

Moose Notes 2009 (Highlights of the Year)

Why moose notes? Moose are cute (in an ugly sort of way). I've always enjoyed moose artifacts, and one of the culinary highlights of last summer's vacation was dinner at the *Moose Nook*, a restaurant at the Fairmont Jasper Lodge. So I let that be my inspiration. (This is the only moose photo I've ever taken, in 1992. I didn't see any moose this year.)



Work this year was on contract with a satellite communications company, writing code to support a ground-based beam-forming communications system. This will allow making and receiving cell phone calls (voice and data) anywhere in the country. Where there's conventional land-based cell coverage, the call is routed through that, as now. But where there is no terrestrial cell service, the call goes through the satellite. This is particularly welcome to those of us who go hiking or backpacking in the mountains, where there has been no phone service so far, for use in case of emergency. The satellite was launched this past summer, and should become operational in the coming year.

This year's trip was to the Canadian Rockies – Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper, and the Icefields Parkway which connects them. Jean was having job concerns, and was unable to join me. I did several dayhikes, including Tunnel Mtn (Banff), Lake Agnes (Lake Louise), Whistler Mtn (Jasper), and Cavell Meadows (also near Jasper). I'll put some photos from the trip on my web site (www.pmansbach.com) soon. Two of them are on this year's holiday card.

Unfortunately, I received bad news on my return from Canada: the company that I've worked for these past 21 years would be going out of business, and I'd be out of a job. (For those not familiar with my job situation: I worked for a consulting firm which rented me out to clients to develop software.) My original termination date was in mid-October, but that contract was extended, and I now expect to be unemployed early in the new year. At this point in my life I want to work part time, and part time computer programming jobs are scarce. So I expect that, in effect, I'll be retired, although I'll continue to look for part time work (resume on my web site).

Last month we got another shock: Jean lost her job, too. That was sudden and immediate. She's keeping busy applying for jobs, but also is spending more time with her grandkids:



Braden (7, left) and Connor (9) on a hike we recently did at Great Falls, VA.



Emmett(2) at dinner.

Have a happy holiday season!