



Trangeleds' in Canada



No. 3

April 2001

Well, April has turned out to be our busiest month so far as we are now in full swing with the development of our basement. A complete floor of 1300 sq.ft (or 130 sq.metres) with a very large family room, a large bedroom for Steffen, a good-sized guest room, bathroom, woodwork room for Jesper, and storage areas. Jesper made the plans and we have a carpenter friend working with him when his other commitments allow. Houses here do not, as a rule, have brick walls; they are wooden structures, so a carpenter is the most essential requirement. They have now completed all the wooden frames for the rooms and Jesper is busy finishing the installation of the electrics for the sockets, lights, telephones, computers and central vacuum system. I have never seen so many wires in one place. Of course this is only the first stage and there is a long way to go before it will be completed, By the next newsletter, though, I hope I can report its completed, but for the moment we must be patient.



Basement taking shape?

Going back a little in time to when we seemed to have more time to ourselves, we spent a wonderful few days in the ski resort of Panorama in British Columbia, for my birthday. The route through the Rocky Mountains (about 4 hours drive) was spectacular and we plan to take that drive again in the summertime. We had a n apartment in one of the complexes with bedroom, kitchen and a

huge fireplace in the living room. We were extremely lucky with the weather, which turned out to be beautiful. We spent each day skiing and then spent time in one of the large outdoor Jacuzzi's or in the hot swimming pool, which helped the aching muscles. There were several restaurants so we also enjoyed some nice food and wine.



Après ski at the outdoor pool & hot tubs



Enjoying a fondue course at my birthday dinner



How appropriate! And no, they did not put this sign here for my birthday

At the end of February, I gave up my job with the security/investigation company. It just never felt quite right and I was still working for the agency on a temporary basis and my hours were up and down. In any case I was working on my own on the outskirts on the city, so I decided to quit before I was permanently employed. I still have my job at home, on a sub-contracting basis, working on the royalties paid to the Indians for the oil and gas wells on their Reserves. It is rather boring, but I can choose how much or little I want to work and it pays me well. Later in the year I will look for another job, this time in a large company in the city.

Jesper is still working for the same large telephone company, but was also rather unsettled in his job, so he has now changed to another job there. We will see how this turns out.

Steffen continues to do very well in school and, for the third time, is on the Honours Roll in his grade, obtaining very high marks. He will be 14 in August and we realise that any number of influences may change his attitude to his schoolwork in the future, but we are extremely pleased with his progress so far. He loves his life here and the different activities each season of the year brings. At the same ski hill where he went snowboarding during the winter season, he will now go mountain biking for the summer season. He is also into skateboarding with his school friends.

We have been skiing a few times since our trip, but the season has been rather disappointing as there really hasn't been enough snow and the resorts have suffered badly. However, we were surprised to see that one day in early April it started to rain (we have not had rain since a shower last October) and, although it became heavy, it soon turned into snow. We have never seen snowflakes as large

as we did that evening and stood at our windows just staring out. It was still snowing the next day and was the biggest snowfall of the season with up to 90 cm in some places. Our road is on a rather steep slope and there were many cars that simply couldn't make it up the hill.



April on our terrace



Up along our road at the front

Steffen and his two friends got out their snowboard gear and spent hours opposite the front of our house where there is a green area, banked with a steep grass slope. They made jumps and a 'bridge' with a wooden plank, for tricks.



Steffen doing a "grind" on his snowboard

In a burst of enthusiasm, Jesper and the guy living next door took the day off work and went out to one of the resorts to have the best skiing ever, with powder snow Almost covering them. Needless to say they came home absolutely exhausted.

Being so late in the season, however, meant that while we were initially shovelling snow away like crazy, the spring sun soon melted most of it and the roads were running with water, sometimes getting flooded. Unfortunately all the large piles of shovelled snow took rather longer to disappear and looked very ugly.

By contrast, spring decided to arrive in Calgary last week, with temperatures reaching 29 degrees on Friday. Suddenly everyone swapped their winter jackets for T-shirts and shorts. Skis have been exchanged for golf clubs and snowboards for skateboards. People are now sitting outside at cafes. The grass, which I would have sworn was totally dead, is now turning green all over the city, the trees are in bud and suddenly all the neighbours are outside watering their lawns and preparing them for the planting season. The daffodils and tulips I planted out in autumn have suddenly shot up and are almost in bud. Steffen went out skateboarding for a day and came home with bad sunburn on his neck, face and arms.

However, no one is complacent about the weather just yet. It is still April and it could just as easily start snowing again in May – or later, so the winter jackets will not be put too far away just yet!

We have had a landscape designer helping us with plans for our gardens which should be started now, but with the basement taking all our time (and money), we may have to do it in stages. Our back garden is quite large, by Calgary standards, with a wonderful view of the Rocky Mountains, so we have some elaborate plans for its use. At the moment, however, it is just a bare piece of grass with two small trees.

On 12 May, I leave for England again and from there I will go on the big 50th birthday bash to Menorca with my three buddies. As you can imagine, I am really looking forward to that. Then I will be bringing my Mum back here with me and she will probably stay until October. She is very excited about coming here and I am so happy that she is well enough to come.

Hence, the main reason for the rush on the basement as Mum will have Steffen's existing bedroom and he will move into his new room in the basement, which will give him more privacy and independence.

Thanks to those who send me emails from time to time, it is so nice to be able to get news from other people. I really do appreciate it.

Here is a picture of my Indian screen, which was given to me as a leaving gift by my colleagues at WHO. Many of you will know how I saw and fell in love with this screen, only to discover that it had been sold. Imagine my shock and delight when my boss unveiled it at my leaving party. I wanted to show its position in our home, directly inside the front door between the living room and hallway, where everybody can admire it - and I have had many compliments about it already. It will always remind me of the wonderful people I met and worked with in my job in WHO.



Our warmest regards,
Julia, Jesper and Steffen

