

Christmas 2011

Dear Family and Friends,

Our 29th annual letter (and still counting)!

As usual, our lives are continually busy with two very involved teenagers, Richard's audio tape restoration business, Mary Beth's occasional Funeral Coordinator position, lots of music and instruments, volunteering, many church-related activities, and a smattering of travel.

The last few months have been demanding as we research, visit and fill out university applications for Robert and support Michael in his dream of doing a high school military co-op program next semester. Robert's passion is music even though he is completing all the science and math courses at high school. He has, therefore, applied to several universities that offer music programs with his top preferences being The University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario (where Mary Beth attended University), the University of Toronto and Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Waterloo, Ontario. Michael has had several appointments in Toronto this fall completing the application steps for his program.

Our living room and guest bedroom have turned into full-time music rooms! Luckily, we have a family room! We have a "family" piano and Hammond organ, a flute, an alto sax, a tenor sax, a keyboard, three guitars, an electric bass, a temporary bassoon for a year, music stands, speakers, amps and a table where the music tutor teaches Robert. You can understand why the drum set had to move to the guest bedroom! Don't worry though as we can easily put the double bed back together for guests!



Worship Band: **Robert**, Tim, Nikki, Roxana, **Michael**

2011-09-25 Richard Baker image, Richard Hess edit

Starting in the spring, Robert has had a tutor come to teach him Royal Conservatory Music Theory and Harmony – requirements to enter music programs at university. He earned First Class Honours With Distinction on the Theory exam in August. Piano lessons started this summer to get him up to the Grade 6 level also. His alto saxophone entrance auditions will be in February or March, so he has another tutor once a week for sax. And then there is homework!

Robert thoroughly enjoyed leading Worship Band at church, playing guitar and singing, through the end of September. The demands of Grade 12 and university goals have had to become his main focus since then.

He continues to find time, however, to be in Concert and Jazz Bands at school and Youth Choir, Orchestra



2011-12-01 High School Holiday Concert, Richard L. Hess

and Youth Group at church – and he can now drive himself to these events! The image shows the Jazz Band at the recent Holiday Concert with Michael framed by Robert and his sax.

As we stated earlier, Michael hopes to be in the Grade 11 military co-op program from February to June. This coming summer, he'll be busy thinking about university! In the meantime, Michael also enjoys music playing both the flute and drums. He also is in the school Concert and Jazz Bands, plays in the church Orchestra, is a Server (Acolyte), and attends Youth Group.



2011-06-04 Michael with Fireworks Rob McConkey image

Michael really enjoyed helping with a fantastic display of fireworks at Trinity's Mortgage Burning party. He is well on his way to driving on his own, too!

Mary Beth continues to be back-up Funeral Coordinator at church and is just finishing being a team leader for Trinity's Celebration 2011 events. She also became Sound Booth Coordinator in efforts to assist Richard more with this huge volunteer commitment. And, there is rarely an idle moment with two teenagers (laundry, food, schedules, etc.)!

Richard still enjoys the life of being a "sound" expert. Several jobs have come in this year to the audio tape restoration business. Projects included digitizing much of the archive of The

Huggett Family, including two albums produced by George Martin, and digitizing 25 large reels of Seismic analog data from before, during, and after the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. He also lectured at Fanshawe College providing insights into the history of recording. He continues to be in demand (volunteer) at church and in recording special events. At Trinity, he installed a new, donated video monitor in the Narthex to display upcoming events.

Volunteering at various events is part of all of our lives – at Trinity, Hillary House and Sharon Temple. The latter two are National Historic Sites.

After 17 years, we traded our 1994 Chevrolet Suburban for a 2011 Hyundai SantaFe all-wheel-drive vehicle. Maintenance costs were rising and we felt it was necessary. You know it's time when new tires cost more than the value of the vehicle!

Travel this year has just been short trips. In March, we drove to Ohio to hear two ManOwar concerts – heavy-metal clients of Richard's. This group is known to be the loudest in the world. Need we say we wore ear protection? The band HolyHell opened the shows. Robert and Michael were just delighted as we even got to meet and talk with many of the performers.

In May, Robert and Michael went on a school band trip to New York City and were able to see many wonderful places. This summer, we visited and cruised through the historic Peterborough, Ontario, Lift Locks. We had a delightful trip to Sarnia to visit Cathie, and on our return, we visited 4 university campuses. Soon after, we had a lovely visit with Jay, Richard's step-mother, in PA. The weekend of September 17, while the boys were at a youth retreat, Richard



2011-07-26 Peterborough Lift Lock Richard L Hess



2011-09-17 Port Stanley Richard L Hess



2011-09-18 Port Stanley Mary Beth & Richard Hess

and Mary Beth escaped for their 28th anniversary weekend to Port Stanley, Ontario, similar to Cambria in California, but not quite as nice, and no artistically made glass shops like Seekers Glass Gallery! We took pictures of each other on the beach (the north shore of Lake Erie) and Richard composited them into one in Photo-shop.

This holiday season will find us in Aurora as usual. Mary Beth's brother, John, will cook Christmas dinner, and we will find time to visit close family. School ends on December 23 this year for two weeks, so it is tempting to go away for part of this time. However, the demands of school work will keep us home as exams start January 20.

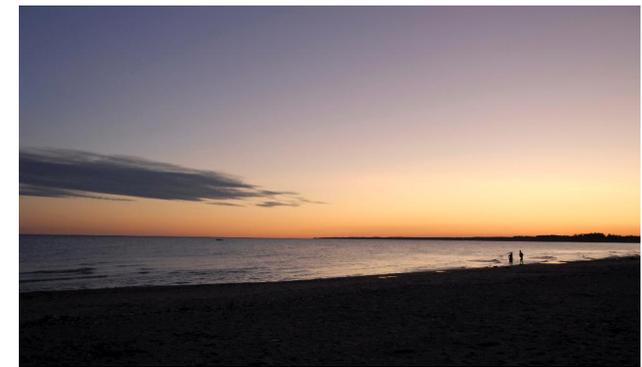
May the joys and blessings of this holy season be upon you, and may you find peace and happiness in 2012.

Love,

Mary Beth, Richard, Robert, and Michael

richard@richardhess.com

(905) 713 6733



2011-09-17 Sunset at Port Stanley Richard L Hess