

What's New?

We've enjoyed another great year! There's always something going on and it's fun to watch everyone discovering and exploring new and ongoing interests. Learning is everywhere!

Last New Year's Eve in Florida

A few days after Christmas last year we drove down to Orlando to spend the week at our timeshare. We spent most of our time relaxing at the resort because, as we imagined, Orlando was really busy! At Downtown Disney the kids discovered they liked gelato because the line for ice cream was 30 minutes long! We also ventured to Clearwater Beach one day and it was really fun spending New Year's Eve swimming in the pool under the stars.



Joseph hanging at Clearwater Beach

Joseph's Favourites for 2004

Movies: Secret Window, Sleepy Hollow, Princess Mononoke

TV Show: X-Play, Friends, Shaman King, Joey

Books: Shaman King, Nintendo Power magazine, gaming message boards

Video Game: Tales of Symphonia, Dark Cloud 2, Baten Kaitos

Room: the basement

Activity: playing video games with great, deep stories!

Quote: "You don't have a TV?! What's all your furniture pointed at??"
- Joey Tribbiani

Worst: the tragic loss of the PS2 ☹

Ouch!

The beginning of July found us visiting the fracture clinic at the hospital frequently to track the recovery of Alyssa's broken arm. She was diving into the pool when it got caught on the edge of a floating tube. It was quite the break near her elbow and it was a few days before she finally got a cast

on, but once that was done she was back in business.



Hooray for keyboard drawers!

She'll be the first to tell you that physio is NOT FUN! But she has full use of her arm now. ☺

Pam's Favourites for 2004

Movies: LOTR The Return of the King, HP Prisoner of Azkaban, Paycheck

TV Shows: this year I added a few new faves - Friends, Charmed, X-Play and Unwrapped

Books: re-reading the LOTR trilogy, The Unprocessed Child by Valerie Fitzenreiter, Life Learning and Discover magazines

Hobbies: I focused a lot this year on my writing - I had two articles published in Life Learning magazine and published my own website. If you'd like to take a look around you can check it out at: www.livingjoyfully.ca

Events: whenever the door opens on JK Rowling's website, trips to the dollar store, and losing to Michael at Clue - and most other games!

Quote: "I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." - Albert Einstein

Live & Learn Unschooling Conference

We attended the Live & Learn conference again this past August. It moves around and this year was held in Peabody, Massachusetts. I was a presenter this time around and really enjoyed talking with people who came up to me throughout the weekend to chat.

Alyssa caught up with her group of friends - they had kept in touch through email - and we didn't see much of her the whole weekend. Joseph met up with Justin, another gamer attendee and they spent the weekend together going back and forth between their rooms - depending which one smelled too much of food! Michael also found a couple friends and alternated between exploring with them and hanging with Joseph and Justin.

Each year more and more dads turn up and Rocco got quite involved with the

Dads group this year ... there were more than 50 of them!

Next year it's being held in Pensacola, Florida in October, on the beach. They are still cleaning up after the hurricanes so the hotel hasn't been finalized yet. Alyssa and her friends have created a petition requesting it be extended from 3 to 5 days. Good luck!

Michael's Favourites for 2004

Movies: Nightmare Before Christmas, Paycheck, Agent Cody Banks 2

TV Show: Fingertips, Simpsons, Charmed, Unwrapped

Wonderland Rides: Vortex, Wilde Beast
Events: learning to ride a bike, selling over \$400 of Scouts popcorn

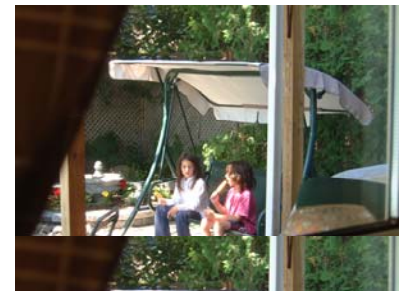
Activities: Beavers, Wonderland trips, skating, hanging by the river, going to the dollar store

Mema's End of Summer Bash

The 4th annual end of summer bash was great fun again. This year Alyssa and Ashlyn decided they wanted to organize Harry Potter activities for the week, and they did a great job! One afternoon we took a trip to Hogsmeade (the park by the lake ☺) and pigged out on sweets from "Honeydukes".

Another day Mom and I were teachers and the kids attended classes - they read their tea leaves for Divination, made an interesting green (and sour!) potion for, you guessed it, Potions, reviewed plants in the garden for Herbology, and at the end of the day sat exams (which Alyssa and Ashlyn had painstakingly prepared weeks before). Coincidentally the door on JK Rowling's website opened while we were there and we spent a few fun and exciting hours speculating about who could be the Half-Blood Prince.

We also picked up some transfer paper and the kids made their own designs with fun quotes and pics to iron on their freshly tie-died t-shirts.



Michael and Delaney chatting

It's always a great week because we get a chance to hang out together and

enjoy each others' company. It's always one of the highlights of the summer!

Rocco's Favourites for 2004

Book: Rich Dad, Poor Dad by Robert T. Kiyosaki

Movie: 50 First Dates

TV Show: What's a TV?

Wonderland Rides: Vortex, Wilde Beast

Hobbies: taking care of my taro, papaya, and bird of paradise plants

Event: fall camping at Albion Hills

Activities: mountain biking, hockey and losing to Michael at Clue, video games, Monopoly, poker ...

Fall Camping

This year we decided to go camping in mid-September for four days, figuring it wouldn't be so busy. We arrived at Albion Hills on Thursday, got a beautiful site right by the river and had the whole section to ourselves.

Michael mastered the complexities of the two-wheeler and Joseph rediscovered the joy and freedom of bike riding. Rocco, who took up mountain biking over the summer, brought his bike everywhere we went!



The boys hiking ahead

We fished, we hiked, we roasted marshmallows, we played a Simpsons trivia game, we found a wasps' nest in the ground on our site. Rocco was stung, but he survived. ☺

On one hike we came across a pair of mushrooms that were about the size of soccer/footballs and a passing park ranger told me they were edible - and quite delicious when BBQ'd. I was the only one willing to try them so we left them to squeeze the last bit of growth out before the serious mushroomers found them.

Another hike found the beach totally deserted. I thought this shot of Alyssa

on the lifeguard's tower was great - and it shows off her new haircut!



The big, comfy, wooden chair??

By Saturday a ton of people had arrived for a mountain bike race, and the nights were FREEZING cold, so we decided to leave a day early. We also decided we love the outdoors but also love a warm home with comfy beds to cuddle into at night. LOL!

Family Hobby - Visiting Conservation Parks!

Last year I mentioned that one of our family hobbies is visiting Science Centres. This year I thought I'd mention our penchant for visiting local parks. We have a Conservation Journeys family membership that gets us into all the local conservation parks.

In the spring our visits to Boyd Park became more frequent and Alyssa and Michael developed a new interest: climbing the tall evergreens! One day Alyssa took our camera up with her and got this cool shot - see the picnic table way down there?



High enough for you?

When we're there we always drop by the Humber River to check it out - how high, how fast, and so on. One day we ran into some park employees removing branches from the culvert under the road. Beavers had been busy damming it up! We have many wonderful Boyd

memories of deep mud, tadpoles, and wet shoes - and sometimes clothes!

Black Creek Pioneer Village is also a favourite haunt, especially for Alyssa, Michael and I. We bring the walkie-talkies and split up. Alyssa and Michael really enjoy having free rein to wander. Sometimes I bring a book, other times I walk the streets. Still other times we play a game using the walkie-talkies where I tell them where I am and they use the map to avoid me.

In previous years we've also frequented Kortright, though this year it keeps losing out to the above two as we walk out the door!

Alyssa's Favourites for 2004

Movie: Harry Potter and the Prisoner Of Azkaban, Harry Potter and the Chamber Of Secrets, Ella Enchanted

TV Shows: The Simpsons, Charmed, Friends, X-Play

Book: all the Harry Potter books!

Wonderland Rides: Wilde Beast, Skyrider, Top Gun, and Vortex

Hobbies: Knitting, Reading, Sewing, Listening to HP Books, Writing Stories, Making lists of names for future stories, Tea Leaf Reading, Making Codenames and IDs...

Events: the Live & Learn conference, Guides, Drama Class

Activities: Knitting & organizing

Quote: "I'm not clumsy! I'm accident-prone!" - Daniel Radcliffe

Are We Moving?

This year we've talked a lot about moving to a hobby farm further out of the city. It does seem like a natural progression for us, given our fondness for spending time outdoors. And we're excited knowing we can still bring our computers, satellites, and gaming systems! LOL! So we are continuing to look and we'll likely have our house up for sale in the near future. The next thing you may receive in the mail from us is a change of address card!

And last, but not least, to all our family and friends, thanks for another wonderful year and best wishes for a marvelous 2005.

Merry Christmas!

