

Christmas 2012

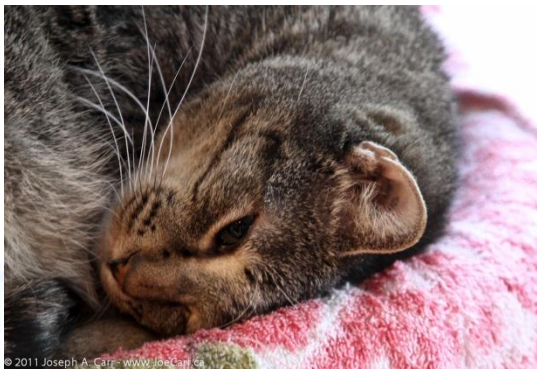
www.joecarr.ca/Xmas/2012/

A few weeks after having Tucker euthanized last December, we decided to start looking for a new Jack Russell puppy. I found an online advert from a breeder up-Island which appealed to both of us: two brothers who were nine weeks old. We drove up to see them, and decided to bring them both home with us. Tanner is the little guy and Rolly is his big brother. They have kept us busy with training - I sometimes wonder who is training who!



The pups give us much joy and lots of laughs, along with some problems with their high energy levels.

They need three walks every day; otherwise they simply can't contain their enthusiasm for life...which keeps everyone in the house on our toes. Our cat Sheba has lost weight over the last year (a good thing), no doubt due to being "dogged" by the pups. Now that they are one year old, Rolly and Tanner are trying their best to be *good dogs*. [Pet photos](#)



Our cat Percival had to be euthanized this last June, after rapidly developing multiple health problems earlier in the year. He was best buddies with the pups, and actually got down on the floor and wrestled with them! Percy was a treasured member of our family, but after consulting with the specialists, we realized his time with us was short. He was a gift to us all while he was part of our little family.

I decided to make a serious effort to research my family history over the next year or so. I joined the [Victoria Genealogical Society](#) in September, and find the group is quite good at sharing their knowledge and resources with a *newbie*. I also subscribed to [Ancestry.ca](#) – a commercial online genealogical research site, which has a huge number of historical records. The four families of my grandparents are: Moore, Carr, Carruthers, and Nicholson. All these ancestors originate from northern England, and all emigrated around 1900, so it is relatively easy to track my family history. I have also captured the more recent family history by talking

and corresponding with my older relatives, which has proven valuable to verify that the online official records I find are actually people of interest. I have found a couple of *family skeletons*, but none I didn't already know about!

It has been a very good year for observing the Sun. There were two very special events which happened this year involving the Sun in a big way.

The first event was the **Transit of Venus**, which happened on June 5, 2012. This is an exceedingly rare celestial event. This was last opportunity in my lifetime I would have to observe the planet Venus track across the face of the Sun. As the day approached, we were suffering through the worst weather for June on record, so I made plans to escape to areas with better prospects. However, I eventually decided to stay home, and take my chances. As it turned out, we experienced nothing short of a miracle weather-wise, since the clouds parted, and we were able to observe the Transit of Venus from the start to when the Sun set. I took [lots of photos](#), and spent the day at home on my front deck observing Venus and the Sun through my solar filtered equipment.



The second event was a **Total Eclipse of the Sun** by the Moon, which tracked across the South Pacific on November 14, 2012. This involved more elaborate planning on my part; in fact, I had planned on observing this event two years ago. I chose to join a ship chartered expressly for the purpose of observing the Total Solar Eclipse from a position in the ocean south of New Caledonia. The *Paul Gauguin* cruise ship offered a luxurious option, and I had always wanted to experience five star service aboard a small cruise ship. I was not disappointed. On November 14th, I was able to join my fellow eclipse chasers on the deck to observe and [photograph](#) the solar eclipse under nearly perfect conditions. I also spent an additional 10 days in Fiji enjoying the warm weather, superb snorkelling, and of course the friendly Fijian people.

This seemed to be the year for aurora borealis, since I was treated to two occurrences in our area. In September, I saw [a beautiful display](#) shimmering over the Strait of Georgia from our camping spot on Parksville beach. In October, I saw [aurora from Victoria](#) – a rare treat indeed!

Merry Christmas & all the best to you and your family for the New Year

Joe and Kirk, Rolly & Tanner, and Sheba