



From Beyond The Pond



2017/18 Edition

The Mallinsons, Orillia, Ontario, Canada

Dear All,

For those of you who wondered, no, we did not send out a newsletter last year. Life just got in the way, and we found too many other things to do! We'll try to catch up in this one.

2017 in brief:

Of course, the major news was the arrival of our first grandchild, Aiden, in August, to Elsa and James. Aiden has added another dimension to our lives, and we love watching him grow and develop. In preparation for his arrival, we bought an antique nursing rocking chair and refinished it for Elsa to use.

Other major events during the year included:

- A baby shower for Elsa and James in June
- Organizing trips to the Shaw Festival and a dairy farm for our Probus club.
- A Probus train trip up the Agawa Canyon on a very hot day to see the fall colours.
- Our niece Zandra's wedding to Liran in September.
- The demise of many local newspapers across Canada, including our local Orillia Packet & Times, which is sorely missed.
- The near-demolition of our car when a tree at the cottage fell during a storm and missed it by a couple of feet.
- We also attended Giiwenh, a First Nations Literary Festival, held at the nearby Rama Reserve. We intended to stay a couple of hours but instead enjoyed a full day of readings, meals and entertainment.
- David replaced the side window of the boathouse. He had to get creative as the window we purchased required us to take out a supporting beam. Our simple renovation started to become a big job. David solved the problem by mounting the window just outside the main support with great success. The



Front row: Rebecca, Elsa (with Aiden), James
Centre row: Sue (with Benny), Yalda, Chris (with Max)
Back: David

drafty boathouse now has the best window on the property – all-weather double-glazed with a screen!

- Organizing the McKay family Christmas party at the end of November. Approx. 80 people come every year and this year Sue's sister and husband, Lib and Bill Bowes, came from Canmore Alberta and two of their grandchildren, Morgan and Devin Bowes, came from Sault Ste Marie Ontario to help us run the party. A great time was had by

all as we love to catch up on each other's news.

- James and Elsa hosted another splendid Christmas dinner at their home with of course Aiden as the centre of attraction.

2018 events:

Our major event this year was a trip to England and Portugal in May. We spent about nine days in England, visiting my sister Anne and various relatives. We were very grateful to be accommodated by Aunt Joyce and Jane in Derby, and by Rowena in Cambridge. While in Derby, we visited Chatsworth House to see some of the scenes from Pride and Prejudice. In Portugal, we had a nine-day driving holiday that included stays in various cities including Marvao, Guarda, Guimaraes, Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon. We extended our stay in Lisbon, and took time for a city tour (on which our guide spoke four languages) and a visit to Sintra, where Portugal's royalty had their palaces.

In April, 13 of our 40 solar panels suddenly went on the blink. It turned out to be squirrels chewing the cables underneath; a problem that cost us a lot to repair and even more to put preventive mesh in place. The panels are still, however, one of our best investments.

David and Sue:

The Stephen Leacock Award gala weekend for Humour has become an enjoyable part of our June routine since David joined the board. David is still enjoying the camaraderie and participating in three yearly concerts of the Orillia Vocal Ensemble. He is often found humming around the house – a pleasant experience.

David is not 'working' as such; however, he has volunteered his expertise by designing, developing and maintaining the websites for our Lake Country Probus Club, the Central Muskoka Probus Club, the Orillia Vocal Ensemble and Stephen Leacock Associates. He is still handling membership for our Probus club, and we continue to participate in their social events. David is still on the boards of three of the volunteer organizations above. Earlier this year, he upgraded the Leacock site to accept memberships and fees on-line, a quite challenging task.

Sue still attends her CFUW meetings and helps with the Homes Tour which raises money for high school female graduates. As part of a trio she is undertaking the rewriting of CFUW Orillia's Constitution and Bylaws. Sue still leads hikes every Tuesday, but now shares that task with David as he takes part of the group on a longer foray into the woods while Sue leads a shorter version as her knees and hips give her trouble on long distances. A left hip replacement is planned with no date as yet so she is keeping active by taking pain killers, investing in orthotics, and physiotherapy – all are helping to keep her moving. She meets friends for lunch, attempts to read the assigned book club books (*Red Notice* was an eye opener and very topical and *Gone to Pot* was quite comical).

It was an enjoyable summer with stays at the cottage, visiting with Sue's sister's family across the lake at their now permanent home and relaxing at our cottage as well as spending time at home.

James, Elsa and Aiden:

James and Elsa took a trip to Sweden in the spring of 2017 while Elsa was pregnant, and then Aiden was born in August at the Toronto Birth Centre for which James was one of the architects.



James, Elsa & Aiden, Fall 2018

Elsa was off for 12 months on maternity leave, and James is currently off for 9 months. They overlapped for 2½ months in the summer and spent time at both the Lam and Mallinson cottages.

We have been delighted to follow Aiden's growth and progress, and he is now a very active and happy little fellow.

James had three major projects completed and open to the public in October - two engineering schools and one university library. He was project architect on two of them and detailed the exterior envelope of the third.

In addition to editing Canadian Architect magazine, Elsa co-wrote and edited a book called Northern Building, 1967-2017 about modern architecture in Canada, to be



published in the fall of 2019.

Rebecca:

Rebecca is still working on energy conservation programs at a gas utility. Her major recreational activity has been developing her expertise in aerial silks, and she took part in two recitals this year, for which she sewed her own leotards. Many of the moves in the routines that she developed require considerable strength, and are quite nerve-wracking to watch, particularly when she quickly wraps the silks around her feet and then drops to hang upside down. You can watch her latest routine [here](#) (the password is "Rebecca"). Apart from this, Rebecca has tried her hand at painting and, with a friend, painted a picture in the style of Bob Ross.

Chris:

Chris has had a very successful two years with his GRIP video game. After a worrisome time when he wondered whether he would be able to get funding to develop it further for platforms other than the PC, he was able to team up with a games publisher in the UK who financed the final development work and the porting of it to Xbox, Playstation 4 and Nintendo Switch. In April of last year, he took a trip to Indonesia to meet up with his business partner Rob Baker for the first time, and to work together on some aspects of the game. During his stay there, he posted this to Facebook: "*Things I never thought I'd say, #29: I need to clear the geckos off the ceiling above me with a broom every night so they don't shit on my laptop*". On the way back from Indonesia he was forced to spend a week in Tokyo owing to an ear infection, but made the most of it by visiting some of the tourist sites and going to see a Sumo wrestling match. Chris travelled to San Francisco, Boston and Germany to attend game conferences and promote the game. When it was launched on all platforms on November 6th, he attended the launch party in London and met the other team members there. A full collector's edition of the game



has been manufactured with vinyl soundtrack, CD, stickers, car shaped USB and other items. Since then the game has been selling reasonably well.

On the personal side, Chris has met up with a lovely girl, Yalda, and has acquired a wonderful little family in the form of two small boys, Max and Benny. They have enjoyed plenty of fun road trips to the cottage and Orillia.

We have had a very busy Christmas with all the family descending on us in Orillia. Elsa and Rebecca were responsible for preparing our splendid Christmas dinner,

while the rest of us pitched in where necessary, and entertained (and were entertained by) the young children, Aiden, Max and Benny. It's a long time since we had young children in the house for Christmas, and while a joy, is more exhausting than we remember!

We wish you all health, happiness and success in all you do in the coming year.

David and Sue.

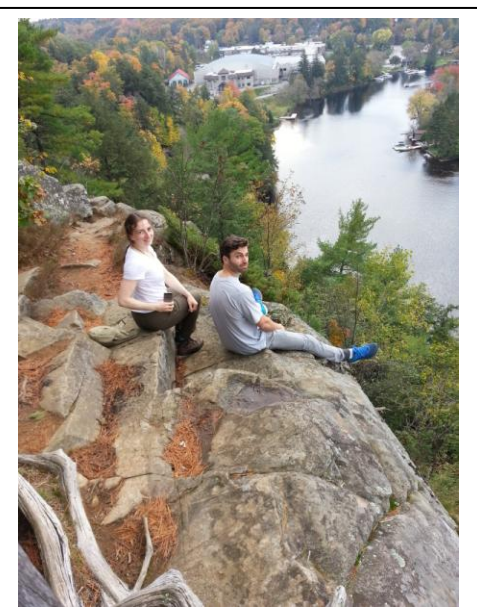
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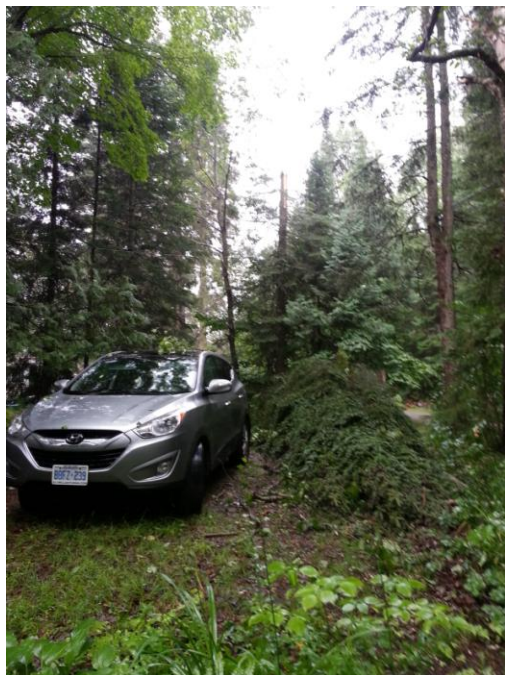
A brand-new grandson (and Grandma)



A special rocker



Chris and Rebecca in Huntsville



A close call for the car



Aiden, summer 2018



A winter resident – the cardinal



Bill and Dan in the new maple sugar shack



New boathouse window



Praça da Figueira square in Lisbon



Portugese hilltop town – Castelo de Vide



Coach Museum in Lisbon



Traditional river craft in Aveiro



White storks on their nests which are protected by law



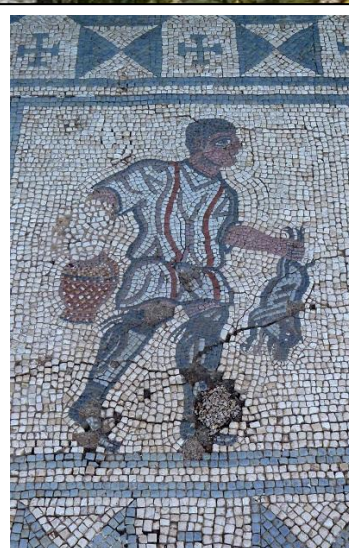
Part of the medieval hilltop town of Marvão



Roman bridge in Ponte de Lima



Roman villa in Conimbriga



Roman mosaic in Conimbriga



Belém Tower in Lisbon



Old Jewish Quarter in Castelo de Vide