

# 2004 Christmas News from the Browns

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## Adventures in Peru & Ecuador



Early this year, our tour-leading adventures took us to mysterious and exciting places in Peru and Ecuador. It was our second trip there and it was as exhilarating this time as it was last. After spending some time in and around Lima, we headed for Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Next we visited famous Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas. Travelling to the



base of the mountain from Cusco by train was spectacular as usual. From there, we flew to Quito in Ecuador where we made our way down into the Amazon River basin. It was hot and sticky in the jungles of the Amazon but we had a chance to cool off when the local Indians made us a raft of balsa wood so we could float down the river back to the lodge. As we were swept along by the river, we swam in the cool water. We then traveled south as far as Quenca, taking in the magic of rural Ecuador. We took the picture of the girl above

when the guide invited a Lama herdsman to bring his family aboard the bus to answer questions about their lifestyle. Later that day, there was an anxious moment or two when we were traveling to the Devils Nose by train. The train suddenly derailed which, by our standards is a serious thing. In Ecuador, however, the trains never go fast enough to cause much damage if they derail. In this case, the engine and the first couple of cars left the track and got stuck in the mud, while many of the passengers (including some of our group) were riding on top of the cars. After an hour of digging, we decided to start to walk to the next village where we knew our bus was waiting. Amazingly, they got the train back on the track in a couple of hours and the train stopped for us as we followed the tracks to the next stop. From Quenca, we flew back to Quito and then travelled by bus to the famous Otavello Market, which is the largest Indian market in South America. Other than some close calls for connecting flights, all went smoothly – not like the year before when we were delayed because a volcano erupted. No volcano eruptions this year, only train derailments.



### Bits 'n Pieces

♥ In September, Paige & Mitch went on a business trip to Las Vegas. They did a side trip to the Grand Canyon by helicopter. Something we have yet to do.

♥ Our next tour will be back to the Greek Islands in May. If there are enough people signed up for it, we will also be leading a tour to Egypt just ahead of the Greek trip.

♥ Gord is still doing SCUBA. When his dive buddies give him a bad time about his age he just reminds them that he paid for the trip with their CPP contributions.

♥ All is well with our health these days, just more aches and pains as we grow older.



## The Clancey Brothers (Grandsons)

Ben is 9 years old now and Mattie 6. Mattie is still involved with Beavers but Ben has opted out this year. They spent the summer at the Y improving their swimming skills. Our hot tub will never be the same again. Good thing we are going from a small two person hot tub to a 6 person one. They have graduated from snorkeling in the hot tub to doing SCUBA. Gord puts one of his tanks in the bottom of



the hot tub and they each have a regulator to breath from. They love it. Next the ocean.



## GREEK ISLANDS TOUR



Caption

Our second tour of the year took us to the Greek Islands. Paros, Delos, Mykonos, Naxos, Santorini and Crete. We left for Athens 3 days ahead of the group so that we could get oriented. There were also arrangements that had to be made for the guests before we left for the Island hopping. Our first island was Paros which we used as a base and, from there, we did day trips to Delos, Mykonos and Naxos. There were 29 people in our group counting us . . . a little more than we normally handle. Getting 29 people on and off Greek public ferries is not as easy as one might think. Unfortunately, there is nothing orderly about the process. The Greek ferries are ocean going ships and they back into the dock for loading. The problem is that everyone gets on and off at the same

packers. And that's just the folks getting off and on. There is usually a family or two meeting & greeting as well just to add to the chaos. We didn't lose anyone but came close on one or two occa-



sions. The Islands were as spectacular as ever. About mid way through the trip, there was a storm in the North which delayed our departure from Santorini for one day. What a place to be stranded! Our hotel was booked for that night so we had to move everyone out. We found a fantastic apartment on the lip of the caldera overlooking the bay. It turned out to be a beautiful evening and actually resulted in a proposal of marriage for one of the guests. (no tip for the match making service!) From Santorini we headed to Crete where we spent the final 4 days touring the island. It was busy for us as we negotiated the dinners in advance. We have that part down to a science now and mealtimes are not nearly so stressful. Always anxious to accommodate, the Greeks showed us a great time.



time, down the same ramp and they only give the passengers 10 minutes to do it. So, while you are trying to drag your luggage down the ramp, you are competing for space with big diesel trucks, cars, bikes and back-



## NEW HOME

After almost 30 years on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in South Surrey, we have sold our acreage in favour of a house in the



'burbs. It looks small but turns out to be much larger than the house we are in at the moment. The lawn, however, is much smaller. We are going from over an acre of grass to a small boulevard that is about two feet wide and ten feet long. I'm sure the neighbours would be impressed if we fired up the lawn tractor! The big change for us is the location. The house is situated on a dead end street tucked in behind a neighbourhood shopping centre. Very

quiet but within a block of every type of store you can imagine. Our round trip excursion to the veggie market took us just 10 minutes. Beside the veggie store is a bakery, meat market, fish store, dry cleaners, hair salon and more. It is going to be a real treat for us to walk to the shops instead of having to take the car.

The new house is designed for our life style. Three finished floors. The upstairs has a very large bedroom suite with large, two-sink ensuite complete with walk-in closet. One of the other two bedrooms upstairs will be an office and the other a guest bedroom which also has a full bathroom. The laundry is also upstairs. The main floor has a kitchen with great room. There is a separate dining and living room. The basement is a separate suite complete with full bath, kitchen with an island, living/dinning area and bedroom. There is a detached double garage with lane access and we had someone come in to finish it with lots of shelves and a mezzanine floor for

storage. Between the back deck and the garage is a large cement pad which sports an 8x8 ft. hot tub. This should do us for a few years.

We are taking our time moving in, replacing our 40 year old bedroom suite and a few other things as we go. We move a little every weekend but will have the movers come in some time just before Christmas to move all of the big stuff. That will give us a



couple of more months to move or sell the rest of the stuff before the sale of our acreage completes.



Please note our new address effective January 01/05

**2920 - 152A Street  
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