

Dear Family and Friends:

T'was the week before Christmas with nary a delivery in sight, no paper mail, no cards, no email greetings, not even a peep. The house was all decorated with lights and wreaths, the turkey arrived, surely this very different Christmas can't be all Trump's fault. Or Trudeau's.

So let's crash off with the annual Jones Christmas letter #47 anyway. We'll start with some big news, then photos from last year and some impactful things that happened. In our 46th year here at 24 Higgins, the realization hit us rather suddenly **It's Time!** Time to pull up stakes and move to a simpler retired lifestyle. Some newspaper ads started the ball rolling and we are now set to sell the house early in the new year and move to an independent senior living situation in the adjacent *Centrepoin*te neighbourhood. We will be renting two units; one a 1-BR for Brian and the other a 2-BR for us. We will be on the ground floor of a sprawling three storey building called *Crystal View Lodge* – already you have enough information in *italics* to Google it. Our new address is at the end of this letter. Our phone numbers and email addresses will not change. Meals and other amenities are included and any of you in urban settings will know the steep monthly rent for places like this, but this has been in our financial planning for decades. We will report on how good the food is next year. This move is especially important for Brian. He will step up from our basement to his own bright and spacious living space which will serve him well down the road. For us it will be a sea-change: from no cooking; finished with pool maintenance, lawn mowing, endless weeding, digging around in the garden, leaves, trash hauling, snow removal and all the usual house maintenance we have done for 46 years. We even have a garage for the Subaru, so it will be easy to get out and about.

Before all this hit, 2024 had its moments. Just before Cynthia saw her last child (our grandkids) leave house for university, she took a threesome portrait of them to hang on her stairwell with earlier ones. Here they are: Nicola, 22; Benjamin, 18; Gemma, redhead, 20. There were convocations / grads for Nicola and Benjamin, alas ticket restrictions made it impossible for us to attend.



Nicola has entered the Queen's masters program in Translational Medicine; Ben has started in business studies at Western, London (WU); and Gemma is continuing her studies in Graphic Communications Management at TMU Toronto (formerly Ryerson). Before Ben left for London, he passed his final driving licence test on our trusty Subaru, making it three for three!



Just before Cynthia's birthday in early August we took a train trip to Toronto to see a Blue Jays game (Brian and me) while Joan visited Gemma in her downtown apartment. The trip was marred by the Jays worst performance of the season (they lost 13-0 to Tampa) and difficulties getting around Toronto's construction zones. The train was on time and included a smooth ride on VIA's latest equipment. At the left is a partial family photo celebrating Bob's birthday in October.

Below we see more of the family at the Toronto Zoo in late August. From the left: Elliott Mindich (Gemma's special friend), Gemma, Cynthia and Peter who bravely drove through Toronto's gridlocked streets to visit them after dropping Ben at Western for his freshman year.



During the spring and summer, we continued to enjoy the Music and Beyond (MBY) festival, which has returned to in-person concerts, post Covid. Not only did we attend several concerts, but we also (belatedly) took an on-line classical music course with MBY. We also went for a final NAC music series which was, as usual, very enjoyable. However these concerts start at 8 pm and often they end about 10 pm, making for a late night of driving home in the dark. So we reluctantly decided to end our long relationship with the NAC, although happily they still stream occasional events.

This still left room for a few plays on Sunday afternoons at the Ottawa Little Theatre. Our great driver, Peter (above in sunglasses) and finder of rare parking spots in Sandy Hill makes these theatre dates very delightful. We top them off with an post-theatre dinner out, trying some exotic food at different restaurants. We have also joined a small two-table bridge group of seniors who were all tennis players in their younger days. They have two reserved tables at the Rideau Sports Centre (an outdoor and indoor tennis club) where we play morning and early afternoon bridge and have lunch at their restaurant, appropriately known as *The Bridge Pub* because its location is near a footbridge across the Rideau river from Strathcona Park.

Above I mentioned not missing the gardening, weeding and mowing, etc. This is true but for our last year (we did not know about the move then) we ordered a big bag of black soil to give the garden a boost. Ben and some graduating friends from high school came over and with shovels and wheelbarrows and moved the soil to the garden in jig time. Then, as usual, we planted and watched. Summer was rainy so little watering was needed. Everything came up well and this October photo shows how effective that new soil was.

Time now to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and good health in 2025. We wish the very same for our paper mail folks, who will see this once the postal strike is over (at this time it seems the end is in sight).

ps. Our new address will be:
6 Meridian Place, Apt. 118, Nepean ON K2G 6E9

With love,

Joan, Bob and Brian

