



Happy Holidays



from our home to yours.

Season's greetings to all!
I hope everyone has had a prosperous and memorable year. I find it hard to believe that another Christmas season is upon us; time sure blinks by! Our family has been very busy...



Outdoor skating at the Jack Frost Festival

Our boys are ever growing and changing. Connor, now eight and a half, is in grade three French Immersion. He is doing great and now reads "chapter books" in French; a great little Frenchman. He is also quite a social guy, as he seems to be everyone's friend! Connor completed grade two Catechism in April by making his First Communion. Mommy was one of the teachers and she was very proud of all the children. He finished his last year in Beavers in June, and "swam up" to be a Cub in September. This summer was a very successful season of soccer. Connor played on Stratford's Team Subway in his division and they were literally unbeatable. What a team!



Connor is very creative with a great imagination



Connor turns 8 with a "Star Wars" cake!



Sorry, no, we can't keep him.



Connor gives it his all in this action shot



Uncle Gary teaches Connor how to fly an RC Heli

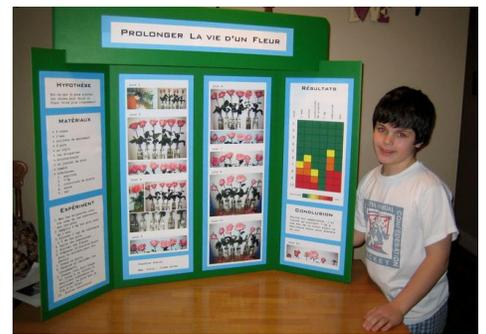


Connor hanging out while hiking a trail near Dalvay



Connor takes a lunge at his big brother

Chandler, eleven and a half years old, is the big dog. He is in grade six (F.I.) - his last year in elementary. (Oh my God, I feel old!) Chandler had an enjoyable and successful science fair. He presented his project in February, was chosen to represent the school at the district fair in March, and then was one of six students chosen to go to the Provincial Fair in April at UPEI. He won two awards at the provincial level: The Integrity Award and Best Project related to the Practice of Science. What an experience!



Chandler found the secret to making roses live longer!



A boy and his dog!



Chandler & Mommy bake for a school project

Chandler decided to return to soccer this year. He hadn't played since he was five. They had a great team and did some traveling to games in various parts of the province. His cousin, Tristan, was on the same team. Good times! They had a great coach, Scott Hastie. Nothing like motivation from the sidelines in a Scottish accent. Thanks Scott. You were awesome, and the parents also had lots of fun!



Chandler's hard working soccer team



Chandler enjoying luxury at the Rodd Mill River



The boys love to Ski; Chandler on a school trip

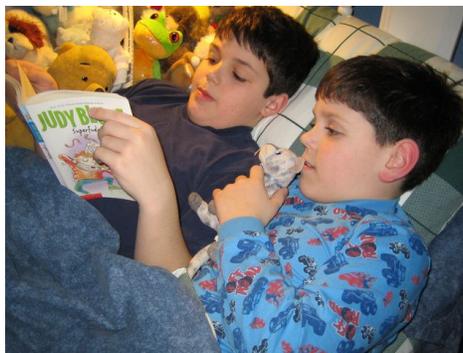


Chandler (left) learning how to start a fire at cub camp

Both boys completed another level of swimming lessons by attending a two week day camp in July. Chandler was old enough to do the boating component of the program this year. He was a little apprehensive at first, but ended up loving it, perhaps a sailor in the making.



Yop! A great time to relax and have a drink



Mommy says, "Reading is part of our day"



The boys love to "fly" in the hangar



Cycling at the "Red Mud" event in Brookvale

The boys also enjoyed another season of golf. Chandler upgraded his clubs this year, and now enjoys a custom made set. They golfed at Grampie's course in Rustico every Wednesday, and also participated in two separate Future Links Clinics. One of the clinics, at Fox Meadow, featured PEI's own Lori Kane as one of the instructors. The boys were thrilled to get lessons from such a renowned golfer as Lori, and she suitably impressed them. In addition to golf, swimming and soccer, the boys did a lot of biking for fun, and they also participated in kid's events such as the Tour de PEI.



Another great year of golfing with Grampie



We made an addition to our family this year. We surprised the boys with a pink “baby girl” card. They initially thought they were getting a baby sister. Lets just say, that had it been for real, they would not have been very pleased. However, they were ecstatic to learn we would be getting our own miniature schnauzer, named Sadie, at the end of May. It’s the only way I was going to get a girl! She is lots of fun and is spoiled rotten.



Sadie is very active and loves to play



She fits right in on a family hike

As for Mark, who can keep up with him? He continues to be an avid cyclist, and this year he assumed the position of President of Cycling PEI. (Does that make me the First Lady? Hah hah! Good one Jared.) Mark organized lots of events and continues to maintain CPEI’s web site. He did two marathons this year, one in Halifax in May, and the second one in PEI in October. He even completed his first triathlon this summer. Prince Edward Island hosted a world-class women’s cycling event in June, the Tour de PEI. Mark was on the organizing committee, as well as one of the officials. It was very exciting, just like on TV.



Mark finishes his 5th marathon. He is crazy!



Mark was one of the race officials at the Tour de PEI



Mark biked the Cabot Trail again this September

Not a couple of days after printing last year’s newsletter, the Great Hobbies owners (Jim, Mark and Gary) decided to buy an airplane. Jim had been taking lessons since last September and they all decided it would be fun and functional to have our own airplane. In January, Jim, with the previous owner, flew their “new” plane home from Ontario. It is a 1966 Piper Cherokee, a great first airplane to learn in. Jim earned his license before his 50th birthday in June. Mark was pretty busy in the spring, but by July, he and Gary had started their flight training and are now only a couple of hours away from their license. The kids have been up a couple of times and also love “flying it” in the hangar! I guess I’m next! OMG.



A cold day in January, the Cherokee arrived



Marks first solo flight after 10 hours of training

Last year, I was volunteering at Glen Stewart School (Chandler and Connor’s school) to help students in the “English as a Second Language” program. In January of this year, I took a tutor training program at the Eastern School Board and then began tutoring full-time. Another tutor and I ran an eight-week “Grade 3 Literacy Program”. I am back with the same program, which began in October. I work half days and truly enjoy what I am doing... it is very rewarding each and every day.



The boys and I hanging out at the park



My sisters and I; friends forever!



I also enjoy being an active volunteer with our Home and School. Last February, I took on organizing our teacher appreciation week, complete with a big buffet lunch supported by many parent volunteers. Our teachers are amazing! I remain on the board of directors for CHANCES, and I also got to help out with lots of the cycling events.



The before and after...



In the midst of everything, we found time for a couple of short trips. The last weekend in June, we went to Saint John for the Great Atlantic Fun Fly. It is a nice weekend getaway, which the boys always enjoy. Sadie made a terrific flying field puppy.

In August, we adventured in Nova Scotia, camping for five nights at Keji National Park. The first night, in a tent, brought us a severe thunder and lightning storm, the likes of which I had never before experienced. It was terrifying. (I was praying to you Gram.) After that we had lots of fun: camp fires, Mark's outdoor cooking, catching a squirrel, outdoor theatre shows, canoeing, swimming, amazing biking trails and a day at Upper Clements Park. We highly recommend it!



Daddy and Connor Canoeing. Chandler took this pic!



My boys and I enjoying the sunset at Kejimikujik



We sincerely hope that you, too, have experienced a year filled with wonderful memories. Here's to an even better 2008! May health, happiness and love be yours.

Rhonda

*Merry Christmas
And a
Happy New Year*



The Bowlan Family... The End



Mark and I at the "Aerosmith" concert

On a sad note, I lost my Gram (Ruth Saunders) in June, one week after her 90th birthday. Although she hadn't been well for quite some time, the memories that I have of the time spent with her as I grew up will never be forgotten. Life is just not the same without her and she is deeply missed.



I love you, Gram

In the month of May, the "Mark & Rhonda Construction Company" (inside joke!) tackled a major renovation project. With the house being close to thirty years old, it was time! Thanks to a colossal effort from our friend Gary, and help from Leanne and Jeff, we replaced every door and window, and installed new siding. What a facelift! We are so pleased.



Gary was a big help with our major reno. Thanks!