

Christmas 2010

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope that our 28th annual letter finds you all well and that 2010 has been kind to you.

To begin the high points of the year, Robert and Michael were recipients of the 2009 Young Heritage Leaders award from the Ontario Heritage Trust for their volunteer efforts at Hillary House and Sharon Temple, both National Historic Sites. In the photo below, the is Mayor of Aurora, Phyllis Morris.



Robert helped form and lead a soft-rock worship band at church this year. In the fall, Michael joined on drums. Here we see Mary Beth, her brother John, and John's dog, Italo, at the Blessing of the Animals service in October.



(Richard Baker photo)



John is almost fully recovered after hip-replacement surgery in August. Robert had the opportunity to sing at this service as the lead singer had a conflict.

Here is Michael on Trinity Church's drum kit in the parish hall. Yes, we also have a drum kit in our ~~living~~ music room!



In addition to drums, Michael continues to play his flute. In fact, he replaced his student model with an intermediate one.

Robert has had an additional musical adventure this year. While continuing his tenor saxophone in the church orchestra and school jazz band, playing an acoustic and two electric guitars, and an electric bass, his high school band teacher loaned him a bassoon and suggested he learn it. The teacher is pleased with Robert's progress.

Last year, school ended well, with both boys making Honour Roll (A average).

This fall, especially, the boys are busy almost every night. Robert is completing his year of supervised driving and his driver's education course, so soon we will be out of the chauffeuring business!

This May, Mary Beth was chosen as one of two Funeral Coordinators at Trinity. She is also part of a team coordinating Celebration 2011 events at Trinity to mark 10 years in the new church and 165 years of worship on the current site.

Richard continues to enjoy the challenges of audio tape restoration and being the Media Meister at Trinity as well.

This October photo is for the church directory.



Oh no, the Hesses took TWO trips this summer!

Our first one was an adventure through Canada's Maritime provinces—ALL of them! Of course, we drove. This lasted 40 days (but only 39 nights) from June 29th through August 7th.



We learned that there is a big difference between “open” and “finished” as we drove the just-opened Trans-Labrador highway from Baie Comeau to Red Bay.

We will leave you with this image of the north shore of Prince Edward Island. For more information and photos, please read the trip report at www.richardhess.com/family/



On August 11th, we drove to Philadelphia via back roads, passing through the ghost town of Centralia, PA. This town was evacuated because the coal mine underneath is still on fire. August 12th saw us doing the usual touristy things in Philadelphia, starting with Independence Hall.

This was our first trip to the Independence Hall Visitor's Center which we were very impressed by.

The last time Richard saw the Liberty Bell, it was still in the centre of Independence Hall.



We also visited Christ Church and had lunch aboard the Moshulu. Launched in Scotland in 1904 as the Kurt for German owners, she made 54 trips around Cape Horn in various trades including nitrate and copper ore. More of her history can be found at www.moshulu.com/

We toured the WWII submarine, USS Becuna, and the 1892 cruiser USS Olympia, which was Admiral Dewey's flagship at the battle of Manila Bay on May 1, 1898. We had heard that the Olympia might no longer be accessible, and might have even been reefed, but fortunately, this brinkmanship has ended with further talks and both ships remain open in 2011. See www.phillyseaport.org/

The main impetus for the trip to Pennsylvania was the first-ever gathering of all seven cousins, the grandchildren of Elam and Marcelia Hess, Richard's paternal grandparents. The reason for this gathering was the interment of ashes of Richard's Aunt Betty and Uncle Gerry Phaneuf from Florida. We were glad that we took the time to visit them in the summer of 2001.

Despite the fact that these deaths marked the end of our parents' generation, we all managed

to have a good time getting to know each other better. These gatherings are far too infrequent. We were wonderfully hosted by Jay, Richard's second mother. As always, she was the consummate hostess! She had sorted through Richard's father's vast collection of papers and saved almost enough to fill the back of our Suburban! Robert scanned some documents and we have made them available to our immediate family. One of the gems of the collection was a series of letters Richard's Uncle Don had written from the Battle of the Bulge to Richard's Dad.

Here are the seven cousins:



And the entire group:



Once again, we wish you the joys and blessings of this holy season and send our best wishes for a peaceful and happy 2011.

Love, Mary Beth, Richard, Robert, and Michael