



Look at the time, would ya...out of one year and into the next so I'd best get this done and on the road before it becomes an Easter card. It's been a busy time here, with graduations and job changes and a bank robbery to spice up the telling.

Mark is still playing with buoy toys and added China to his brag map. It was for a conference and no, I didn't get my bag packed in time to sneak aboard. I thought it would be better for him to break ground first so all the bugs are worked out (insert intestinal humour of your choice here).

Rachael graduated from University in June with a degree in history. It was a pretty fancy ceremony with all sorts of Harry Potter dress up gowns and Dumbledore hats. Undergraduates go through a brutal initiation of walking in a line, sitting in a group, posing and kneeling individually in front of Dumble...er, the Chancellor... He whispers a secret word and beats the wisdom of the ages into their heads with his magic hat. They run back to their chairs as buttons pop throughout the audience.



Rachael refuses to say what her secret word was but I'm pretty sure it's Ravenclaw. She took herself on a 3 week trip to Atlanta (via San Francisco) and the US eastern seaboard and is waiting at home now for the next stage. Don't ask.

Nicole finally threw off the shackles of retail sales and is now a customer service representative - aka 'bank teller' to us old farts - at a small CIBC on Gorge Road. It is tucked away between a gas station and a Fairways and is used by just about everyone in the world, it seems. Well, the world in Victoria, anyway.

Yes, that's where the bank robbery took place. In her second week. And she was there to watch it all go down. Fortunately the ne'er do well chose a more experienced teller...er, csr ... to approach with his simple request. "I want \$5,000 - no marked bills, no dye pack." No gun waving or shots fired--this is Canada, after all--just polite, specific and out the door with no further fuss. Except when the dye pack exploded and left a fluorescent trail down the sidewalk all the way to the next bank he stopped in to visit.

The moral of the story is, no matter how nicely you ask, the bank insists you get a party favour with each impromptu withdrawal. Surprise, you're an orange for Halloween.

I've been going through the long process of accepting that, no matter how jam-packed the resume, I may be vintage but I ain't wine.

So when the opportunity came up to work as a novice curling coach for the Township of Esquimalt I put my name in the ring, so to speak. And, as no one else applied,



after several weeks, a criminal record check (I passed) and a thorough check of my references and still no other applicants, I got hired.

At the same time Curl BC was desperate for someone to go into local schools to teach the Rocks and Rings program. After careful consideration of my application and references (criminal record check again-- yes, I passed that one too) and a lack of anyone else stepping forward, I was given a bag of brooms and wheelie rocks. As of

January I'll be spending a few days a week teaching elementary kids how to shout Hurry Hard!

It's a living. And still leaves me time to crack that writing gig.

It's been a year of health stress in the Blaseckie family but with happy conclusions. Clarence got rid of a few feet of intestine he really didn't want and, a few months later, had a shiny new titanium hip put in to replace the crapped out calcium model that had been giving him serious grief for some time.



That about does it for us for the year. I'm sure I've forgotten a whole bunch of stuff like taking Granny on a magical history tour in honour of logging 75 trips around the sun. She got to ride in a limo to the hospital where her grandchildren were born, to the police station where her eldest son spent a few uncomfortable hours many years ago, to the movie theatre where Clarence proposed and other highlights of a life well lived.

Yes, it's been one of those years. Just like the others and many more to come, I hope. Thank you for sharing a bit of it with me and being patient enough to read this far. It's a time of year for family, friends and saying Thank you. Always worth repeating.



I hope this finds you in good health, warm, dry and exactly where you want to be right now.