



M & Em's Family Newsletter

December 2020 Edition

Jan. 1 - Mar. 12

Emily and I rang in the new year, and observed what would have been Gord's and my 20th wedding anniversary*, at Sugar Ridge Retreat Centre, near Midland.

Emily, the dogs and I stayed at the retreat centre for four days, in our own little cabin in the woods. While at the centre, we enjoyed some family R & R, games, movies, yoga, meditation, outdoor walks, campfires under the stars, and amazing vegetarian meals. We also visited Little Lake Park, in Midland, where Gord and I were married.

After our little family vacation, it was back to school for Em and me. Emily returned to college in Peterborough, and I returned to Rama Central P.S., where I was teaching a Grade 4/5 split.

** Gord was killed in an accident in 2002.*

March 13 and onward

Early on the week of March 13th, teachers at my school joked about the fact that the 13th was on Friday, AND there would be a full moon, AND there was a time change the next day. We had no idea that Friday, March 13th would be the last day we'd teach in our classrooms that school year... and the day that colleges and universities would suspend classes indefinitely, and send students home.

Em and I are really fortunate. We were both able to transition to online teaching/learning during the Spring Covid-19 shutdown, and I continued to receive a paycheck. We will always remember fondly the extra family time the shutdown afforded us.

In-person classes resumed for most elementary and secondary school students in September. School during a pandemic is a new experience. My Grade 3/4 students and I socially-distance and sanitize our hands many times a day. The Grade 4's and I wear masks. (I also wear a face shield some of the time.) Students sit in rows, cannot engage in partner or group work, and can only associate with their own classmates. It's not ideal, but we're all making the best of it.

Emily is still living at home most of the time. Her college courses remain fully online.



Summer was not cancelled!



I engaged in some fabulous camping trips, on my own with the dogs, and with Emily. Em worked in the gatehouse at Bass Lake Provincial Park for the second summer in a row.

Returning to the Backcountry at 60!

In 2018, I set a goal for myself: to be as fit at age 60 as I was when I was 40. Reaching this goal involved two years of healthier, more mindful eating, exercise for an hour a day (primarily outdoor walking or hiking), and engaging in yoga to keep my body limber. Being fitter and 70 lbs. lighter enabled me to accomplish a couple of epic "firsts" during this past camping season:

- I went on my first-ever solo backcountry trip! The dogs and I spent 5 days on our own, at a paddle-in site in Algonquin Park.
- I engaged in my first backpacking trip in 23 years! Em and I spend Thanksgiving weekend on the Western Uplands Trail, in Algonquin Park. This was Emily's first-ever backpacking trip.

In Other News...

- In the summer, I also camped at Six Mile Lake, Samuel de Champlain, Marten River, and Killarney Provincial Parks. Em joined me, on her days off work.
- In May, Bailey (our 11 year old Cockapoo) was diagnosed with Kidney Disease. She is stable at Stage 2, and feeling well, on medication and a special diet.
- In September, I completed my 7th year on the board at Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary!



Spring 2020 Shutdown



More from 2020...

