

Well, Christmas is finally over for us, the Haugan family, on January 19, 2009. No, we haven't become Ukrainian (again) rather we've had a belated celebration with the Dueck side of the family in Winnipeg and, as I write, we are on the final stretch of our long drive home along Hwy #1... getting very close to one of my favourite town names: Uren. No, I'm not kidding. Having been back in the Provinces of Provinces for four years now, I can safely say we are loving it. Swift Current is the "lotus land" of Saskatchewan getting all the milder winter weather (I said "milder" not "mild"), plenty of sunshine, and enough rain to keep the farmers from taking up web design and/or selling life insurance.

We decided that it was a good year to consume as much gasoline as possible (in retrospect, considering the \$1.45/L gas, it wasn't a good decision) by driving on two long trips. First, in May, we went all the way up to Vancouver Island visiting friends and family. Along the way we went to two weddings, rode on two ferry rides, sat in one huge traffic jam in Kelowna, and managed to lose Matt and Dylan's custom sports team jackets. In the summer we drove to the place of my birth...and then another 68 kms further to Fort St. John for a couple days before our



Frank family reunion (the family surname is "Frank" rather than a reunion where everybody has serious conversations and always tells the truth) in Grande Prairie. We had a great time seeing many of our relatives and setting a new world record for housing the most adults in a single cabin. Duane and Sonya... kudos to you for administering a wonderful time.

We also decided that it was a good year to buy up a residential lot in Waldeck (just 10 mins east of Swift Current on the #1), and then sell our house while we were on our summer trip (as mentioned above) and then buy a new

house and move it on to our lovely lot and have a new house and a smaller mortgage. That was all fine and dandy until everybody decided to stop buying houses. So, we have a nice lot in Waldeck (which we'll sell for a great price if you're interested). Our hope is to try it all over again this spring...otherwise I'm thinking of growing canola or durum on our lot...depending on price. Total time to harvest: 38 seconds.

So, we still live in the same house, have the same dog (Stella), go to the same schools, work at the same places, sit on the same furniture, and enjoy the same life. The only thing that really is a noticeable change is the clock in the living room, which takes up approximately 90% of our feature wall.

Matthew has reached 175 lbs, scored a touchdown for the high school football team (well, actually, he didn't because it was called back due to a spurious holding call), started taking drum lessons (which is odd since he's been playing for a few years already... probably got that backwards), is in the "rep" and "regular" choir, plays tuba in the band, has two jobs, is playing basketball, is a master jedi in Runescape, and been home a total of 49 hours all year.

Dylan has embarked on his soon to be burgeoning singing career. Is also in the "regular" choir, accounted for 3/4 of his bantam football team's tackle/touchdowns, played volleyball and soccer (including the Sask. Summer Games on the Sask. side of Lloydminster), tried fencing



for one day (the “keep the cows in” kind), is playing basketball (against his poorer judgement), and has become a fashionista.

Our one, and only, daughter, Emmalina, has delved into fencing (the pointy stick kind), is still persevering with piano, is taller than her mother, cuter than her dad, growing two apple trees, has played softball, delivered papers (a few times only... hallelujah), continues doing all sorts of crafty things (not “sneaky” crafty but “crafty” crafty), plays the bass clarinet, and has watched “Madagascar 2” (somehow that movie was important enough in her life to have it included).



Joell Jr (aka Dustyn... and, to be clear, if you call him “Joell” or “Junior” he will have no idea who you are talking to) has followed up his rookie year in hockey with his sophomore year and loves lolly gagging, is enjoying grade 2 (and all the benefits therein), played soccer, tried his hand at golf with Uncle Randy (and won’t stop asking to go back there), loves the Pokemon (so 1999), playing video games, and driving his siblings crazy.



Michelle continues to buy up all the items she is supposed to be putting out for sale at Pharmasave, finally got a cell phone, stressed incessantly over our pubescent children, did more than her lion share of housework, continued to ignore her email, drove to Saskatoon and back (with Dylan) by herself (not including Dylan), failed to get any significant work done on her scrapbooking and quilting, and is still one hot chick.

Joell (well, me actually) has enjoyed another year in church work, taken on the odd side job with a local computer company, built a few more websites, gone to too many meetings for the denomination, gained another 7 pounds somewhere (yah, I know, “turn around I think I see it... hardee har har har), took up hockey again after 16 years, continued playing and coaching volleyball, and won, then lost, and then 1/2 won back... and then 1/2 lost again, \$400,000 of imaginary money on facebook poker....which, oddly enough, seems to be the same kind of money that’s in our real bank account.

Well, that’s it. We’re off to LA, USA, in February after collecting aeroplane points for the last 25 years. If there is no letter next year, and we are not at home (either in Waldeck or in Swift Current) then, perhaps, we never made it back.

God bless you all!!

