

The Black Family

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

2011

Greetings from Margaret, Emily, Robyn and Dexter (the cats) and Bailey (the dog)!

This year, Emily is in Grade 6 at Harriett Todd P.S., involved in swimming and dance lessons, increasing her technology skills via computer and i-Pod, and helping out by assuming extra responsibility for the care of our pets.

I am teaching Grade 5/6 at Rama Central P.S. for the second year in a row. In the spring, I completed a ten-week online course about inquiry-based learning. In the summer, I followed this up with a three-day course at U of T re: how to incorporate the outdoors into math and literacy instruction. Both of these strategies seem to appeal to my "outdoorsy" students. This year, I have 28 students in my class, 19 of which are boys. :-)

This past year Em and I enjoyed five wonderful trips. We went camping at Six Mile Lake on the May and October long weekends, took my nephews camping at Albion Hills Conservation Area, enjoyed a two-week camping trip on the north shore of Lake Superior and spent a couple of action-packed days in Niagara Falls with my Mom, sister Mary and my nephews. Pictures of our camping trips are on page 2 of this newsletter.

Right now, I am on an extended Christmas break, recovering from abdominal surgery in mid-December. All went well and I am expected to return to work around January 23rd. Thank you to my wonderful team of doctors, the staff at Orillia Soldier's Memorial Hospital, my sister Mary for staying at our house for nine days to take care of Em and me, Mary's husband Jerry and my parents for caring for my nephews while Mary was away, and our friends and neighbours for all their support!

Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year!



Em and I, December 2011

Gordon Black Memorial Camp-Sponsorship Fund

In 2003, Emily and I established a fund in my late-husband Gord's memory, through the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, in Midland, Ontario. This fund enables local underprivileged children to attend summer day camp, on full sponsorship. Wye Marsh, Emily and I are responsible for soliciting donations to the fund and local social service agencies (Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Kinark and CAS) decide which children to invite to attend camp.

In 2011, Gord's fund enabled 18 children to attend a week of summer day camp for free, bringing our total since 2003 to 135 children!

Gord would be incredibly pleased that underprivileged children are being granted an opportunity to experience the solace of nature at a young age, in his memory.

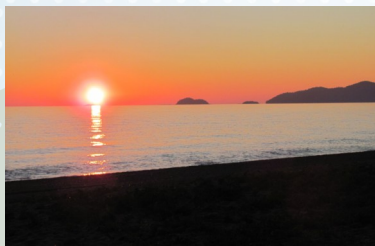
Thank you, once again, to family members and friends who continue to support this initiative!

Lake Superior!

This past summer, Em and I packed up our dog, bicycles, kayaks and camping gear, and embarked on our fourth trip to the north shore of Lake Superior. We spent a week at an absolutely stunning campsite right on the beach at Agawa Bay, visited the Agawa Pictographs and Town of Wawa, and then thoroughly enjoyed a second week at a nice, little site across the camp road from the beach at Pancake Bay. Here are a few pictures of this wonderful trip:



Two views from our site at Agawa Bay!



Quiet morning paddle on Agawa Bay



The beach at Pancake Bay



Albion Hills Conservation Area!

In July, Em and I took my nephews camping. We chose a venue close to my Mom's place and the boys' home, so family could visit us throughout the week. My friend Louise and her son Christopher also visited for a day.

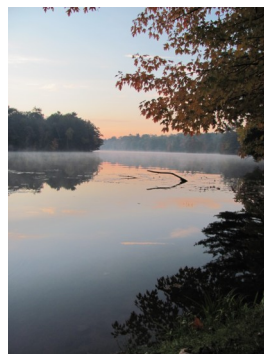
Our campsite bordered on the Humber River. The kids spent a great deal of time wading in and exploring the river. They also swam at the park's splash pad and at my cousin Brenda's pool in nearby Bolton. Games, crafts and campfires rounded out our fun-filled stay at Albion Hills.



Christopher, Jason, Emily & Cal

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park!

On the May long weekend, Em and I took our first-ever weekend camping trip. Six Mile Lake was surprisingly quiet and our campsite was beautiful... right on the water. We enjoyed our little respite among the Trilliums so much that we returned to Six Mile to experience camping amidst the fall leaves on the Thanksgiving long weekend. Both weekends were unseasonably warm, allowing us to spend our days paddling, and hanging out in camp and at the beach, in shorts and t-shirts. On Thanksgiving weekend, we even enjoyed a nice turkey dinner in the woods! :-)



The view from camp
(both trips)



Em and Bailey in the tent

For more of our vacation pictures, see:

<http://www.blackdeer.ca/adventures/recent.html>