

Holiday Hello 2010

Russell, Heather, Dylan and Ben | 114 Demers Drive, Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2B1

Welcome to the e-edition of our *Holiday Hello* for 2010. Normally, we scamper about designing, printing and mailing copies of this hither and thither, but under the veil of environmental sustainability and in the interests of effective distribution, we're going to jump into the new millennium and send this by email.

You may have followed our lives reading one or several of the 240+ blog posts that found their way onto the Internet at www.middleagebulge.blogspot.com. Or, perhaps you receive our bi-monthly *Wood Buffalo Update* by email.

Some of you are even connected to our goings on thanks to Facebook and the social media universe. Let's face it, we are more connected, informed, appraised, inundated, and exposed than at any other time in history. Isn't it wonderful?

This year we will once again hunker down in Wood Buffalo and enjoy the rest and

relaxation that comes with staying put for the holidays. We will spend time throwing the snow around outside, reading, drawing, playing and *not* going to any meetings, receptions, special events or public functions (can you tell I need a break from politics?)

It is a time to put the cares and concerns of our work and community lives on hold for seven to ten days and to concentrate on ourselves. We are really looking forward to the break after what has been a whirlwind fall with Dylan going through his second major surgery, and the rigors and roller coaster ride of the election campaign.

Our hope is that you find the peace, joy and love that is properly in abundance at this blessed time of year. Happy holidays!



Dylan Patch Theodore



I'm almost 12 years old. Early this year I threw my 'always a big hit' 3rd Annual Birthday Sleepover with Tanner and Mathias. We had chocolate cake, pizza and a video game marathon. It was the best birthday yet.

I just escaped from Unit 201 at the Glenrose Hospital in Edmonton. I once again saw the same nurses that I had met back in 2008, like Sandy, Loraine and Eveyln. I also met some nice patients that I became fast friends with like Antonia, Dean and John. John and I became *very* good friends as we share a HUGE interest in wrestling.

Now I am at home eager to find out what lie's under the big homemade ornament-filled Christmas tree. I'm making my Christmas list, checking it twice for that big red jolly man waiting in the North Pole.

I can't wait to go to my mom's house in Fort Mckay and see her and my two dogs, Kuna and Anuk, and my old cat Meow.

2010 has been lovely, but I'm ready for the New Year.

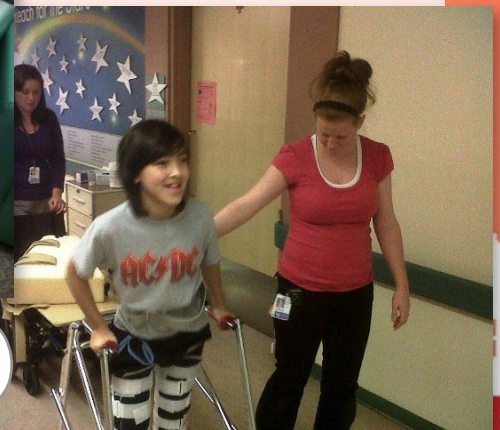
So one last thing: Ho! Ho! Ho!, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you so much to everyone who sent me best wishes and kind thoughts when I was in the hospital. It makes it easier when so many people care about you.

Written by Dylan on December 18, 2010



Dylan enjoying a moment of fun with Grandma Wagner in early October.



Dylan was at the Glenrose Rehabilitation hospital from late September to December 17th. This is a picture from October 27th, a few days after he started using the walker.

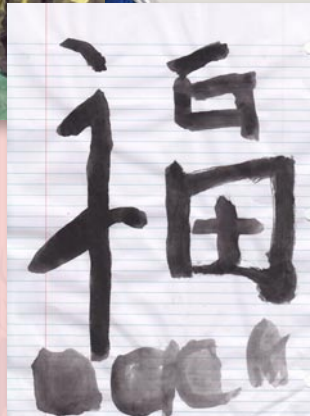
Ben Charles Russell

Ben has grown into a creative force in 2010, going through very distinct phases, from Egyptology to Abstract Expressionism and most recently into the world of Chinese culture and symbols. He has a natural talent and once he gets an idea into his head, he doesn't stop till his drawing, painting or creation is finished.

He kicked off the year by participating in the Starfish Circus Camp, performing a variety of tricks and flips in front of a theatre full of fans. In the picture to the right he is working the "silks" under the watchful eyes (and hands) of the professionals.

Still very attached to his collection of Penguins and Puffles from the Club Penguin family, Ben added an iPod to his pile of toys after earning some extra money as a model for a Syncrude advertisement. He also spent a full day this summer in front of the video camera as our family was featured in a vignette depicting family life in the oil sands region of Wood Buffalo.

Ben loves music, enjoys the water and is becoming very interested in martial arts. He's looking forward to Christmas and glad to have his brother home to keep him on his toes after being away for three months in the hospital!



Ben has been learning about a variety of different artists at school, including Van Gogh and Picasso. He drew this abstract after supper one night. He's also been very interested in Chinese culture and has been practicing writing a variety of characters including "Luck" featured to the right.

Russell Vincent



As Heather sat behind me in glee, I began to realize that the wool had been pulled over my eyes. It's a great picture! I was awarded the Big Spirit Ambassador Award and for once in my life was speechless. Too fun. That was back in March.

It's been a great year for me. As spring started to bleed into summer, I had made the decision to run for office in the upcoming municipal election. I started designing highway signs and campaign materials before we left on summer holidays and publicly announced my intentions the week after the curtain dropped on the 20th annual interPLAY Festival.

After a four-week campaign that began with taking Dylan down for his second major leg surgery, I ended up winning the last available seat on Council by just a couple of hundred votes. It was an intense evening as a whole bunch of us gathered in our living room, including Mom and Dad, to watch the numbers roll in. When that final polling station result came in, it was cheers and hugs all around.

So far, it's been totally fun, more fun than I expected to be honest about it. The group that the electorate selected is excellent, the "Dream Team" some say. It was crazy busy in the weeks preceding the swearing-in ceremony. There was one stretch when I went three weeks without eating supper at home on a weekday. Now that we're through the team-building, governance and budget sessions, it's much more manageable.

I'm grateful beyond measure for the blessing in our lives and wish you and yours the very best this season.

(-: Russell



Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Council, 2010 -2013:
Councillor David Blair, Councillor Russell Thomas, Councillor Allan Vinni, Councillor Don Scott, Councillor Dave Kirschner, Mayor Melissa Blake, Councillor Sheldon Germain, Councillor Sonny Flett, Councillor Jane Stroud, Councillor Mike Allen, Councillor Phil Meagher

Heather Elizabeth Susan

Happy Season Everyone! What a joy and a pleasure it is to send you greetings and updates!

This year - as always - has been a year of growth and change. In November 2009 I left public sector employment and now work solely for myself teaching yoga and practising as a massage therapist. In June I received my 2200hr Massage Therapy Diploma, passed the provincial exams and became an "RMT". In August I successfully sat my International Yoga Teacher's exams, which puts me closer to my dream of teaching internationally. (Mexico - here I come!)

As I find absolute joy in this new career, my biggest challenge is trying not to do too much of it. This year I realized that 7 yoga classes and 10 massage clients a week is too much. Life is way better when I relax and take my time... Go Figure! Russell is always supportive and I am eternally grateful for being able to work part-time.

Last winter as the WBCV Community Yoga Program ended, I began offering 3hr yoga workshops twice monthly in the home studio. I can accommodate 6 people at a time and they usually fill up well in advance. I love working from home and it is truly a joy to share what makes my heart sing!

On the health front, some of my facial pain has returned and I am on the list to for another infusion of Rituximab. It worked so well last year that I had no need for any medications from April through October. I am also excited to be consulting with a plastic surgeon who is renowned for his skills in facial reconstruction!

As I think of family and friends who will read these words, my heart overfills with love for each of you. May all your days be blessed and full of joy! Love and Light, Heather.



Heather continues to change and shape lives through her work in the Ananda Center for Balance. Hundreds of massage and yoga clients have reaped the benefits of Heather's skill, knowledge and spirit.





2010 Summer Memories

Watrous | Kamsack
Edmonton | Gibsons | Vancouver

The summer of 2010 saw us enjoy two wonderful trips. First we traveled to water-logged Saskatchewan for amazing visits, stunning prairie vistas and lots of fun in the sun. We spent time with Doug and his family in Watrous before heading home to Kamsack.

Later on in July we hopped aboard the VIA Canadian in Edmonton and enjoyed the nostalgic leap through the Rockies before grabbing the ferry to our getaway destination in Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast. We were joined by Neil, Susan, Kathryn and Julia for an unbelievable week in paradise.

We enjoyed reconnecting with many family and friends and basking in the incredible beauty of Western Canada. It was a wonderful time of renewal, relaxation and fun.

Stories and pictures available online:
www.middleagebulge.blogspot.com

