

# Christmas / New Year's Greetings 2013

Well, 2013 sure went by fast! We're all another year older (and I'm officially a senior citizen). The grandkids don't stop growing – Cheyenne's now 8 in grade 3, Tanisha & Geoffen 11 in grade 6, Dakota almost 13 and in grade 7, all at 3 different schools: C&G at Century (a block away), T in her last year at Bells Corners and D at Sir Winston Churchill. SWC has a great music program, and Dakota is learning to play sax. And grandma and grandpa are slowing down but still surviving. Hope all's well with you and yours.

OK, now to try to figure out what memorable events happened this past year. In January Diane flew up to Thunder Bay to celebrate with family as her mom received the Queen's Jubilee Medal, for her work with the mentally handicapped. Then in



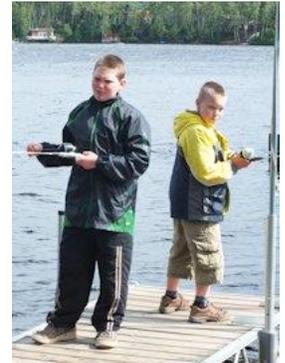
April Gord turned 65 – he's now taking advantage of more seniors' discounts and looking forward to that extra deduction on income tax. That event was celebrated with 3 days of partying, starting off with a small dinner and Paul Baloché concert on Wed. (his actual birthday), dessert with friends after choir on Thursday and a complete dinner party with many more friends on Friday, the latter 2 events at his favorite place, the Foolish Chicken – great gluten-free ribs, chicken & tasty desserts. The spring saw Diane and Gord signing up to help with music for a new Presbyterian church plant in the Barrhaven area of Ottawa. The work had started back in October 2012 and in April of this year the services of Chris Clarke, a student in his last year at Presbyterian College in Montreal were secured. Chris spends most of his time in Ottawa and one week a month studying in Montreal. He completes his contract in April 2014. The services are held in a new Seventh Day Adventist church – the SDA congregation that met at Parkwood for 20 years. The services are at 6 p.m. Since the fall Diane and



Gord share the music duties, one month on, one month off.

In June Dakota graduated from grade 6 at Century PS and moved on to “middle school”.

The summer saw our annual trek north to our camp out-side Thunder Bay. This year we particularly enjoyed swimming and use of the raft that came to our place when Reg & Marianne sold their lake home and moved into TBay in the summer of 2012. Both Dakota and Tanisha “swam the bay” this summer, Dakota for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, a distance of about ½ km. Cheyenne has become an excellent swimmer as well. All four kids passed the “swim to the raft” test that satisfied grandma & grandpa that they were safe on their own near the water. (They also passed the swimming ability test at the local pool on return to Ottawa in the fall). The weather for the first couple of weeks at camp was



uncommonly cold and rainy, so we spent the first while without running water. Our amazing boys continued to fish in 9° C temperatures. Gord still hasn't learned to fillet, so most of the catches were thrown back, including a few good ones. Camp was also a place to reconnect with old neighbours & friends, like Sandra Caddo (nee Roberts) from the west coast, who Gord hadn't seen for 45+ years. The kids particularly enjoyed visiting with Stewart & Mary Roberts and B.J. & Jack Grant, as well as getting to “hang out” with their Uncle Reg, Aunt Marianne & 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin Jenn, and Diane got in lots of visits with her mom, who has moved to a different seniors' home in TBay. The boys also enjoyed an afternoon fishing on Lake Superior with Uncle Reg & friend Brian Kroeker. As in the past few years, we returned to Ottawa in September, and the kids missed their first day of school, which also was the twins' birthday.

September saw a bit of a schedule change, with Dakota now taking a school bus and leaving a bit later – so only two have to be out the door at around 8:00 a.m. Gord got on E-Bay and successfully bid on a nice Yamaha tenor sax with advice from a sax-playing friend. There are a number of youth at our church who play various horns and they've formed a horn band that contributes in worship from time to time. The kids still love the Logos program and Dakota is now old enough for youth group.



Alison is now in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a Police Foundations program at Algonquin College and doing well. Her “significant other” Warren just landed a job at Canadian Tire, and has been quite busy and thankful to be working. Graham took a course in the spring to requalify as a security guard and is now studying for the exam. His Krystal is keeping busy taking some upgrading courses at Algonquin.

Gord continues his activities at Parkwood (elder, musician, Personnel Team leader, webservant) as well as work at the presbytery and synod level (including in the fall the slightly crazy project of mapping all 100+ churches in the Synod of Quebec & Eastern Ontario). In June he attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Toronto. He and Diane enjoy singing with the Parkwood church choir, including Thursday night practices and Wendy's/Tim's afterwards. In September both Gord & Diane got to participate with a large group of local musicians in a concert put on by Michael Morris, who works

with Parkwood's youth group. Michael brought in Geoff Moore for the occasion, and a good time was had by all. Diane, in addition to the music at Barrhaven, plays at Parkwood from time to time and has been quite busy helping a young immigrant woman who has some significant health issues navigate the complexities of the Canadian system. And “Sweet 'n Free”, the quartet D&G sang in with two other folk from Parkwood, just sang at the church's annual Christmas dinner.

Gord has had an interesting year in the area of family/ancestry research, helping some distant relatives find out “whatever happened to...”. He has made contact with folks in a branch on his paternal grandmother's side, descendants of his great grandfather's cousin Reg Coysh who apparently managed the Banff Springs Hotel in the 1920's. On Diane's side he made contact with the Rick Karaitiana, son of Diane's dad's cousin, an Australian originally from New Zealand, of Maori heritage. Rick's maternal grandmother emigrated to N.Z. with her three children after her husband was killed in WWI; also connected with folks in the line of his maternal grandmother Carmichael. Gord has also been in contact with one of his birth father's three children, a musician living on Vancouver Island, and in discussion has agreed to take a DNA test to confirm the relationship.

We also enjoyed connecting with other friends in Thunder Bay, the annual Reinikka summer get-together and associated levity while up north and celebrated the birth of Zoë Hélène, a second child for Reg & Marianne's daughter Maureen & husband Gaby in Montreal, born on Aug. 31.



In this season when we celebrate Jesus' birth, we are thankful each day for His blessings, for care throughout the day, and ask His blessing on those who need His care. We pray that same prayer for you and yours both now and in the coming year. We thank you for your friendship, support and prayers over the years. May our God bless you richly in 2014!

God bless!

**Gord, Diane, Graham, Alison, Dakota, Tanisha, Geoffen and Cheyenne**