

Dear Family and Friends,

This year has been very different for us as we have stayed close to home and are certainly glad that we went to Alaska last year and not this! We hope that you and yours are spared too much economic hardship as we enter this unsettling time.

Volunteering has become a larger part of all of our lives this year. We have all helped at two national historic sites, Hillary House in Aurora and Sharon Temple in Sharon, where John, Mary Beth's brother, is Director/Curator.

In mid-February, Mary Beth's brother, John, broke his hip—that's right, the other one if you remember way back to 1992 or you can read about that at www.richardhess.com/family. After spending 10 days in the hospital, he spent seven weeks recuperating at our home. Italo, a shared Cockapoo, enjoyed his time with us also. Mary Beth was a wonderful hostess while she also looked after John's home. John is almost fully healed now.

Our winter missed a record for snowfall by about 10 cm. In mid-March, we had a blizzard which dumped 45 cm of snow on top of what we already had—and Richard still made it to church after we all shovelled the driveway again! He took the photo below and it became the cover of the church's Christmas CD.



On June 30th, Chuck (one of the owners of NTC where Richard worked) and his partner Steve visited us from California. We couldn't believe we'd been apart for four years, and it was wonderful to see them!

The next day, our friends Annmarie, Mitch, and their three sons visited, and we all went to Niagara Falls. Being in a touristy mode, we went on the *Maid of the Mist*. We all had a special time together. The photo at the right is the souvenir that was done in front of a green

screen. We thought we were back in Hollywood!

July was busy! On July 9th, we visited Jay and Dick (Richard's Dad). They are still in fine shape, especially considering they're 90! On the 19th, relatives John and Mary Webster from Markham had a large 60th birthday party. They are world-travelled Town Criers, by the way!

The first week of August, we spent a few days with Cathie in Sarnia and saw some of her large family, too. In September, we all visited the *HMCS Charlottetown* in Toronto when she was touring the Great Lakes. Michael, especially, was excited.

Mary Beth and Richard

Mary Beth now volunteers more at school, church, Hillary House, and Sharon Temple. She became a chalice bearer and helps during communion some Sundays. Since the new church CD was released, she has been busy selling them after most services (we have three) on Sundays.

Right after New Year's, Richard and Tony, the choir directory at Trinity Anglican Church, edited a Christmas CD recorded during the 2007 Advent and Christmas season which is being well-received. Richard is also very involved with Trinity's sound system—earning him the title of "Media Meister" which includes scheduling the volunteer sound booth operators.

Richard's business is doing well including some assistance with instrumentation tapes. He is currently transferring tapes of 1952–1968 Canadian National Exhibition Grandstand Shows. We held a four-day, one-person seminar this fall for a tape restorer from New Zealand.

Robert

In mid-May, Robert and his class took their Grade 8 graduation trip to Montreal and Quebec City. He had a great time!

At the end of May, Robert was confirmed into the Anglican Church.

In early June, Robert and his tenor sax spent a week at the Enrichment Band camp, his second year.

On June 24th, Robert graduated from Grade 8, making it onto the honour roll. He also won the music award!

Richard hired Robert during July and August to scan family negatives while Richard scanned family slides. Together they scanned about 13,000 images, roughly 30% of our collection.

Robert started high school this fall and is really enjoying it. In addition to the Grade 9 band, he was invited to join the Grade 10 Jazz Band. This is in addition to playing in the church orchestra and singing in the church choir. High school students must do 40 hours of community service during their four years in order to graduate. Robert already has already accumulated enough hours to graduate, but he'll continue his volunteer work.



David Mark Peter Richard Robert Mitch Annmarie Mary Beth Michael

Michael

Michael started Grade 8 this fall. In early May, he spent a few days at an outdoors camp, but had a broken finger from a gym accident and couldn't enjoy it to the full extent. He later broke another finger on the other hand roughhousing with Robert! Michael was certainly well-cast this year! Michael was still able to play the flute, however—even at Sharon Temple.

Michael also worked for his dad this summer, de-constructing and carefully sorting parts from 13 complex professional tape recorders. Now we can better find spare parts when needed. These machines were never going to work again, but they can help keep others working for Richard's business.

Michael is also active in choir and orchestra at church, as well as being a server/acolyte. He was promoted to duty server this past year. The whole family helps Richard do sound at church for complicated events. We have a good basic setup at church augmented by a whole heap of Richard's gear which is used at other venues like Sharon Temple as well.

We are now starting another round of Christmas and visiting, and while we cannot visit with all of you, our thoughts are there with you and we wish you well! While we are living in challenging times, we also have hope. Please join us in supporting President-Elect Obama. Hopefully he and his team will turn the U.S. around and the world will follow.

With all our love,

Mary Beth, Richard, Robert, and Michael

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