



Trangeled's in Canada



Newsletter No. 9 December 2003

Well, we have now been in Calgary for over three years, having arrived here on 12 August 2000 and are therefore eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship. This is a process which can take a year to complete, so in the meantime we had to apply for a Permanent Residents Card which is the only way we can get back into Canada after the end of this year, until we become Canadian citizens.

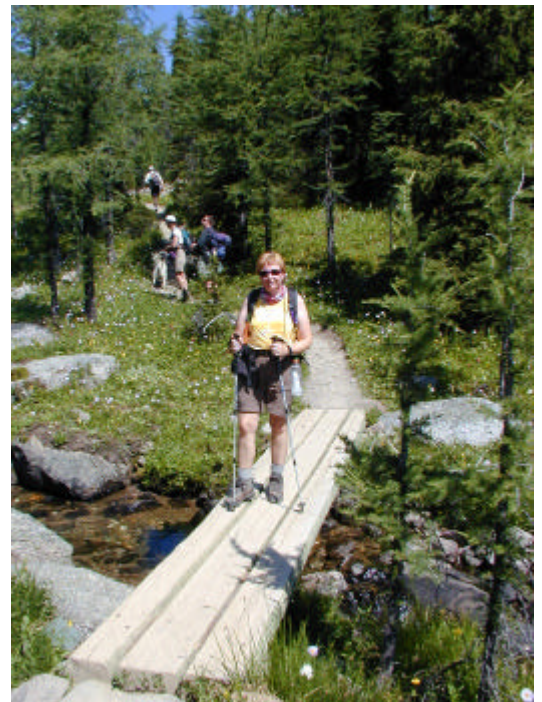
Like many countries this year, we had a wonderful summer in Calgary, although we have of course learnt that here summer or winter can arrive at any time of the year. In September we had several inches of snow and in October we were picnicking in the mountains with temperatures that were almost too hot to bear. Normally, we don't get much snow before December, but this year winter arrived earlier than usual and we have had quite a lot of snow already, with temperatures as low as -30c on the odd day. Then a 'Chinook' comes along and we're back in plus temperatures for a few days. We never take the weather for granted and it keeps everyone on their toes. The ski resorts are also enjoying the earliest season for several years with loads of powder snow.

I went back to England at the end of June to visit my Mum and enjoyed a week catching up with my family and friends once again.

I am still very happy in my job at the University and hope it continues until I want to leave it, but funding from grants is always an issue and there is no guarantee. Still, I would not want to be anywhere else.

Hiking really took control of my life this summer and I was out on a hike in the mountains at least one day every weekend. As my confidence, ability and strength grow, so too has the level of hikes I attempt. Sometimes the hikes are steep and appear never ending, or tricky to climb because of mud, snow or ice, or we end up bushwhacking through the forests. It can really be a struggle on some of the more challenging ones, but when I reach the top and eat lunch overlooking the mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes, it is always worth the effort.

Of course, we expect the mountain hikes to be spectacular, but the shock for me has been the city or urban hikes each Wednesday evening which I lead. Each one brings a new element of surprise, or beauty, that I never knew existed and confirms my belief that Calgary is a wonderful city, with wilderness, parks, rivers, wildlife, interesting neighborhoods, beautiful gardens and exotic homes. I would never have seen most of these things if I were not walking around like this. On these urban hikes we have seen many different deer, beavers, various types of birds, ducks and geese and even a porcupine. Even the odd bear or cougar are occasionally seen in the city in one of the wilderness parks.





Steffen

Steffen started in 11th grade in September and next year will be his last year of High School. He is more focused this year and doing very well in math's and physics, but is finding it more difficult with chemistry. Here, they only do two core subjects for half a year and then swap to the other two core subjects for the second half of the year.

He has been doing a lot of bike trials recently as his knees are, thankfully, not as bad as they have been previously, so he is taking advantage of that. Recently he went out for a short ride in shorts and without shin guards. He fell; the pedal spun around and cut his shin so badly that he ended up in the ER having 25 stitches in his leg. It was a hard lesson to learn, but he won't be going out without shin guards again.

Jesper

Jesper has been working in his PC maintenance business and it has been up and down, sometimes a lot of work and sometimes none. It is not very reliable and he has been looking for employment the whole year, without success. Then suddenly in November several jobs came up in the area in which Jesper works and he was approached by an agency for one of these positions. He was interviewed and offered a job immediately with IBM. Many of you will know that most of Jesper's training has been with IBM and he has most of his experience in mainframe computers and in banking. This job combines all three, so they were eager to snap him up and he was eager to accept. He started working there as a contractor at the end of November and is very pleased so far. He has already been made the Team Lead for the project they are working on. At present the contract is until the end of March, but we hope that it will continue long after that.

He is still very involved in his riding activities and now that it is winter, he is back to the cattle penning competitions once a month, which he loves especially as he has won 3 times this year.



During the summer it was all about trail riding in the mountains, and Jesper and Chico his horse, were out nearly every weekend. There was also time to join in the Stampede parade again this year, and then the highlight of the year was the

big cattle drive. In the spring 1200 cows had to be driven up into the mountains for summer grazing, and in the fall they had to bring them all down again, a lot of hard work, but also a lot of fun and riding.

We are traveling to our families for the holidays. First I am going to England on 14 Dec, to spend a week with my Mum, and then Jesper and Steffen arrive on 21 Dec. for a couple of days, before we head off to Denmark. We will spend Christmas with Jesper's parents and his older sister and her family in Jutland, before returning to Copenhagen to spend New Year with his younger sister, her husband and their twins, as well as seeing some of our friends. We will return to Calgary on 2 January.

My nephew Colin and his fiancé Michaela are going to Austria to get married next week, so my brother Ronnie and wife Pat, with whom my Mum lives, will be traveling there for this occasion. My Mum is not up to traveling anymore, so she will stay at home, which is why I took the opportunity to spend that time with her and my niece Sarah, who will be around also, so we should have a jolly time.

We hope that this letter finds you all well and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

