

Welcome to the intermittent Blaseckie Family Christmas letter. Hard to believe the year is getting ready to exit through the gift shop. Harder to believe 2 years have gone by since I actually managed to apply sufficient bum glue to the chair to get this letter together and mailed off to your oh-be-joyful mitts.

You'd think with Christmas carols echoing in every commercial venue since shortly after Labour Day I'd have enough of a head start on this project. Nope, every year it taps me gently on the shoulder at the end of November just before the final countdown to detonation starts...

Since last I wrote you we've acquired a few more wrinkles, a sprinkling of grey hairs and a new roof, thanks to a neighbour's tree. I didn't even notice the critter resting across the back of the house until Mark had gone off to work and I'd sucked back my 2nd coffee. The most notable part of this adventure is it happened when Mark was actually home. But that is another story.

Let's get up to date, shall we? Where was I? oh, right, way back then, there were two girls at home, a cockatiel, a cat and, I believe, one new little bundle of yappy puppy. Bob and Squatch are still here and the yappy puppy, Fergus, is now full grown - all 8 hulking pounds of him. Only one girl, however, remains in the nest.

The year started off with almost the entire Blaseckie clan sitting in the airport with bags packed for Mexican adventure. Regrettably absent were Scott's very significant other, Jen and her two boys, Owen and James--last name "Kirk"...I'll wait a minute for the penny to drop. It was back to Nuevo Vallarta and the Marival Ironman marathon of gluttony, sloth and tequila fueled dissolution.

Mark met up with his first real boss (not counting the one he sleeps with, that is) who lives semi-permanently in Nuevo on his sailboat, Amizade.

Andrew and his partner Naomi (I'm pretty sure her last name is Dynamo or should be) took most of the clan sailing across Banderas Bay to Yelapas - a remote village on the coast that looks a lot like I remember Mexico looking way back in the 70's. Naomi also took a few of us on a shopping excursion into the mercado district (i.e. the real...no really the real...shopping area of Puerto Vallarta). She was getting a few supplies for the party they hosted in honour of the whole famn damly at Naomi's condo's party palapa (includes patio, full kitchen and pool).

We left there with the memories of a lifetime and the happiness of renewed friendships.

This September, Nicole moved into an apartment with her cousin, Melissa. It's on the edge of Fairfield and gives her a little distance from the embarrassment of parents while she goes through what we think is her last year in Camosun's Criminology Program. "Think" is the operative word as she is no more forthcoming about what is actually happening than when residing under our roof. And we are impeded now by not being able to shovel through her room in hopes of unearthing a clue. I've considered the option of bribing Mel for updates but I'm pretty sure her rates as a mole are more than I can afford at the moment.

Rachael went on a tour of Germany with the Victoria Children's choir that, by all accounts, was a smashing success. They even placed first in their category at the Summa Cum Laude Youth Choir Festival in Vienna, Austria. Damn, now I have to sew all these buttons back on again, they keep popping off whenever I think about it.

Mark is working and traveling and traveling and working. He manages to get home for the occasional family event; his birthday and Christmas seem to be the most consistently attended over the years. Odd, I've never noticed that before. Hmm. Anyway, as I write this he is wrapping up a marathon of buoy work in Hecate Strait, a short holiday to San Francisco with me and now he's in Brazil. So, in the last 2 months he has been home approximately a week. Give or take.

Yes, there was actually a short break where we traveled together to the city on the bay. It was only for 6 days but it was a blast. We rode the cable cars, wandered along Fisherman's Wharf, went to the Castro district for lunch and did the pilgrimage to Alcatraz. And we walked. A lot. Everything there is uphill, eventually.

The trip to San Francisco was my replacement for the annual trip to our propeller head conference in June. Just 2 weeks before we were set to leave for Ottawa, my left leg decided to party with some bad bugs. The doctor was so impressed with my puffed up, fire-engine red leg he took a picture of it for his next lecture--well, that's what he said; Mark suspected it was for his facebook page.

There was general hilarity in the IV clinic when I asked the nurses if they thought I'd be okay for the 4 hour flight to Ottawa. As the plane tickets and hotel had already been paid for, Mark went to Ottawa, I stayed home with leg elevated and my ticket was put on hold for future considerations.

So, now I is home and doing my duty to catch y'all up on our little old lives. The bottom line is we're all happy, healthy and still ticking along here and I hope you are doing likewise there. If you're ever in the neighbourhood, give us a call.

Otherwise, enjoy all that the season has to offer, keep company with those closest to your heart and hold close in your heart those who have to be far away.

May 2012 be kind to you. May it offer you refuge and relief, rest and restoration. Most of all I hope the New Year brings you many reasons to laugh and opportunities to raise a glass in celebration.