



From Beyond The Pond



2023 Edition

The Mallinsons, Orillia, Ontario, Canada

Dear All,

Other than making a trip to England in February for my sister Anne's funeral, we have not been anywhere significant this year, but have managed to keep ourselves fully occupied nonetheless.

David and Sue:

I finally managed to relinquish responsibility for our Probus web site, thus ending 12 years of being on the board. We still enjoy being members, and in fact I was awarded a life membership before COVID struck for all my involvement as web site developer, membership chair, speaker on two occasions, and organizer of bus trips to theatres in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Leacock Medal for Humour still occupies a lot of my time, and in September we held a second post-COVID gala weekend at which the

medal was awarded. It was very successful, but meant that most of the preparatory work had to be done during the summer when we all would have preferred to be enjoying summer activities. Consequently, this year we are returning to a June date for the weekend.

Towards the end of the year, I was approached by another Probus club in Huntsville to create a website, so my spare time in December was spent customizing my web application for them. It should go live before the end of January.

Sue also managed to relinquish her responsibilities for the hiking and speaker programs for CFUW, which leaves us both free to twiddle our thumbs for a while, though Sue has just joined the "Sunshine Seniors" helping out each week at The Sharing Place, our local food bank, making



soup and meals in the kitchen for members and local agencies.

Healthwise, we are managing to stay fit and active, though Sue is presently nursing a stress fracture in the 2nd metatarsal in her foot (reason unknown), and had a large benign lipoma successfully removed from her upper arm in October.

Some of the events during the year:

- Most of the family enjoyed attending the Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia in July.
- Sue was interviewed by Barrie TV News in May on the occasion of the death of Gordon Lightfoot. We were walking in Tudhope Park (where there is a statue of Lightfoot) when a reporter approached us and asked if we had any memories to share. The interview was replayed in the end-of-year round-up at the end of December.
- We hosted the delightful Chester family (Tim, Jenny, James, Helena, Rebecca and George) for a couple of days in August at the cottage. Tim is the son of my cousin Christine who sadly died over twenty years ago. George (7) and Aiden (6) really hit it off together and revelled in each other's company.
- Also in August, Sue and I attended the pow-wow at the Rama reserve near Orilla – a very colourful spectacle. First nations people from all over North America come to it and dress in their traditional costumes for music and energetic dancing competitions. ([Men](#) and [Women](#))
- In October, we spent a pleasant weekend with friends Bonnie and Andreas at their home in the country, and followed up with a visit to Margaret Burkholder in her nursing home. Bonnie and Margaret were two of Sue's university friends, Together with Gail in the U.S., they keep in touch frequently.
- Also in October, we had a special hike on the property of CFUW friend Louise, and were able to view Chinook salmon congregating for spawning in their stream.
- We took part in an enjoyable Probus car rally in October, making it a very busy month.
- Chris had an operation on his nose in November, and came (with dogs Lyon and Nyah [his ex's dog]) to us afterwards to recuperate for a few days. Back in 2013 Chris fell off a roof, breaking his leg and nose. Since then he has not been able to breathe properly, so this operation was intended to address that. Our cat Monet and the two dogs fortunately managed to get along

with each other without too many tiffs, though Monet was very wary of the canine visitors.

Monet, being an outside cat, has managed to supplement her diet with chipmunks. Unfortunately, despite having a collar with a bell, she has caught and killed about 20 chipmunks (that we know about) during the course of the year, and has eaten at least four of them. Lately she seems to have become more affectionate and seeks our company – a change from her usual disdain and aloofness.

At the cottage, our electrician finally found the time in November to replace our ancient panel box, so we have jumped from a 50 amp service to 200 amps. This should be more than sufficient to handle our future needs. Having bought a plug-in hybrid car on December 30th, we should have more than enough power to recharge it when at the cottage.

On returning from a hike in October, we spotted several antique cars outside a local restaurant, and, after a little chasing, were able to meet up with the current owners of the 1910 Tudhope car that transported us from the church to the reception after our wedding in 1977. They were kind enough to give us a ride around local streets, and in return we sent them photos of the car at the wedding for their car history scrapbook. Tudhopes were built in Orillia for several years, but there are only a couple of them running any more, and we were very fortunate that friends Stan and Sondra Passfield were able to borrow one for our wedding.

In March, Sue and I will be visiting England to attend a reunion dinner to celebrate 60 years since leaving St. Peter's School. In 2027, if in condition to do so, we may be attending the 1400th anniversary of the school!

James, Elsa and Aiden:

Our grandson Aiden continues to grow in leaps and bounds, quite literally as he's taken an interest in gymnastics. He started grade 1 in September and is social enough that it's hard to keep track of who his friends are. He is in a French immersion program and seems to be enjoying learning the language.

Aiden, Elsa and James travelled to Washington and Virginia in June for a wedding and visited some spectacular caverns near Shenandoah National Park. They also flew to Thunder Bay in August to visit some friends who had recently moved there.

Elsa continued her role as editor at Canadian Architect magazine, scaling back her teaching activities, but becoming more politically involved in a number of hot-button issues, notably the redevelopment of Ontario Place and controversy around the competition for design of the

Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan. Outside of work, Elsa is very connected to the contact dance community.

James returned to Montgomery Sisam Architects in February, after 12 years in other firms. He is currently



working on the envelope design for the children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa. Rejoining the office has also given him the glorious opportunity to be lead singer in the office band, which culminated in a concert for 800 architecture colleagues in April. Family have been supportive but are wary of rock star ego-inflation. (See the video of one of James' performances at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ix7AfaSfKR0>)

Rebecca:

Rebecca had a busy 2023. In last year's letter, we mentioned that she had started a contract with the City of Toronto's Environment and Climate Change division. In February, she took on the role of acting Project Manager when a colleague left the team, and in the summer she was promoted to a full time permanent Program Manager position. A lot of Rebecca's time in the fall was spent putting together a proposal for a building energy use reporting by-law, which paid off in December when the proposed [by-law](#) was passed by City Council. This means that 2024 will be another busy year due to the work that needs to be done to implement said by-law. Outside of work, Rebecca enjoyed spending time with family at the cottage during the summer and in Orillia during the Christmas break, and very much enjoyed puppy-sitting Lyon while her brother Chris was travelling.



She also continued her aerial silks practice throughout the year, and again performed in both the spring and fall student showcases. Her latest performances can be viewed online here: [June 2023](#), and [November 2023](#).

Chris:

Chris has had a very busy year with work, but also with his brand new puppy Lyon! Lyon's breed is a coton-doodle, which is a mix between a Coton De Tulear and Toy Poodle. Lyon is a lovely new addition to the family with his generally calm temperament and adorable looks, of course. Lyon was born on Christmas Day 2022, so he's just turned 1 recently.



Work-wise, Chris is still working hard on his company's new game to be released this year, called SPEED FREEKS. In between working, he managed to go to San Francisco, the mountains in Alberta (also visiting the Bowes-Matulis family) and Iceland, which he thinks might be his favourite place in the world.

This year will be another busy one, but Lyon will help keep Chris calm and taking breaks from his desk

As with last year, we wish everyone a belated Merry Christmas and an enjoyable 2024.

*David, Sue, James, Elsa, Piden, Rebecca
and Chris.*

Pix



Then and Now





The Chester family at the cottage: Jennie, James, George, Helena, Rebecca and Tim



Breadmaking efforts during the year



Sculpture spotted during the car rally



Chipmunk in our living room



New panel box at the cottage



David, Sue, Katharine and Michael at a pub in Kettlewell



Monet has to participate in everything



Towards the end of winter



Michael, friend Johnny Cartwright, Michael Burton, David, Roger Burton (1962?)



Morning at the cottage