

## Ho! Ho! Holy Cow!

Is it the end of 2010 already?! Time for another annual installment in the saga that is the Bridger household. We're going to try to keep it short this year.

First and foremost: this was the year we welcomed the fifth member of our family to the world. Roxanne Elizabeth Bridger was born June 4<sup>th</sup> at 8lbs 4oz – our tiniest baby yet. She is quite simply the best smiler in the world. She'll take one look at anyone smiling and break into a grin that melts your heart. She's now starting to eat solid foods which has lead to the faintly surprising discovery that we have YACWABS (Yet Another Child With A Bottomless Stomach). Costco is going to love us.

Cohen has taken to being a big brother like a champ. He tries very hard to be gentle with her, and we often find him checking in on her while she naps. Sometimes “checking in” can mean throwing 3 or 4 large books at her head while she sleeps, but his heart is in the right place. Cohen is starting to really enjoy his extra-curricular activities when he's not busy toughening up Roxanne. This year he's tried sportball (a combo class of various ball-related sports), skating, and swimming. He's also taken a particularly strong liking to gymnastics – we know he's a monkey and all but his skill at balancing and his strength are really something to behold.

Marley continues to shock us with just how capable she is at pretty much anything she tries. With the arrival of Roxanne she officially moved from a helpful sibling to a primary caregiver. She loves to hold Roxanne (in positions that would make a yoga instructor proud as Roxanne has to contort just to be able to breathe) and feed her when she can. Oh the look on her face when she gave Roxanne her first bottle! Marley also likes to keep busy (where did she get that habit from?!) and has taken classes in ballet, gymnastics, soccer, art, swimming and skating. We're aiming for Prime Minister material here so we want to go with breadth and depth of experience ;)

Kirk and Alisa have both had professional shake downs this year. Alisa was first to see some unwelcome change in the spring when she was told right before leaving on mat leave that she would need to stop being such an excellent, capable counsellor and that she would need to be “bumped down” to a classroom teacher for cost-saving reasons. Today it sounds like she might get to continue on as a counsellor when she returns next year, but not at the school where she previously worked. So she left on uncertain terms and will return in exactly the same state.

Kirk also is seeing uncertain times. This summer he quit the company he's been working at for the past 7 years and joined the University of British Columbia in a role he thought would lead to long term experience and prosperity (would he leave for any other kind of opportunity?) However in the fall it was announced that the project he was hired on for would no longer be part of UBC's funding and that he would be moved on to some other, as yet unidentified, project in a yet to be determined capacity. So January is coming and Kirk doesn't really know what he's going to be doing, nor in what capacity. UBC is

undergoing a large amount of transformation this year and Kirk seems to have joined at just the right time to be swept up in the confusion and uncertainty.

Apart from all this drama, life has been good to the Bridgers this year. We have oodles of fantastic and funny memories, and are dreading in some ways the coming year as it means Marley will be entering kindergarten. Surely this event cannot be upon us already?! Some great moments from our scrapbook this year:

Alisa, on her first day home with 3 children and no supporting adults around, having to go shopping for a washing machine because ours broke that very day. Do you know how much laundry our family generates? Think how much laundry a small country generates in a year. Now double that. And that's just in one week!

Alisa climbing into her brand new mini-van, feeling her heart sink as Marley comments on how it will help mom be a better taxi driver. Then feeling some degree of comfort as the seat warmers kicked in – maybe it isn't so bad after all.

Kirk and Alisa slipping away for their first vacation in 4 years. Sure Alisa was feeling extremely pregnant and it was only for two nights in Tofino. But let the record show that it was a vacation, and they were alone for the entire thing. We can't deny that sleeping in until we wanted to get up was luxurious, so it was without a doubt a vacation.

The entire Bridger clan piling into the new mini-van and heading out to the Dinotown theme park near Hope – a childhood memory for both Kirk and Alisa. The temperature soared to over 30 degrees that day, but everyone had a blast and nobody came home with a sun burn. It was a great adventure for everyone, including Dazy the dog!

So as you can see, we are not suffering. Our lives are filled with love, laughter and passion every day. We shouldn't really ask for more than that – but we do have one thing we're lacking: more time. There's just never enough of it. So if you have some spare time lying around, perhaps tucked away for a rainy day, get in touch. We'd love to let you in on our little typhoon of a life and all it will cost you is a little bit of that extra time. We promise it will be worth it.

In you don't have a moment or two to spare, then we understand – we're in the same situation. But we did want to take this moment to wish you and your loved ones a very happy holidays. We all hope you find time to savour the spirit of the holidays and enjoy the presence of those around you.

May you find peace and a joyful spirit this holiday season, and may the coming year be the happiest one yet.

**Kirk, Alisa, Marley, Cohen, & Roxanne**