

The year 2012, more than any other year, has been filled with twists and turns, laughter and sniffles, and all sorts of busy-ness.

Roxanne spent the year acquiring a delicate and refined palette, insisting on only hummus, applesauce and mozzarella cheese sticks for many meals. True to her Bridger/Hicks blood she always leaves room for the possibility of chocolate or candy at every meal (and sometimes in between). She has fallen in love with Dazy our family's saint/dog, which means she likes to feed her, walk her around the house, and ride her like a horse. You know, like you tend to do with dogs :) She swims like a fish and clambers around at gymnastics like a monkey. Her special talents now include spilling any cup of liquid within 3 meters in the blink of an eye and dazzling you with her infectious smile. In July we finally found a cause for why her language skills were falling behind developmentally: she is hard of hearing. Until recently she has only been able to hear our voices as a faint whisper even when we were speaking directly to her from a foot away. She has been wearing hearing aids since September and since then has been shocking us with how quickly she picks up words and new sounds. We are enjoying becoming part of a new (to us) community with those who have deaf or HoH children. Our family is learning ASL to help ensure Roxanne is always able to communicate with us. Marley in particular is picking up the new language incredibly fast and the two girls are already becoming thick as thieves - saints preserve us.

Marley is actually learning 3 languages right now, and is excelling at all of them. There's English of course and she is always looking to satisfy her curiosity about new words like "sarcasm". She's in grade 1 French Immersion and she can hold fairly interesting conversations with us entirely in French. She also understands Alisa and I when we speak in French, so our secret means of communication in front of the kids is no longer working. We haven't been able to spell out words in front of Marley for a long time and now we're kind of floundering without a secret language to use. Marley also takes great pride in teaching her friends rudimentary ASL at recess and lunch. When she encounters a word she doesn't know or remember she makes up a really cool and authenticate-looking sign and nobody is the wiser. Marley has discovered a new talent in grade 1: mathematics. Her first taste of addition at school quickly led to advanced addition tests in the car and to numerous pieces of paper strewn about the house where she adds up huge numbers like  $1,429 + 249$  correctly. She's tackling subtraction next and is already intrigued by this multiplication thing she hears about. Ambitious, smart, and a quick learner - she's also a great snuggler, inventor, and artist. Her artistic side manifests in great story-telling sessions as well as an interesting "flair" for fashion (a flair her mom may not share, if you catch my drift).

Cohen somehow manages to bring all kinds of novelty to the table - he's an entirely different ball of fun. He is enjoying 4 year-old pre-school and has a strong affinity for stories and puzzles. Just the other day he almost beat me at checkers - the second game we've ever played and he caught me napping a couple of times. His talents extend quite often into the realm of storytelling and imagination. He's exploring that delicate line between reality and fabrication. He obviously has a unique take on the world as he often lays out fantastic one-liners such as "My dad is a giant but a friendly giant", and "It is OK to have dirty feet because you can't see the bottoms." He's enjoying gymnastics and skating and pulled the training wheels off his bike earlier this summer. He is also our only child that has needed stitches - twice nonetheless! His chin stitches were traumatic enough last fall, but this year he took a dive into a chair at the library trying to grab a Toy Story book. 4 stitches in his forehead later and his tally is now 7 stitches. We've made a rule that he cannot have more stitches than his age in years. He seemed to take that pretty well so we hope that's the end of it for another 3 years or so. He also was pretty nonchalant about having an x-ray this summer looking for an elusive penny. Yes, they found the penny on the x-ray. It happened while I was out of town for work (poor Alisa). Cohen was playing with a penny while falling asleep and accidentally swallowed it. You know, like you tend to do with pennies at bedtime. Both his parents were mightily impressed with the bright round white spot on his x-ray right around his stomach, as well as the "waiting for it."



to come out" part of the whole ordeal. So another rule was put into place: no more money near your mouth. It must be tough to be 4 and have so many rules to remember.

I've been keeping busy with work this year. For the first part of the year I was consulting for a trio of clients. The second half of the year I regained my senses and limited work to just one full time job. I'm back working in healthcare, which is where I want to be, and I'm working as a Product Manager, which is also what I want to be doing. Outside of work I have trained for my first triathlon. In fact I ran my first half-tri in February and then teamed up with a special someone for my first full triathlon in September. I met all my goals and left myself plenty of room for improvement (aren't I the thoughtful one). I'm not sure I'll do a full tri again but it has certainly had a positive impact on my health and mental well being this year, so no regrets at all. My body kind of hates me a little bit though, as the training was actually really hard.

Alisa also took up triathlons as a new sport this year. She ran her first half in May and was my special someone for our first full triathlon in September. She kicked butt on all legs of the triathlon - she seriously impressed everyone. The race did not go off without a hitch though (we're seeing a life-long pattern here) as both Alisa and I managed to spend a lot more time off the bike course than we wanted to. I managed to tack on an additional 2 or so kilometers to my bike distance by taking a wrong turn while Alisa spent the majority of her bike leg entirely off course. Determined to state that she had finished a proper triathlon, we re-traced her custom-made course after the race and discovered that through some geo-magnetic miracle she had actually ridden the exact length of the course before returning to the next leg. Baffling but a relief as neither one of us was sure what would happen if she hadn't finished the entire distance that day. Thankfully we never had to find out. Alisa finished off her summer butt-kicking with a half marathon 2 weeks after her triathlon. That's the Alisa we all know and love: driven, athletic, and maybe a little bit nutso. In terms of work she's back as a school counsellor a couple of days a week and continues her own private counselling practice, seeing anywhere from 2 to 5 clients a week. You know, in her spare time.

As a family we've had a couple of neat adventures this year. In February we managed to jet down to Mexico to join Alisa's parents for fun in the sun. Marley thoroughly enjoyed the trip overall but declared that she will need to build a robot before going again. This robot will be able to create anything so it will create a drug that stops her ears from hurting in airplanes. Sounds like a handy robot to have. We also drove out to Harrison Hot Springs and Osoyoos in the summertime to spend time with Alisa's parents and their fifth wheel. Some of us call it camping, others call it ... not camping. We all agree it was a lot of fun though. Finally we participated in a local Ultimate team as a family. No we didn't have Roxanne out there running for the disk but we all attended the games and the kids had fun watching or running around the field during the games. It was a neat experience for us as we begin to enter a phase where our family members are all mobile and able to "attend" events with some degree of independence. It gave us a glimpse of some neat times ahead for the family.

That's the story of the Bridgers this year. We wish you all sorts of health, happiness and peace for the coming year. We hope to be able to do more visiting and socializing once we adapt to all these changes from 2012. We're almost certain that 2013 won't hold any more changes for our family. Our logic is that we've used up all our change-related karma so it will be smooth and predictable sailing from here on out. That's how it works - right? ;o) We'll give you an update next year.

Happy Holidays,

Alisa, Kirk, Marley, Cohen, and Roxanne