

Christmas 2003

Excursions with the Chowaniecs

Our year has been filled with trips to near and far for work and for play. Joe's work destinations included Montreal, Calgary, Banff and Vancouver. Joe's travels with his friend Elio to the US included 2 trips to Seattle for "sporting" events (Wrestlemania and a Seahawks football game) along with a trip to hear Jimmy Buffet play in Vegas. Appropriate attire for the Jimmy Buffet concert was a grass skirt and coconut bra.



Rami combined work and pleasure by covering pharmacist shifts in Fort McMurray in May, June and August while getting a chance to visit with Joe's mom, Helen. Rami also flew to Salt Lake City for a diabetes conference and Vancouver for training

(along with some clothes shopping!)

We did manage to take 2 trips together this year to (where else!) Vegas. The first was enjoyable drive with Elio and Hilery to see Olivia Newton John and LeAnn Rimes. The second was National Lampoon's Chowaniec Vegas Vacation! Our objective was to see Hall and Oates (Rami's favorite group) perform outside at Mandalay Bay's Beach Party. Our schedules only allowed us to drive straight there (24 hours straight), see the concert, and drive straight back. Rami, Joe, Elio and his daughter, Larissa, suffered through the following nightmare. The van we were traveling in had air conditioning issues on the way down (temp in Vegas was in the 40's). We were at the beach waiting for the concert when it was cancelled due to a severe lightning storm. Hail, torrential rain, and lightning strikes occurred as hundreds

of disappointed concert goers scurried for cover. This was just the beginning. Our trip home included van trouble in the middle of the night near Butte, Montana (2 hours outside the dealership waiting for it to open) and a tire blowout on the middle of a bridge near Lethbridge. We were all very happy to when we finally made it home. Rami and Joe have not learned their lesson and plan to fly to Vegas in February to see Hall and Oates.

Closer to Home

Rami, Joe, our friend Brian and his dad joined 56,000 other crazy Canucks to watch the Heritage Classic hockey game outdoors at Commonwealth Stadium on November 22. We dressed for the weather (-18 degrees Celsius) in layers and layers and layers! Seeing Gretzky, Messier and other vintage Oilers suited up again made it worth enduring the cold. It is impossible to explain the sight of all those fans cheering on our Oilers. Truly a once in a lifetime experience.

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Muscular Dystrophy Canada

Joe was voted to the National Board of Muscular Dystrophy Canada in September. He now has the responsibility of representing families of children with Muscular Dystrophy on this prestigious board. He is up for the challenge!

Rami, Joe and extended family (Rami's brother Erroll and his wife Shannon and Brian) have been actively involved in as many fundraising activities as possible this year. Harley Davidson stickers sold well at the Biker's show with Rami dressed in leather; Rami and Joe got wet washing cars with some topless firefighter's; Joe's ESAA golf tournament was successful as always (much warmer than last year!); the Muscle Ride for MDC with Harley Davidson (a poker run) was enjoyed by all; Rami, Brian and friends Neemet and Laura formed **Ilsa's Runners** for the Strathcona Firefighter's Run for MD; Erroll and Rami sported balloon hats while selling (approximately) a million hotdogs; and Brian has offered his services as Jolly St. Nick this year at the Xmas Party.

The Working Life

Joe is now the Director, Program and Event Development at ESAA. His new title arose out of a restructuring of the Association this fall. Joe is looking forward to tackling his new responsibilities this next year.

Rami's work as Certified Diabetes Educator pharmacist is as challenging as always. Some of the highlights this year included presenting at the Kids and Us conference to parents of children with diabetes, attending a dinner meeting organized by the Canadian Diabetes association with members of the Alberta Legislature, offering diabetes clinics in family physician's offices, and training medicine students at the University of Alberta.

Kira and Odo

Odo is a spry 10 year old now who still acts like a kitten. His favorite pastime is to do the Olympics (run up and down the stairs as fast and loudly as he can!) at 4 AM. Needless to say, this is not greeting with joy from his owners.

Kira is now 7 and is showing her age with some grey hair (her dad was totally grey when we met him). She is a sensitive girl (at least where her stomach is concerned) and had a bout of pancreatitis again this fall.

Holiday Outings

Our holiday plans

include a trip to the far north (Fort McMurray) to visit with Joe's mom at Christmas. We plan to celebrate New Year's quietly at home.

For those of you who may have misplaced our new address from last year:

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Hope your family is enjoying the peace of the season. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas:

**Rami, Joe, Kira,
and ODO**