

Christmas 2011

Having just celebrated the First Sunday in Advent at our cathedral, it occurred to me that it's once again time to bake some shortbread, and compose our annual letter to all those we think of often, and, unfortunately, seldom write. We hope this letter finds you in good health, and looking forward to spending some portion of the holiday season with family and friends.

January began quietly enough for Jette and I, but saw Kim beginning a five month long series of operations to remove cataracts in both eyes, and laser work to eliminate both her near-sightedness and astigmatism, and she's delighted to be no longer wearing glasses or contacts (except for reading).

In March, Bill spent a week in Del Ray Beach in Florida, for what he thought was going to be his last session as a faculty member for the Interim Ministry Network –more about that later. And April, as usual, he was busy along with other volunteers preparing HMCS Haida for summer visitors, this time refinishing the Flag Staff at the stern (including the detailed painting of the crown on top). The spring months are also the time we both enjoy the Shaw Festival, trying (and succeeding) in getting to each of the three theatres. And in May, Jette was again busy with Elections Canada (she was a Poll Supervisor), while Bill began the season of memorial services and parades with the Burl-Oak Naval Veterans. Also that month, Bill, Jack Hurley, and Greg Fokszey, who all began teaching at Napanee DSS in 1963, continued their annual reunion. We ended May with a cruise (our fifth) on the Kawartha Voyager to Kingston



The summer highlights began with the NOAC AGM in Niagara-on-the-Lake for a week, followed by a trip to Ottawa to see family and friends, and to be present on Parliament Hill for the visit of the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge on Canada Day, then via friends in Lac Marois to Halifax (and more friends) for the AGM of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust, where Jette was honoured at a reception aboard HMCS Sackville as the Trusts newest Life Trustee. Having enjoyed the Tattoo, and the hospitality of friends in Hammond's Plains, we spent a couple of days driving around the Annapolis Valley, including the site of the old HMCS Cornwallis, and the Lunenburg area, while staying in Marriott's Cove. In July, we spent a relaxing week with David & Mimi Mitchell at their cottage on Lake Weslemkoon, and with Dave and Rosemary Gagan at Sauble Beach. In August we were with Bob and Laura Morris, at Lake Manitouwabing.

In September, Bill was called out of retirement to assist with a heavily subscribed workshop in Paris (not France, unfortunately) for the Interim Ministry Network, before we headed off to Huron and UWO for Homecoming Weekend. And while we can normally figure on settling into a more sedate routine in October, this year was entirely different. Jette worked for Elections Ontario as a Supervising DRO, making the 6th an interesting but very long day. At the end of the month, we joined a part of some 66 odd (and we certainly were...) former UNTD cadets, spouses, partners and friends, to travel to the UK aboard RMS Queen Mary 2. Our purpose for the trip (see pictures on our family website www.angelfire.com/on3bjthomas) was to visit the University Royal Navy Units, to learn why, even in tight budget times, the Royal Navy continued a training program begun in 1967, while our government killed our program in 1968. It was a terrific experience, and also gave us the chance to meet with Jette's extended family in Cambridge, and to meet another of her cousins for the first time. We enjoyed the voyage so much, (including five formal dinners) that next fall, we're flying over to Denmark, and then returning across the Atlantic aboard the QM2.



In November, we returned to Ottawa to help Bill's cousin Jim celebrate his 80th birthday, and our friend's, the Dixon's, celebrate the sale of their former store and home in Golden Lake, and settle into a true retirement. And in December, we're delighted that Bill's sister Betty has continued her tradition of gathering the several generations of the wider family together for a celebration on Boxing Day. And although we've grown accustomed to a quieter New Year's Eve, Bill's continuing involvement with all things Naval has brought us back into a great round of New Year's Day Levees.

In an otherwise exciting and enlivening year, the only downside was the increasing round of funerals, as colleagues and friends depart this world for a new life in the next. All of which makes us much more sensitive to, and appreciative of, the friends and family who continue to surround us. But as one ages, that's entirely appropriate.

Ian continues to live in and work out of Guelph, enjoying the fellowship and company of old friends (and a very attractive, intelligent young woman), and exploring the challenges and delights of digital photography (see his work at www.flickr.com/photos/7308152@N07/)

Kim is enjoying her condo in Dundas, her work with autism spectrum students at Dundana Elementary School, and her new-found expertise in communications with her Galaxy Tablet and Apple iPhone.

Wishing you a Blessed Christmas, and a Happy New Year,

Jette & Bill