



Happy Holidays



from our home to yours.

Happy holidays! I can hardly believe 2004 is coming quickly to a close! It has been a great year at our house. January came in with a bang for me as Mark completely surprised me with the news that we would be leaving February 29th for a Caribbean Cruise aboard the "Voyager of the Seas" for a full week! An early anniversary present as we celebrated the big 10 years in July! Let me tell you that Royal Caribbean is true to their slogan "It's like no vacation on earth".



Enjoying the beaches of Cozumel, Mexico

We went with our business partners Gary and Wendy Stephen and it was an amazing experience - what a way to travel. We stopped in four destinations; Bahamas, Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and Cozumel, Mexico... We got to see and do so much; swimming with stingrays and dolphins, climbing the rock wall on the ship, snorkeling, fishing, shopping, way to much eating and more! Check out our website for our day by day account with all the pictures. Truly a trip of a lifetime. We certainly couldn't have done it without Grammie Donna and Grampie who moved into our house to take care of the boys! A good time was had by all.



Rhonda playing with the dolphins



The Voyager of the Seas; a huge floating city!



Dressing up for wonderful dining each night was fun!

Mark and I also cracked down last January and decided to get more fit. Sometimes life just gets crazy and we needed to take better care of ourselves as far as making time for exercise and fitness. By June, between the two of us, we had lost over fifty pounds and we feel great.



Mark bought a new "road-race" bike for the relay



Mark & Jeff at the finish of the Red Cross Relay

Mark began training (cycling and running) for the Red Cross Relay (66km course) for the end of May. He and Jeff Keefe completed the relay as a two-man team. They did great! After that Mark needed a new goal, so he set it on the PEI marathon to be held in October. He completed his first marathon in 4:04:26. We are so proud of him. I'm almost scared to think what's next!



Mark at the start of the PEI Marathon



Almost half way at 21km

He's also done lots of business travel this fall. He was out to Edmonton (Great Hobbies West) in early September for a week, then to trade shows in Las Vegas and Chicago for a week and a half in October. While in Edmonton, he and Gary took a couple of extra days to head to Jasper, where they took in some picturesque fishing, camping and mountain hiking. During the four hour drive back to Edmonton on September 4th, they ran into a blinding snowstorm; Alberta weather for ya!



Mark says the trout fishing on Maligne Lake is incredible. The view made it hard to fish!



Gary & Mark at the summit of Whistler, in Jasper; a 9km trail with a 1200m ascent above the tree line.

Great Hobbies has had another busy and successful year, this being their 20th Anniversary. They participated with a float in the "Gold Cup & Saucer Parade" in August and



the big news for this year is that they were the first dealer in Canada for the Segway product line. The HT (Human Transporter) is absolutely amazing and is easy and fun to ride... the boys love taking turns on them! Check out www.mysegway.ca



The Great Hobbies Team in Edmonton



Chandler and my Dad, Ron; ripping up the asphalt on the Segway HT



Great Hobbies float and some participants

I continue babysitting Matt and Will this year, one to two days a week, we really enjoy them. Now with Connor gone for the mornings, I give myself the first hour or so after dropping him off to exercise. I was walking/jogging outside in the early fall and now I make great use of our own Stratford town hall/gym. Mark is trying to get me hooked on runs with the PEI roadrunners club. I did my first 5km run in Montague in November. It was fun, but I'm no marathoner yet! It sure does feel good to get some exercise though. I also continue on the Board of Directors for C.H.A.N.C.E.S. It is such a wonderful program to be a part of. Their programs truly make a difference for both parents and children.



Mommy and Chandler having a swim



Out on a sleigh ride with friends



Mark and I over at our neighbor, Rhonda's house



Mark said I had to put this picture in; I think he is crazy!

This Spring we tackled a big home improvement job! We renovated our kitchen/dining room and hall area. We took out the carpet and vinyl and replaced it with laminate and (heated) ceramic tile. We also painted, put up all new trim with boston-headers, refaced the cupboards and installed new doors - no more 70's! It was one huge mess! Lots of sanding on the cupboards! Oh boy!



Yeah, I can use power tools too!

We did all the work ourselves with some help from Mark's brother Jeff; it was worth it and we are very pleased with the results.



We pretty well stripped everything down



Mark and his brother Jeff, ripping up the layers of old vinyl to lay down the ceramic tile



What a big mess!



After and...

...before shots



The boys continue to grow up way too fast and keep life busy with loads of fun. Chandler made his First Communion last April with lots of school friends.



Chandler's First Communion with Father McNally

He hit Rustico Golf Course for his third year. He and Grampie love to golf. Chandler moved up a league this year in baseball, he is now in Mosquito! He played on the Stratford Lasers, and we even had Spring training in May. Unfortunately, he was unable to play in the play-offs as he had fractured his ankle around the end of August. Even hopping, he was in the dugout supporting his team!



Chandler at his golf lessons in Rustico



Crack! He lines up a hit early in the season



The boys love to bike at the cottage in Desable



Chandler with his friend Aaron on the last day of ball

Chandler kick started grade three in his bright orange cast, but it was gone within two weeks. He is still doing fantastic in French Immersion and has joined the school choir. Being eight this year also meant that Chandler moved up to Cubs from Beavers in his scouting group.



Chandler's first day of grade 3 with his crutches



Chandler & cousin Tristan at summer beaver camp



Chandler and Tristan learned how to play chess



Chandler and Tristan tenting out at Cub camp



Chandler's investiture night at Cubs with Akela (Jim)



Chandler's 8th and Aunt Leanne's 31st Birthday!



Chandler & Frisco; a self portrait



The real Chandler; enjoying a fall day



Connor is now a big "5" years old. He graduated from play school last April and is now in kindergarten. He has made lots of friends, is learning so much, and Mommy gets to go on all the fields trips! Connor also hit the ball fields this summer for the first time to play T-ball. He's a big hitter already! Connor also learned how to ride his bicycle with only "two wheels"... so long training wheels. The boys love to get out for an afternoon of biking on the local trails.



Connor learned how to ride his bike in the spring



Connor planted this flower in Play School; it bloomed all summer



Connor is a big "5" this year; he is a big boy!



By mid summer he was driving everywhere!



Connor played T-ball once a week all summer



Connor graduated from Play School and is now in Kindergarten



Daddy and Connor Kayaking at the cottage



Connor lost his first teeth this year



Connor sleeps with his best buddy Teddy every night



Both boys love to draw with chalk on the driveway



Connor loves to play and ride; Rainbow Valley



Connor getting ready for his first day at Kindergarten



Connor is a big helper with all his gear!



Auntie Leanne face painting Connor on Canada Day

Merry Christmas

from The Bowlans



Both boys took swimming lessons with the Red Cross for the first two weeks of August. Chandler made great progress; going from not getting into the pool two years ago, to now swimming with his head under water! Connor was the youngest in his group, but he had the biggest spirit and did great. He loves those flutter boards. They also had a ball with the outdoors part of the program; they learned and played a lot. Connor loved going with the big kids on the school bus.



They had a great time at swimming lessons



They each passed, and move up for next year



We took a day trip to Halifax to see the air show



The boys did a great job on our dipped Easter eggs



In the middle of a field... somewhere on PEI!



Riding through the trails in Stratford is fun



A totally unplanned candid shot, believe it or not!



Grampie and the boys having a great time with Radio Control trucks



Daddy built an igloo after the big blizzard



Walk the plank!

The boys love to read



My sister Janet graduated from Vet College in May!

This October we had a couple of "Pirates" on our hands for Halloween. Halloween was on a Sunday this year, which was great in that we got to visit more relatives in the afternoon with still lots of time to "Trick or Treat" around home in the evening. Needless to say, there was way too much junk food at our house by the end of the night.



Merry Christmas from all of my bears to you!

Blink! And here we are, now well into the festivities of the Christmas season and there is still much to do. The last two weeks of the year are going to go by fast and will soon be fond memories. We hope 2004 was good to all of you and that Santa finds his way to your home. We wish you health, happiness and love for 2005!

*Merry Christmas
Happy New Year*

To view this newsletter in full color, see our website at www.thebowlans.com You can keep in touch with us there all year long!



The Bowlan Family... The End