

# 2001

## Christmas News from the Browns

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At our age we always seem to be celebrating a milestone of some sort. This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year that Marilyn has worked for lawyers and is probably the only paralegal alive and working that can still take short hand. Her favourite story is about one of her first experiences taking dictation when she was only about 19 years old. She had just finished transcribing a divorce Petition, which contained the words “an act of adultery” and delivered it to the lawyer for review. Moments later, amid great peels of laughter, her boss called her in to point out an error in the transcription. She had transcribed “an act of adultery” as “active adultery” . . . he pointed out that most adulteries are active all right but this one happened to be “an act of”. She has been working for MacCallum, McIntyre for 15 years now.



Gord is working now with Web Development projects that are mainly interactive . . . where the customers' current computer systems provide the data for the site. There is less competition in that part of the industry and it has turned out to be a lot more creative than just building web pages. He is also providing consulting services to Paige, the President of the Basic and for Mitch, the President of Compro, who are now located in the same building. He tries to stay out of their way but, the economy has had a big impact on some of their major accounts and difficult decisions have had to be made in order to keep the companies solvent. Visions of the early 1980's dance in our heads. Good thing the interest rates are not what they were back then.

There is not much happening in the world of travel escorts these days. We had hoped to manage two tours for Royal Heights Tours this year, the first to Africa in January, and the other to Western Turkey in October. The African trip was cancelled because they did not have enough people to go and the Western Turkey trip because of all of the troubles in Afghanistan. Our name is in the hat for managing a tour to South Africa and then East Africa in the fall of 2002. We are hopeful that all of the problems going on in the world today will not prevent us from going.

We had set time aside to do these trips but, when it looked like they were about to be cancelled, we booked a trip to Malaysia. Leaving Vancouver on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October and travelling throughout Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong until the 28<sup>th</sup>, we had some great adventures and made some great new friends. (See [www.browfamily.com](http://www.browfamily.com) → Photos → Malaysia Adventure)

We started in Malaysia, where we spent a couple of days on the scenic island of Penang in the Straits of Malacca, visiting ancient temples and exploring it's vibrant Chinatown. Meals, which always included the traditional Malay rice and noodle dishes, were very inexpensive, leaving our budget clear for the Hong Kong part of the trip. (two Malaysian ringgits equals \$0.92 Canadian) From Penang, we made our way to Kuala Lumpur, or “KL” as it is affectionately known to the locals. It is a very modern city with tall buildings that include the famous Petronas Twin Towers. Our guide asked us if we wanted to go to the top to view the city but, with September 11<sup>th</sup> still fresh in our minds, we decided to pass. We drove on to Kaula Tembling where we had our first dip in the South China Sea. We spent the next day shopping and taking care of emails at the local internet café and then it was off by riverboat to the Taman Negara Reserve (the oldest rain forest in the world). We did jungle walks, explored caves, swam in cool streams and, the highlight of the Reserve, did the canopy walk. The canopy walk is a swinging bridge suspended about hundred feet off the ground which is about 18” in width and travels almost 1 kilometre through the jungle canopy. Although the bridge was quite wobbly at times, it was a great way to experience the atmosphere and sounds of the wilderness. After leaving the park we spent a couple of days in the serene surroundings of Kampung Baluk, an area noted for its night markets and traditional fishing villages. Then it was off for some R & R as we took the ferry to Tioman Island, about a two hour journey. Here we spent our days snorkelling, trekking through the jungle and beachcombing. Gord was able to do a couple of SCUBA dives where he saw blue spotted ray, turtles, and the ever present reef sharks. The island is thinly populated with a few tiny fishing villages. We hired a boat one day to take us around the island . . . a four hour journey where we discovered that the island remains unspoiled by large resorts. It has gleaming beaches, crystal clear waters with fine coral beds and millions of technicolour fish. The jungle and mountains are just a stroll away. After five days of relaxing, we headed for Singapore, called the “fine city” because you get fined for littering, fined for spitting on the street, even a fine for not flushing the toilet! We explored the famous china town of Singapore, took a river boat through the city from a lagoon within the city to the outer harbour, and spent a couple of delightful evenings eating at the many restaurants that dot the



harbour quays. Of course the visit to Singapore would not be complete without a visit to the famous Long Bar. Located in the beautifully restored Raffles Hotel, this bar is where the Singapore sling was invented. The final leg of our trip took us to Hong Kong where we spent the first day exploring the historical sites of the city . . . the next three days we did all of our Christmas Shopping.

The weather was very hot . . . over a hundred degrees



most of the time and very high humidity of 95%. It was a relief to get back to some cool weather and to our Grandsons, who were waiting in anticipation for gifts that we just might have brought home for them. Ben is now in grade one and active in Beavers. He was over at our house the other day pasting air plane stickers on a piece of paper. Gord asked him if he was going to learn to fly when he grew up. He said "No, what about you. Are you going to learn how to fly or are you just going to be an "ordinary grandpa". Mathew is 3 and the two of them together usually ends in some roughhousing with Grandpa . . . an activity not sanctioned by Grandma! Mitch and Gord take them swimming quite often and Gord hopes that he will still be SCUBA diving by the time Ben is old enough to join him.

Christmas this year will be spent close to home with Paige, Mitch, Ben and Mathew. As most families, since September 11<sup>th</sup>, being together takes on a whole new meaning. We'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very special Christmas and New Year filled with love, peace and contentment.

