



Dear

Our 50th Anniversary Year...

Christmas 2014

...turned out to be a very busy year – and for Bill, monumental! More about that later.

We're hoping this letter finds you in good health and looking forward to the Christmas season with family and friends. In our now accustomed pattern, the last couple of weeks in November have been spent making shortbread and vanillekranse, getting the outside lights up and the Christmas decorations in place.

Our year began with the usual round of Levees at HMCS STAR, RCNA Burlington, and RCL 486 in Bronte – lots of “moose milk”, pigs in blankets and fruit cake (now there's an ethnic meal!) and our now annual 3+ hour, four course, with beer and ‘snaps’, “Danish Lunch” with the Picketts. The feasting continued throughout the year. And the next two months were spent working off the excess, shovelling snow out of the driveway. April saw Bill spending much time at the HAIDA, getting her ready for the season with new paint and varnish. May is becoming Jette's favourite month as we cruise on the Kawartha Voyageur, this time for 12 days as we travelled the Rideau from Kingston to Ottawa and back. It also gave us a chance to visit his cousins Jim (Donna) and Dannie (Bill). Bill's birthday has become tied to Admiral Hose, as he was again asked to address the crowd assembled for the dedication of a monument to the “Saviour of the Canadian Naval Reserve”. The trip to Windsor gives us a chance to visit the expanding list of wineries in Essex and Kent Counties.



Kawartha Voyageur at Smith's falls



ADM Hose Monument, Windsor



RCN Ships in Korea Monument

In July we drove to the East Coast for the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust AGM, to visit with friends in Hammonds Plains and Marriott's Cove, and to replenish our supplies of Nova Scotia's “Tidal Bay” wines. On the return we diverted to PEI to sample their growing distilleries and estate wineries (detecting a theme here?) Later in the month, Kim joined us for a week with the Mitchell's at Lake Weslemkoon. On July 28, Bill officiated at the dedication of a monument to the RCN Ships in Korea, and the sailors who died in that war. It's located in Burlington at Spencer Smith Park. July was also a big month for Ian and Jen – they bought a home together in Guelph (a renovated farmhouse, now in the middle of town) and began populating it with Jen's cat (Charlie), a new puppy (Avon), and kitten (Stringer). Jette's hoping that will provide practice parenting.....



Megan and her Grandfather Mitchell

A highlight in August was the marriage of our goddaughter, Megan Mitchell to Craig Schmidt in Merrickville, where Bill presided (he also presided at her parent's wedding 30 years earlier). And, a week later, our 50th Anniversary, which began with a dinner for family and close friends on the Friday evening at the Waterfront Centre, continued with an Open House at Bagnall Lodge, Canterbury Hills on Saturday, and a special coffee hour and cake at the Cathedral on Sunday, where we joined the recession to the accompaniment of “The Prince of Denmark March” – and a standing ovation!



September began with our last camping trip – after a week of bugs at the Pinery, we sold the CombiCamp trailer to a young couple from Toronto, who are thrilled with it! September also saw us back at Western for Jette's 50th Anniversary, with dinner in the Great Hall, where she met several fellow residents from her years at Spencer Hall, and Bill met a fellow House Senior from Medway. While the women hadn't changed that much, the guys were almost mutually unrecognizable....



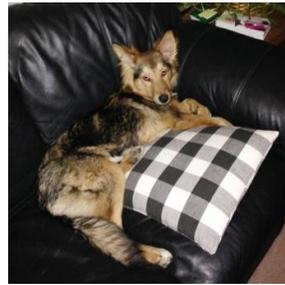
NAC Honours



QM2 in Quebec



Blankets for Children



Avon



Stringer

October saw us back in Ottawa for the AGM of the Naval Association of Canada, where Bill received their "Bronze Award" for his work with veterans in the Toronto and Hamilton Areas, and was elected to the Board of Directors, and Jette received a Certificate of Appreciation for her work with the Hamilton Area Group of NAC. At the UNTD Ass'n of Canada GM following, Bill retired as President, but continues on as a member of the Board, Webmaster, and Chaplain. We then were able to spend a couple of days with friends at Lac Marois, surrounded by terrific fall colours. The great anniversary trip we were planning turned out to be a 12 day cruise aboard (surprise) the Queen Mary 2, beginning in New York, and stopping in at Newport R.I., Boston MA, Bar Harbour ME, Halifax, Quebec, and back to New York. Heavy winds prevented us from visiting St. John NB, but gave us more time in Halifax. We had excellent dinner companions – a retired couple from Toledo, and a young couple from NZ. Our varied ages and interests led to great humour and conversation as we compared our days, afloat or ashore, and we've exchanged emails to keep in touch.

Which brings us back to November – with Kim, Jette and I taking turns dog and cat sitting for a week while Ian and Jen took a well deserved relaxing week in Costa Rica. Ian continues to travel around Southern Ontario and the Great Lakes States as Linimar's quality engineer, developing new parts for the auto industry, while Jen works in Kitchener as a recruiter. Kim, now the only EA at Dundana Elementary School, is being honoured this year for her 25 years in the field. She's finding being a "senior" (in terms of years at the school) person on staff very interesting, as she becomes a mentor to young teachers. The last week of the month also saw us disposing of the Tracker (not high mileage, but 12 years old) whose deteriorating paint, body, exhaust, and coolant hoses were not worth repairing.

While there have been many special occasions this year, we are even more blessed to be able to keep up a busy regular schedule throughout the year – although we now operate permanently on "cottage time" – ie a half day for work type tasks, a half day for home duties, and (usually) evenings watching TV or reading – independently. Jette however makes much better use of her time in front of the TV – usually knitting baby blankets for the hospital (several hundred so far), or gifts for family and friends. Bill usually spends several mornings a week on the internet, updating the UNTD Website and responding to board business from several agencies. Sundays begin the week at the Cathedral (early service); Wednesdays are Navy days, with Bill out to lunch (sic) with the Burl Oak Vets, and on the last Wednesday of the month, both of us lunching with the Hamilton Area Group Naval Officers. Bill gets in to Toronto a couple of evenings a month at the Staff College (speakers, and board meetings) giving Jette and Kim a chance to get together for a meal. In retirement, though, the great gift is for us to be together for dinner, by candlelight, with a selection of our favourite music in the background, and a glass of our house wine. And to interrupt that with, at least, one dinner a week out.

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!
Jette & Bill