



From Beyond The Pond



2015 Edition

The Mallinsons, Orillia, Ontario, Canada

Dear All,

Since Christmas, we have been kept busy painting our downstairs bedroom and bathroom so that it would be ready for a student from Belgium who is staying with us for three months while he is on a work term at Davidson Log Homes near Orillia. Bert arrived on Thursday, Jan 28, and within 24 hours had bought a second-hand car to use while he is here. Hence, I have only just got around to completing this newsletter.



we rented a car and drove for four days across the Rockies by the southern route to Canmore to stay with Sue's sister Libby and husband Bill for several nights. On the way, we visited Fort Steele near Cranbrook and various other attractions. We ended up the vacation by climbing Ha Ling Peak near Canmore, and attending some of the horse jumping trials at the Spruce Meadows equestrian centre near Calgary.

Summer: James and Elsa treated us to tickets to watch the archery (Sue was a university archer) and sailing

events at the Pan Am Games which were held in Toronto, and also welcomed us into their home for that weekend, wining and dining us in style. An amazing number of people were watching the archery; probably due to the influence of *The Hunger Games*.

We enjoyed our usual swimming, canoeing and sailing at the cottage, with visits from friends Bonnie Bird and Andreas Gada, and Margaret and Stuart Burkholder.

2015 in brief:

Winter: Yet another very snowy winter, but not quite as much snow as last year. We had some good days cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. We organized a couple of snowshoe outings for our Probus club, but Sue and I were the only ones to turn up. Perhaps the fact that the temperature was -20°C on both days had something to do with it!

Spring: Back into painting mode as we redecorated our kitchen and family room, covering over the dark green left by the previous owners with a paler more-soothing green, and painting the varnished wood trim white.

David developed a web site for the Orillia Vocal Ensemble (www.orilliavocalensemble.com) as well as singing with the ensemble in concerts in March and May. Also in May, David organized a trip for our Probus club to Stratford to see *The Taming of the Shrew*.

At the end of May, we took off to Victoria, B.C., and spent nearly three weeks out west. The first week we met up for the first time in 22 years with Sue's cousin Pat and husband Peter in Victoria, and visited Butchart Gardens and the Royal British Columbia Museum. After that, we spent a pleasant few days with friends Ian and Rosemary Kennedy near Duncan, visiting Cathedral Grove (a stand of enormous ancient Douglas firs), a logging museum and a raptor centre. We then crossed over to Vancouver, where

Autumn/Fall: This season was the usual hectic blend of hiking, choral practices and concerts, and involvement in our Probus club and Sue's CFUW women's club. Elsa's brother Vincent, and his wife Margarita invited us all (together with parents Andrew and Rosalie) to celebrate Thanksgiving at their cottage on Christian Island, which is a native reserve. It was a very enjoyable weekend altogether. The following weekend our family closed up our cottage for the winter.

Other Happenings:

Our great news for 2016 is that we will be going to China for a three-week trip in September and October. It has been arranged by our Probus clubs in Orillia, and includes the major sights in China, including the Great Wall, the terracotta warriors, Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. This is something we are really looking forward to, and we hope to meet up with cousins Rowena and Jeremy during our one-day visit to Hong Kong.

James and Elsa:

Elsa and James have settled into their home in east Toronto, undertaking several minor renovations and indulging in a newfound (for Elsa) love of gardening. They took two holidays this year, both related to Elsa's work at Canadian Architect magazine, the first to the Netherlands in April and the second to London in late-August. The trip to London marked the first time James had returned to the city since living there in 2001 as a student. Having the means to eat well and afford better accommodation than a bedsitter left him with a much more favourable impression. Elsa got to eat at Ottolenghi's restaurant (twice!) and therefore deemed the trip a complete success. Next trip they're looking forward to touring more of the countryside and visiting family.

Canadian Architect underwent a complicated ownership transition during 2015 and the dismissal of her associate editor has meant Elsa has had to do the job of two people for several months. It looks as though a new hiring is imminent, and both James and Elsa will be glad for the support. However, it was another year of success with the inaugural CA awards ceremony taking place in December. James spent his first full year at Perkins+Will where he was project architect for a new engineering building at the University of Waterloo and a nursing/nutrition/midwifery building at Ryerson University in Toronto, the latter of which will continue to challenge him in 2016.

Both Elsa and James enjoyed singing in their respective choirs, with James singing Orff's Carmina Burana in May and Bach's Oratorio in December. Elsa's improvisational choir was part of a thousand-chorister performance of R. Murray Schafer's Apocalypse in June and several collaborations with Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq. They're looking forward to an equally musical 2016.

Rebecca:

Rebecca's wonderful American flat mate, Emily, moved out and was replaced by another Emily at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately, Emily 2 was not as compatible as Emily 1, so



eventually Rebecca decided to move to a one-bedroom apartment on the other side of the same building, away from noisy Avenue Road. Rebecca's contract work with the Toronto Atmospheric Fund ended in the spring, but shortly afterward, she was able to land a permanent full-time position at a large gas distribution company, working in their conservation department on the program design team. This was a relief after almost two years of quite precarious, if environmentally fulfilling, employment. During the Fall, Rebecca used a couple of her new-found vacation days for a road trip to Sudbury with her best friend Elizabeth. Together, they attended a friend's baby shower and visited 'The Big Nickel' before driving

back down to the house in Orillia, which they used as a launching pad for the trip. In her free time, Rebecca continues to keep fit with dancing, aerial silks, and other physical activities. At Christmas, she gets into chocolate-making mode, and we all benefit from her wonderful home-made confections. At the time of writing, she has



just come back from Arizona, having attended a conference in Phoenix, and taking a side trip to see the Grand Canyon.

Chris:

Chris stayed with us for most of the year, continuing his development of a combat racing video game. He put together a team that includes an English programmer in Bali, an English

producer in England, a graphic designer in Holland, and a number of musicians to develop Drum and Bass (DnB)

music. In addition, the producer, Dave, involved graphic arts students at a college in Holland in the development of scenery, tracks and artifacts as part of their curriculum, free of charge. Initially, the team had hoped to fund the project through Kickstarter, the on-line crowd funding site, but was not able to raise the requisite amount. At that point they fell back on plan B which was to release a very basic version to raise money on the understanding that people investing in it would receive the full game later. The game has just been released last week, and is selling fairly well. Its name is GRIP,



and you can find out all about it at www.gripvideogame.com.

Chris moved back to Toronto at the end of November, initially to share an apartment in the east end, but then, within the space of a few weeks, returned to the apartment that he used to share with his friend Sean.

Sue:

Sue still enjoys her involvement with the local chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women, leading hikes Tuesday mornings, attending social functions and listening to inspiring speakers. In the summer she invited the hiking group members and their husbands up to the cottage for a day of swimming, chat and barbecuing. She loves cooking and consequently it's a miracle that we manage to keep our weight down to reasonable levels. Sue and Chris enjoyed tackling unusual recipes while he was with us; sweet potato cookies became his favorite. Aching knees, legs and back frustrate her, but she manages to keep going.

David:

David still handles membership for our Probus club, and we both participate in dinners, outings (such as a car rally and theatre visits, including a 30's themed mystery theatre). He also sings in the Orillia Vocal Ensemble, and is on the boards of three volunteer organizations; the Probus club, the choir, and Leacock Associates, who award a prize for Canadian humour each year. He also developed a web site prior to the general election in October that listed many of the problems (not all, as there were too many of them) with the government of our former prime minister, Stephen Harper. We were frankly delighted to see the end of such a mean-spirited and divisive era in Canadian politics.

On that hopeful note we wish the best to you and yours for the coming year.

David and Sue.

Pics



Raptor Centre in Duncan, BC



Othello Tunnels near Hope, BC



Fort Steele near Nelson, BC



With Libby and a bus driver at Emerald Lake



Elk outside Libby and Bill's home in Canmore



Natural bridge in Yoho National Park



View from Ha Ling Peak above Canmore



Sunset in Canmore



Castle Mountain near Lake Louise



Spruce Meadows show jumping



Pan Am Games



CFUW Hikers visit the cottage



David emulating Pan Am



Bowes and Mallinson families