



# G & S GAZETTE

December 2006

As last year drew to a close, we had made a move in our life, specifically, moving from our condo in Vancouver Heights in North Burnaby (on the Vancouver/Burnaby border) where Glen had lived for 12 years, and Susan and Glen together as a married couple for the first 6 years of their marriage, to our new house in Montecito, still in North Burnaby. As I write this, it is actually one year ago to the day since we received the keys to our new house.

From the first night in our new house, we spent good times with friends. Spending time with friends and family is a good way to live life, and so this year I have chosen personal interactions to be the perspective used here in our newsletter to tell the story of Glen and Susan's 2006.

Starting with our move in December of 2005, we had our good friend, Nikita Franzmann, help us move and then stay with us for the night. With this, Nikita won the award for first house guest. Glen first met Nikita when he went to SFU. Both Glen and Nikita

belonged to the same Toastmasters club.

A week later in mid-December, our first dinner guests were our good friends, Anna and Stephen. Susan met Anna when they were taking courses together early in their time at SFU. Anna and Stephen have always acted as good role models for myself. Being as goal oriented as they are, they have achieved many things that I admit almost act as inspiration for myself and Susan. They were some of our first friends, who in the

Lower Mainland, sold their condo and moved into a house, and they have certainly set the standard over the last few years for taking on home renovation projects. Just a couple of days before Christmas, we were lucky to be invited for dinner at May and San's. May was a co-worker of Glen's at three companies in a row, and a good friend as well. Starting with Millennium, then Sideware, and finally ALI/McKesson. Although not working at the same company anymore, the two have stayed close colleagues.

Christmas morning proper was spent with Jim and Jim's family. Glen's brother, Jim, was actually the central character in Glen's university English paper

entitled "Who is your hero"? Unlike many families, we really do get along well in our family! Since Jim's wife, Ellen, had to work on Christmas Eve, we parted ways late afternoon and then went to Susan's cousin Nancy's home for dinner. I know that Nancy was one of the first to welcome and help Susan's family when she moved to Canada as a tyke, and Nancy has always been a great help throughout Susan's life,

and was in fact one of Susan's bridesmaids during our wedding. For myself, both Nancy and her husband, Simon, take a special part in my memory, as they were some of the first people I met from Susan's family after I was going out with Susan, and confirmed that I had a girl from a good family.

A couple of days later during boxing week, we visited with Dave and Miriam and their son, Will, who were here for the Christmas holidays from their home in Edmonton. Glen first met Dave when they both



*Christmas 2005 with Glen's brother's family – Jim, Zachary, Ellen, Jessica, Rebecca, Susan and Glen*

entered junior high school. From the early days of junior high, with sleepovers and all night role-playing game sessions, through high school, university, hiking and backpacking, and Dave being Glen's best man at our wedding, these two have remained best of friends. The same day as Dave and Miriam's visit, we also entertained Pauline and Eddy, and their kids, Hayley and Nicholas, all also from Edmonton and also here for just the Christmas holidays. Susan first met Pauline when they both were in the Kinesiology program at SFU, and became best of friends when they took a group trip to Hawaii, which is where Pauline's romance with Eddy was first kindled. Although I probably wouldn't know these two if it wasn't for Susan, I have always felt they were just as much my friends, probably due to the fact that they were the first of Susan's friends I was introduced to when we started dating. And as if that wasn't enough, also on this day we hosted Susan's extended family for dinner. Again Nancy and Simon, Susan's cousin Sam, Nancy and Sam's mother, Aunt Fong, and Fong's brother's family,

Uncle Herbie and Aunt Ruth, and their kids. Aunt Fong has always been a help in Susan's life, and for myself holds a special place because she is the one who taught me the only Cantonese that I can still reliably recite to this day, and that is

the digits to count from one to ten. Herbie and Ruth are the ones who first hosted Susan and her sister, Shirley, when they moved from Calgary for Susan to go to university. I also have always felt a good connection to them since I was first met Susan's family who lived here in the Lower Mainland. Of the people in Susan's parent's generation, Herbie and Ruth are the only ones who fluently speak my one and only language, English.

We spent New Years at our house, hosting a few friends: David and Ki Nam, Andrea, Rob and Diana, and Sabrina. Glen first met David in the mid 90's, when Glen was an area governor in Toastmasters and visited David's Toastmasters club. This was soon after David moved to the West Coast from his home province of Nova Scotia. Rob, Eddy's brother, was

first introduced to Susan when she returned from her group trip to Hawaii. Rob was one of the first friends of Susan I met in our early days. We've seen a lot of them the last few years since Rob has been with Diana. Sabrina was Susan's supervisor when Susan worked for Safeway. More than just a supervisor, Sabrina has become a close friend of both of ours. Andrea we met through David a few years ago, and has become, along with Ki Nam, one of the regular invitees when Susan wants a "girls night".

In early January, we picked up Susan's sister, Shirley, from the airport as she returned from her holidays at their parent's place in Calgary. That weekend we all hiked from our place (Shirley just lives a few blocks down the road from us) to Burnaby Lake. Shirley was the one who moved with Susan to the West Coast when Susan wanted to come to the Lower Mainland to go to university. Shirley also bought the condo that Susan lived in when I first met Susan. And although she was in the middle of her 10 year stint living in Asia

when Susan and I were first going out, Shirley was actually the first member of Susan's nuclear family that I met—on one of Shirley's yearly visits back to Canada during this time.

As January turned to February, we started to paint the upstairs of our house. The colour we

chose for most of the upstairs is a Benjamin Moore colour called Putnam Ivory. This colour was actually suggested to us by Nikita's sister Teresa, who is an award winning interior designer. Glen has known Teresa for almost as long as he has known Nikita, probably meeting Teresa at one of Nikita's famous birthday parties. In February, while Susan was away one weekend working at a home show in Penticton, Glen painted the upstairs bathroom a bold General Paint colour called Montrose (a red derivative). Glen was thankful to Nikita again for some quick advice on colour and painting as Nikita, like her sister, has quite a bit of experience in painting homes and choosing colours.

Also in February, we enjoyed attending Herbie and Ruth's daughter Deborah's high school performance of South Pacific. It was very nice to see Deborah



*New Year's Eve with friends Andrea, Ki Nam and David*

perform, because although we know that Deborah is supposedly an instructor level piano player and singer, Deborah has never been comfortable playing for people she knows, and so it was nice to see Deborah finally perform.

In mid-March, Glen's parents returned from their snowbird migration from Southern California. Like the relation with his brother, the relation with Glen's parents is more one of best friends than of traditional family.

After celebrating Jim's daughter Jessica's birthday while Glen's parents were here, there was plans made to go skiing the weekend after at Sun Peaks just outside of Kamloops. Jim's older kids, Zachary and Rebecca, went with their grandparents to the interior for their spring break vacation. Zachary and Rebecca are both terrific kids who not only are a lot of fun, but also wonderful in all the help they've given us on various things over the years. For anyone who has been to our cabin, the trail in front of our cabin was in large part built by these two kids. Skiing this year at Sun Peaks was great. We all had fun staying on the mountain for two nights in the Sun Mountain Villas. Snow was great, the hot-tub was wonderful, and the company was even better.

In April on the Easter weekend, Glen's parents, brother's family, and Susan's sister all came over and helped us achieve some very aggressive yard plans. Under Glen's dad's guidance, we used our chainsaw to cut down a 50ft tall cherry tree in our back yard. The tree was nice, but it was causing problems for our lawn, not letting sunlight through. We know definitively that the tree was more than 50 years old, probably at least 60. Our neighbours, John and Lillian,

were out giving us some help and advice when we were cutting the tree down. John moved into his house in 1951, and he said that the tree had been there when he moved in. Both John and Lillian have been great neighbours to us. We've learned a lot about the



*Our cherry tree in our backyard before we cut it down.*

neighbourhood over the last 50+ years they have lived here, and also the history of our house (it was originally built in Brentwood and was moved here when they built the mall). Susan has built a good relation with them, which gets us regular deliveries of vegetables and fruits out of John's massive third of an acre garden, all for the low cost of the occasional apple pie sent their way. The tree cutting was a full day job,

and most of the wood ended up going to John for him to burn in his fireplace, and the scraps totally filled John's pickup truck, as well as a good part of Glen's dad pickup. Not having the biggest chainsaw around (14"), we've had to leave a 3' stump in our backyard which to this day is still there. On day 2, we continued

with our plans and again with much help from Glen's dad, we built a shed in our backyard, near where the tree had been. For two days straight, we worked on the shed, and before the weekend was over we had it built. Besides these two large scale jobs, much work was also done on more traditional gardening type jobs. Much raking, small branch tree cutting, clearing out of our pond was achieved by Zachary and



*Our backyard with the new shed and cherry tree stump.*

Rebecca, Jim, Ellen, Susan, Shirley, and Glen's mom. The weekend wasn't all work, we did enjoy a very good turkey dinner.

At the end of April we bought ourselves a low-end barbecue and nice patio table and chairs from Canadian Tire, with which we have had much high-end fun throughout the rest of the 2006 summer.

Also through the spring Susan worked at a number of home shows throughout the province. She went to the Penticton, Salmon Arm, Prince George, and of course the Vancouver Home Show. It was at the Vancouver Home Show that Glen took advantage of Susan's extra admission and interviewed a number of painters. Over the weeks following the show, we got a number of quotes from the various companies to paint the exterior of our house. Our ultimate decision was to use a contractor from Benjamin Moore. The decision was made because the pricing of Benjamin Moore was not that far above other companies, and most of the other companies had been using Benjamin Moore as the metric against which they measured themselves, saying things like "Our paint is (nearly) as good as Benjamin Moore, and we cost considerably less". Our thought? "Why not go with Benjamin Moore? The price really isn't that much more." So in July we had the whole exterior of our house painted by Benjamin Moore. We are happy with our decision.

Susan was not the only one who travelled considerably during the year. In late May, Glen was assigned to a new project where he has worked Monday to Friday in Calgary, and is still doing such. The project is a big one, with more than 20 IBMers brought in from

around the country each week. The end-date for this assignment was recently identified, and so Glen is looking forward to February 2, 2007 when he will "roll off" the project and finally end his weekly trips to Calgary. But until then, he is continuing to rack-up Hilton points each week in Calgary.

Besides interesting work, another positive is that the assignment has allowed him to get to know some of his co-workers better. Glen had known his co-worker Jennifer for a few years at IBM, as Jennifer attended the same IBM hosted Toastmasters club as Glen did, but during this Calgary assignment, he's gotten to know Jennifer better, and appreciated her help in learning some new activities such as mountain biking.

Also in May, Susan met up with a long-time friend, Ivan, from Ontario. Susan first met him when she was in Grade 12 and had traveled to Ottawa for a program called "Encounters with Canada". High school students from across Canada spent a week in Ottawa discussing social issues within the country. Susan has kept in touch with Ivan each year since they first met with annual Christmas cards. Their reunion was the first in 15 years.

In July, we went for the long weekend to our cabin at the lake. Susan's Uncle Darcy and Aunt Minnie, and their kids Amy and Kenny drove out from Calgary to spend a night. We had fun boating and picnicking with them. I've always been thankful that Minnie emceed our wedding reception in Calgary, keeping both the Chinese speakers and the English only attendees (like myself) entertained and involved. Darcy has always been wonderful at offering help when and where needed. Any time we've been in Calgary and needed a bigger vehicle, such as going skiing at Sunshine, Darcy has volunteered his van. Amy and Kenny have always been great fun making us feel welcome. Always good for a late night game of Risk, or being guides to shopping, they have always been willing to help us.

The week after the July long weekend, we both were in Calgary attending the Calgary Stampede with Amy and Kenny. We had great fun at the rodeo, which I always find to be a bit of a shocker with the speed at which the competing cowboys can lasso a calf and bring it down. We of course were staying at Susan's parents'

house. Susan's parents have always been so nice to me. They have always pushed me food, making sure I get more than my full share that I need. And they must have an endless stream of nice clothes and other gifts that they're always offering to give. There



*Our newly painted exterior. It looks better in colour on the website.*

is no place better than their place, when we're looking for a place to stay in Calgary.

Late July we had some more fun at our cabin, this time hosting Eddy and Pauline and family. We had a great hike with them to the top of Copper Island.

For the August long weekend we all again were in Calgary. Glen's parents and brother's family were there too, as they were heading to the annual family reunion, this year taking place in Saskatchewan. On the Friday, we all had fun at Calaway Park, riding rides. In the evening, we went to Japanese Village to celebrate Jim's birthday. On the Saturday, we attended Glen's cousin Leanna's wedding to Sheldon. Sheldon is a great guy and his family were great organizers and hosts of the wedding. Leanna has always impressed me, especially how she is raising a daughter, Madison, who is such a character. It was great to see Leanna and many of Glen's extended family members. We saw Lee, Leanna's dad. We're both always thankful to Lee for all the work he did to build our cabin. He and Christine are enjoying their new home in Saskatchewan. We saw Marc, Leanna's brother, along with Lynette and their kids. It was good to catch up with Marc and we learned that he recently started his own company, driving a truck each and



*Uncle Lee walking cousin Leanna down the aisle.*

every night between Kamloops and Jasper. I have fond memories from when Lee and his family first moved from South Africa, it was through Marc that I really learned a bit about the differences of life and language between South Africa and Canada. We also saw Glen's Uncle Van for the first time in a few years. Probably being the youngest of Glen's mother's brothers, there has always been a close connection with Van. Some of my favourite memories of Christmas as a kid are when Van would come to town and we would always go on a Christmas light tour in his car to see all the best Christmas lights in town.

The weekend following the August long weekend, we started a week of holidays at our cabin. We were lucky to have Robin and Sheila and their kids join us for the opening weekend. We had fun boating and travelling around the lake, as well as a very good barbecue with them. I first met Sheila and Robin at a Toastmasters convention in Nanaimo in the early 90s. Since then we've had a lot of fun together. Sheila is one of the best dance partners I've had, and it was actually Sheila who taught me a few dance steps including the two-step. Robin and I have a number of common interests, and we've had fun together over the years doing things such as going to



*Glen and Susan with friends Robin, Sheila and their kids, Evandro and Hayley.*

the Indy. Robin and Sheila's first child was born soon after our wedding just over 6 years ago, and since that time we actually hadn't seen them. This year we saw them four times, it's good to have them back in our lives now that their children are a little older. In the middle of our week, Glen's parents returned from Saskatchewan, and we picked up Rebecca from Jim's car as he passed through Kamloops. At the end of our week-long stay, we had Rob and Diana drive up, as well as Eddy and

daughter, Hayley. We had some pretty wild times riding a new tube that we had bought that allows three people to ride behind the boat.

In late August, we went for a barbecue here in town at Rob and Diana's place.

In September, we had Anna come with us to the lake for a relaxing weekend. Originally, we planned to also have Stephen, however Stephen had to stay behind due to some imminent work deadlines.

Mid-September we drove our car on a weeklong

holiday through the Kootenay's and experienced some great hiking and wonderful times at various hot springs. The overall winner between Canyon Hot Springs, Radium Hot Springs, Ainsworth Hot Springs, and Nakusp Hot Springs, would have to be Radium Hot Springs. They were all very

enjoyable, with each one having its own strengths. In both our opinions, Radium was the nicest combination. At the end of the week, after spending several nights tenting, several nights in a variety of motels and B&B's, we spent a couple of nights and days of fun, including our actual anniversary, with Robin and Sheila.

At the end of September, we again went to the lake, this time taking Glen's co-worker Jennifer and her husband, Zachary. As mentioned previously, Jennifer likes some of the more extreme sports such as mountain biking, and so she had been looking forward to trying water-skiing. Being a few months pregnant though, water-skiing was ruled out. Zachary did a great job of both water-skiing and knee-boarding. We ultimately decided that tubing in our three person tube was probably fine for an early second trimester pregnant lady, so Jennifer had some great fun tubing.

In October, Susan's parents were in town, so we were out for dinner and dim sum with them and other family. Susan also spent a little time working at the Vancouver home show, and has been administering a number of educational building seminars throughout the province. Glen's parents were in town helping us with some more yard work. We filled in our pond since our neighbour's trees

were putting too many leaves and branches into it, and so now we have a new flower garden where our pond used to be.

In late November we went skiing at Whistler. This was the earliest opening the mountains have had in years with all the snow we've received. Susan was (rightfully) very impressed with her improvements, tackling successfully a number of blue runs at Whistler. Our drive back from Whistler that night was quite nail-biting as it was the start of a few weeks of heavy snow that blanketed the Lower Mainland.

Our Christmas season this year we're looking forward to hosting a few family dinners.

Then we'll be spending Christmas proper in Calgary, where both Susan's sister and brother's family will be too. Their first Christmas all together in over 10 years.

In 2007, we're looking forward to spending a night at the Whistler Hilton using Glen's accumulated Hilton points, tackling some more runs, and meeting up with Susan's cousin, Doris, from New York. We're looking forward to a more normal life with Glen back in town working weekdays here in town. We hope to get to Sun Peaks for some skiing with Zachary and Rebecca, and hopefully Glen's parents once they're back in the country from their snowbird migration. We've been talking about biking in Nova Scotia or PEI, for a holiday this year, so we hope to do that. Probably not as likely, but the pamphlets from Holland America cruise lines also offer some trips through the Panama Canal that have been making us drool. Susan will undoubtedly be travelling the province to work at various home shows this spring. We hope it will be an enjoyable year for you, we're going to try to make it one for us. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*-Glen & Susan*



*Glen and Susan at Kalamalka Lake in Vernon.*

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