



Hello! Happy Holidays! Or Bah! Humbug! Whatever! I just like exclamation points!

The New House

So. We bought a house. We've lived in various types of transient housing since Yixin arrived from China in 2007; this is our first permanent home. Yixin and I have both lived in world class cities like Los Angeles, Shanghai and New York City. We knew what a world class city looked like, and we knew in Toronto we weren't living in one. That was when a recruiter called with an interesting proposal....would I be interested in a move to Ottawa instead? Well, maybe you could talk us into it....

I was selected for a director role at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, running the provincial program for maternal and newborn care that is based there. We collect data on pregnancies and births in Ontario to improve care and make sure no one misses an important test. I liked the opportunity as it blends meaningful work on the clinical side with a strong technology piece too.

Ottawa has proven to be a good fit – big enough to have everything we need but small enough to be manageable. Yixin loves the house, she spent two weeks preparing it for my staff Christmas party. I didn't know you could vacuum a ceiling, but with the house surrounded by greens pace there are little spider webs everywhere, and apparently that's 'normal'?



The easy access to kid's activities has also been wonderful. Jayden loves his indoor soccer, and both boys do skating and swimming every week. There is also a proper BMX race track next to the swimming lesson pool. Jayden has inherited my love for speed on bikes, and can do a lap in 1:15! Niko isn't far behind, with training wheels churning up the dirt. I was so happy, I dug out my old BMX from dad's garage, fixed it up and now we race together! You know what they say: "the family that races together ...uh ...comes home dirty, usually"

The Ice House

In other news, I was promised an Ottawa winter so cold that it could only be described in an ancient Viking language as there are no English words harsh enough. So I decided to make the best of the situation and build a back yard skating rink. I built it in November. You know, before the ground freezes. And there it sits, the subject of much ridicule and bemusement from



friends, co-workers and of course my dear wife. With such a mild winter to date up here, I may have to move it to mow the lawn this weekend....

The Beach House



We managed to make it to Tom and Liz's beach house in Connecticut this year for a few days. The weather cooperated and we took the boys to our old stomping ground – Times Square in New York City. We rode the ferris wheel inside Toys r Us, watched the multiple spider and iron man figures in the square and marvelled at Grand Central Station. Having been to Shanghai several times, the boys were more impressed by the cool double decker train ride there than the city itself. I have to admit, a train with stairs inside *is* pretty cool.

The Mouse House

Spring break. Mickey Mouse. Busiest time of the year. Are we crazy?

Yes, yes we are. But you already knew that. The boys were old enough to enjoy it and we had Shanghai Nana here with a coveted USA Visa in hand, so off we went for a week of warmth in the sun. And it was great. We had to do the classics like Jumbo the elephant, the Jungle Safari cruise and of course It's a Small World. Sitting next to my boys in the little boats, it really hit me. Yixin and I were born on the opposite sides of the world, yet somehow we found each other. And here we were, two beautiful boys and mother in law in tow, at the happiest place on earth. Walt was right: it is indeed, a small, small world after all. Enjoy it.



Enjoy your holidays with family and friends.