



Trangeleds' in Canada



No. 5

January 2002

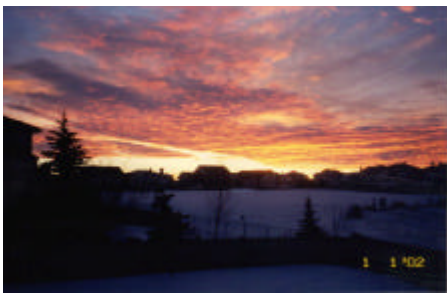
We have now experienced our first full year of living in Canada, so we have seen all the months and seasons here – and we still love it!!

Of course it is the middle of winter and we have temperatures ranging anywhere from -20 to +10 C, although at the present time it is more like spring. Even -20 in a dry climate like this is tolerable, especially in the sun. We have seen the odd person in shorts and one in a T-shirt (it's definitely not that warm), but most civilized Calgarians are still sporting winter jackets. Whatever the temperature, there is still lots of sunshine and clear blue sky most days, so it's hard not to go outside, even when it's cold. Besides, we have the frequent warm Chinook winds, which blow in from the mountains, dramatically raising the temperature for a short time.

Sunrise over the mountains



We have the most amazing skies here, especially at sunrise and sunset, or when the Chinook winds appear, creating a huge arc over the mountains.



Sunset taken from our back terrace

In early October we all flew to Manchester and took my Mum home again. She loved Canada, Calgary, the mountains and the lifestyle over here and we had a wonderful time together. We had a chance to see the family, before continuing to Copenhagen and then Aalborg, to visit Jesper's family. We then returned to Copenhagen to Jesper's younger sister and family and then to our former hometown of Sengeløse to visit our friends there. We all split up to visit with our own friends to save time and then met up again at the end to return to Canada. It was an extremely hectic week, but we managed to do what we wanted and we enjoyed visiting our family and friends so much. It was a shame we did not have more time to spend there, but with the small amount of annual vacation in North America (average 2-3 weeks), it was not possible.

Since our return I have been job hunting, but it is proving more difficult than when I got my previous job. Luckily, I had a lot of work in early November with the contract work from home, but then the contract ended so there is no more work at the moment. I have registered with some staffing agencies and taken all their computer assessment tests, but the end of the year is not the easiest time to find work. Still, there are some jobs now that look promising, so I am hoping to join the ranks of the employed again soon.

Also in Fall (or Autumn) I started attending our new local recreation centre, taking various exercise classes and doing weight training. I also train at home from videos (I even got new hand weights for Christmas) and have taken up walking, so every day I try to do some form of exercise. I came to the conclusion that at my age, I had better start taking better care of my body, get stronger, more flexible and help prevent future problems. I have found that I really enjoy it and am now lifting

almost 12,000 lbs each session on the machines, which are linked to their computer system. At the end, after adding in my various activities, I view my workout log and it is so motivating to see the totals and points mount up.

Steffen is still doing well in school and getting very good grades. He will soon have to make his application to attend High School and we have been on tours of the possible schools, before making the decision of which one he would prefer. His grades this year are, therefore, very important for acceptance, if he wants to have a choice of schools and optional subjects. He has been persuaded by his maths teacher to enter a maths competition with kids from all over Canada, so he is studying for that in addition to his normal work, which does not please him, but he agreed to it himself.

After a summer of mountain biking and skateboarding, he is now back to a season of snowboarding, and has tried out and been accepted on the school basketball team, so he is very active all year long.

Jesper is still taking western horse riding lessons and enjoys it immensely. He is anxious to get out into the Rockies for the 'real thing' – I may never see him again.



Jesper driving the zamboni on the ice rinks

This year he has volunteered at the local outdoor hockey and pleasure skating ice rinks just down the road from us and he often ambles down there in the evenings to

clean the ice (I think he only does it so he can drive the big zamboni ice cleaner).



At the controls – what power!

We spent a couple of weekends in November going for long walks in Fish Creek Provincial Park, one of several enormous park areas in Calgary. In fact this one is the largest urban provincial park in Canada – it is so big that Copenhagen could easily fit into it. The weather was so warm that hundreds of people were out, cycling, walking, jogging, roller-blading etc., in short sleeves, on the many hiking and walking trails through the park. We saw several deer down by the river and many trees felled by the beavers. There are apparently even bears and cougars out there. It was very interesting to know that we have such vast areas with wildlife even within the city.

The last weekend in November we went out skiing for the first time this season to one of the big ski areas near Banff, about 1½ hours away. It was wonderful to get back out on the ski slopes again and, although it was very cold, we had a good time and I didn't even hurt the next day. I treated myself to some new fancy skis, so I was eager to try them out and they were awesome.



Jesper and I out for the first time this season at one of the ski hills

We have been out skiing several times already. Steffen comes sometimes, but now Canada Olympic Park is open (10 mins drive) which has perhaps the best snowboard park, so he prefers to go there with his friends. We have again bought a family membership as Steffen can go after school or in the evenings and we sometimes go for a couple of hours, if we take him or pick him up. I have not enjoyed skiing this much for several years, partly due to my new skis, but mostly because I am so much fitter now that I do not ache or get exhausted while skiing, nor do I have any after effects the next day. As a result I find that I am skiing faster and with more confidence than I have done in years. We go earlier and ski the whole day long. Jesper is shocked that I no longer have to keep stopping for a breather, so he too is skiing more.

Christmas was spent here in Calgary, just the 3 of us, with no pressure and we enjoyed it a lot. We seem to have made a tradition of going out for a walk on Christmas day and the weather was beautiful as usual, with some snow on the ground.



Steffen helping me serve dinner

At New Year, we had some friends from across the road for dinner and New Year celebrations, so we had a very enjoyable evening with them.

This week, we had an unexpected heavy snowfall during the night, followed by a beautiful sunny day, so in order to spend some time outside, I decided to shovel the snow away from our driveway (a duty usually performed by Jesper, but now I can include the activity in my fitness program, so that encourages me to make an effort).

While giving directions to a motorist, I saw a large coyote come off the field at the side of our house and walk down the road and back again. It was clearly frightened and lost. I felt so sorry for it, but it is a wild animal and there was nothing I could do. It only needed to get a few blocks away from here before it was back in the countryside, but somehow it came into our built-up area and couldn't find its way out again. As I stood watching it, it stood watching me and then decided to go back on the field and slowly wandered off, hopefully to find a way home.

Today Jesper almost hit a deer, which suddenly ran across the road in front of him on the highway just a short distance from here.

Well, that about brings us up to date for this year, another hectic one for us, but also a year marred by the terrible and tragic events in the US, which has left us with a different world, affecting all our lives. I think we have learned in one quick lesson just how precarious life really is and that we must be thankful for each and every day.

We thank those who have sent us Christmas letters, either by post or by email. It is so nice to read your news, so please do not forget that we like to hear from you too from time to time.

On that note, we sincerely hope that this letter finds you and your family in good health and we wish you continued health and happiness for 2002.

P.S. If you haven't already, please note our new email addresses below.

Our warmest regards,
Julia, Jesper and Steffen

