

What's New?

Well this year was quite an eventful year for our family! In March we made our biggest decision: to homeschool the kids. And we're having a great time! Our philosophy is that learning does not happen only in a school building, at a desk, dispensed by a teacher. Learning happens anytime a person is engaged in thought or activity (that is to say, not sleeping!) and tons of learning happens by living life every day.

Cocoa Beach, Florida Trip

In May we took a weeklong getaway and drove to Cocoa Beach, Florida. One of the many benefits of homeschooling is you can travel when the crowds are light!



The kids at Cocoa Beach

We did lots of swimming and walking on the beach. One morning we counted 6 jellyfish washed up on the beach! We also visited the local art gallery and marveled at the artist who spent a year making impressions of his tea bag stains each morning before he left for work. That's definitely a unique way to mark the passage of time!

Joseph's Favourites for 2002

Movie: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Lord of the Rings

Book: Nintendo Power magazine

Event: when Max slept over
Pet: Oreo (my hamster), of course!

Activity: playing video games ☺, working on my web site, playing with Oreo, and waiting for Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age to be released!

Not so favourite: I almost broke my toe giving Michael a ride in the laundry basket!

Summer Activities

It was another great summer for swimming in the pool! Joseph spends more time underwater than above it, Michael is a fish in the deep end, and Alyssa is now a terrific diver.

At the end of June, Vince and Rosa and their kids, Anariella and Vito, trekked east from Chicago for their 5th annual summer vacation here with us. We

spent most of the week at Franca and Giulio's cottage. Mike and Sandra also managed to make it up with Diana, Laura, and Jonathan, and a great time was had by all.



Alyssa and Anariella at sunset

Joseph attended a computer programming camp for a week in July and created his own unique version of Frogger - complete with alternate characters. If you'd like a copy of the game, just let us know!

We also spent a week at Poppa's cottage fishing, taking long swims in the lake, hiking, and the kids built a wonderful frog habitat that they kept on the balcony for the week. We quickly researched what to feed them and actually got a film of one of them eating a spider! The kids finally released Tolulah, Flint and company (6 in all) at the end of the week.



Michael fishing off Poppa's dock

An ongoing activity this summer was the kids' Lego town. It was in the backyard under the canopy, so it was well protected from the elements. Everyone had their own house and character and they ran various town businesses from the hospital to the diner to the hotel. The town has undergone a number of reconstruction projects and has now been moved inside for the winter.

Pam's Favourites for 2002

Movies: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Lord of the Rings, and Bowling for Columbine

Books: Learning All the Time by John Holt and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by JK Rowling

Events: deciding to homeschool and my romantic weekend getaway with Rocco!
Activity: reading with the kids (I'll never forget finishing HP and the Goblet of Fire at 2:30am with Joseph and Alyssa because we just couldn't stop!)

Quotes: "I love learning, but I hate being taught." - Winston Churchill
"Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire." - William Butler Yeats



Relaxing at the Cancelli beach

Nonna's 80th Birthday!

This past July marked Nonna's 80th birthday. We celebrated the occasion in style with brunch at Vinnie Zucchini's and then cake and coffee around the pool.



Congratulations Nonna!!

Michael's Favourites for 2002

Movie: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets and any Scooby Doo movie!

Book: any Scooby Doo book!

Event: Harry Potter Day, Dad's Day trip to Canada's Wonderland and Cocoa Beach ("Can we go to Florida today?")

Activity: playing video games with Joseph, and trick-or-treating at Hallowe'en (I love candy!)

Mema's End of Summer Bash

The 2nd annual end of summer bash was a big success, according to sources. The premise: all the grandkids stay at Mema's, my Mom, for the last week of August. I also stay as an extra set of hands - and for all the fun! The first night was spent in a tent in the backyard, complete with S'Mores and scary stories. A returning hit from last

year was Messy Day - the name says it all, doesn't it? Another day the kids made tie-die shirts and off we went to Presqu'ile Park for a picnic and hike - where we saw 4 or 5 deer wandering the forest.



Off we go!

The surprise hit of this year was Harry Potter Day! All the kids were enrolled at Hogwarts for the day and attended Transfiguration, Quidditch, and Potions classes, along with a field trip to Hogsmeade (okay ... Wal-Mart) for supplies, and of course, a tall glass of butter-beer! The sorting hat ceremony was lots of fun and each house earned enough points that day to be awarded their own House Cup. That evening the parents also came to attend the End-of-Year Feast and celebrate the end of another wonderful summer - and to finally take them all home!



Harry Potters everywhere!

Chicago, Illinois Trip

The kids and I tagged along with Rocco on his weeklong "business" trip to Chicago in November. While he spent his days in business presentations, the rest of us could be found checking out the Shed Aquarium, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Science and Industry, and, last but not least, the Children's Museum at Navy Pier.

Of course, Dad had to take in a Blackhawks game while we were there! Everyone enjoyed dropping in on Vince, Rosa, Anariella and Vito. It was great to see them again. And thanks for putting us up for a couple nights!

Rocco's Favourites for 2002

Book: Future Shop and Canadian Tire flyers!

Movie: Lord of the Rings

Event: roller coasters at Wonderland and my weekend alone with Pam
Activity: checking my satellite message boards!



Hockey at it's finest! (see Steve in the background?)

Memorable Outings

This year has seen many outings - field trips for those of you still in a schoolish mindset - wink, wink!

Kortright Centre has become a favourite place to go for a hike, whether in the spring for maple syrup, the summer for bugs (yuck!), or the fall for the beautiful colours ... and we're looking forward to our first snow-covered hike. The kids' favourite trail takes them across the bridge and to the two lookouts that overlook the East Humber River. We also enjoyed their Wizardry Workshop at the end of November.

Boyd Park has also played host to a number of hikes, as well as discoveries!



Beaver evidence at Boyd

We've also enjoyed a number of hikes at Black Creek Pioneer Village. A Halloween visit brought trick-or-treating back in time and the Christmas Remembered visit was terrific.

At the end of the summer we picked up a family pass to the Ontario Science Centre. Boy, is September ever a great month to visit - we practically had the

place to ourselves! We're at 6 visits and counting and are keeping track of our favourite exhibits in a journal.

Throw in Casa Loma, the Zoo, the ROM - we all enjoyed the LOTR Two Towers exhibit - and we always manage to keep busy, even though we are "at home"!

Alyssa's Favourites for 2002

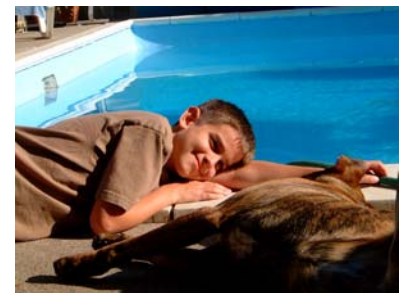
Movie: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Book: all the Harry Potter books!

Event: Harry Potter Day and my Dad's Day trip to Canada's Wonderland (I love roller coasters!!)

Activities: Brownies, cursive writing, researching breeds for a family dog ☺

Not so favourite: having to wait 1½ years for Harry Potter #3 to come out!



Joseph trying on Bruce for size

Anything Else?

I guess a quick update on "work" may be in order! Rocco is still enjoying his work at Avnet as a Business Development Manager. It keeps him on his toes and he just loves to spread the word about connectors! I am squeezing in the finishing touches on the web app I've been developing along with my brother Colin and my Dad. We've finally got a good chunk of venture capital and a couple of promising customers lined up so things are looking great!

And finally, to all our wonderful family and friends, thanks for a wonderful year and best wishes for a terrific 2003.

Merry Christmas!

