAA after John’s death. He will remain someone I admire and am deeply thankful that he was the first NAA president I had the distinct honor of working with. I have no doubt that Wright Tree Service will continue to flourish and be a living tribute to John.”

— *Cynthia Mills, CAE*
(Cynthia is Executive Vice President of the National Arborist Association)

g to listen...and respected

pect for his employees was well known. He was to say and respected our opinions. John cared erned when my husband Charlie was ill and . Not everyone was aware of John’s sense of be quick to catch it! Basically, John wore two n, very occasionally, he was just plain John!

(The following is an excerpt from a letter Cynthia wrote to John on February 28, 2000 as he completed his presidency of the National Arborist Association: “Rarely does one have the opportunity to serve with someone who is so confident and comfortable with the role of president of an association. I want to thank you for doing such an outstanding job and for leading the National Arborist Association. You were truly a pleasure to work with from ‘Day One.’ Thank you for the guidance you gave me; for the calm manner with which you handled challenges; for your honesty; and for your support and strength.”)

(ree Service)

This Year's "Turkey Trot" Only One Incident Away From Accident-Freedom!

Over 800 turkeys found their way into the ovens of employees in the North, Minnkota, Mountain States and Southwest Divisions, thanks to each employee working accident-free in these divisions from October 7th through October 18th. Only one accident blemished what would have been a perfect record. Unfortunately a Central Division trimmer twisted his lower back while chipping brush, thus disqualifying that division.

This was the best "challenge" by far and it indicates a complete commitment by you to work safely every day. If this attitude were continued throughout the other 50 weeks of the year, we could have an accident-free record for 12 months. If receiving a turkey can make you more conscious of safety, consider how much more important it is to work safely when your life is on the line.

Congratulations to each of you who for making this "challenge" the most successful ever!

General Foreman Awards For Fiscal 2002 To Be Distributed This Month

Some general foremen are going to enjoy an even merrier Christmas this year. The General Foreman Incentive Awards for the fiscal year ending last September 30 have been determined and were distributed the first part of this month. In addition to working with a cost of less than 10 cents per man-hour, other requirements were included for the first time. General Foremen were expected to have their foremen complete all performance reviews, both written and field; have current CPR/First Aid

(continued on back page)

Safety-Conscious, Even At Age 10

Lois Ward Recalls A Memorable Experience When John Was Young

John Wright displayed his passion and sense of dedication to doing the job properly at a very early age. As a fourth grader at Elmwood Elementary School in Des Moines, Iowa, he was selected to become a Crossing Guard. His responsibilities were to safely guide fellow students in crossing the street. Crossing guards were outfitted with a fabric belt that went around the waist and connected with diagonal belting, which went from the shoulder, across the chest, and connected with the waist belt. Crossing guards stood at their post with their arms outstretched to the side, which indicated it was not safe to cross the street. Only when the arms were dropped were students allowed to cross the street. John, with his small arms extended, and his black horn-rimmed glasses perched on his tiny nose, took his job assignment very seriously, almost to the point of being excessive in his responsibilities.

As a sixth grader, I faithfully stood behind John's outstretched arms every morning, waiting for his guidance to safely cross the street. One morning, John was being especially cautious, and a small group of us were getting very impatient in not being allowed to cross the street. In a moment of rebellion and defiance, we decided to go around the outstretched arms and cross the street on our own. Thirty minutes later we were all standing in front of Blanche Toubey, the school Principal, who was a large, imposing woman with the demeanor of an army general. As a group, we were properly and sternly reprimanded for our disobedience and reminded that crossing guards are to be obeyed at all times.

As a ten-year-old, John knew the importance of performing the job assigned to him and by taking his safety responsibilities seriously. This attitude continued on and became one of the solid traits he carried throughout his lifetime. Blanche Toubey would have been proud of John's lifetime achievements and his never-ending sense of commitment to doing his best.

*Lois Ward
S.E.T.*

BENEFITS

Investing 101: Use “investment smarts” to manage your retirement account

When it comes to your 401(k) plan, being an informed investor is your best defense against volatile market conditions. It's hard not to panic when stock values start falling fast. Stay calm and stay invested. History has shown that selling your stocks during a downturn is the wrong thing to do.

Quick Tips On Investing in Today's Market

When the market is down, the first thing you might be tempted to do is shift your money to guaranteed accounts, or remove it altogether. Before you make a change, ask yourself three key questions:

- Has my time horizon changed?
- Have my goals changed?
- Will I be retiring within the next five years?

Time Horizon

When you enrolled in a 401(k) plan you probably set a date, year or age when you would retire. You also realized investing in a 401(k) takes a long-term strategy. When considering any investment it's important to know the market will have many ups and downs over the long term, and therefore, so will your investments. Unless you are retiring earlier than planned, you may want to consider letting your investments ride out this latest market decline.

Have Your Goals Changed?

You have certain expectations and dreams for retirement, including what you want to do, and where and how you want to live. You've also figured

out how much money you will need to meet your goals and how your money should be allocated in order to meet your goals. If your goals haven't changed you may want to consider leaving your investment direction as is, despite market turbulence. You've probably also spread your money around to different types of investments, or diversified them. This is a way to help reduce your risk.

Will You Be Retiring Within The Next Five Years?

Experts agree that if you are close to retirement (within five years) you may want to consider allocating your investment dollars differently to help reduce the effects of market fluctuations on your retirement account. Because higher-risk investments typically are the ones that fluctuate, it may be wise to consider investing in more conservative investments or guaranteed accounts.

Remembering The Basics

Remember the old adage, “Buy low and sell high?” This investment strategy could apply to buying stocks “on-sale.” Now may be a good time to look at investing in stocks that are selling low because you may get more for your investment dollar. In fact, world-renowned investor Warren Buffet has been quoted as saying “The critical investment factor is determining the intrinsic value of a business and paying a fair or bargain price.” Right now, there are plenty of bargains around.

Principal - Here For You

These days, protecting your financial future is becoming increasingly important to you and

your family. That's why Principal is here to help you secure your financial future. Visit www.principal.com and go to The Principal Retirement Service Center for more information or call 1-800-547-7754 to speak with a retirement specialist to receive general retirement planning and investment education.

Remember The Three Rs To Retirement Security

Remember your goals. By evaluating your investments, saving over the long-term, and revisiting your goals for retirement, you can enjoy what you've worked toward all these years: a successful retirement plan. **Reassurance.** The Principal has been in this business for over 60 years and is the nation's 401(k) leader. They have a sincere and shared interest in your financial success. **Resources.** Log onto the Principal web site and you will find a wide range of retirement account information such as:

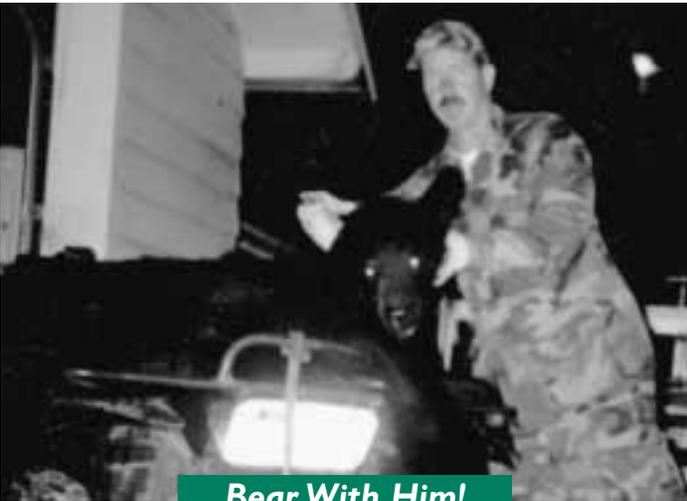
- Asset allocation assistance.
- An Investor Profile Quiz to help you assess your comfort with risk.
- Deposit Director services to suggest a mix of investments in line with your risk tolerance.
- Easy-to-read articles covering key investment principles.
- Retirement calculators that help you determine how much you need to save to reach your retirement goals.

If you should have any questions or need assistance please contact Michelle Eggleston in the Des Moines office at 1-800-882-1216.

Ponies Today - Horses Tomorrow!



Foreman John W. Childress, far left, back row, Southwest Division, helped coach the Kellyville Ponies football last season. His son, John C., is in the front row, far left (see story in News from our Branches).



Bear With Him!

You cannot blame Minnkota Division Supervisor John Sanford for bragging a little after he tagged this huge black bear in early September while hunting in northern Minnesota.



Farewell To Fleck

Foreman Chester Fleck, center, of the North Division retired at the end of the September. Wishing him well in his retirement years were General Foremen Wayne Fancher, left, and Herb Coy.



Mark Your Calendars Now!

The annual family picnic hosted by General Foreman Ken Venzke and his wife Penny attracted a good turnout – but Ken's hoping for more picnickers next year (it's the first Saturday after Labor Day).



In left photo, Minnkota Division Manager Wade Myers, left, and Ken show off the logo cake; in right photo, the kids are trying to break the pinata.



Halloween Hi-Jinks

Trimmer Tom Snyder of the Central Division got into the Halloween spirit big time with an Afro wig and fanged tooth.



The Luck Of A Young Buck!

On his first deer hunting trip, 12-year-old Dillon Hansen, son of General Foreman Doug Hansen of the Central Division, nailed this eight-point buck in southwest Iowa.

FROM THE Kitchen

One of our holiday recipes is being repeated by popular demand. It comes from Nancy Wright, wife of the late John Wright, who was Chairman and CEO of the company. Nancy had told us it was an old family recipe, passed through the family for many years. It is delicious...and easy to make.

RAISIN CREAM PIE

1 cup cooked raisins
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup milk
2 egg yolks or 1 whole egg
1/2 tsp salt

2 T flour
1/2 cup cream (or half & half)
1 tsp vanilla
1/2 chopped pecans

Cook raisins 15 minutes in 1 cup of water. Mix sugar, flour, salt, egg, milk and cream. Stir into raisins and cook until thickened. Add vanilla and chopped pecans. Put in baked pie shell and top with whipped cream or cool whip.

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Here's an easy, colorful treat for family or friends who drop in. These can be made almost as quickly as you hear the doorbell ring announcing the arrival of company.

2 & 1/2 dozen small,
plain wafer crackers
8 ozs. soft-style cream cheese

Mint jelly
1 can of wild lingonberries
(or cherries) in syrup

Spread the crackers generously with cream cheese, forming a slight mound in the center of each cracker. Using the back of a melon baller, make a small cup in the center of the cream cheese. In half of the crackers, fill each cream cheese cup with 1/2 teaspoon mint jelly. In the remaining half of the crackers, fill with cherries or other canned red fruit. Arrange on a white, doily-lined plate.

S.E.T. News

(continued from page 10)

Training; and finish all weekly safety tailgate meetings. The names of the general foreman recipients will be published in the next newsletter.

Reading Keith's Fan Mail...

Brian Getzelman, President of Arbor Care/Arbor Scape, Inc. in Salt Lake City, UT recently wrote **S.E.T. Director Keith Sheriff** a "thank you" note for supporting the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) international climbing competition. According to Brian, who was Utah's champion, this competition has grown into a major event.

...and from Melissa Levangie, who works for Trees, New England in South Hadley, MA, Keith received these kind words: "Thank you for all your hard work and generous donation to the ITCC's throwline. As a second year competitor in the women's division, I wanted to express my deep gratitude to companies like yours for supporting the entire industry."

As always, Wright Tree Service is at the forefront in sponsoring industry-related activities and competition – but it's certainly appreciated when competitors take the time to write and express their thanks.

The Results Are In!

826

EMPLOYEES QUALIFIED FOR
THE SAFETY INCENTIVE AWARD

During Fourth Quarter Of
This Fiscal Year
(7/01/02 - 9/30/02)

Family Clippings

News From The Home Office



Rubbing The "Wright" Shoulders

WTS President Scott Packard, center, accepts an award on behalf of Wright Tree Service for its support of the Governor's Very Special Arts Festival. Presenting the award were Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack and Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson. The festival promotes the creative prowess of people with disabilities.



"Family Reunion"

Receptionist Donna White and her husband Jim recently returned from a trip to Rome (where they had an audience with the Pope), Florence and Venice. In Venice the Whites reunited with Volker Buttermann, a foreign exchange student who lived with them in 1989. Left to right, Volker, his wife Alex and daughter Sofia, Jim and Donna. Donna also reports that she and Jim celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary on November 18.



First Time's The Charm!

Nancy Jacobson, Division Accounting, and her husband Steve are first-time grandparents. Their daughter Jennifer Pero, and her husband Courtney, show off Ryan Matthew, born on November 12.



Who Shot The Sheriff?

Someone caught S.E.T. Director Keith Sheriff cuddling his new grandchild, Zachary Daniel Sheriff. We announced Keith's new grandson in the last issue but didn't have room for this picture.

If you have access to the Internet, you can visit us at: <http://www.wrighttree.com>

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