

What a year! Get yourself ready for a blistering 2 pages of recap at breakneck speed. Grab a hot drink, settle in with your reading specs, and dig in.

We'll begin our story with the youngest Bridger - Roxanne. She is now one and a half and has become the single largest threat to her own safety. She is incredibly agile and almost every day finds some new feat of dexterity and balance that makes her parents clutch their chests in fear (and then grab a camera). She climbs as high as she can see. She arranges objects into stairs to help her scale those larger items like chairs, tables and shelving. Her high chair serves more as a skyscraper than any kind of sitting apparatus. Yes, she's playing the role of King Kong. She's also quite the little fish - loving her time in the pool. Any time you see her she invariably has a grin on her face - she has the sunniest, most agreeable disposition! Perhaps that is why she has so many ladies in waiting. She's treated like a queen, with kids and adults alike waiting on her hand and foot. Her parents are worried about where this is all going, but are powerless before her adorable little smile. Roxanne looks up to her big sister like Marley can do no wrong, holding her hand and asking for her help with brushing her teeth. She looks at Cohen, on the other hand, like she's looking at a funnel cloud bearing down on her. Not only is she unsure of where he will touch down, but I believe she sees a competitor in him: for attention, for toys, for the sake of it. And as sunny as she can be, she can be fiery, feisty, and furious. There is no shortage of interesting dynamics in our house!

Cohen is now 3 years old and is a fantastic mixture of a Tasmanian devil and a big-hearted little boy that will melt your heart. He loves physical activity such as gymnastics and going for walks. However he can also be quite timid in uncertain situations or around new people. Once over the summer he was out camping with Grandma and Poppa and they were hiking through some apparently steep terrain. He just wasn't convinced it was a good idea, and embraced the idea of being a "Ned" when Poppa mentioned he was acting like a nervous Ned. Since then he freely states that he's feeling "A little Ned" any time he's nervous. His Ned side was in full force earlier this summer when he started swimming lessons - he was convinced that if he touched the bottom he would simply cease to exist (or he behaved as much). However he was lucky enough to have a fantastic teacher for his first class and as a result has become an enthusiastic swimmer/bouncer. When he's not busy bouncing off walls he thoroughly enjoys puzzles and board games. He loves to investigate new objects in the house, particularly if they're related to video games or electronics. He has quite the inquisitive mind and we often forget that he's only 3. He has taken to being a big brother like a champ. He tends to hang back and let Marley do most of the proxy parenting, but given the chance he'll make sure Roxanne is happy and safe, and definitely entertained. Cohen also started going to preschool in September and is loving his time with new friends, teachers, toys, and activities.

Marley is now 5 years old and has had a year full of change. She finished up her final year of preschool in June and started full day kindergarten in September. Just like that, one of our little ones spends 5 days a week somewhere else for most of the day. Alisa was lamenting the change over the summer and I just wasn't getting it. Then September came and I was walking my daughter to and from school, talking about her friends and school projects, and library books started appearing in the house - little changes like that. But then it struck me - Marley wasn't home as much anymore. And it hit me finally - this was a change to our family and there was no going back. But it also was a new beginning for Marley, and I am totally behind it all now. When she's not at school she's busy skating and she's becoming a very skilled skater too. I told her the other week that she's probably better than I am now, to which she responded that we should go skating together and she can teach me a few things. She also continues to love swimming and is quickly coming to the end of lessons for her age group. Who knows, maybe next summer she'll be doing lengths of the pool with me. We also have had an inaugural visit from the tooth fairy this

fall. Twice in fact. The first time Marley managed to convince her to leave behind the tooth, a note, and a blurry picture of her. You can't really get around Marley when she wants something - even the tooth fairy can't say no.

Alisa has been keeping busy beyond being a wonderful mother of 3. She returned to work for the Surrey school district 2 days a week as a school counsellor in September. She has also pushed forward with her private practice and has been working with clients in her "spare time on the weekends". Needless to say she sleeps well at night, all tuckered out. Thank goodness Roxanne is now on a regular sleeping pattern. The only problem left for us to solve is how to get more hours into a day, because we just can't seem to get to bed on time. For her sanity she still fits in some exercise (even if it's cut into by kids calling for her). To give herself some uninterrupted, feeling like a kid herself time, she's skating once a week with a group of adult women. Alisa has also been running regularly this year with her two good friends, Kim and Nathalie and has completed another two half marathons. The most recent one in October she ran with her Dad and achieved a personal best. I've run with her once or twice this year and man - can she run!

Myself I've had a tumultuous year professionally. I have moved on to consulting full time and am loving working from home. Not just the lack of a commute but the ability to visit the family throughout the day. "Visit" is fancy word for "run around getting kids dressed and into the car", for those of you who enjoy the Fancy Nancy books. I am lucky enough to walk Marley to school twice a week (holding hands of course) and every once in a while give Alisa a couple more minutes of sleep in the mornings. One other perk of working from home is the ability to sneak out for a run or bike ride occasionally, and I'm toying with the idea of a triathlon.

Alisa and I celebrated our 10th anniversary this year. Thanks to Alisa's parents' babysitting skills we managed to fly down to Santa Monica for a couple of nights away. I'm sure it will surprise everyone to hear that Alisa and I overscheduled ourselves while there, but managed to relax just a little bit. There were trapeze lessons for Alisa, running on the beach, a bike tour of the city highlights, shopping, a movie, and great eating.

As a family we had a few fun adventures this year too. We went camping in the rain (and it was a lot of rain), earlier this year we spent a wonderful week in Mexico, and we endured a week of renovations in the kitchen. Well, actually I endured it - the rest of the family fled to Grandma and Poppa's until the drywall settled. Which ended up meaning that Grandma and Poppa's house endured it too - our kids can leave quite the "impression" on people's homes.

Phew - it has been quite a year. What hasn't been mentioned though are all the fun times we've had with friends and family. I haven't mentioned the brunches, lunches, and dinners (oh and the snacks - plenty of snacks). The play-dates, the visits and the excursions. The late evenings, the laughs over tea and cookies (real and otherwise), the dress-ups, the parties ... they all have made 2011 a treasured year. We thank you all for being a part of our lives - we feel blessed every day. May your 2012 be filled with adventure, love, joy and peace.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for 2012

The Bridgers