

Christmas 2016

Dear Family & Friends:

This is turning out to be a very busy year. In October Bill was pressed back into work (part time) to help a congregation discern whether or not they can turn themselves around, grow and reach out in mission, or close and endow a whole new ministry. On reflection, it's not unlike the challenges one faces in retirement. That's meant a tightening up in our timetable, including (as you may have suspected) the fact that 14 lbs of butter, added to flour and some secret ingredients from an old Scottish recipe from Bill's great grandmother, have been turned into shortbread by mid-November.

2016 year began with the usual round of Levees, with Jette as designated driver for Bill and his fellow UNTD from Toronto, Andy Shaw. That was followed the next day by an overnight Scotch tasting with our son Ian, and his cousin Brad, both of whom were showing a growing interest in Scotch – would you believe we had more than 28 single malts and a couple of high-end blends to choose from? In mid-January, we hosted a 3 hour, 4 course, “Danish Lunch” for the Picketts, in honour of his birthday, complete with ample quantities of Aquavit & beer (noticing a trend here?) An otherwise dull February was brightened by a farewell concert back in Brantford where it all began by “The Three Cantors” - for whom Jette has sold so many CD's at their concerts ( <http://www.3cantors.com/home.htm> ) that she gets an honourable mention .

April saw us wine touring with Bill's sister Betty, and enjoying the opening of Shawn & Ed's Craft Brewery here in Dundas, where as a “kickstart supporter”, Bill received a 64 oz Growler filled with “Lagershed Dark” - (noticing a continuation of the theme?). That's also prep month for all the HMCS Haida volunteers, busily getting the ship ready for the season. And we were honoured at the Admiralty Ball marking 150 years of naval presence in Hamilton and 75 years for HMCS STAR. As Bill observed seeing all the female sailors in their fine dresses and ballroom gowns, the uniforms they wear on duty “are not flattering”..... The month ended with Bill receiving a notice from the Governor General that he had been awarded the “*Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers*” for his work with naval veterans, and a lifetime of community work, with presentation to follow later in the year.

May marked our now annual voyage on the Kawartha Voyageur, this time a 12 day round trip Kingston to Ottawa and back on the Rideau – fine weather the whole way. June saw Jette again honoured by the Hamilton Health Sciences for her many hours knitting blankets for the Children's Hospital. Late June saw us once again attending the AGM of the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust in Halifax, and to enjoy the hospitality of our good friends Anne & Peter Vaughan ( she, and her sisters, used to babysit Kim, Ian, and Eric ), and with Graham and Gail Scott ( Graham and Bill were in the UNTD's at HMCS PREVOST/Western, and sit on the Board of the UNTD Ass'n of Canada ). It also gave us a chance, on the return drive, to visit Cape Breton and a former colleague at the Cathedral, the Rev'd Susan Best. The last week in July saw Jette, Kim, and I joining David & Mimi Mitchell, their daughters and a friend, and 5 dogs at their cottage on Lake Weslemkoon – and yes, even though there were five more people than bedrooms, it was a relaxing and delightful visit – and an introduction to that rare breed, a Catahoula Leopard Dog.

The first half of August saw us sticking close to home, and covering services at the Cathedral, but on August 17<sup>th</sup> the great adventure of driving across the country to the west coast, and back again, began. In all we put on just 6 kms under 12,000, the great majority of it in fine weather ( except of course for the west coast of BC ). We visited family and good friends – in Gaylord, Michigan; Wyndmere, North Dakota; Winnipeg & Gilbert Plains, in Manitoba. Then following the Yellowhead and Alaska Highways, we made our way through Dawson Creek to

Watson Lake in the Yukon, then down Hwy 37 to Stewart, and Hyder Alaska ( an unexpected bonus and one of the most spectacular drives anywhere ). Then over to Telkwa, BC for a couple of days with another retired cleric – Doug Campbell & his wife Betty, and a visit to a historic 1<sup>st</sup> nations village, off-roading in a van, and celebrating a birthday with 5 generations of Betty's family. From there, out to Prince Rupert for a 16 hr ferry ride down the inside passage to Port Hardy on Vancouver Island. Then to Nanaimo for a couple of days with Jette's brother Steen and his wife, Charlene. .Back on a ferry across to Horsehoe Bay, and East along the southernmost Trans Canada Highway, through the Crowsnest Pass, across the prairies and north of Superior to North Bay, for another visit with friends, then, finally, on Sep. 11., home, with a car still in fine shape having driven from the Atlantic to the Pacific twice in one year – once from east to west, and once from west to east!

Which brings us quickly into October, and yet another Naval Ass'n of Canada AGM (where Bill was re-elected as a member of the Board for 3 more years), a UNTD “Weepers” at the Rideau Club, and an “Up Spirits” and Brunch at HMCS Bytown. .... and back to where we began this letter. Ian & Jenn are enjoying life in Guelph with their dogs (Avon & Bodie) and cats ( Charlie & Stringer), and vacations in Muskoka and Costa Rica, while Kim , now a senior staff member in her school, finds herself mentoring beginning teachers – and enjoying the antics of her cat (Panther).

For those with web access check out <https://www.flickr.com/photos/100845819@N04/albums> “East 2016” and “West 2016” for a couple of hundred photos of the great trip... for others:



Caribou ▲ Stewart R. ▼

Wood Bison▲ Inland P ▼

Bear Paw Glacier K'Tsan Village



Wishing you a year to come filled with good health and happy surprises, and above all

*A Very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!*

*Jette & Bill*