

# THE GAIO FAMILY

2011 Christmas Letter



Punta Cana

## THE YEAR IN A NUTSHELL

**We've decided to save trees. Let us share the joyous season digitally through our 2011 e-letter. We're big on going green.**

Dear Family and friends;

I just can't get motivated this year. We are well into our second week of advent and I would do anything to make the clock stop for a while. Some snow would be nice; but only on the days I'm not working.

We finished 2010 in style since I'd be turning 50 in January so we decided to jumpstart the celebration over the Christmas break with a glorious week in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. I love all-inclusive vacations. The big decision of the day was either the pool or the beach. We spent most of our days exploring the beaches and feeling the pristine fine sand beneath our feet.

A typical day at the Gaios involves driving our sons to their many extra-curricular activities. Today is no exception as Christopher has been preparing for two months for his Images of Greatness. All students must choose a great, deceased Canadian whom they must research and re-enact. It's like a flashback in time. Parents and guests are invited to engage the student-characters with questions and dialogue to learn more about their famous person's life. Tonight we will be living with Joseph-Armand Bombardier.

In Air cadets, Christopher had great success with the biathlon team. He placed second in the zone competition in Whistler and seventh in the Provincial Championships at Mt. Washington on Vancouver Island.

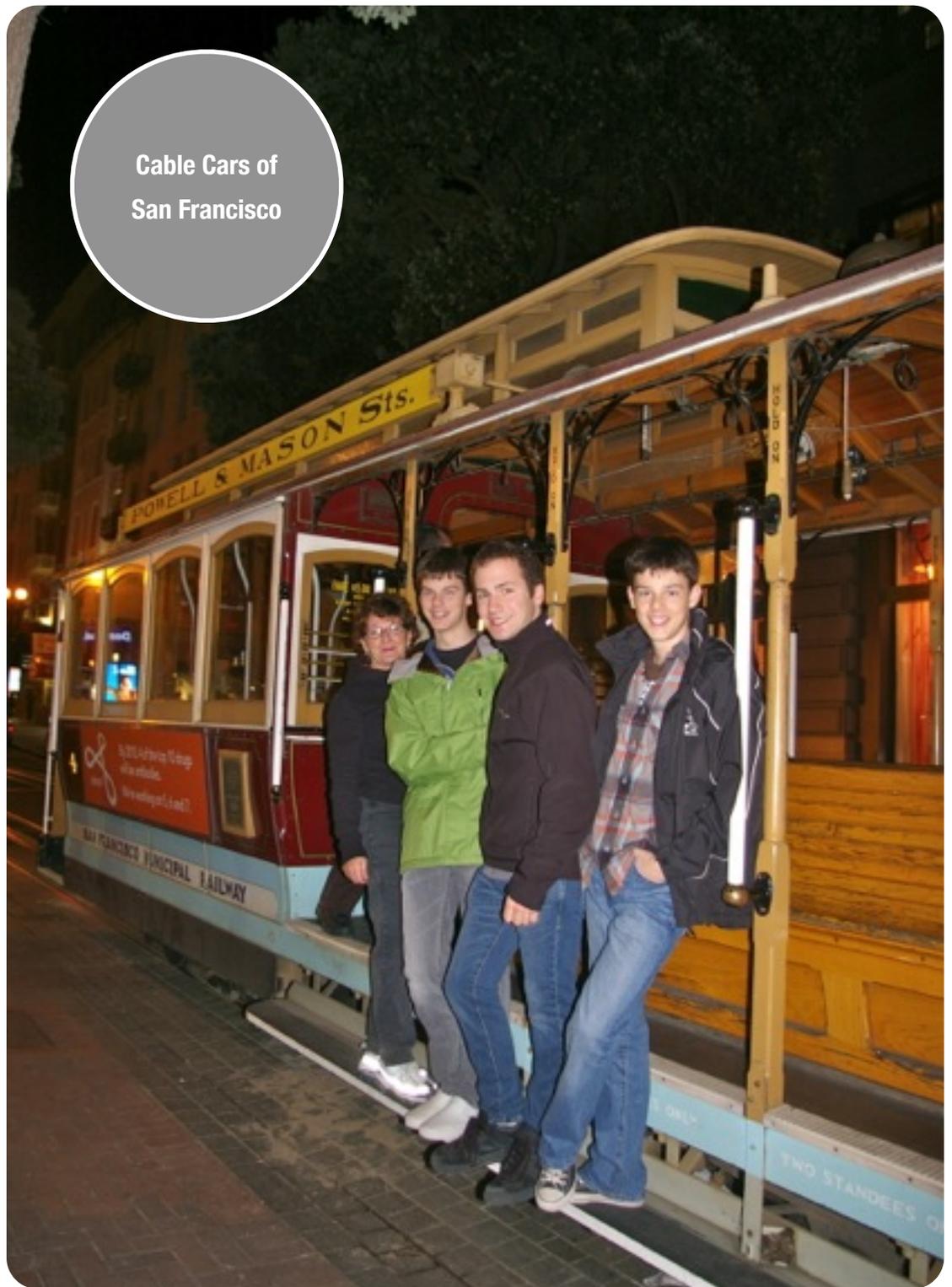


**Christopher in Character for his Images of Greatness.**

Yaquina Head  
Lighthouse  
Oregon Coast



Cable Cars of  
San Francisco



Flying through water.

Alexander made it to the finals in effective speaking. As I am a member of the Squadron Sponsoring committee, I worked hard with our usual pub-night fundraiser and a successful garage sale.

In March, Alexander flew to Ottawa to partake in a national youth forum, *Encounters with Canada*. Here, students from across Canada met with each other and discovered Canadian heritage in the nation's capital. It was a fabulous experience to see the Parliament Buildings and the Rideau Canal firsthand. He was barely home in time to unpack and repack and head off to San Francisco to celebrate his and his friend David's birthday. What a fun city! We enjoyed touring Alcatraz, riding the cable cars and driving over the Golden Gate Bridge with my cousin Kirsten. It was so nice of her to meet up with us! It's been too long time between visits.

Easter was spent in Duncan with Mom and in the spring our niece, Marica, visited along with her boyfriend, Matteo from Italy. As the weather improved the boys began their training at the outdoor

swimming pool. In between homework and then final exams we attended swim meets.

Christopher was thrilled to be selected for Survival Training this summer at Albert Head near Victoria. Three weeks away from home (with hardly any showers) —and he loved it. Alexander took a job staffing this summer as a lifeguard at HMCS Quadra: Sea Cadet Training Centre for two months. Since both boys were away and Paulo worked, I escaped to New York City with two girlfriends. We rented an apartment for six days, bought a subway pass and thoroughly enjoyed exploring Manhattan. On the Sunday, I took a train to see Martin and Robin in Connecticut for the day. The weather was cooler outside of the city and kayaking on a lake was a well-deserved break from the record-breaking heat. By the end of August, the boys were busy working on the adventurous journey portion of their *Duke of Edinburgh Awards*. They did a four day trek in the Whistler-Garibaldi area. They had a terrific time. Since the weather was ideal, Paulo and I decided to drive to the Oregon Coast. We had our share of clouds and cool weather.



Haystack Rock  
Cannon Beach

## BUSY, BUSY



### Description

[TOP] New York City with the girls.  
[CENTRE] Sea Lion Caves, Oregon Coast.  
[BOTTOM] Remembrance Day.

Nevertheless, we enjoyed the sites including an old lighthouse, photographing the rocks on Cannon Beach and visiting Mt. St-Helens. Just after we returned, we had more out-of-town guests, Mom and Aunt Hilda. We played tourists in our own town visiting Van Dusen and Minter Gardens, then we dropped them off to partake in their first Alaskan cruise with other friends from Duncan. Not to be outdone, Paulo and I took a three day reposition cruise from Vancouver to Los Angeles—all in celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. We anticipated a relaxing time with just the two of us, but Mother Nature inflicted us with rough weather—five

meter waves. Lots of passengers had motion sickness. The boat stabilizer was put into position and three glass windows shattered due to the twisting of the ship. We survived.

September made us settle into more of a routine, grade 10 and 12

already—remember what I said about making the clock stop for a while? I am a member of the Dry Grad Committee. We now spend our free time going to post-secondary institution open houses. It is a challenging time. In between all the business of applications Alexander is still trying to find a path to follow. His computer company, Save My Machine, keeps him busy and happily employed. Thank goodness for Bill Gates mistakes and the older generation's lack of computer knowledge. I am Alexander's best client.

Air Canada sold its aircraft maintenance division and now Paulo works for Aveos. Thank goodness for his 30+ years with the airlines as we can still fly with standby privileges. My employment is unchanged I continue to love nursing. On my days off, I attend yoga classes which helps with the arthritis in my back.

The school swim club made us proud with their 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in the provincial championships in November. Martin and Robin stopped by for lunch bringing Mom along for the day. Their whirlwind tour took them to Aldergrove for the afternoon and dinner back home in Duncan. Our two vehicle family now has three drivers so with less time on the road there is more time for evening walks and facebook. (add me: Christine Seifert Gaio)

Last night after dark Alexander and I placed lights on our front yard pine tree. Today the Christmas music will be blaring. Soon the decorations will be on the tree. I intend to start baking and look forward to the many Christmas events at school and in the community including our annual Church decorating event. We are sending you all best wishes from our home to yours. Peace, joy and relaxation with a warm cup of tea in front of a roaring fire. I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you by email, face book or snail mail (Canada Post).

Always remember the reason for the season. Lots of Love, from

## MEMORIES



### We have so much to share

[TOP] On the trail again.  
[CENTRE, BOTTOM] Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.



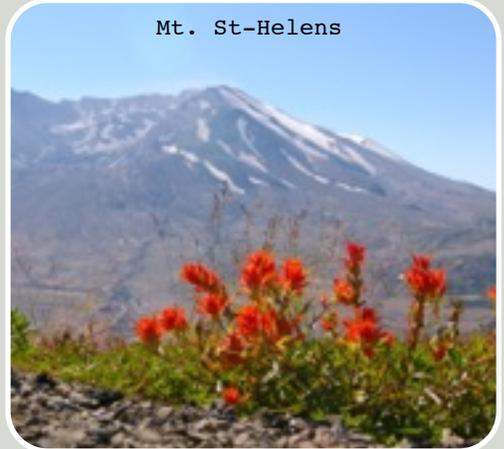
San Francisco

Baker Beach and the Golden Gate Bridge



Martin, Robin and Oma

Mt. St-Helens



Biathlon Provincials



Enjoying our Backyard.