

Christmas
2015

Dear

Hoping this annual missive finds you in good health, with much to be thankful for in the past year, and looking forward to a future filled with new challenges and pleasant surprises.

Our Year began with the traditional round of Levees at Naval Establishments & Legions – and Bill is very thankful that Jette chooses to be the designated driver... followed quickly by a celebrative Danish Lunch with the Pickett's. Bill continued his annual educational program at the cathedral, completing a 12 Sunday conversation begun in Advent. In February he brought together a new team (originally all male, now mixed) know as the "Brass Monkeys" – not a comment on the weather – who polish the brass, silver, and wood at the cathedral monthly. The big event in March was Ian & Jenn's wedding at City Hall, followed first by a family dinner – and then by a great reception at the Guelph arboretum.

Throughout the spring Jette continued to host periodic dinners with good friends - in addition to turning out two knitted blankets a month for the McMaster Children's hospital, and a multitude of cross-stitch projects, while still finding time to resolve 500 & 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles. Bill spent most of April getting HMCS Haida ready for the tour season, completing the painting and installation of canvas Life-raft bags.



Note the Danish Cake!



3 of Ian's 4 Mom's: l. To r. Kim (his birth mother), Jette, Anna (boarded with for Gr13, University)



Bill Presents an NAC Award to Park's Canada (note Red Chair)



Aboard the Kawartha Voyageur -only other Parks Canada Red Chair afloat.

In May we were off for our annual cruise aboard the Kawartha Voyageur, this time from Rosemont, down the Severn-Trent, along Lake Ontario to Gananoque, then back to Kingston and up to Ottawa – the first week free as a thank-you for 10 previous trips! June was dominated by naval events – Bill's now traditional address to the annual parade (on June 22!) at the Admiral Hose monument in Windsor, then flying out to Calgary for 5 days for the Naval Association of Canada Conference, AGM, and UNTD Reunion. No sooner were we back then into the car to drive out to the East Coast for the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust AGM, and wine-tour and to visit with good friends – the Vaughans and the Scotts. The trip also provides an opportunity to visit with friends and family (getting harder to tell the difference after all these years) on the way back; the Sinclairs at Lac Marois; the McNeils in Ottawa; the Dixons at Yuke's Lake. In July, Jette & Kim managed to once again pull off a great Surprise party for Bill's 75th (since on the exact day he'd been in Windsor – then everywhere else!!!). Planned for the patio and garden, hot and humid weather forced some 35 people into the house – a cozy gathering indeed. Then we ended the month, along with Kim, for a week at Dave & Mimi Mitchell's cottage on Lake Weslemkoon, with their daughter Cassie, & four dogs ... great fun, and great sunsets!



Windsor – Admiral Hose Memorial



Leaving NY aboard QM2



Dressed for Dinner – QM2 style!



with Dorrit (maid of Honor) & husband Kjeld



With Uncle Erik (he's 96)

In September, we flew to New York to board the Queen Mary 2 for a "crossing" to Southampton, UK (a far better and more relaxing way to get to Europe than flying!) then by bus to Heathrow, and by air to Copenhagen, where we rented a car to drive to an AirBnB apartment in Lyngby (a terrific location). That gave us a base for visiting her cousins and uncle over the next three days. Then back by air (BA is so much more pleasant than AC) to the Victory Services Club in London (Bill loves referring to 'my club in London') for a couple of days, enabling us to tour the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace, then wander through Hyde Park and Selfridges. Then by train back to Southampton to board the QM2 for the return voyage –and to enjoy again all the special events that were part of Cunard's 175th Anniversary celebrations.

In October- another delayed 75th birthday present for Bill – a flight in the B52 Mitchell Bomber from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum – a great experience in a plane the same age – and in much better condition. His other gift (to himself, but that's another story) was a 50" Smart TV. It only took 3 days for him to find the proper bracket and install it above the fireplace in the family room. Meanwhile Jette was being recognized by the Hamilton Health Sciences for her 3,000 plus hours as a volunteer. She also worked the election, again as a Poll Supervisor, which not only meant three training sessions, but a very long day on the 19th: up at 6:30 am, not back home until 2:45 am on the 20th.



Bill & "Hot Gen" before the flight



View of the Escarpment from the cockpit



Bodie & Avon



Smartie & Bailey

Kim had a few anxious days over the summer when one of her chinchillas (Bailey) had some health problems – she'd been eating too many treats and too much of Smartie's food. But with a very restrictive diet and a lot of TLC, she's back in good form. In August (a week before going back to work) Kim had her living room carpet replaced - the first of several renovations she's planning for the next couple of years. Getting back to school with no contract for teachers or support staff has been stressful – all the more so because of the increasing raft of behaviour problems amongst students (and some parents) that the principal and board seem incapable of dealing with.

Ian and Jenn also had an anxious moment or two this summer. A major limb on the big tree in their front yard came down in a windstorm, and blocked the street, nearly hitting a car in the driveway across the street. Fortunately the city had it cleared and cut into moveable chunks very quickly. Then while returning from Kitchener, and enjoying the fall weather, Jenn had a bee fly in the car window and sting her, resulting in the car drifting off the road over a curb and into a pole. She's fine now, but the car was a write-off. Hence they have a replacement vehicle – a Mazda CX7. Although Jenn's job in Kitchener ended, she's keeping busy looking for work and volunteering for the Guelph Humane Society. Ian, as a Linamar Senior Measurement Engineer, is busier than ever. They have, however, been able to get off on a couple of get-away breaks, and still find lots of time to play with a growing family of critters – Avon the dog, Bodie the puppy, Charly and Stringer the cats. Turns out there is a slight problem with Jenn volunteering at the Humane Soc. –too many cute puppies looking for homes.....

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