



HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2010

The Black Family

Greetings from snowy Orillia!

This has been a year with many ups and one sad "down." In August, we lost our beloved Casey-the-Springer-Spaniel. She passed away of old age just shy of her sixteenth birthday. We miss our old girls, Casey and Scratch (who left us the previous August), but our cats Robyn (age 3) and Dexter (age 2), and our puppy Bailey (just turned one) are filling that void. Bailey joined our family in February. She is a spunky, little Cocker Spaniel-Poodle (a.k.a. "Cockapoo") from Bancroft, Ontario. Bailey is already a big fan of the outdoors, camping and kayaking. She also loves the cats... thinks they are playthings. Her main challenge is an inordinate fear of strangers. We are working on that by taking her places and exposing her to new situations, whenever possible.

This past summer, Emily, Bailey and I enjoyed three camping trips. Our first outing was a four night stay at Awenda Provincial Park, near Midland. We took Em's friend Tayler along with us, and enjoyed a day-visit from our friend Lorelei. The highlights at Awenda are the great dog beach and the interpretive programs.

Our second trip was to the Tobermory area. We stayed at Bruce Peninsula National Park, for five nights, with our friend Louise and her son Christopher. Seven more friends stayed at a motel in town. They visited us in camp, and went on day trips with us. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with old friends, including some that we hadn't seen in several years. There were five kids in our group. Their favourite aspect of the trip was being able to walk from camp to "The Grotto"; a pristine cave/swimming area on Georgian Bay with crystal clear turquoise waters. Another highlight of this trip was a road trip to a historic lighthouse.

Our third trip was to a park new to Em and me: Halfway Lake Provincial Park, an hour north of Sudbury. Emily, Bailey and I spent ten days at Halfway Lake, on our own. We hiked, swam, kayaked and rode our bikes in the park daily (Bailey actually learned how to jog beside a bike without getting hurt). We also attended half a dozen park interpretive events, and took two day trips to Sudbury so we could explore Science North and Dynamic Earth. What a terrific vacation destination!



Emily and her friend Tayler at Awenda



The gang's all here, in Tobermory!



Em and Bailey explore Halfway Lake by kayak

The Black Family



Our fun day trips this year included:

- Picnics and hikes in several parks near our home
- Several visits to "Scales" Reptile Park, in Orillia
- A Canada Day visit to Huntsville with my Mom and friend Lorelei
- Kayaking in Algonquin Park with my sister's family
- A first visit to Splash Canyon water park, near Barrie
- Attending the musical "Tap Dogs"
- A fall kennel tour and dinner, in Haliburton, in support of Winterdance Kennel's bid to run the Yukon Quest 1,000 mile sled dog race, in February. Em and I will be dog sledding with Winterdance over the Christmas break (it has been five years since we last went dog sledding). We are also sponsoring Winterdance lead dog Lily in the Yukon Quest, and I will be tracking the race with my Grade 5/6 class.

Emily is now ten years old! Over March Break, she tried snowboarding for the first time, at Horseshoe Valley. She loved flying down big hills with her feet strapped to a board! In August, Em enjoyed her first experience at horseback riding day camp. She came home with awards for most improved rider and archer. Emily has completed eleven swimming levels since she first started swimming lessons, at age 2. She wants to pursue lifeguarding, but needs to wait two years before she can start that training. In the meantime, she will be attending "Junior Lifeguard Club," where kids play games that enhance their swimming skills and work through water-safety scenarios. Em is continuing with dance lessons. This year, she is involved in "musical theatre." Emily is now in Grade 5 and thoroughly enjoying her year, thanks to teacher Rick Clendinning, who is a terrific motivator of kids!

This year, I'm having the time of my life, teaching a Junior-level class for the first time (Grade 5/6)! In November and December, I also enjoyed hosting a student-teacher in my class for the first time. A friend of mine who teaches at the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Orillia, has invited me to speak to two classes of student-teachers, in January, about my original Whooping Crane and Sled Dog Race Tracking Units, which include tie-ins to several curriculum areas. I'm really looking forward to that! ☺



Em and I were voted "best dressed mushers" at the Winterdance Yukon Quest Fundraising Dinner!



Em snowboarding @ March Break day camp

The Black Family
15 Claremont Cres., R.R. #1, Orillia, ON, L3V 6H1
Phone number: 705-329-0213
E-mail address: blackdeer@rogers.com