

December 2003

Greetings to you all!

Well I've just spent a lovely couple of hours listening to a Christmas CD sung by the '3 Tenors', and mentally going through the past year to see what exciting events I have to share with you!! I've come to the conclusion that their singing was much more exciting than my news!! Have you heard them? It's Pavarotti, Carreras and Domingo - and they get together for a combined concert every so often, which is out of this world!!

Now, on with the continuing Richards Chronicle - maybe I should call it "The Senior and the Restful"!!! (It doesn't seem to have such a swing to it as the original!) It has been another quiet year for me - no major happenings as in previous years. I really should try and do better next year!

My time spent with Daniel has given me the most pleasure and interest, as you can imagine! I look after him on three days each week now, and this lively 2 year old certainly keeps me busy!! He talks a lot now, and has an amazing vocabulary already. Of course I think he is very smart - takes after his Grandma!!

At home he plays with his Thomas the Train set, which has grown in size since the original layout last Christmas. He is at the age when he goes through the catalogue and points out all the items he'd like next!! Actually he loves anything with wheels, and has a great collection of Hot Wheels cars too!

Daniel and I attend a 'Parents and Tots' play group twice a week, and he enjoys being with other children. They spend some time in the Gym, and Daniel now scoots around on his favorite green tricycle with the best of them! The group recently participated in the Santa Claus Parade in Waterloo, so Daniel and I sat on a float and waved to all the people!! Quite a thrill for both of us! After Christmas he will start attending Pre-School, so that will be a real challenge for him.

Well, as you can imagine, our garden is growing by leaps and bounds!! From April onwards I haunt the nurseries to find all the new and unusual plants that I couldn't grow in 'arctic' Thunder Bay!! What a joy to be able to over-winter my treasures here! One fascinating addition is a Moon Flower, which only opens when the sun goes down, and blooms overnight!

Michelle and I grow quite a selection of annuals from seed (well, you've got to do something in February and March!) - but my main hobby is the perennial garden. Michelle and Marko are very patient with me as my flower beds gradually increase in size!! And of course in the Fall, I went crazy with Spring flowering bulbs!! We should have a lovely show anyway.

Daniel had his own special bed this year, in which he grew flowers as well as carrots and

cherry tomatoes. Did you know that cherry tomato vines grow to be 8 feet tall?!! Well Daniel's did! They were beside the front steps to the porch, and we had to cut them back so as to get into the house!! He must have inherited the family green thumb! We picked bushels of ripe tomatoes and gave them away to everyone.

This year we had the pleasure of several visits from Marko's parents who live in Sault Ste Marie. They really loved spending time with Daniel of course - but we put his Dad to work too!! We fenced in the back yard, and Mauri constructed a gate to close it off. Great job too - it works like a charm! Now both Daniel and Sunshine can play out there safely. However I had to add wire fences in front of the flower beds, as when those two start a rousing game of soccer, you can imagine where the ball inevitably ends up!!

My most exciting event this year was the wedding of the daughter of my friends Leottia and Gavin, at which I was asked to be the back-up candid photographer. Nancy (the bride) lives in Oshawa - about two hours' drive from here. So we all piled into my friends' motor home, with our two dogs, and made a long weekend trip of it!! That was lots of fun for me and Sunshine - albeit rather stressful for the bride's parents! Everything went off beautifully of course, and I used up far too many rolls of film as usual. You know me when I get a camera in my hands - I just don't know when to stop!

Over the past two months our church has been running an interesting course entitled "The Purpose-Driven Life" based on the book by Rick Warren. Basically it answers the question 'What on earth am I here for?' - and it's been really great! Not only did we read a chapter of the book each day, we had an appropriate message each Sunday, and also joined into small weekly groups to discuss our purpose in life! I've made some new good friends, and our group plans to continue in the New Year, which will be helpful I know.

I've got news for those of you who (like me) are computer whizzes! Michelle has added my 'Vignettes' to my web page. These are my memories of childhood, growing up in England during WW2 and other stuff. If you care to read it (or just look at the photos!) - my website is at www.lola.isfoundhere.com.

As usual I've rambled on far too long, but it's only once a year! Thank you all for your news - and please keep it coming! I do hope you have a very Happy Christmas and I wish you a healthy and peaceful New Year.

With love from Lola and Sunshine.