



JOURNALS

FERN

Resort



*Dedicated to the two most important people in my life,  
without whom these travels would not have been possible.*

*Thanks, Lisa & Jordana*

# Fern Resort: Year by Year

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# 2000: A New Start

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## *Impressions and activities from our annual summer vacation*



### **Sunday, July 16**

Hello. We arrived here mid-afternoon, after a 90-minute drive. The resort is very nice, and we are having a good time. There are four computers in Bertyl's (*the resort's lounge and dining area*). I can use them to keep in touch.

They have a nice menu here. You have a choice of the regular menu, veggie or healthy. I had the healthy. We got lucky in that we have our dining table in Bertyl's, which is a lot quieter than the dining room. Also, they have great table service. After dinner we saw a ski show and then went to see a magician at Mary Lou's.

Hope to go to the casino while here.

Let David and Jen know we are OK.

Bye.

### **Monday, July 17**

Hello.

You know vacations are wonderful social things for kids. Here, there are programs for kids all day. They can pick and choose which to attend.

Jordana does so, coming and going; giving us a passing hello as she wanders off with other kids she meets. For the first time, she does not want us to take her or pick her up from events, insisting that she meet us at a certain place or time. All of a sudden our baby is gone, and this pre-pre-teen has emerged. It is sort of sad, yet amazing.

Today I played a game called Outburst, and we also soaked up a lot of sun. Jordana and I went canoeing in the afternoon. Jordana had an early dinner and then joined her group for a movie night. She joined us later to see the Legends of Rock and Roll Millennium Show.

Ciao for now from Fern Resort.

### **Tuesday, July 18**

Hi from Fern Resort. It was an interesting day. I took part in archery, and, oh yes, Lisa played bingo last night and won \$190. Lisa and I went to Casino Rama today. However, we didn't win big.

I also played archery today.

Tonight was the talent show. Jordana was up there with other kids. Boy, is she bossy, telling other kids where to stand. The magician also called me up on stage to help him get out of his straitjacket. Then it was my turn, but no luck; I could not escape the straitjacket.

Jordana is soo different this year. All of a sudden I feel like I am entering a new stage of parenthood. She had breakfast with us, said goodbye and off she went to join her group. She came back for lunch (*I can't pick her up*). Then off she went again. Later that afternoon she came back to the room just long enough to tell us she was going to the trampoline with her friends, and then she was off. She had supper with her group. She really loves her group and the leaders. This evening after the talent show, there was a staff talent show and Jordana and a bunch of other kids were up and dancing till 10:30 p.m. She didn't want to come back. What she wanted was a key so she could come back on her own! Is this where her pre-pre-teen years start? She loves us, but her time now is for her peers. It's funny, I look around and see the young people and know I'm not there anymore and see the young parents with babies and realize that's part of my past now. What comes next? I'm not sure, and it's a bit scary. Talk to u soon again.

### **Wednesday, July 19**

Hi from Fern Resort. It's Wednesday and the middle of the week. Having a wonderful time. Lisa played bingo this morn (*as she does every morning*) and I went for a walk (*my usual thing*). Then I went to a talk called Discovering your Colours, which explores a person's personality. After getting up on stage last night, a lot of people know me and my paper. Had lunch in the dining room. Jordana was very busy. In the afternoon, I went scuba diving, and Lisa played mini-golf, and later I signed up for a cocktail-making class. Basically, for \$5 you got to learn how to make and drink four drinks. Not bad for the money. Also went swimming. Tonight there is a BBQ dinner by the pool, and then a hypnotist performs. Definitely think we will make plans to come back in 2001. Talk to u soon.

### **Thursday, July 20**

Hi, it's me. The weather was a bit cooler, but sunny, so it was nice to lie around. I was in an archery tournament and lost by one point. Got 3 bullseyes though. Lisa and I also took part in a beanbag toss. Jordi did mini-golf today and has a movie tonight, so she is eating early dinner without us. We had BBQ lunch outside today. Lunch alternates between BBQ outside and sandwich board outside. Or if you wish, you can have lunch indoors. Also went for a nice long walk. Entertainment this evening was a staff lip sync performance. Ahhhhhhhh, the week is coming to an end. Be back home tomorrow. But not before we put our reservations in for July 2001. TTFN

### **Friday, July 21**

We finished packing this morning and, after breakfast, checked out. Jordana went with her group and we signed up to return to Fern Resort in July 2001. As usual, Lisa played bingo, and I went for a walk. Later Jordana went swimming. For lunch we went to Mary Lou's snack bar. Then we headed home.

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*All in all, the day programs were fun, evening entertainment was quite enjoyable, the food was great, and the service and dedication from all the staff were top-notch. Lisa, Jordana, and I all agree that it was a great trip and we all had a great time doing the different things during the week.*

# 2001: Back for More Fun

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## Sunday, July 15

It was a nice start to our vacation. We slept in and finished packing leisurely.

It took around 90 minutes to drive up, and then we stopped at Wendy's for lunch.

Our room was ready when we arrived. The room looks exactly the same as last year, but this year we are staying on the first floor facing the lake.

Jordana and I walked around and played games in Bertyl's (*the bar/lounge*) while Lisa rested. Later we met at the pool for wine and cheese and then went for supper.

In the evening we saw the ski show and later a magician at Mary Lou's (social hall).

Afterwards, they showed The Wedding Planner. Lisa and Jordana stayed for a while and then went back to our room. I stayed until the end.... Oh yes, Jordana met up with friends from last year, and she sat with them during the show. Nice to see how quickly kids renew friendships.

## Monday, July 16

Hello.

Hi again. After breakfast, Jordana took off with her friends and group. The group leader remembers her from last year.

I went to nature photography and learned a few useful tips about taking pictures. Lisa went to bingo and then to badminton. We met up later and went to the BBQ gazebo for lunch. Jordana's gone again, off with her friends (*I think at the park*). I'm off to archery now, and Lisa is going to the pool. Tonight I signed us all up for a cruise. All for now...

Hi again.

Well, the cruise was scrubbed...something about boat trouble. Just as well, since it rained anyway.

I went to archery this afternoon, and later we all went to the pool. Jordana is quite the swimmer. I had fun throwing her off me into the water. Speaking of her, she is at Mary Lou's with Lisa watching some kids' show. I will rejoin them at 9 for a musical variety show.

Guess that's it for today. It's been a good one. I said to Lisa how it is such a pleasure travelling with Jordana, but it always has been. She is growing up into a wonderful person.

I went back to Mary Lou's to see Sheridan Style, a musical/dance troupe from Sheridan College in Oakville. They were very good.

Afterwards, I went up to the group manager and introduced myself and told him I was Sheridan class of '82. He asked what I did. I felt super being able to bridge the gap and told him how much Sheridan meant to me as well. Between their two sets, Jordana and her friends practiced their routine for the talent show Tuesday evening.

Well, I'm out of the room; Jordana is outside the bar waiting for me. Lisa is playing bingo.

So until tomorrow...goodbye.

## Tuesday, July 17

It was a quiet morning. I walked around, took photos, and later met Lisa for family mini-golf.

When I took pictures of Jordana at the pool, she saw me and dove under the water. She is very comfortable and good in the water....

Talk to u later.

Hi again...this is both a letter and a continuation of my daily diary.

Tuesday afternoon was fun. I went on a nature walk around Fern and then met the family for the water show at the pool. After that, I took part in a Martini-making class. There I learned how to make (and drink) four different martinis in half an hour. It was veerry good!

Lisa and I had dinner by ourselves this evening, as it was kids' night out. It was Italian night for us. Jordana was with her friends, and then they had a rehearsal for the talent show. We joined up with her later to see the show. While she was going to do a dance with two other friends, she said her friends changed their minds and didn't want to do it.

So our daughter...the same one who a few years ago could not be coaxed onto stage for her dance recital by herself, got on stage by herself and danced to an S-Club Seven number.

I could not have been more proud of her. Later she returned to the stage to help lead a Britney Spears karaoke singsong.

I also took the stage with a bunch of men to sing Born to be Wild in a karaoke number.

After the show, a juggler came on. He was pretty good. Overall, it's been a great day. Life may get better than this, but I don't see how at this point!

So, I wrap up this Tuesday night, saying goodnight until Wednesday.

### **Wednesday, July 18**

Hi again. The weather is hot and beautiful. This morning I relaxed by the pool and read the paper. Lisa played badminton and bingo (like she does most days), and Jordana was off with her group.

We had lunch in the dining room today. Supper will be outdoors. After lunch, Jordana and I went swimming; I went scuba diving, then archery and back to scuba. Lisa met someone from Cleveland who is Jewish, and the two of them got to chatting.

All for now.

Hi again...this is a continuation of daily journal and letter home. Well, the cocktail-making program was cancelled. I was the only one who signed up, and I didn't feel like drinking alone (a first!)

We had dinner outside tonight and attended a performance of Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, put on by local students here. It was pretty good. The best came before the show, though. They give out daily awards for accomplishments, and Jordana won a trophy for top mini-golf score in her age group.

So again, she was up on stage. So not only is she talented, but an accomplished mini-golfer.

What a kid!

Lisa is at bingo now, and I'm going over with Jordana for stargazing.

Will let you know if I find any.

Actually did find one star. She is 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years old, lives in Thornhill, and goes by the name of Jordana Stephanie Rosen!

That's all for now. This holiday is rushing by too fast, but we are having a great time again for our second year.

Bye for now.

### **Thursday, July 19**

Hi again.

We went to Casino Rama this morning. We didn't win, though. Last night I didn't go stargazing, as it was too buggy. I got a hall sitter, which is a babysitter that goes room to room to check on the kids.

Then I went back to bingo and Lisa, and I played a bit before going to Bertyl's. They had a performer, and we sat around and enjoyed the rest of the evening.

We are having lunch by the pool again.

That's all for now.

This afternoon I went to archery and then lazed around the pool.  
Later, Jordana and I went canoeing. I tell you, she is one cool kid. It's pretty amazing being able to go canoeing with your kid. After she had enough, I took the canoe out by myself.  
Time is running out way too fast.  
TTFN.

Well, the evening program is over. They had a family bingo followed by a guest video showing guests over the past few days (*Jordana was in it*), then the annual staff lip sync show. Mary Lou's was packed. I think it is the most popular of all evening events. Perhaps because many people are leaving tomorrow, including us.

Too bad.

For dinner, Lisa took Jordana down early, and Jordana had dinner and then went to a kids' movie.

Therefore, Lisa and I got to have dinner afterwards by ourselves.

At dinner, we got a reservation request form allowing us to pre-book our summer holiday for July 2002.

We did so, requesting the same room and dining room table, but made one change. Instead of a five-day stay, we requested a seven-day holiday package.

I guess that's about it.

It's been a fabulous holiday.

How did it compare to 2000? Last year everything was fresh and new. This year it was like a comfortable shoe. Definitely a place to relax...definitely a place to enjoy.... definitely a place to have a holiday.

TTFN.

## Friday, July 20

That's it.

We have packed the car and checked out. Jordana is at her program, and Lisa is headed to bingo. We will stay around the pool area, have lunch at Mary Lou's, and leave this afternoon. So, that's it for Fern Resort 2001.

I know, I know. I've been saying goodbye the past few times, but this is it.

I went kayaking this morning and then headed to the pool. Lisa played bingo and then joined me.

Jordana came after she was finished doing what she wanted.

She and I went swimming. Jordana got the address of a new friend, and we got a picture of them together.

Then we headed to Mary Lou's for lunch. It is now 1:51, and all is packed and ready for departure. This is and will be my final, final entry for Fern Resort 2001!

***So long, farewell and goodbye.***



# 2002: Two Extra Days of Fun

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## Sunday, July 14

WE'RE BACK!! We arrived at the resort and settled in at 4:30. Before that, though, we stopped at McDonald's near Barrie for lunch and in Orillia, where we played tourist. There we went into the dollar store and, like true Rosens, bought some plastic wine goblets. Jordi got a dog puppet.

When we finally arrived, Jordi headed to the gift shop by herself, where she made inquiries into buying a present for her mom's birthday. Later she headed back to buy a wristband for her room key. She then announced she wanted an afternoon swim, so off she went. She is now by the pool with a group of friends she met up with from last year. She is very self-sufficient and confident. Lisa is resting, and I'm off to read by the pool.

It is just so nice here. We just finished dinner. This year they put in a kids' buffet.

Jordi had chicken strips, a hot dog and pizza with a Popsicle for dessert. I had salad, chicken curry with wine and diet chocolate mousse, while Lisa had roast beef. Well, we were off to see a ski show and then a hypnotist.

It was a great evening. They put on a ski show with the theme being Austin Powers. Later we went to Mary Lou's. First, they had a hypnotist, and I was one of the volunteers. He had me give him my watch, and then I had to ask for it back.

It was totally weird. Afterwards we saw Sheridan Style, a musical-dance group from Sheridan College in Oakville.

They are marking their 20th year in existence, meaning the group started in 1982, the same year I graduated as a journalist. Very strange.

One of their tributes was to Barry Manilow, who Lisa and I saw so long ago at Wonderland. Time continues to roll on.

Well, the day has drawn to a close, and I'm tired, so I'm calling it a night (a night) and going back to our room. Till tomorrow...

## Monday, July 15

Welcome to the start of the week. After breakfast, I settled in outside The Main Inn to read the Toronto Star (*as I do every day*). This morning I took part in a session on nature photography, while Jordana went to Duck Soup (drama group) and other activities with her friends.

Lisa played bingo, and the two of us had a nice walk.

We sat at a different table for breakfast and had lunch by the pool. I'm off to archery soon and will take part in a session on martini making a bit later.

### 3:52 p.m.

Just heading into martini-making class. After archery, I went kayaking and swimming. Kayaking definitely is better than canoeing. You ride lower in the water, are less subject to waves, and it is easier to control.

The biggest change this year is that Jordi has her own room key, which gives her complete freedom to come and go. Sort of like a teenager with their license.

Also, she likes the fact that she can sign for her own drinks at the pool bar (*pop*).

As I said, each year we go on vacation she grows up a bit more. This morning she dressed before us and told us she would meet us for breakfast. Where did she go - to play on the computer, of course - like father, like daughter.

Hi.

Finished the martini tasting class where we had 4 different martinis in 30 minutes, which was followed by a wine and cheese party. So much fun. Imagine the feeling. The only sad part is watching Jordi (*that is what she wants to be called now*). I can see the child slowly vanishing.

#### **9:34 p.m.**

We had a nice dinner tonight - turkey and cranberry sauce, Lisa had veal parmesan, and then we saw a magician. Not bad, but then there was some musical group - very ho-hum.

Lisa is still at Mary Lou's listening, and Jordi is back at the room. I'm headed back for the night.

#### **Tuesday, July 16**

Kids never cease to amaze you. Today Jordi is up and dressed before us and heads down to feed her Neopets (*on the computer*), and by the time we arrive she is seated at our table with a chocolate milk and is talking with one of the program directors about the day's events. This morning I took part in a nature walk session for 90 minutes and got some great shots, including a close-up of a bee. Hope they come out. This afternoon Lisa and I are going to see a different type of wildlife...at Casino Rama.

Back from the casino. I lost \$30, and Lisa won \$3.50.

Every year I see a difference in Jordi on vacation...kids grow socially and emotionally at this time just as they grow intellectually during the school year. I lost the \$5 hat I bought in Kingston today (*but Jordi found it later sitting beside a computer terminal in the bar*).

Tonight is kids' night out, so it's just two of us for dinner. After that we go see Oliver.

The cast includes members of Duck Soup Productions (*the boys declined, the girls all joined*). After that there is entertainment in the lounge, so we are getting a hall sitter to check in on Jordi every 20 min. She loves the idea.

#### **10:27 p.m.**

Well, another day has come and gone. Tonight Lisa and I had dinner without Jordi as she had kids' night out. She had her dinner at Mary Lou's. After we watched a production of Oliver with the Fern Resort kids acting as choir to a local group of children who performed very well. Well, I'm off to the room. Good night.

#### **Wednesday, July 17**

I have found that being around water is refreshing, even if you don't go in. It cools the temperature. So this morning spent some time kayaking before picking up my book and heading to the pool. Read a bit (*The Stone Monkey by Jeffery Deaver*) and swam before having lunch at the pool with my family.

Soon I start scuba lessons in the pool (do this once a year), archery, play some TV Guide trivia game and go to a cocktail mixing class.

Lisa won \$5 in bingo this morning (*actually a certificate for the gift shop*), while Jordi spent the morning practicing skits for the talent show tomorrow night. Life is just so difficult.

Had some bad news here. Could not go scuba diving, but made up for it by going kayaking with Jordi. It was her first time, and she did great. Just waiting for cocktail mixing to start.

Hello.

Had a nice dinner by the poolside - steak and baked potato. At that time, a photographer came around and took family photos.

Afterwards, Jordi went fishing, and then we took a sunset cruise from Fern to Orillia and back. Saw some beautiful homes, including Stephen Leacock's. Took a lot of photos, including some breathtaking ones of the sunset. Lisa and Jordi are playing bingo now, and when it is over, Lisa and I plan to check out Bertyl's, where an entertainer will perform.

## **Thursday, July 18**

Boy, the weather has changed. It rained last night and today is overcast. So far, the outdoor lunch BBQ is cancelled. Not sure what is going on today. I thought we were going to see a singer last night, but it turned out to be line dancing. So we left...boring!

It's **11:47 a.m.** now, and I am surrounded by my family.

Despite being overcast, it is very mild out, and the lake is perfectly calm. So calm in fact that I took a kayak out and went to the closest island, the furthest I have gone. It was like cutting through butter. Lisa played bingo and took a mini course on how to use the Internet. Jordi practiced her skits for tonight's talent show. It's funny, but I prefer a kayak to a motor boat and an SLR camera to a point and shoot. If I were to analyze myself, it would say a lot.

### **2:05 p.m.**

Lisa and I just got back from a walk on the nature trail. The trails here are great. Will play a trivia game at 2:30 and mini-golf at 4:15.

### **6:00 p.m.**

Hi again.

Well, I finished my book, Stone Monkey. It was very good.

Also played mini-putt with Lisa, and Jordi acted as scorekeeper, relaying our score to the judge. I also played trivia, and my team won. Jordi is at a kids' movie now. The kids had an early dinner, and Lisa supervised her in the dining hall. Now Lisa and I are going to have dinner. You know the three of us have not had dinner together in the dining room since Monday. Very strange.

Tonight is different from Tuesday night, as then the kids had dinner out and tonight they had it in the dining room.

See you later.

Don't know if I mentioned it, but it was an early birthday for Lisa today. A few weeks ago Jordi decided she was going to buy something at Fern for Lisa for her birthday.

I told Jordi she would have to give it to her at the resort, as it could not be returned after. So last Sunday, when we arrived, she went to the gift shop by herself, talked to the salesperson and found something. Yesterday she went back by herself again and picked out a nice beige shirt with flowers and a gift bag. Today she presented it to Lisa. As well, Jordi also made her a beaded necklace.

The kid is so amazing and has gone through so much in her life. I am amazed at how she has come through.

She truly is the best of both of us, even with Lisa's limitations.

Maybe it is Lisa's own disability that makes her such a special mom to Jordi. Maybe they would not have had the same relationship if things were "normal." Maybe I over-analyze things. Who knows and who cares.

It's been a great vacation. Tonight the kids had a talent show, and Jordi was in three skits. They also had the annual staff talent lip sync show. This afternoon, while I was lying in a hammock looking around and reading, I was thinking that things can't get better than this. Things are so peaceful, and life is truly beautiful, even with Lisa's problems. There are truly more stupid things in my life. Anyways, I babble.

This is usually where our vacation would come to an end.

However, we have an extra few days, so it will be interesting to see where things go from here. Take care.

**PS - I broke a personal record today by kayaking across the lake to a nearby island.**

## **Friday, July 19**

Good morning. Well, the sun is back. A typical morning. I read the paper at the front of the Main Inn, then took a kayak out. The water was very choppy today, but was enjoyable. Nothing much new, but still very relaxing. Jordi bought two pens for her leaders. Nice touch!

The weather has returned to very hot, but the humidity is gone. Things are very different today as a lot of people go home and some arrive for a weekend stay.

Tonight we are going into Orillia for Chinese food as we are a bit tired of resort food (*it really is good though*). We could not eat lunch by the poolside as it was closed. They don't want people leaving to take advantage of it, so they close it off on Friday and Sunday.

Played archery this afternoon, and Lisa joined me for a game of TV Song Trivia where you have to guess theme songs. We didn't win, but it was fun. Enjoyed a nice Long Island Ice Tea, which has no ice tea in it but plenty of punch! Tonight going to see Sheridan Revue at Mary Lou's.

## **10:24 p.m.**

Another day has wound to an end. We went to Orillia and after dinner Jordi and I walked along the docks, while Lisa went grocery shopping. Back at Fern, we saw another show by Sheridan Style, a different show from last Sunday. They are so very good. We made a good decision to extend our vacation from 5 to 7 days.

I have learned so much today - like it takes 7 types of booze to make a Long Island and that a Zombie is for living people and tastes like a strawberry shake. Such an educational holiday. One more day to go before the holiday is over.

## **Saturday, July 20**

Well, it's the last day. I'm going to read the paper and see how the day goes. See you later.

Hi. I finished archery, where I hit one balloon and later played TV Guide Trivia with Lisa. We now have 25 points, but don't know what we will get. Lisa bought a cover-up with her bingo winnings.

## **FINAL JOURNAL ENTRIES**

Well, the holiday is rapidly winding down. The extra two days this year were so worth it. Not that we did anything special in those two days, but the extra time was nice. Today was the usual stuff - went kayaking, archery, and played TV Guide Trivia (*with Lisa*). Jordi did a lot of things, including playing ball hockey with a bunch of boys. Lisa won twice in bingo today, in the morning and afternoon. In the morning, she won a \$5 gift certificate. She put it together with her other gift certificate she won earlier in the week and bought an evening cover-up, throwing in some extra money. In the afternoon, she won a T-shirt.

Also, when you participate in things like archery, trivia and sports, you earn points, and at the end of the week you can redeem them for things. This year we had enough for one coffee mug. The weather today, like the rest of the week, was perfect.

Jordi had a PJ party with her friends, so she had an early dinner in the dining room and then saw a movie in her PJs. Lisa and I had a final dinner by ourselves.

We also filled out the return reservation form for 2003 for the same week, same room and same table in the dining room. As it will be our fourth year, we also applied for alumni status, which will give us another discount.

Will we return?

It is still too early to tell. As long as we have our health. A lot depends on whether Jordi goes to overnight camp in July or August next year, but Lisa and I talked about it and think we might come even if Jordi does not.

This evening the entertainment is a magician followed by some singers.

Well, the sun is making a very slow descent on the horizon.

There is something about looking around the resort that brings an inner peace to me. It is so beautiful. I really enjoyed the kayaking this year. It is wonderful sitting in the middle of the lake looking around you. It is nature at its finest. At that moment, any and all problems cease to exist.

There is a certain sadness also knowing this holiday is coming to an end and will soon be relegated to the history of Rosen vacations. Like I say every year, it was wonderful witnessing Jordi's growth and maturity. Both Lisa and I are honoured to call her our daughter.

**10:30 p.m.**

The day is gone now, and Jordi is sleeping. Just took a walk along the waterfront. It is so peaceful with the calm water, sky full of stars and, in the distance, the lights of Orillia.

It brought to mind an old tune from camp overnights.

*Day is done, gone the sun, from the hills to the lakes the skies, all is well, safely rest, goodnight...goodnight.*

**This definitely is it for Fern Resort 2002...**

***So long, goodbye and farewell....***



**POSTNOTE: Sunday, July 21**

Today we had breakfast, and we're out of Fern by 9:45. Before we left though, we had a real surprise. It turns out I had overpaid back in February. So after totalling all the weekly expenses charged to our room, we managed to get back a little over \$6. Even when you err, there is a benefit.

So long!

# 2003: Chapter IV

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**Sunday, July 13**

**3:27 p.m.**

Well, we're back. We had a nice drive up and stopped in Orillia for lunch at The Zoo, where we ate at an outdoor patio.

After walking around (*and picking up a bottle of Coke*), we arrived at the resort. Jordi changed into her bathing suit and headed to the pool while Lisa and I went for a walk. We are now in Mary Lou's, which has been enlarged with Bergwen's. Computers from Bertyl's and pool tables and other games from the recreation centre have been added to the back of this entertainment venue.

Well, so far so good.

**6:55 p.m.**

Hi. I toured the animal farm at Fern...would you believe...they have two pigs (*Henry and Suzy*), a donkey, turkeys, ducks, and goats.... We finished dinner, including dessert of diet chocolate mousse...very yummy, and we are going to see the ski show soon.

**8:23 p.m.**

Hi from Fern.

I think the theme of this year is "I vaunt to be alone". We went to the ski show after dinner, but Jordi soon left, saying it was boring. More and more, she wants to do her own thing. However, she soon returned needing a partner for the scavenger hunt. Apparently that falls under daddy duties. The one good thing with Jordi off on her own is that it gives Lisa and me much needed together time to talk about "family matters," which I have been thinking about.

I do feel that it is almost Amaretto time. So, until my next entry...chow.

**10:22 p.m.**

It's 10:22 p.m., and the D&J show just got out. They built Bergwen's onto Mary Lou's, and it is fantastic. It is like a nightclub setting...the show featured two men who got the audience involved in stunts, including one where he picked me, as he said I looked like my mind was blank. He had to read my mind and guess the name of an entertainer, which was written on a piece of paper. He guessed wrong a number of times, but eventually I wrote it on a paper for the audience to see. He was wearing a black mask, and when he took it off, it was the face of Mick Jagger written on the paper. Lisa and Jordana are at Mary Lou's now as they have a DJ there. We will then call it a night.

Been a nice travelling day with great weather. Oh yes, Jordi did not sit with us tonight but saved a table for all her friends, where they sat together.

**Monday, July 14**

**9:00 a.m.**

We finished breakfast, and Jordi is getting ready for the day's activities (*sunscreen time, donning hat and sunglasses*). Lisa and I are going to read the paper in front of the main building. She has bingo at 10:30, and as for me, maybe kayaking or a walk.

**1:00 p.m.**

Just finished lunch, which is outdoors around the pool. They have a lunch gazebo which serves burgers, hot dogs, pizza and sandwiches and dessert. You go up and help yourselves. Lunch is from 12-1, but people are right there at 12 for the food...sort of like feeding time at the zoo. After going for a walk this morning, I went kayaking for 40 minutes, which was great.

This afternoon going to archery and playing a game called Say When. I say it every year, but life doesn't get much better than this. Lisa didn't win at bingo this morning, but had fun anyways. Jordi went to dance class. The skies are clear, the sun is hot, and it is great weather. Going to Cocktail Mixing class a bit later. For \$7 you get to try out 4 cocktails in 30 minutes. Not a record endurance test, but a yummy one in any case.

#### **10:00 p.m.**

The evening entertainment was so-so. Rhapsody Junction performed show tunes, Disney tunes, pop and jazz. As well, Orillia Woodgate Irish Dancers performed. Jordi and her friends found the whole thing boring and left. First time they have ever done that as a group, leaving evening entertainment. What is going on? She finally decided that enough was enough and went back to the room to relax, even though her friends are listening to another singer in Mary Lou's.

I find Jordana becoming more and more complex. The wine and cheese party before dinner was very nice. Oh yes, Lisa and Jordi played mini-golf this afternoon, with Lisa picking up a narrow victory. All in all, a wonderful first full day and good news to end it....it should only continue. Until tomorrow.....

### **Tuesday, July 15**

#### **12:43 p.m.**

Hi again, or should I say good afternoon. It's been a relaxing morning (*is there any other kind?*) I went to advanced archery and came in second in the tourney with 3 bull's eyes. Jordi's team came in first in the scavenger hunt for the youth group. I signed up for water skiing at 2 p.m. Another Fern first!! Will let you know how it goes. Ciao for now.

#### **3:35 p.m.**

Of course, I did it and went water skiing. Actually, since it was my first lesson, I held onto the boom bar and by my final run (*I think I had 3 or 4*), I did not wash out. But boy, do my arms feel sore. But I did it. I tried something new. Two years ago I tried kayaking here and now this. Something about the environment pushes me to try new things. Maybe will try it another day with ropes. The second time almost lost my swimsuit in the water. Fortunately, I retrieved it in time.

I came back in time for the pool party where, among other things, Jordi and a partner came in first in feeding Kool-Aid to her partner. It was a race. So she won twice today, first in scavenger hunt and now this...it's raining now, and I think we'll head back to the room for a while. That's it for now....

#### **10:00 p.m.**

We just got out of the evening entertainment - a musical tribute show with Keith Burton providing impersonations of musical stars. It was very good and entertaining. Before it all started, though, it decided to rain. What a downpour. Lisa borrowed an umbrella from the front desk and ran to the car to get our jackets and to see if we had an umbrella in the car. We didn't, so we bought one in the gift shop.

The kids had dinner together, leaving parents to enjoy a dinner for two.... the muscles continue to ache...one word about water skiing.... never again! Going back to room now. Jordi has already headed up there (*can't believe it, we don't tell her when to go to bed, but she decides when she has enough and doesn't stay up late...still she has a new word ...she likes to hang with her friends.*)

Lisa went to evening bingo...oh well, to each their own.

Let's hope I feel better tomorrow...the rain which was coming down in buckets after dinner has ended...I think we got the tail end of the storm from the States.

Well enough for now.

## **Wednesday, July 16**

**1:10 p.m.**

Hi again.

After I went into Orillia for some muscle relaxant, I spent the morning at Bertyl's reading the paper since the weather was so dull and cool. Jordi has declared.... I'm weird, mom's not.

**4:40 p.m.**

Hello again.

Well, it's been a fun afternoon.... Jordi finished first in her group in catching the smallest fish while Lisa and I were on the winning team in TV Guide Trivia.

Afterwards, I went to a Martini tasting class where, for \$7, I got to taste 4 different martinis. Of course, the bartender made too much, so everyone got seconds in a couple of rounds.... very educational and tasty. At 5, we are going to see the talent show, which includes Jordi.

After we opted for the steak dinner at the outdoor BBQ gazebo like we do every year. We should have stayed inside, what with the chill in the air, but can't change it now.

I can't believe it is Wednesday already...time is rushing by too fast...weather is so different from last year when it was over 30 degrees in the shade each day. Well, you takes what comes and enjoy it to the fullest. Talk to me later.

**10:10 p.m.**

Well, the end of another day.... we had steak dinner from outside, but brought it in because it was too cool out. Entertainment was very good with a juggler, ventriloquist, magician, and Cirque du Soleil-type performer. My arm is not as achy, but I find it hard to lift up.

Good night.

## **Thursday, July 17**

**12:34 p.m.**

Good afternoon.... The weather has been cloudy-sunny. I went for a nice walk along the nature trails this morning. Also got a massage. It felt wonderful and did a lot to help with my achy muscles. The woman could tell which muscles were injured just by touching them. I never realized there were so many muscles in the arm.

Jordi did Dance with Jacqui as she does every day, played pool and shuffleboard. Lisa and I are now going to Casino Rama to lose some money. We just finished lunch with some people she met at bingo. Jordi is very quiet this year, and I don't understand why.

**4:40 p.m.**

Back from Rama. I lost \$24, and Lisa lost \$20. We spent just under an hour there and were glad to leave. She wanted to get a passport because she is going back with her mom in August and needs it to get a free lunch. I came back and spent the afternoon by the pool. Lisa is playing bingo now...Jordi and her friends were down by the pool before and then went into the kids' hot tub and then the lake. Tonight she is having dinner before us, as her group has movie night. So Lisa is taking her down at 5:30.

Tonight is the last night for a lot of people who chose the 5-day plan. The evening entertainment is kids' talent show, a staff talent show and a lip sync contest.

Lisa bought me a sweatshirt, which was on sale for half price (*she paid \$25 plus got 5% off for alumni discount*). For lunch we sat outside with other people Lisa met at bingo. Jordi definitely gets her social skills from her mom. I can go somewhere and not talk to anyone, and it doesn't bother me. Lisa always talks to people.

**7:40 p.m.**

Had a nice dinner with Lisa and, as a bonus, free wine since we are alumni (*one glass each*).

Nice touch, Fern!

Heading over to Bergwen's now for evening entertainment.

We picked up the family photo, which was taken last night. Jordi is growing into a beauty!

You know it's hard not to have fun here. So much (*or so little*) to do, I guess you have to like this type of vacation, which I definitely do.

**10:35 p.m.**

Days done, gone the sun...whoops, wrong day.

This holiday is far from over. Just got out of Bergwen's, where we saw the annual lip sync contest. It was a collection of old favourites and new entries like a tribute to Chicago and old stuff like Day Oh. It's all really quite good...of course it is not actually singing. Still, the dancing is good and the fact that all these staff members find the time to come together to rehearse and put together such an entertaining evening is a tribute to everyone who works here.

Well, tomorrow is check-out day for a lot of people here. But not for the Rosens.

There is plenty of vacation yet left in this family... so stay tuned.

Good night!

**Friday, July 18**

**4:45 p.m.**

Well, the afternoon is winding down...Jordi is sitting beside me now. She always seems to find me...clever girl. Her team finished first in the raft race this afternoon, and her picture will be in tomorrow's Fern agenda, the second time it has been there this week. Wow.

This afternoon Lisa and I played TV themes contest and didn't do so well, but got some more points out of it. There is a lot of activity around here today with people leaving and new people coming up for the weekend.

As for us, we are going to get ready soon and head into Orillia for a night on the town, including dinner. Then we are going to see South Pacific.

Funny thing is, in our 4 years here, we have never had dinner here on a Friday evening. The first two years we stayed 5 days, and last year we ate in Orillia. So we don't know what Friday dinner is like here.

Too bad we are missing the Sheridan Revue, a very good group from Sheridan College in Oakville. We saw them last year and the year before and the year before that and enjoyed them. Unfortunately, we can't do everything, though.

Talk to u later.

**10:55 p.m.**

Tonight we did something different to top off the vacation...was great...went to a steak house called Webers in Orillia (*we parked halfway between theatre and restaurant at no charge*) and then walked to the theatre afterwards.

Before we went to the restaurant, we went to the theatre where I got to pick out the seats I wanted - Row H, Orchestra.

The play was very good and was enjoyed by all. We just got back...you would not believe all the traffic heading out of the casino area at this time of night...no way I would go to a show and then drive back to Toronto. Well, one day to go.

It's been fun.

**Saturday, July 19**

**10:15 a.m.**

Good morning

Well, final day here and the weather is...how shall I put it...crappy! I went to advanced archery this morning, first time back there since my water skiing debacle. Not too bad. I managed to break the balloon to get extra Fern points.

Ran into Lisa and her friends after and got some pics with them. I also took some pics around Mary Lou's and Bergwen's. Still debating whether to go kayaking...water seems choppy.

Catch you (*me*) L8tr

**12:45 p.m.**

Well, I didn't go kayaking...still some residual pain in my arm, and it is cool out, and the water is choppy.

We finished lunch outside (*our last one here this year*), and I am now going for a walk. I am going to meet Lisa at 2:30 for another game of Say What.

See you later.

**5:35 p.m.**

Well, it was a nice afternoon. Lisa and I played Say What and our team won. Before that, I went on a nice long walk on the track and nature trails and relaxed and read my book by the pool. Going to get ready for dinner now. Later entertainment is a hypnotist. Should be amusing.

Lisa got the address of the woman from B.C. Overall, she really enjoyed the trip.

Jordi also feels the same way. She lost her camera this afternoon after she left it at a golf course, but found it later. What is nice is that if you lose something or put it down, it doesn't get stolen. People really are different on vacation.

**9:20 p.m.**

Well just got out of the entertainment at Bergwen's.

Tonight was a hypnotist who wasn't too bad, but there were too many babies making too much noise. Guess I am just out of that phase of my life. Right now I am in Mary Lou's, Jordi is playing pool with a friend, and a band is playing in the background.

Jordana told me earlier that it was a great vacation because she made a lot of new friends, rather than just hanging out with a few kids.

Right now the sun is retreating behind the tree line in the west, casting an orange glow in the sky and slowly changing the colour of the lake to a dark blue.

It was truly a fantastic and relaxing holiday. At dinner, Jordi ate with us as she did not want to see the kids' movie.

We filled in our request for the summer of 2004 for a 5-day visit to Fern Resort starting July 18. The week has moved, as 2004 is a leap year. We opted for a 5-day visit as '04 will be Jordi's bat mitzvah year, and we figured we could save some money.

So I guess that's it. Jordi convinced me to re-launch the journal this year, and I am so glad I did, as it is a wonderful way to preserve memories.

We already did a lot of our packing, so all that is left tomorrow morning is to finish the job, load the car, have breakfast and depart.

Oh yes, and restart the counter for Fern Resort 2004.

**Sunday, July 20**

**9:30 a.m.**

Well, as surely as day follows night, the end of our vacation has finally arrived. After four years, Fern Resort remains a fantastic getaway. A week here and we leave happier and more relaxed. Lisa and Jordana have traded email addresses with people, and I am a far more relaxed person.

The sky is overcast, and it is raining off and on...a perfect travelling day. After all, who wants to waste a nice day travelling?

We finished with 40 Fern points, a record for the Rosen family. For that we got a hat for Jordi, two plastic glasses, and a button for her cap. Breakfast is done, the car is packed, the comment card and bill have been signed and paid, and the keys have been turned in. I am in Mary Lou's right now looking over the lake.

So I guess that's it for Fern Resort 2003. If all goes well and we are all able and healthy next year, there will be another year...something the same, yet a bit different.

So until the next time...

Sit back, relax, don't sweat the small stuff, and enjoy life. After all is said and done, it really is a beautiful world.

*Hasta la vista, baby!*



# 2004: Someone's Missing This Year

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**Sunday, July 25**

**4:14 p.m.**

Well, we are back for our fifth summer. We left home around 11:30, and by 12:45 we were in Orillia. First order of business was to stop at Kelsey's for lunch. The weather was hot and sunny. We walked around the town and the waterfront area (*just wonderful*) and finally headed to Fern, but not before Lisa stopped to buy a postcard to send to Jordi.

You see, this year the little munchkin/daughter/preteen/teen decided to skip the Fern thing and go straight to camp.

We got to Fern and checked in. I could not believe it, but our room 115 is across the hall from the room we had the last three years (*room 104*), so it is easy to find. Also, it is facing the parking lot, so I just threw the bags over the railing to Lisa (*who caught them*).

We did the usual walk around, and Lisa decided to go to orientation (*she likes to be oriented*). It's strange this year seeing all the kids running around knowing we don't have one with us. I suggested we rent one for the week, but Lisa is against the idea. It is so quiet without Jordana, and it makes us miss her more.

Well, so starts the 2004 journal...I promise, more to come.

**Sunday**

Hi there.

This afternoon, relaxed by the pool with refreshment and a good book and took in the sun under a perfect sky...Does life get any better (*I don't think so!*)

**10:20 p.m.**

Was the song YMCA ever controversial? Was the Time Warp a counterculture tune? Hard to believe. Tonight's entertainment was the musical group Nightlife. They put on an interactive musical show, getting kids and parents to volunteer and take part. They even taught the kids a new song, the Alley Cat. Lisa and I remembered it. We must be getting old. We stayed for the entire show and enjoyed it. As well as Alley Cat and YMCA, they also introduced the kids to the Chicken Dance. Can't wait to get these songs played at the BM this November.

The evening started with dinner, which was quite yummy...Lisa had the turkey dinner, and I had the Thai meal, which was quite spicy, but great.

Afterwards, we went to the annual ski show. This year's theme was the movie Spiderman and included his friends Superman, Wonder Woman and a few evil meanies.

It is pretty much the same thing every year, but who remembers from year to year? After the ski show we went over to Bergwen's for the nightly entertainment. Lisa is feeling the separation pains as much as I am.

Funny thing, most of the crowd here are either seniors or young and middle-aged with kids. Parents without kids are practically non-existent. So strange, even though Jordana was usually with us only at meals, we almost expect to bump into her running to her next activity. Guess not.

Well, I guess that's it for our first day...strange but relaxing...stay tuned for more adventures tomorrow.

**Monday, July 26**

**11:20 a.m.**

Good morning. Today is our first full day here. It's a little bit cool, but nice otherwise. For the first time in years, they have changed the breakfast menu, and one of the things now on the menu is bagel with cheese and lox (*OK, they call it smoked salmon, but it is the same thing*). Jordi would love it.

Met an alumnus from Mackenzie C.I. from Lisa's year. He is Larry Swimmer, who happens to be an old friend of Michael.

This morning went on a nature walk, which I always find fascinating. Learned a lot about the history of the area and vegetation. Lisa went to bingo (*as usual*) and, oh yes, we got a letter from Jordana. She is having a great time.

I'm going to meet Lisa for lunch at noon and will have lunch at the BBQ gazebo.

Talk to u later.

**4:23 p.m.**

Well, just finished my cocktail mixing class...I tried 4 drinks in 20 minutes, and we have a wine and cheese party soon. This afternoon took in some archery and then met Lisa for "Say What," a game in which you try to guess answers to crazy questions. We lost, but who cares.

This evening, we're going on a cruise of the lake, which is offered by Fern Resort. Bye for now.

**8:45 p.m.**

Well, it's evening of our first full day...the wine and cheese party was nice. We both tried a red and white (*it's free*) and some cheese and crackers.

Dinner was nice, with Lisa taking the chicken breast with honey mustard sauce and me choosing the veggie stir fry with spicy Szechwan sauce.

After dinner, we went on a 45-minute cruise on Lake Couchiching, which was wonderful. The weather was nice and the lake calm.

We saw some beautiful homes and boats tied up in Orillia. Came back and stopped at Bergwen's for the nightly entertainment. Tonight is the Woodgate Irish Dance Show, a group devoted to Irish dances, music, and theatre. Last year Jordi walked out on this one. Well, this year I followed suit. It bored me silly, so I told Lisa I would see her later. She was fine with this.

Right now the view as I type this is beautiful (*I'm in Mary Lou's*). The sun is setting over the lake, and it gives the sky and lake an orangish glow.

I can't believe it, but Lisa really misses her daughter. After all these years, the two have developed such a strong bond.

I guess that's all for today and tonight.

Tomorrow will be another day...so long.

**9:07 p.m.**

Oops, I misspoke myself a few minutes ago. As I said just a few minutes ago, I was closing up in Mary Lou's, but Tom Leadbetter has taken to the stage here (there are two entertainment halls now). He is quite good, playing popular music, so I think I will stay for a while and listen. Besides, Lisa just walked in and so will spend time together (*she says: HI BONNIE.*)

**10:39 p.m.**

OK, OK, I know I said goodnight, but the program is great...all this old music from the 70s, 60s and 50s...even some nice slow ones to dance to...boy was Lisa surprised when I asked her to dance.

Looking around at the parents with their kids makes me realize that not only is Jordi not with us, but that we don't have a little kid anymore, which is probably even sadder.... Lisa is still at Mary Lou's, so I think I will go back for a while... This is definitely Good night!!

**Tuesday, July 27**

**12:11 p.m.**

Good afternoon

Not much doing today...After breakfast read the paper and went kayaking for 50 minutes. I'm going to meet Lisa for lunch at the BBQ gazebo, and then I think we are going to head over to Casino Rama.

This afternoon is the pool party with games and events for kids and adults. If we are here, then fine; otherwise, big whoop!

**2:08 p.m.**

Hi. We are back from the casino, where yours truly, the master webmaster and journal junkie, won \$205.50 playing one slot machine with the "I Dream of Jeannie" theme. I started out with \$20. Bought some pens at the casino also for us and those taking care of our house. Lisa bought me a T-shirt back at Fern.

Think will go for a walk now.

Till later...

**10:55 p.m.**

Good evening. Well, actually the second full day is almost over. Started with a nice dinner, which included Chicken thighs in spicy Thai sauce (*who knew chickens had thighs*). It rained a bit, but you know what they say: into each life a little rain must fall.

The evening entertainment started at Bergwen's with Fernandez, a hypnotist who put on a great show. The room was full.

No, I did not volunteer, but picked up a little bit of his show...you are getting sleepier and sleepier and want to give me all your money.

Afterwards we went over to Mary Lou's to listen to Jamie Williams, a versatile performer who sings and plays a multitude of instruments.

Well, so much for the day. The guy is now on a break, and Lisa has gone back to the room, so I will join her.

Overall, it's great here, and I feel relaxed. We have adjusted to our Jordi-free holiday. It was funny, but tonight it was kids' night out for dinner, in which the kids have dinner and entertainment by themselves. However, every night for us is kids' night out.

Also, I have noticed that everyone here is Caucasian. What does it mean? Who knows? I try not to think too hard on holiday.

Anyway, enough of my babbling. I'm signing off for Tuesday and will be back tomorrow.

Ciao!

**Wednesday, July 28**

**11:55 a.m.**

Good morning...OK, the morn is almost over, but still... I went kayaking, travelling the furthest I have ever gone...then went for a swim. It was wonderful. I just wish those kayaks had washrooms in them (*water, water all around and not a place to p....*)

See u later.

**2:11 p.m.**

Hi and good afternoon

Just came from archery where I got 5 bullseyes in 4 attempts with 20 shots total...not bad. Lisa is meeting me at 2:30 for "TV Trivia," and then I have martini mixing class at 4 p.m.

We are getting our official photo taken at 5:55 in front of the Main Inn. We thought the floral backdrop would be nice.

Had pizza for lunch, but it was lousssy so I stuck with salad and pudding.

TTFN.

**5:21 p.m.**

Hi again.

Been reading outside in the hammock as well as in the room. Going for our Fern photo at 5:55 and then dinner and entertainment, which is the Craig Douglas Variety Show I believe...talk to u later.

**7:36 p.m.**

Great dinner.... It started off when they took our photo, as Wednesday is photo night where they take family photos. Wednesday also is traditionally steak night, and you have the choice of having it in the dining room or at the BBQ gazebo. The first few years we opted for outdoors, but now we eat inside. I think it is better as you can custom order your steak, which is delicious with a brandy peppercorn sauce. Lisa ordered some red vino, and we topped it off by sharing vanilla ice cream. Well, off to the room and then entertainment.

**10:05 p.m.**

Hi and good evening.

Well, entertainment was so-so. First part was the variety show consisting of a juggler, acrobatics and a magician. It was good but corny. The second part at Mary Lou's was Jim Cronk. He was just so-so, and to make it worse, he was singing the same songs that other singers performed the past two nights. This is the first year they have had two different entertainment venues running every night.

Before the entertainment, though, I took some scenery shots around Fern. Hope they come out OK.

Well, I think the day is done for me. I'm tired and retreating to my room, leaving Lisa to fend for herself at Mary Lou's (*she said go*). It is so beautiful out; the sky is clear, and you can see all the stars as well as the city lights from across the lake in Orillia.

Why can't life be so easy and carefree all the time, with no cares or worries?

It would be wonderful to stop time just around now and enjoy life for a while longer.

Oh well, good evening and see u tomorrow.

**Thursday, July 29**

**9:37 a.m.**

Good morning

Just finished breakfast and checked my e-mail...going kayaking now. Oh yes, yesterday Lisa and I played TV Trivia and our team won...goes to show that there is no such thing as too much TV. We got an invite to a cocktail party later this afternoon for alumni guests only...should be fun (*alumni are those who have been here at least three years*).

The weather is clear and sunny.

**12:46 p.m.**

Good afternoon... just finished lunch outdoors. It is so hot, but we were lucky to get a table with an umbrella. Kayaking was awesome; the lake was crystal clear, and I went even further than yesterday. This afternoon I'm going to archery and then meeting Lisa for a game of Outburst at the BBQ gazebo. Got to rack up those points since we are leaving tomorrow. Lisa wants to buy Jordi a sweatshirt. We will give it to her on Sunday.

What started out with both of us missing Jordi terribly has turned into a wonderful holiday in which we are just enjoying the time together. We still miss her, but it's different now.

So is Lisa. When we started coming here in 2000, she needed a nap every afternoon. Now she goes all day and yesterday got back to the room about 11:30 p.m.

Bye for now.

**3:35 p.m.**

Archery is all shot out for the holiday.... I finished in the competition with 16 points, with the top person getting 21. Met Lisa for a game of "Outburst," but we didn't win.

It's soo hot, so we've been sitting around the pool enjoying it for our last day here.

**7:43 p.m.**

Well, dinner is over...the cocktail party was great with plenty of great appetizers and an open bar...enjoyed by all. Lisa and I sat on the patio and talked and watched the lake and the activity there. It was great and so amazing.

**10:34 p.m.**

Well, the show just got out. As fitting for Thursday entertainment, it was the guest video and staff lip sync show, which is put on each year. This year was a tribute to Hollywood stars. Of course, they performed their annual fav, Day Oh.

After the show ended, they started a bingo game at Mary Lou's, which Lisa has gone to take part in (*GO LISA*). I have already packed, and Lisa will do so in the morning.

I guess it really is over for another year. So much the same, yet just a touch different, as it has been each and every one of the five weeks we have come here since 2000.

Overall, it has been a wonderful, fantastic week and G-d willing, there will be another next year, July 2005.

You know, right now the only thing I can think of is the Carol Burnett song: *It seems like we just get started and before you know it, comes a time we have to say so long.*

Good Night.



**Friday, July 30: LISA'S 44TH BIRTHDAY!!**

**9:38 a.m.**

Well, good morning.

*Our bags are packed, and we're ready to go.... STOP*, it seems I'm ready to burst into song at the slightest drop of a hat.... speaking of drops...please don't.

It's overcast today, so I don't know yet if we will sit by the pool or I will go kayaking.

In any event, we have finished breakfast and packed the car with most of our stuff (*we have until 11 to be out of the room*). Lisa got some nice birthday cards last week for her 44th birthday today, which she opened this morning. She loved them all.

At breakfast we filled out our comment card and our bill (*for all charges to our room*) and filled out the advance registration for 2005. We signed up for the 7-day package from July 17-24, which is our usual week and requested the same dining table (*for our 5th year*) and same room as this year. We will see how everything goes.

Usually at this time I would be signing off just to pick up everything in a few hours upon a Toronto return.

### **NOT THIS YEAR THOUGH**

The journey continues today when we head into Orillia to stay at Econo Lodge and then go to see Cats tonight in town.

Tomorrow we head to Haliburton for the night, and Sunday we visit Jordi at camp. Then and only then will we return home.

I guess that is it. Unfortunately, leaving Fern will mean a complete communications blackout for the Rosens as they are surgically removed from the computer terminals, but it should be a painless procedure.

Hasta la vista, Baby.

**1:04 p.m.**

Hi.

We bought lunch at Mary Lou's, and now we are about to depart Fern Resort. It's a bit cloudy, but I managed to kayak over the waves and travel further than ever before. Lisa went to bingo, and then we met at the pool. I swam a bit before we did lunch (*you don't get lunch on your last day*)

We're off to the casino now.

So Long Fern Resort 2004

It's been a blast!!!!

## **POST FERN**

After another trip to the Casino (*I lost \$45*), we got to Orillia, and Lisa remembered we forgot the Fern rolls we had ordered Thursday (*we passed a bakery, and she remembered*). So, it was back to Fern for the fresh buns. Once we got back to Orillia, we stopped at Webers to make dinner reservations, then to the theatre to pick up our tickets. Finally arrived at the EconoLodge at 3:30 p.m.

I rested, and Lisa went to the dollar store.

Finally, we got ready and went for dinner at 6:15 and then to see CATS. It was very good.

The motel room is very nice and spacious with a king-size bed. It was a good choice for our short stay here.

Oh yes, at the theatre we sat beside a family from Barrie who had a five-year-old daughter who was also celebrating her birthday today. Lisa loved her present from me, a gift certificate from Trade Secrets.

## **Saturday, July 31**

### **4:10 p.m.**

We got up this morning, and it was overcast and rainy. After leaving the motel, we went down the street for breakfast and then back to the room to read the newspaper. Then we headed into Orillia to buy "goodies" for Jordi. It was then that Lisa realized she lost her watch. So we backtracked to the hotel and restaurant, but no luck finding it.

So we said our goodbye to Orillia and headed north on Highway 11 and then east on 118, stopping for a bite to eat at Highways 118 & 35 before continuing to Haliburton.

We walked around the town and park before heading to the Lakeview Motel. It is not fancy, but serves the purpose for the night. I like it because it has a balcony and I can sit and read and watch the traffic go by. Tonight we are going into Haliburton for Chinese dinner and then to A&P to buy some deli for tomorrow's visitors' day lunch at Camp Northland B'nai Brith.

The weather today has been wonky... cloudy one moment, sunshine the next. I guess it's a product of the region.

### **9:15 p.m.**

Dinner was great. We came back, and I went for a walk along Highway 121. It is so peaceful.

Afterwards, Lisa and I sat on the balcony and talked.

It really has been a wonderful holiday, and unlike our 7-day Fern excursions, this one doesn't end tomorrow morning. No sir...we get to visit Miss Jordana Stephanie!

## **Sunday, August 1**

Hi.

Got up at 7 a.m. and had breakfast at the Lakeview Motel. Then drove to A&P and ran into Howard Sheldon, who was meeting Larry before they headed up to Camp NBB. We got to the camp around 9:30 and met Steph (*her camp nickname*).

She looked great. Has a nice tan and dresses sharply. We walked around a lot, saw her cabin a couple of times and had a nice lunch of corned beef and Fern Resort rolls and French fries, which we bought at the camp. Also saw the BB Beach and showed Steph the secret path, which I discovered.

We left the camp at 2:40 p.m., driving straight through. We got home about 5:30 p.m. It was a wonderful day. When we got home, Mom talked to Bubie and found out she only got one letter from Jordi. We received no letters from our daughter. Got lots of bills though.

Put Steph's camp picture in her room and have already unpacked a lot of our stuff.

All in all, it was a great day and had lots of fun. Hope Steph did also. We both love her very much.

*Well, that's it for the 2004 Fern/Post Fern Journal. As always, it will be interesting to look back and see what a great time the Rosens had in the summer of 2004.*  
**SO LONG!**

# 2005: A Holiday Built for Two

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**Friday July 29**

**3:30 p.m.**

Hi.

Well, we are here and already involved in Fern life. We just finished TV Trivia, which our team won. We arrived here about an hour ago, actually first stopping for lunch in Orillia and checking out the hotel where we are staying next Friday. Then we picked up our theatre tickets for tomorrow night and went over to Casino Rama, where Lisa won about \$12.50 while I lost \$40.

We are on the second floor this year, overlooking the parking lot. They had a first-floor room, but it was only for the weekend, so decided against it.

The Main Inn is so different this year, having been renovated after a fire. Still disappointed there are only four computers available to guests.

Going to check out the rest of the resort and head back to the room for a rest. It's been a long day. Til later....

**7:45 p.m.**

Wow!

Is it really Friday? I keep thinking it's Sunday, and there should be a water ski show now. Instead, Lisa and I are about to go to Bergwen's to see Paul Pacific, the Amazing Mentalist.

Earlier I said I was heading back to the room to rest.

Wrong! This is Fern, and one does not rest. Did I say we won in the TV Trivia? Well, we did.

Afterwards, I walked around Fern before heading back to the room to unpack. However, there was no sign of Lisa. She had gone to bingo and actually won! A cookbook no less. We sat around the pool for a long while, and I went swimming. The new goggles are great.

For dinner we both had chicken with salad for me and soup for Lisa and diet chocolate mousse to finish it off.

It's different this year with a scaled-down gift shop and redesigned lobby. Even our table in the dining room is in a different location. After five years at the same table (*actually, we had a different table inside Bertyl's the first year*), we moved two tables down, but we are still by the window overlooking the pool.

Also, instead of signing out towels at the pool, we were given towel tickets, which we redeem at the pool and get a ticket back when we return the towel later on.

Like years past, everything is the same except for some small details. Just enough to keep it interesting. The former basketball court is now a kiddie play area, with the court having moved near the tennis courts.

In addition, there are more archery targets and time slots for my favourite sport.

With only four computers at Fern this year (*down from 8*), it might be harder to do this journal.

The weekend should be OK though, as it is quieter, as most people come from Sunday to Friday or Sunday to Sunday. That is why being here Friday when many people are finishing their week is strange.

The nicest thing today was Lisa's involvement in all aspects of Fern life. Years back, the only thing she did the first day was take a nap.

It is also different from last year when it was our first without Jordi. Now with one year under our belt at Fern without her, it seems the norm. Still, it is quiet without her.

That's all for now. I am off to Bergwen's.

**9:05 p.m.**

The mentalist show was great. The guy actually could read people's minds and move objects in space and time. He also linked three gold wedding bands taken from the audience, so no trick there. Now we are at Mary Lou's and listening to Nightlife with Scott & Gerry playing live music. All in all, it's been a nice first day.

**Saturday, July 30 - LISA'S 45<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY!**

**12:30 p.m.**

It's Saturday afternoon already. The weather is warm and beautiful. After breakfast (pancakes; Saturday is pancakes as is Tues. and Thurs., with Mon. and Wed. and Fri. devoted to French toast). I went on a nature walk as I do every year. The tour guide remembers his guests. Lisa went to bingo. After the walk, I went kayaking. I took along my waterproof camera. It will be interesting to see what develops (*sorry, could not resist that one*). I took pics below and above the surface of the water. Later I met Lisa at the pool area, and we sat around until lunchtime. Like most days, we opted for lunch outdoors.

There are many activities for this afternoon, which should be interesting. Will let you know later. TTFN.

**4:10 p.m.**

Hi again.

Boy, it's hot outside. Went to archery and had to leave before it was over, as I had to go to the Shout it out at the Movies game. There, our team finished first, thanks to my guessing the final answer and pulling our team back from behind. Yes, I do love the sweet smell of victory.

Lisa is at bingo now, and I went to the water sailing class, but decided against taking a boat out. Little wind today, and besides, I just decided not to.

Tonight we are going to Webers in Orillia for dinner and then to see the play Jesus Christ Superstar at the theatre.

Til later.

**10:45 p.m.**

Wow!

What an evening. We had reservations at Webers, and would you believe they actually had a table with a reserved sign on it near the window? That's very nice in my books. We parked halfway between the restaurant and theatre. From the parking lot we walked to dinner and then to the theatre.

I mentioned it was Lisa's birthday, and she got free dessert, a raspberry, blueberry, peach crumble with vanilla ice cream. Of course, she had the ice cream, and I had the fruit crumble. It was amazing. Also, we ordered a bottle of white wine with the meal.

The play was so good. They always have great productions up here, and this year was no different.

We heard a lot of music we knew, but didn't realize it was from Jesus Christ Superstar.

Lisa says she really enjoyed her 45th birthday, including getting a birthday card from yours truly.

All in all, the best way to celebrate her birthday while on holiday.

I guess that's all for today. Heading back to the room now. So until tomorrow... Ciao!

## **Sunday, July 31**

### **10:00 a.m.**

Another beautiful day. Today is actually a first for the Rosen family. This is the first time in our six years here that we have stayed at Fern for the entire day on Sunday.

In the past, we have either been arriving or leaving on Sunday, but not here for the entire day. It is a hustle and bustle today with people leaving now, with new people destined to arrive later in the day.

It's nice to be above the hectic rush. Today's schedule is divided into two parts, with guests only receiving morning programs, with the afternoon/evening to be given out later today.

Well, I'm off now to play Say What in Mary Lou's. Ciao!

### **1:00 p.m.**

Hi again.

Did I say I was going to play Say What? Well, no one showed up except Lisa and me, so we opted not to play.

The weather today is cloudy and a bit cooler. However, does that bother us? NO! Fern is the place where you leave worries and troubles behind and don't let anything bother you. Still, it is nice enough to sit around the pool and read a good book. Lisa went to bingo this morn and then to mini-golf, and while she didn't win at either, she came back all smiles.

The more she does, the more people she meets. I find she talks to them more when I am not with her. We just finished lunch, our first Sunday lunch up at Fern. It is definitely different on Sunday. It was interesting having lunch in the dining room as tables for new guests are already set for dinner in appropriate group settings, so you can see which tables will have new people. You see, for lunch and breakfast they use placemats, while at dinner they use tablecloths, so you can see which tables are set for dinner quite easily (*the people leaving today don't get lunch*).

I don't have the afternoon program yet, but Lisa and I might go for a walk soon.

Talk to you later.

### **8:50 p.m.**

Hi again.

This afternoon we spent around the pool and went in for a bit before the clouds started to return. Dinner was delicious (*spaghetti for me and steak for Lisa*), then the weather really changed, and the rain came, cancelling out the ski show. Oh well, I was not that interested anyway. Lisa and I finally came down to Bergwen's (*where she is now*) to watch Greg Tarlin, a juggler. I will check him out. If not, Star Wars II is on. It's been a very low-key day, but not a bad one in itself. Guess that will be all for today. Bye for now.

Addendum: *I passed on the juggler and went straight back to the room to watch Star Wars II. I could not get on the computer at the time to make my final entry for the day.*

## **Monday August 1**

### **9:50 a.m.**

Good morning.

Boy did it rain last night. Despite that, it is warm this morning. Lisa has gone to bingo, and there is not much for me this morning. Might go for a walk or kayaking. Will let you know later. I talked with Larry Swimmer today, an old friend of Michael. Like us, he switched weeks this year as his child returned from Northland last week (*last week was his regular week*). He is debating whether to come back next year if his kid goes to Northland for the entire summer. Not a bad thing to think about.

Til later.

**4:35 p.m.**

Hi there.

The weather has been some parts cloud, some parts sun, some parts rain...guess what you would call a mixed bag.

After my walk this morning, I read a bit before lunch. After lunch, I eventually went to archery, where I got one bullseye to add to my room points and then to play Shout It Out at the Movies.

Finally, it was the time we have all waited for (*ok, the time I have waited for*): cocktail mixing and tasting. We had a Fuzzy Navel, Frozen Watermelon, Candy Apple Martini and Purple Monster. Overall, it was very, very tasty and I'm sure nutritious, as the Fuzzy Navel had OJ in it and the Frozen Watermelon tasted like a fruit, as did the Candy Apple Martini. I was the veteran of the group, having come to Fern for six years and never missing one of the classes. Still, I have much to learn and feel I must return to learn all I can. Practice makes perfect.

At 5:30 is the wine and cheese party at the pool, and I would insult the resort to miss it, so I shall do my best to attend.

Lisa was feeling a bit bored, but she talks to people when she is doing things and actually attends the same number of activities per day as me.

Oh well, different strokes for different folks.

Til later.

**10:10 p.m.**

Finally, I can finish today's journal. With only four computers and countless teenagers, it's all but impossible. The kids get on the machines and chat with their friends in other cities...four or five at a time. Tonight they had a science magic show, The Freddie Fusion Science Magic Show. It was not too bad. However, how many magic shows do you have to see in a week?

After we went to Mary Lou's to see and hear Karla Crawford and her band. She just finished her first set and is very good. Lisa is beside me right now and says hello. Lisa says she is having a wonderful time and the weather has been great. During the day, she plays bingo.

I guess that is all for Monday.

Bye for now.

**Tuesday August 2**

**9:40 a.m.**

Good morning. Well, we finished breakfast, and Lisa is preparing for bingo (*how do you prepare for bingo?*).

I think I will go kayaking. It is hot out, and the lake is clear.

This afternoon we might go to Casino Rama. We will decide after lunch, but looks like a good possibility.

Actually, it's a good bet we will (*sorry, could not resist that one*).

More later...

**11:30 a.m.**

Boy is it hot out. Kayaking was great. The lake was so beautiful and almost crystal clear. There was little wake on the lake today as a lot of boaters have gone back to work. After I went to the Main Inn to hear about its history. It was very interesting. The new bar area was where the washrooms were last year.

**2:10 p.m.**

We're back from the casino...Lisa lost \$10 on \$20 in slots. Jeff won \$80 on \$40 played on slots.

We stopped on the way back to pick up more OJ. Right now I am going to change and hang around the pool this afternoon. It is way too hot to do much else, and it is cooler around the pool area.

(*Don't you feel cooler just hearing this?*)

Back to you later.

**5:45 p.m.**

Hey, IT'S ME! (*You were expecting someone else?*)

After the casino, we retreated to the pool where the annual pool party was just about to start. Did we take part? Silly question. Have we ever taken part? I remember when Jordi was actively involved in it. Still, we stayed around the pool, jumping in every so often to cool off, as it was so hot out. We called Mom, but she has not heard anything about her tests.

I just showered and washed all the gunk off my body. It's almost supper, and later we will go to Bergwen's to see hypnotist Paul Royter.

Still no mail from Jordi yet, and we have sent her two postcards.

That's all for now.

Til later...

**9:30 p.m.**

Well, the hypnotist is finished...always a good show. We have now retreated to Mary Lou's and are listening to Jamie Williams.

Guess that is all for today.

Boy, there are so many strollers around Fern this year. More than I can remember in the past.

Good night and see you tomorrow.

**Wednesday August 3**

**9:30 a.m.**

Good morning (*or is it?*).

We finished breakfast, but walked away upset. There was no Sweet and Low in the sugar bowl. You would think they would refill it for guests.

Then I asked for another cup of coffee and had to wait and wait and wait. Finally, we finished breakfast, so we just left. I did tell our table captain, though. I hate complaining, but told her that if I was in a restaurant, I would have walked out, but that there is no other place to go.

Last night, I woke up around 3 a.m. as some people were talking loudly in the parking lot. So I called the front desk and complained.

What's on tap for today?

Well, there is archery in the afternoon, and we are having our picture taken at 5.

Before that, there is martini mixing, and in the evening Lisa and I signed up for a cruise on the lake.

Right now, though, the lake looks very choppy, so we'll go for a walk rather than kayaking.

Talk to u later.

**4:35 p.m.**

OK, got to make this fast. At 5 Lisa and I are having our annual Fern picture taken.

Boy, it has been hot as hell today. After my last entry, I decided to go kayaking after all. The water was a little rough in the middle of the lake, but wonderful and refreshing.

Afterwards we sat by the pool. After lunch (*outdoors like always*), Lisa and I sat by the pool before I headed off to archery. Boy is it hot here. Once you leave the pool/lake area, you really notice it. Still, I did very good today with a total score of 40 after four turns. Then met Lisa for a game of Scene It, and our team won four more room points. Then it was more relaxing (*what else*) before I headed to martini tasting. We had a Blue Lagoon Martini, Raspberry Twist, Chocolate Martini and French Martini. Was it good? (*Need you ask?*)

Tonight going on a cruise on the lake. Oh yes, when got back from kayaking, Lisa told me Mark (*the owner*) wanted to see us. We finally met up, and he wanted to know what our problems with the kitchen were.

He listened and apologized. I was amazed. Guess I am too used to being lectured to and excuses made.

It reaffirms my belief in this place and makes me want to come back next year even more. I also tried to get some extra boxes of soap and shampoo from him, but they can't do it.

Well gots to go now.

Bye.

**9:25 p.m.**

We went on a cruise on the lake tonight. It was very beautiful, and we sat in the front of the pontoon boat. We came back and missed the guest talent show, which we were happy with. I remember a few years back when Jordi was in it. After (*that means now*) there is a group of teenagers playing big band sounds called 22 Piece All Star Band. They are very good and enjoyable. Will go back now and rejoin Lisa to listen to them.

To answer your question, no, Jordi has not written to us yet.

I can't believe tomorrow is Thursday already. This is about the time I want to slow time down. It is rushing away too fast, and before you know it, it will be history.

SO STOP!!!

**Thursday August 4**

**10:00 a.m.**

Good morning, Fern.

Well, last night we lost the internet connection here, so I was literally cut off cold turkey from the computer. I went into computer withdrawal, foaming at the mouth, biting my hands and feet and running around in circles.

Just kidding.

Well, another beautiful day and our last full one here. Might go kayaking soon.

At breakfast we got an invitation to the alumni (*3 consecutive years here*) cocktail party later in the afternoon. It is a really good time. Free booze and appetizers. Also, we got our order form to buy Fern rolls. So ordered 2 dozen. Like last year, we will use some on visitors' day Sunday. We will probably pick up cold cuts in Haliburton like last year.

We also got our advance reservation form for 2006. While it doesn't commit us to anything, it helps Fern do preliminary plans. We put down 3 for Fern for next year and chose a Friday-to-Friday period. Lisa likes that arrangement because if it comes to pass, it gets us home without rushing to pack Jordi for camp (*all things remaining equal and she doesn't have summer school*). We chose the week of July 14-21.

Of course, it's a year away, so plans always change. Look at this year. We started out coming to Fern the same day as the Kates' wedding and moved to July 29 as Jordi had summer school. Still, by January 2006 we will have some idea if Jordi is not doing well and has to go to summer school. Oh yes, I finished my book yesterday, *The Moscow Vector*. It was a good spy thriller.

Guess that's all for now.

Ciao.

**11:50 a.m.**

Did I say I was going kayaking? I think not. The lake was tres choppy, and so I got my new book, *Ice Hunt*, and found a hammock to read. A few minutes later it started to rain and, boy, did it pour. It's stopped now, but it's definitely not a day to worry about sunburn. It will be interesting to see how the day plays out.

All for now.

#### **4:15 p.m.**

What a day. The clouds roll in, it rains, the sun comes up and dries it out, and it becomes hot and humid, and then the clouds roll in again.

Right now the clouds are coming back.

Did I mention I didn't go kayaking? Oh well, I just said it again.

It did clear up in time for outdoor lunch, and the staff dried off the tables and chairs.

After lunch, I went for my last archery set. Boy was it hot and humid...archery is the furthest from the lake and always hot there, but it was bad this year (*the heat that is*).

Not my score though. In the final set, I tied for first place with 12 points, securing an additional 5 points and giving us enough to get a T-shirt from the gift shop.

After I went to a lecture on Stephen Leacock before going to the BBQ gazebo for a game of Say What.

The team Lisa and I were on came in first, giving us another 10 points plus two participation points.

Lisa wants to buy Jordi a sweatshirt and give me the T-shirt we will get free. Right now she is at bingo for the second set today.

There is another monster bingo as part of this evening's program. Because of unstable weather today, Lisa started packing, deciding to consolidate our clothes in one suitcase for those we will need in the next few days after leaving Fern. This way we only have to take one suitcase into the hotels.

Smart cookie.

Got a letter from Jordi today that she sent the day she arrived at camp. She tells us how she did not throw up on the bus, and she has the top bunk, but she is not with a lot of kids from last year, including Laura.

However, she is with a few kids she knows, including a girl from her school.

I guess that is all for now.

#### **8:40 p.m.**

The day is slowly slipping away.

We have had dinner and picked up our snapshot of us at Fern for 2005. Even with the unstable weather today, it was great being here.

This evening we went to the annual Alumni cocktail party where they served free finger foods and had an open bar (*three double scotch for the record*).

Right now, I am feeling very mellow and relaxed. Lisa and I were the last ones to leave the cocktail party. We were so engrossed. We went to the patio overlooking the lake, leaning against the rail and just talked about our vacation. We agreed it was wonderful and we both had a fantastic time. Lisa has no interest in looking elsewhere. I think she talked with more people this year than ever before and took part in more activities.

There is something about this place that gets into your soul and destroys all negative energy, problems and stress. Right now I'm in Mary Lou's looking over the lake as a slight breeze moves the water.

The only bad thing about perfection is that one has to leave it. Still, we have not done that yet.

Tomorrow will be another day, and although we will check out by 11, we will probably stay around the resort for a while. However, of course I will let you know tomorrow.

Do problems still exist in the real world?

As Rhett Butler said, "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn!"

#### **10:45 p.m.**

Days done...gone the sun, from the lakes to the hills to the skies....all is well...safely rest....

Well, our final full day at Fern has drawn to a close. We just finished the evening program, which of course was the guest video and staff lip sync show. Among the classic faves were Day Oh, the Banana Boat and Seven Little Girls in a Car with Fred. As always, it was fantastic.

Right now I feel...so emotional...another fantastic vacation is drawing to an end. Lisa is playing bingo now...we are mostly packed. Tomorrow we have to be out of our room by 11, but will probably stay around for a long while after, even though our last meal here is breakfast. (*We can buy lunch at Mary Lou's*).

You know, last year felt strange without Jordana. I guess that is because it was our first year here without her. This year it doesn't feel strange at all.  
I was talking with Larry Swimmer and his wife earlier tonight. He is a high school friend of my brother Michael and fondly remembers my mom.  
Life really is strange, but in the end... it is wonderful.  
This has been one fantastic vacation.  
Until tomorrow...good night.

## **Friday, August 5**

**10:15 a.m.**

Well, our bags are packed, and we're ready to go. We're standing here outside our door.....STOP THE SINGING ALREADY!

Yes, the bags are indeed packed, and practically everything is in the car. Just a few last-minute items to move. We've paid our bill, used up our points on a T-shirt for me and a few buttons (get the point) and bought a sweatshirt for Jordi. We also bought a guest video (*alright, it's really a DVD, but old habits die hard*).

I was going to go kayaking, but the water is so choppy you can see whitecaps. So I think will pass. What a shame. Other than that, it's warm outside, the sky is clear, and it's windy. A lot of the people who came last Friday, like us, and people who arrived last Sunday for 5 days are packing up. We have to be out of our room by 11, and I will finish packing myself, as Lisa has bingo at 10:30. However, we do not have to be out of the resort so fast and will probably hang around here for a while. So I guess that is that. Fern Resort 2005 is almost over. After we leave, I will be out of computer contact until we get home Sunday evening, but will try to chronicle the adventures of Lisa and Jeff using an old-fashioned paper and pen.

It's been a real slice being here this year, and God willing we will be back in 2006.

So until next time,

So long, goodbye and farewell.

**12:40 p.m.**

Surprise, it's me again. We are still at Fern, having checked out and sitting around the pool. We're having lunch at Mary Lou's now, and then we will see what is what.

Ciao.

**4:05 p.m.**

**SURPRISE!**

Ever had that feeling of Deja Vu? Well, we've got it all over again. After lunch, we headed back to Rama for our third attempt to make millions at the casino.

Instead, I lost \$60, and Lisa made a few dollars. We then headed back to Fern, arriving at approximately the same time we arrived a week ago. We sat around the pool, I went swimming, and Lisa is now playing bingo for what is definitely her final time. Then we head to Orillia for the rest of our vacation.

It's interesting to see people arriving to start their vacation. Last Friday we arrived and saw people hanging around the pool preparing to depart.

Not to mention the people who arrived last Sunday. So we have seen at least four "generations" (*is that the right word?*) of people on vacation at Fern. A record for us, but then again being here as late as we are today is a new record for us. Now this is definitely my last computer entry.

Bye.

# 2006: Family's Reunited for a Week

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**Friday, July 14**

**2:27 p.m.**

Good afternoon and welcome to Fern 2006, our seventh visit to this fantastic Orillia resort. We got here about 10 minutes ago, and our room is not ready yet, so we are just relaxing, touring the grounds and observing the changes. The animal farm and nature pond are both gone. They filled them in. I guess we will have to wait until 2007 to see what replaces it. They also added a breakfast buffet for those who do not want to order off the menu.

It is particularly interesting for Jordi, who is back after a two-year hiatus (*her last visit was 03*).

We got up this morning, and I walked over to What a Bagel for some bagels. After breakfast, Lisa packed her stuff, and we eventually loaded the car and departed Thornhill shortly after 10. We arrived in Orillia (*after a short break outside Barrie*) close to noon.

We went to a supermarket and stocked up on liquids (milk, pop, OJ) before heading to Kelsey's for lunch (our third such visit).

We then proceeded into town to walk around, bought some chips and made reservations at Webers for Sunday night at 6:30. Since I was by myself, I asked the hostess for the same table as last year and told her it was my wife's birthday. Boy, will Lisa be surprised. I did tell Jordi, though.

The hostess said they would have some balloons there as well. So it should be fun.

Tonight's entertainment is Deal or No Deal, but I doubt it will be with real money. It should be interesting.

Well, guess that's it for now.

This year our good friend Bonnie loaned us a laptop computer. If and when I get the password, I may just do the journal that way.

Time will tell.

That's all for now.....

**10:50 p.m.**

Good evening.

I am penning this entry the old-fashioned way, pen and paper.

Well, the first day is coming to an end. It was pretty good. This afternoon Jordi and I went swimming while Lisa played bingo. She didn't win, but had fun anyway. Eventually, I went back to the room and, soon after, fell asleep. I woke with my daughter standing right beside me.

I changed, and we met Lisa at the Main Inn for dinner.

This year we have a new table again due, in part, to the fact we keep changing weeks.

Dinner was so-so. I had fish, which was a bit dry, and Lisa had prime rib, which was not bad. When it came to dessert, the waitress said she didn't know what the special cake of the day was, so I had to tell her to check with the kitchen.

Evening entertainment consisted of Deal or No Deal in Mary Lou's. Both Lisa and I put our names in as contestants, but did not get chosen.

After we went to Bergwen's to listen to Jamie Williams, who dazzled with his one-man band playing tunes from the 70s and 80s.

Jordi went back to the room to watch TV, but I eventually convinced her to come down to listen. She did for a bit before leaving for the computers and then back to the room. I think her pre-teen counterpart would have been more interested. Go figure, teens.

I came back a short while ago, while Lisa just walked into the room. That's it for now. I lost my first entry into the laptop. Let's hope it's the last time. Otherwise it's going to be journal interruptus this year.

Good night.

## **Saturday, July 15**

### **10:20 a.m.**

Good morning. It is hot and sunny out. Still, I think I will have to pass on the kayaking today as the water is very choppy, plus there is a lot of weekend watercraft on the lake which adds to the choppy seas (*OK, lake but sounds better*).

Breakfast was a washout with my pancakes arriving cold.

I sent them back and got them back a few minutes later slightly warmer, but now hard, and the bacon was cold.

So, I opted for the breakfast buffet instead, which was nice.

I got a surprise last night as my journal entry on Bonnie's computer vanished. Seems the computer does not allow guests to maintain files on the computer, so I did last night's by hand. So much for the laptop. Jordi told me that she has also started a journal, so this year will be interesting to compare notes at the end....sort of like Star Trek: The Next Generation. How about: Fern Resort...the Next Generation.

This afternoon seems busy with archery and cocktail mixing and Shout it out at the Movies (*a group game*).

This morning after breakfast I plopped myself into a chair outside The Main Inn and caught up with all the news from Israel and the Mideast. Pretty depressing...nothing ever changes.

Well, guess that is all for now....will talk later.

Bye.

### **3:15 p.m.**

Hi again.

It's Saturday afternoon, and I just came from playing Shout it out at the Movies, where we had to guess the names of TV shows. Only Lisa, myself and another woman showed up. We lost, but who cares. It was fun. I think most people today are lounging around the pool, as I just went to archery and no one showed up. So I left. No fun playing by yourself (*or shooting oneself*). Jordi is in Mary Lou's now, playing some hockey game with another girl. She connects with others far better than me.

You know, seeing all the people here with young kids reminds me that we also started here with a young kid seven years ago. Now look at us. Lunch by the pool was delicious as always. There is no shortage of choices for lunch by the pool. We are also having dinner by the pool, having been given the choice.

I have cocktail mixing at 4, but so far I am the only one signed up. If no one else shows, I am going to pass on it as well and take in the sun.

Will talk to you later in any event.

### **10:40 p.m.**

Good evening.

Well, our first full day is coming to an end. I never did go to the cocktail class. I was the only participant, so I cancelled and went back to the pool.

This evening we had steak dinner outside. The steak was fatty and poorly done. I had to go to the washroom, and when I came back, Lisa was talking to the hostess, telling her of my complaint. We also told her of the poor breakfast today, where pancakes were cold the first time and, when returned, hard. After dinner, Jordi had her hair done by someone here, with corn braids put in. Something a little different.

Evening entertainment started with Vibe 2006, a musical/dance revue in the same style as Sheridan Style. We all loved it. They did a tribute to Elton John and Billy Joel, a history of Motown and Studio 54. Lots of good music, but it made me think that all these songs are golden oldies for us and unknown to the younger generation. Guess there is no good music today. It was funny telling Jordi that this is what Mom and I used to go dancing to. Sort of thing our parents would have told us when listening to Sinatra and Benny Goodman.

Jordi absolutely loves her digital camera and is getting some nice shots.

I guess that's all for now, so I will call it a day (*a day*) and head back to the room. Right now Nightlife is playing in Mary Lou's and Lisa wants to stay put here for a while, so will catch up with her later. As for the journal, I'll catch up with it tomorrow.

Good night.

## **Sunday, July 16**

### **10:30 a.m.**

Good morning, Fern.

EXODUS has begun at Fern. While many guests check in and out on Wednesday and Friday, Sunday seems to be the most popular day. It is interesting sitting in front of the Main Inn as I was doing just a short while earlier, watching people say their goodbyes, packing their cars and beginning their trek home.

Of course, arriving Friday, we were spared all that. Very soon a quiet lull will descend on Fern as the departing guests finally leave. It won't be till later this afternoon when the new crop begins to arrive. The result is very little programming today. Lisa and Jordi are at bingo now, but that is about the extent of it. I think Lisa and I are going to the casino this afternoon, as there is not much else for her to do (*she can't go into the water this week*).

Today we got a new server in the dining room who will be with us the rest of our stay. I think he is a lot better, but he cleans up while we are still there. I may mention this to him if it continues. Lunch today will be in the dining room as is done on Sunday and Friday. They suspend the poolside lunch to prevent departing guests from snatching an extra meal. I tried saving a journal entry yesterday in the laptop e-mail system, but once again, no good. So it's either going to be this or the old pen and paper. Still, with Jordi doing a journal, one of us is sure to capture the best of Fern 06.

Until later....

### **1:05 p.m.**

Good afternoon. After my last entry, I found a nice hammock under a shaded tree, lay back and read, occasionally closing my eyes for a brief respite. Is there anything better? This year's book, by the way, is *Black Order* by James Rollins. We had lunch in The Main Inn, which was almost deserted as it is changeover day. The hamburger was very good. For the afternoon, I think it's more of the same. Oh well, someone's got to do the hard work.

Talk to you later.

### **5:10 p.m.**

Boy, do plans change fast. After lunch I went for a walk and along the way decided that if Lisa didn't want to go to the casino I would go myself. So I came back and told her and, guess what, she said she would come.

We had a lot of fun for a few hours. She lost \$20, and I lost four times that. We also bought some pens, and I got a Tilley Hat. For some reason, now I have this overwhelming urge to hum the tune to Indiana Jones. We also checked out the casino's restaurants for when we return on our trek north to visit Jordi at visitors day.

We came back just as punch and cookies around the pool was wrapping up and sat around the pool for a while.

Boy is it hot out. The casino was a nice change to get out of the heat. We are going to shower and change soon and head off to Webers in Orillia for dinner. It sort of has become a tradition to go out for dinner one night while at Fern.

This year though, there is no theatre night in town afterwards, as the theatre company folded.

### **8:30 p.m.**

Good evening.

Well, I just got back from Webers. Dinner was fantastic and a real success. We had the same corner table as last year, and it was decorated with balloons. Lisa was so thrilled and touched by the gesture. But why not? Her birthday is only two weeks away, and anytime is a good reason to celebrate, especially while on holiday and we are all together (*Jordi will be at camp on her actual birthday*).

Lisa had the veal parmesan, Jordi wings and ribs, and for me, the salmon, topped off with a nice bottle of Sauvignon Blanc. Afterwards, they brought us a piece of birthday cake and sang happy birthday. Still, it was nice to get back to the resort and change out of long pants. When we left, it was 32 degrees, and when we returned it was 31. Yes, we did feel the difference.

Getting back after 8 meant we missed the ski show. Now let's all say ahhhhhhhhhhh.

Lisa and I are going to see Tim Holland now in Bergwen's. He is a ventriloquist and juggler. Jordi will join us when Big Brother is over on TV.

After that, they are showing Fun With Dick and Jane, so we might stay to see it. Time will tell.

It's so different with Jordi being back at Fern with us. She is a different person than in 2003.

If you don't hear from me until tomorrow, then goodnight. Otherwise, talk to you later.

Ciao.

### **11:10 p.m.**

Entertainment was very good tonight. It was so warm in Bergwen's, so I asked them to turn up the A/C and ordered an ice tea.

Fun with Dick and Jane was good also.

Well enough for tonight.

The weekend is over.

See you tomorrow and the start of the work week (*well, it is for some people*).

## **Monday, July 17**

### **9:35 a.m.**

Good morning.

Did I ever mention that this year they introduced a breakfast buffet as an alternative to the menu? The best part is being able to make your own toast...hot and crisp. It looks like it's going to be a scorcher today. Going to sit back and read all the good news of the day.

### **1:10 p.m.**

Good afternoon.

It's a hot and windy day (*so you don't feel the heat*).

I read all the latest developments from the Mideast before I went kayaking for a while, but it was too choppy to stay on the lake for a long time, so came back, found a hammock and read my book.

Eventually moved to the room to read as it was too hot out. I met Lisa and Jordi for lunch by the pool.

Lisa was late as she was taking a casino lesson.

This afternoon we are going to play Scene It, across in the room across from ours, then archery and finally, will wrap it up with cocktail mixing. After that, there is a wine and cheese party for guests.

This afternoon Jordi is going to Mocktail mixing, sort of like my program without alcohol....chip off the ole block.

**7:10 p.m.**

The wine and cheese was great, but left me feeling full, so I decided to eat at the kids' buffet, which was OK. I had some chicken noodle soup and chicken. It was very good.

Lisa and Jordi also ate at the buffet.

I think I am going into Orillia to buy some sleeping pills. Tonight's entertainment is the Down East Show, featuring singers and dancers and fiddlers from the East Coast. Last year I walked out of the show as I didn't like it. Will see if this year is any better.

**9:05 p.m.**

Day's end.

After I signed off last time, I noticed Jordi playing pool by herself, so I asked her if she wanted a game. She said sure, so we wound up playing two. I won both, but was fun playing pool with her.

After I found Lisa, we went into Orillia, where I bought something that should help me sleep, plus something for my toe, which is developing a blister.

Came back and found Jordi in the room. Seems all the teens bugged out of the evening entertainment and went their own ways back to their rooms. Lisa and I went to the program, but fiddlers don't do much for me, so after a few minutes I told Lisa I was going back to the computer and then to the room. She said she is coming back soon.

I think I forgot to mention, but this afternoon after lunch we went to the pool and got some great shots: Lisa on land, Jordi and I in and under the water.

Well, that's all for today, Monday. Have a good evening, and all being well, will return, same channel tomorrow.

**Tuesday, July 18**

**9:40 a.m.**

Good morning.

Wow, what a storm we had last night. Thunder and lightning and rain. We needed it, though, to get rid of the heat. This morning started off overcast, but the sun is now starting to come out and burn off the cloud cover. For the first time since we arrived, I slept great, thanks to the sleeping pill. Feel like a normal person again.

My foot is bothering me as the blister has formed on one of my toes. I got some padding to put on it at Shoppers Drug Mart last night. Of course, trying to walk without putting pressure on the toe has increased the pain level in my entire foot. There is no easy way to walk.

I have archery this morning at 11:15, but that is about all the organized programs I have lined up today. So it seems right now a good day to read.

This afternoon is the pool party where kids take part in various pool-related games. We used to watch it when Jordi took part, but don't think she has signed up for it this year.

Tonight the teens are having dinner themselves and eventually a movie night right across the hall from us. So it's just Lisa and me for dinner.

Well, enough talk for now.

Back later.

**1:30 p.m.**

Good afternoon.

Well, it turned out to be a nice day after all. It's warm out, but not sweltering.

After my last transmission, Lisa showed up here at Mary Lou's, and then we went to the gift shop. I bought a T-shirt before going kayaking. The water was beautiful.

Coming back, I saw Lisa at the boat docks. Jordi was also there with a friend fishing. She won some fishing contest. Found a hammock and read a bit before lunch (*outside, of course*).

Now Jordi is playing water volleyball.

Going to relax this afternoon and read some more.

Until later.

**5:15 p.m.**

Wow, a second afternoon entry. It must be my lucky day. I relaxed around the pool this afternoon, savouring a blue lagoon martini and reading my book while the pool party took place. Before that, though, I watched the water volleyball game and got some pics of Jordi in the game.

Later I retreated to the room to get out of the sun to.....wait for it.....read some more.

I finally headed down here to Mary Lou's, meeting Lisa on the way and finding Jordi here. We played a game of pool (*I won*) before she left. Tonight the teens are having dinner on their own, as are all the kids. Then it's the Fern Idol, the talent show which Jordi signed up for.

Then a show called Comedy in Motion with Bob Cates, who is a professional comic/variety entertainer, and finally a Patio Cats in Mary Lou's.

So, should be a fun evening.

Til later.

**9:45 p.m.**

Good evening.

Well, the final part of the evening show started. It started, though, with Fern Idol, 8 kids competing for a trophy. Jordi entered, and she told me that she was so nervous that she felt like backing out, but in the end she didn't. She danced to the song "Dirty Pop."

She was awesome. In the end, though, she did not win.

Two girls sang together, and they were the best, something Jordi admitted to me privately. However, just getting up in front of everyone takes guts. Actually was a good day for her as she won a teen contest earlier in the day, catching the largest fish. Tomorrow she is going on the banana boat.

After Fern Idol, they had a juggler comic who was very good juggling, among other things, plates, a routine taken from Ed Sullivan.

Well another day has come, another day has gone. Time seems to be spinning away during this vacation. Brings to mind a song...*Slow down you move too fast, got to make the morning last, kickin' up the cobblestones and feelin' groovy.*

OK, so maybe you can sing it better, but I control the journal, so there!

Anyway, enough chatter for tonight. I'm going to listen to some tunes with the Mrs.

So until tomorrow....goodnight.

**Wednesday, July 19****10:20 a.m.**

Good morning.

I finished reading all the wonderful news coming out of the Mideast.

This morning we had our family photo taken before everyone scattered.

Jordi is going on a banana boat ride soon, and I may head out on the kayak (the only way to travel).

Jordi told us last night she found out she came in second in the Fern Idol contest.

I was woken up around 12:30 a.m. by some people playing hockey outside. I think it was some staff. I called the front desk and told them last night.

I have been enjoying myself, but in a way will be nice to get back to my own bed.

This is the first year we have not had one server.

Every day we have someone different, which diminishes the experience, as it is nice to have the same person every day.

Guess that's all for now.

**5:00 p.m.**

Seems hard to believe the afternoon is almost over.

The first half of the vacation inches along, and once you pass Monday, the whole thing seems to zip along. Today for lunch at the pool, Jordi ate with her friend and, according to our daughter, she played bingo, but sat with the other teens. Lisa didn't care as she found someone to chat with.

After lunch, Lisa and I spent the afternoon by the pool, both in and sitting around. I skipped out for a

short bit to visit the general store across from Rama to get some more OJ and milk. Eventually Jordi joined us, and we all went into the pool, and I finished off all my waterproof cameras. Finally, it was time for Martini mixing class. In one word...yummy. We learned how to make a Breakfast Martini, a classic, a Hawaiian and a Candy Apple Martini. The last two were my favourites. Tonight for dinner we had the option of eating in the dining room or by the pool again for a steak dinner. This time we opted for the dining room (*see Saturday for that outdoor experience*) The evening entertainment is a group called the 22 Piece All Star Band, a group of young people who perform big band sounds of yesterday. They were here last year and were very good, even though not many people stayed to listen. I can't believe we have only one more full day here. Around this time, we start to discuss the future and a possible return. Like last year at this time, we remain uncertain. Part of it will depend on what Jordi does next summer. Like everything else, time will tell.

#### **9:20 p.m.**

The band is on break, so decided to take this opportunity to say so long for the day. I tried to get a kayak earlier in the evening, but asked too late as they don't let boats out one hour before sunset. What a shame, as the water was crystal clear. Perfect for kayaking. Funny thing is the teens have vacated Mary Lou's already, and Jordi went back to our room earlier. The band is good, but you have to like this stuff. Think I might head back to the room as well. So on behalf of the crew, goodnight.

#### **Thursday, July 20**

##### **10 a.m.**

Good morning.

We finished breakfast, which was good, except for Lisa's cold French toast.

Well, the final phase of our visit has started. This morning we got our order form to order Fern rolls. We ordered two dozen, which we will get tomorrow when we leave. Also at our table was a request form for Summer 2007, which, as you know, does not commit us to anything. We chose the same week, which will correspond to Friday, July 13-Friday, July 20. We have still not decided on the type of room we want.

We also got an invitation to the alumni cocktail party later this afternoon, which is always fun. Guess that is all for now.

##### **1:05 p.m.**

Good afternoon.

Well, after my last transmission, Lisa and I talked and decided to put down Fireside Inn for our 2007 request.

I was going to go kayaking this morn, but the winds really picked up, so decided to stay landlocked.

Read the paper and then picked up my book again. It's great having so much time to read.

This afternoon Lisa and I are going to play Outburst Trivia, and then I have archery.

That's all for now, though.

##### **2:00 p.m.**

Hi. It's me again (*you were expecting someone else?*)

The weather is really changing. Clouds are rolling in, and it's becoming breezier. I think we are headed for a storm. Didn't even bother with the swimsuit. While some go in the water no matter what the weather, I prefer it a bit hotter. Did I mention that at lunchtime, Jordi ate with her friends again? Also today is Pirate Day (*arrrr maties, thar she blows*) and a number of the program directors ran around the pool deck looking for the buried treasure and making kids walk the plank into the pool. Was cute.

### **3:45 p.m.**

It's me again. Some days you don't make many entries, and then there is today.

Jordi went on the teen cruise, and they got to the part where they can jump off the boat when the teen leader spotted lightning in the distance. So it was the end of the one program Jordi has been looking forward to all week. We had some rain already, and it is still overcast.

Jordi joined Lisa and me to play a game of Outburst Trivia, with Lisa and Jordi on the same team. My team won, though (*yippee*).

On the way over to Mary Lou's, where we played, I started talking to the teen leader. He said he wished a lot more of the kids were like Jordi, as she is willing to try new things and is very sociable. After the trivia game, the family departed, and I went to Bergwen's to watch the Indian River Reptile show, consisting of snakes, crocs and lizards.

Well enough for now. Jordi is watching me type this entry and is giggling profusely. She said goodbye to her good friend a few hours ago.

### **7:30 p.m.**

Good evening (*wow, last night I can say that*).

After I signed off last time, I was walking back to the room and noticed how calm and peaceful the lake was.

So I went to the boat docks and asked if I could take a kayak out despite the overcast skies.

They said sure, so I changed and took a kayak out for a brief jaunt (*didn't want to go too far in case the rain started again*). The water was so peaceful, and it was so beautiful on the lake.

Before dinner, it was the alumni cocktail party, which was nice. We also picked up our official Fern 06 family photo. Dinner was great with a pirate theme, and everyone got an eye patch to wear (*I may wear it Sunday night when we go to the Gordons for dinner, along with a smile and my hat!*) They had limbo contests and staff dressed as pirates. The menu was done in a pirate theme. I had the jerk chicken, finished it with mud pie and a specialty coffee (*my first dessert all week*).

The guest video and staff lip sync show starts at 8:45, so will head back to the room now to read a bit. Til later...

### **10:25 p.m.**

Well, it's all over but the packing. Wait, we did that already after dinner.

The evening program has just finished, and Lisa and Jordi are now playing bingo. It's never been my thing. This evening's entertainment was the guest video and the staff lip sync show. This year they completely revamped the show, eliminating many of the long-time favourites, including Day-Oh and Sitting in the Backseat with Fred. The guest video was just OK. Watching it, you would think that all the guests were under 20. Still, the opening of the video was fantastic, featuring a photo of the Rosen clan. I can see it now, agents on my doorstep wanting to represent the Rosen clan as we prepare for our world tour. I digress, though.

Fern 2006 will soon be consigned to the annals of history. Funny thing about vacations. You look forward to them so long and count down the months, weeks and days till you leave. There are good times and not so good ones, but as time goes by only the good ones shine through. What is left are moments you treasure for the rest of your life.

I know I will. This year with Lisa and Jordana has been truly wonderful, moments in time that will never be repeated and never forgotten.

So, until tomorrow and our final send-off, I would like to say, goodnight.

## **Friday, July 21**

**10:00 a.m.**

*Our bags are packed, and we're ready to go, we're standing here outside the door....STOP THE PRESSES, THIS JUST IN.....*

Lisa and Jordi came back from Big Bucks Bingo last night all giggly and hiding something. They explained how it went, and Jordi was practically jumping up and down as she explained how she won the **BIG** game. The prize: a free weekend at Fern for Winter 2007 for the three of us.

**WOW!!!! AMAZING!!**

We now return to regularly scheduled programming.

Everyone today is wishing the three of us congrats over Jordi's big win.

Our bill is paid, and we have used our Fern points to buy Jordi a T-shirt and a pin. Most of our luggage has been loaded into the car. We will finish after bingo as we have to be out of our room by 11.

*(Note to self: ask about room 102 for winter vacation.)*

The weather today is cool and overcast. We have had quite diverse weather this week. No idea what I am going to do now, but will fill you in later.

Ciao.

**12:05 p.m.**

I guess that is about it.

An eerie calm has settled over Fern as it is a changeover day and most of the Friday departures have left already. No doubt in a few hours the new crop of guests will begin to arrive.

This morning went kayaking. It was beautiful as usual. The lake was a bit rough, but so peaceful. Then met up with the family in the room, changed and went to archery. We are going to have lunch here at Mary Lou's (*we pay for it now as we have checked out*) and then head out. All in all, Fern 2006 has been another fantastic holiday. All being well, there will be others in the future, some better, some worse, but there will never be another holiday as the one we took this week.

Whether we return next summer remains open to debate.

At the very least we will be back in the winter, which will be a first. This will be the final entry in the journal. All that remains is to sign off now, reset the clock and consign Fern 2006 to the annals of history.

So long....for now.

\* \* \*

## **POST FERN 2006**

### **Saturday, July 22**

Boy was it nice to be back in our own beds. I went out for fresh bagels this morning. Today we stayed home, and I started working on my Fern journal. Jordi went to the Promenade with her friends and saw a movie. This evening stayed home for dinner and went for a walk to Shoppers Drug Mart for Jordi's camp goodies.

### **Sunday, July 23**

This morning went to Camp Connection for a poncho for Jordi and to Pharmacy 1 for camp goodies. Then went to buy fish for my aquarium. We were caught in the rain coming home. I finished my journal and the main part of this Fern Resort 2006 Website.

This evening Jordi stayed home and had pizza, and we went to the Gordons for BBQ dinner, which was nice. Uncle Joe and Aunt Myrna were there.

### **Monday, July 24**

This morning went to Golden Griddle for breakfast with Gayle Freedman, Jordi's former tutor. It was a lot of fun, and we are going to keep in touch. We came home and packed Jordi's bags for camp. Eventually headed to Centrepont, as she still needed a few things.

Eventually we took her duffel bags to Promenade, then picked up Mary, and went to Pickle Barrel for dinner. Jordi took us out for Lisa's "birthday dinner" as is her tradition.

We walked around after dinner and we bought a battery charger for Jordi's batteries to use in her digital camera and a cordless phone for the living room.

### **Tuesday, July 25**

What a nice and busy day. Lisa and I went out in the morning to Dr. Baum to refill a prescription and then to Allan Lustig to get my new orthotics.

We had lunch at home and then went to Hillcrest and eventually to the movies, where we saw My Super Ex-Girlfriend, which was cute. Then we went to Golden Star for supper. The movie is a real Rosen tradition, going back to when I was a kid. We did this every year before camp. The dinner thing is now a tradition, having started it last year.

Jordi is getting ready now for camp departure tomorrow and making last-minute phone calls.

### **Wednesday, July 26**

Would you believe we are just warming up our dinner and it is almost 8 p.m. Lisa is having leftover chicken, and I am having sardines.

What a busy day it has been.

After we dropped Jordana off at the Camp Northland bus departure area, we went to Shopsy's for breakfast. I had an omelette and toast, and Mom had her usual. We then went home for a while and then to the bank to take care of some things in our safety deposit box. Lisa got a bracelet that was there which belonged to my mom.

After we went to Vaughan Mills, the new mall. It was beautiful. We walked around and eventually bought lunch - Chinese. They also had a place for bourbon chicken. We eventually came home and went to sleep.

We just came home from What a Bagel and Longos. There we ran into Marlene Rosen. We met the new people moving into the house next to us, and we showed them around our place. They seem very nice.

### **Thursday, July 27**

Hi! It's me again (*you were expecting someone else?*)

This morning we stayed around the house and eventually walked over to Longo's to do some shopping. There we ran into Barbara, my cousin.

We then went to Dominion at Bayview and Major Mac to buy some potatoes and other stuff and walked over to Pizza Pizza for lunch.

Afterwards, we went to Home Depot. We are looking at tiles to redo the kitchen. We finally came home and did nothing much. Tomorrow we are taking Bubie to the doctor in the morning and having Uncle David over for dinner.

Well, I guess that is about it. Time to call it a day (*a day*).

### **Friday, July 28**

Good afternoon. Well, another busy day (*it's 5:06 now*).

This morning we picked up my mother-in-law and went to Sunnybrook where she had a doctor's appointment. We got there early and left early.

Then we went to Olympia Tile to look for new tiles for the kitchen and bought two samples. We may just have the winning tile now. After we went to Harvey's for lunch (*the restaurant, not the one in my lodge*). After, we took Bubie home and went to Nortown to pick up some steaks for dinner. We came home and did not do much. Luc just came over and gave Mom a birthday card, and we showed him the tiles. Lisa is cutting up the potatoes right now.

Hi again. It's 11:15 now, and the evening is about over. David came over about 6, and we started the BBQ. We made steaks and potatoes. It was delicious, and we had a great evening.

Guess that is about all for today. So long.

### **Saturday, July 29**

Today we went to the races at Woodbine. Along the way, we passed McDonald's (*McDough!*)

We only stayed until after the sixth race, as it was so hot out. After that, we went to the casino for a short bit and then cashed in our winnings and left. Yes, we actually won. Either Lisa or I or both of us won on every race. Not bad, eh? For lunch, we had pizza at the races.

Tonight we just stayed home and had dinner at home. It was too hot to go out again. Guess that is about it.

### **Sunday, July 30**

Happy Birthday Lisa!

Today we went to Camp Robin Hood's 60th anniversary. Boy, has the camp changed since I was a counsellor. It has even grown since Jordi was a camper there. Walked around and remembered the past, and we came home.

Hi again. It's evening now. We just came home from dinner. This afternoon Lisa took the bus and went to see her mom, and I had a nap. Michael came over with a card for Mom. This evening we went to Baton Rouge. The food and service were great. After they brought Mom a piece of birthday cake with a sparkler in it. Then we went to Luc and Jenny's and took the gift over that we bought them.

Well, I guess that's it for my vacation this year. It's been a great one, first with Lisa and Jordana, and then with Lisa. Now it's back to work, at least for the next four days. Then Friday sometime, it's off again for Northbound II (*I think there is a visitor's day somewhere in the plans*).

Until the next time....live long and prosper!

### **Friday, August 4**

**4:25 p.m.**

Good afternoon. We are back in our room at the Mariposa Inn now. I was at the pool for a while, but too many loud, obnoxious kids were there, so I did not go in. But I digress.

The day started very leisurely with a late breakfast at Shopsy's with the waitress bringing us wrong orders. After we went back home to pack up the cooler and food (*the rest of the car was packed already*) and headed off at noon.

There was already traffic on Highway 400, so it took us a little longer than usual to get to Orillia. It was funny being back here three weeks after we came up to Fern Resort.

Our room was not ready when we arrived, so we went to the variety store next door and then to Kelsey's for lunch. For the first time, we sat in front of the restaurant.

We came back and got our room. It was very nice with a king-size bed and a fridge.

That's all for now.

## **Saturday, August 5**

**12:45 a.m.**

Good morning. We just got back from Casino Rama. Tonight we took the shuttle to the casino. Once there, we went to the restaurant in the hotel for dinner and then went to see Wayne Brady. To say it was funny would be an understatement. It was an improv comedy show with Brady calling for volunteers from the audience for suggestions.

After the show, we went to the casino, and after losing \$30, I walked away with \$71.

The shuttle ride back was not as great, as our hotel was at the end of the route. So it took 45 minutes to get back to the hotel. Well, I am exhausted now, so until later, goodnight.

**5:50 p.m.**

Good afternoon.

Wow! What a busy day and a fun one. This morning we had breakfast at the hotel and eventually checked out, stopping in Orillia to buy Jordana a cup for her hot chocolate and then to A&P to buy her goodies. By then it was around noon, and we decided to go back to the casino. I lost \$40, and Lisa lost \$20 before winning \$12.25 on a \$5 bet.

We left Rama and Orillia and headed north to Bayview-Wildwood resort to check it out. First thing we noticed was the small pool. Well, that ruled that resort out as a possible summer spot.

Continuing north on Highway 11, we eventually reached our cut-off at Hwy 118. We decided to go visit our friends Frank and Maryann at Bangor Lodge. Before we did that, though, we went into Bracebridge for lunch at Harvey's. Then we headed to Bangor (*getting lost along the way*).

Our friends were surprised to see us, and we had a great visit seeing their cottage and the resort. We stayed about 30 minutes and continued on our way, arriving in Halliburton and the Lakeview Motel around 5:30.

As I said at the outset, it's been a busy day.

Til later.

**9:10 p.m.**

Hi from Lakeview Motel. We just came back from dinner in Halliburton. After my last entry, I went on the porch to read while Lisa took it easy for a while. We finally left for dinner at 7:30. We had Chinese food and then went for a walk. Guess that's all for today. Tomorrow is Visitors' Day. So until next, take care.

## **Sunday, August 6**

**6:49 p.m.**

Hi. It's me (*of course!*)

We got home at 5:45, 3 hours and 15 minutes after leaving Camp Northland, which is about right, especially since we stopped three times for breaks.

However, what a busy day it has been, rising before our planned 7:30 wake-up. We had breakfast at the motel and then headed to the camp.

Jordana was so glad to see us, especially since we arrived early. What a surprise we got. Her girlfriend straightened her hair, and she put part of it in a ponytail, so she has long straight hair. We talked a lot, and she showed us her cabin. We met her unit head and counsellors as well as Jordana's friends' parents from Toronto.

The corned beef and pastrami were delicious.

Alas, Visitors' Day ended all too quickly. We left at 2:30, just 15 minutes before the official end of the day, headed west along Highway 118 to Highway 11, down through Hwy 400 and 407, and home.

I guess everything is over now for Summer Vacation 2006: Fern, Orillia, Haliburton and Visitor's Day.

All well thought out, planned and executed. They are history now with plenty of great memories.

So, on behalf of Lisa and Jordana (*who is still far away at Camp Northland-B'nai Brith, but not far from our thoughts*), I would like to say:

Goodbye, Farewell and Amen.

# 2007: Tales from Two Seasons

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**Friday, February 2**

**1:25 p.m.**

Hi.

Guess what? We're here! Fern Resort 2007 with a big difference. What started with a simple game of bingo last summer has turned into a winter getaway and our first winter trek northward to this great resort.

The basketball court is a curling rink, and the lake is a sheet of snow and ice. It is so beautiful. We left at 10:30 this morning, making one pit stop and arriving in Orillia around noon for lunch. The roads were clear and dry all the way up. After lunch at Kelsey's, we came here and are presently waiting for our room to be ready. (*We are staying in Sweet Fern, which is a two-storey, three-bedroom unit.*)

Tonight there is a nice program, which includes wine tasting and a movie: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest.

That's all for now.

Until later, Ciao.

**7:26 p.m.**

Good evening.

It's so strange going for dinner at 6, and it's dark already and so quiet. Such a far cry from the summer. Dinner was OK, but it was nice that they had a piano player playing dinner music. He was very good. Today we got a letter from our cousin Stacie in Washington, and a germ of an idea has been planted for a summer vacation. It's early, but we will see.

This afternoon we just relaxed, watched TV and had a little shut-eye.

Dinner was nice as we ordered a litre of wine. Our server said whatever we didn't finish would be put away for tomorrow night.

Soon evening program starts, first with a chocolate fountain and wine tasting, then a ventriloquist, and finally a movie.

There is not much here for the journal, but then again not much is happening.

We signed up for the hay ride tomorrow morning, so that should be fun.

Until later.

Bye.

**11:58 p.m.**

Well, seems our first day is over.

It was a great program this evening with the chocolate fountain and wine tasting.

The ventriloquist was very good, and then the movie was great.

So that's it for day 1....until tomorrow, Good Night.

**Saturday, February 3**

**11:40 a.m.**

Good morning. OK, well technically it's almost over, but this is my first chance to catch up on events here.

Well, it seems our plans changed radically after breakfast. Mike Stewart announced the programs in the dining hall, and the snowshoe trek intrigued me, so I told the family I wanted to do that at 10 instead of the hay ride. So, at the appointed time, I headed over to the ski shop and got a pair of snowshoes, and our group headed out across the lake to Bird Island. Yes, this is the same island I usually kayak to in the summer.

It was amazing. I was actually walking across the lake. So in a way, I was walking on water! Once again I tried something new at Fern. Remember, it was here many years ago that I tried kayaking. Later I tried water skiing, an adventure that did not turn out so well (see Fern Resort 2003). So, we walked to the island, around it and back. Mike brought another person and me back earlier because I decided to go on the hay ride at 11, and Jordi joined me. The ride was fun. In the meantime, Lisa and Jordi went to bingo at 10:30, and then Lisa went to play Say When at 11. It is so cold out today. This afternoon have a wine seminar and TV Trivia. We have lunch in half an hour (it's 11:53 now). I guess that's all for now. Until later...

### **3:07 p.m.**

Good afternoon.

I just came back from the wine seminar with Lisa. We tried three wines from Colio Estates: Cabernet Franc, late autumn Vidal and a white. There was no charge, and it was very educational. This morning Lisa played Say When and her team, just her and someone else (*the smallest team*), won. Now we are waiting to play TV Trivia.

### **5:02 p.m.**

Hi again.

Well, it's later than my last entry (*no kidding*). I just came back from the staff lip sync show, or as it is better known, Showtime 2007. The winter show is a lot smaller than the summer staff show, with only 6 people, but it was fun and featured the return of Day Oh or the Banana Boat song. Another Fern holiday is quickly coming to an end...*seems we just got started, and before you know it, comes a time I will have to say so long.*

I guess that's because we got here yesterday and we are leaving tomorrow. Still, it sounds so much better in song. Being winter, though, I must be out of tune. Oh well!

Tonight Lisa and Jordi are playing bingo, and then Nightlife is performing at Mary Lou's. After that they are showing Superman Returns.

We ordered Fern rolls, which we will pick up tomorrow. I think I will head back to the room and relax before I change for dinner (*been in sweats all day*).

So until later...Arrivederci.

### **9:46 p.m.**

Good evening.

Well, we had a good dinner...steaks done just right. Afterwards I went back to the room, put a log on the fireplace and read the paper...I don't know what it is about Fern, but summer heat or winter chill, there is something about it that dissolves all tension and leaves one calm and relaxed.

While I was mellowing out, the family was playing bingo. Then Jordi came back to watch TV, and I came back to Mary Lou's to listen to Night Life with Lisa. They play in the summer as well and are very good. Anyways, enough for now.

If don't catch up with you later...good night.



**Sunday, February 4**

**10:22 a.m.**

Good morning

Wow!

What a storm last night. By the time I came back to the room after Superman Returns, there were no paths left to walk on. I got back to the room covered in snow, and Lisa told me to leave my pants downstairs.

Mother Nature must have dumped at least a foot of snow. One of the things they do great here is take care of the place...in the summer it's the gardening, and in the winter it's clearing the paths.

By the time we went down for breakfast, all the paths were clear of snow.

Sunday mornings they serve a buffet breakfast which was nice, especially the fresh omelettes.

Afterwards, I went to clear off the car, which was a monumental task in itself. Now I'm just going to take it easy for a bit after that chore.

Lisa and Jordi are going to play bingo at 10:30, and then we will pick up our Fern rolls, check out and say goodbye to Fern and Orillia for what looks like the last time this year.

Well, at least we are keeping our Fern record intact for this century. So I guess that's the end of our free Fern weekend. Winter sure is different up here.

All that will be left is to do some minor cosmetic surgery to this log and send it to the web. So until whenever.....take care.

**Post-trip note:** While Lisa and Jordana were playing bingo this morning, I loaded up the car and checked out. The only thing we had to do when they finished at 11 was check our room, pick up our Fern rolls, hand in the keys, and we were off.

Due to road conditions, though, we didn't get anywhere too fast. The roads in Orillia and on Highway 11 were snow-packed, and it wasn't until we got closer to Barrie that the roads cleared up. Overall, it took two hours to get home, which included a lunch stop at Wendy's.

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**Friday, October 19**

**6:20 p.m.**

Hi, it's me. Well, if it's autumn, then we must be at Fern Resort. Seriously, we are back for our third season (*summer regulars, winter and fall tryouts*) and second time this year. We decided to try fall just to get away after the past hectic month. We left home around 12:30 and headed to Kelsey's at Hwy 7 and Yonge, maintaining a Rosen family tradition of lunch at Kelsey's the day we depart.

We got on the road around 1:47 (*according to my reliable timekeeper, Jordana*) and made it up here in just over an hour. This is quite amazing if you ask me. Before checking in, we stopped in Orillia for some supplies.

Also quite amazing is finding out that there is no evening program tonight. You see, it's Jazz Weekend and so there is music in the dining room and ...well that's it. Like I said, quite amazing. This year we are staying in one of the Edgewater Cottages (*I guess that's it for the Fireside Inn*). After checking in, I went for a long nature walk, taking Jordi's digital camera and snapping hundreds of pictures (*ok, maybe not that many*). Not a bad way to take photos. I could get used to it.

Now I know you are asking the question of the week: why I took so long to start this journal. Well, you see, when we arrived, there was a business conference meeting in Mary Lou's, so we could not use the computers.

Bummer, man, as they say.

Well, it's almost 6:30, and the sun is setting in the west (just like it does in Toronto). That means it's almost time to head over to the dining hall to meet the little woman for dinner. (*The medium-sized one is on another computer near me*).

So until we meet again... ciao.

**8:15 p.m.**

Hi again.

Wow, it seems like just a few minutes since I took pen to paper (*well, actually fingers to keyboard*).

Just came from the dining hall...dinner was superb.

This time out we have a table on the opposite end of the dining hall from where we sat last winter.

Unfortunately, it is not near where the music is being played. Still, it is nice as we can talk to each other.

I had prime rib, which was delicious, and some kind of chocolate dessert with a Fern coffee (*Baileys and Kahlua*), and we polished off a bottle of Shiraz.

We just rented a movie, *The Wedding Planner*, as there are no programs tonight. Tomorrow there are no programs here, so the day is at our discretion. It will be interesting. I don't think we would have come up if we had known about the lack of programs, but we are here, and it's up to us to make our own good time. So let the good times roll.

Anyhow, enough yammering. Time to head back to the room and watch the movie...lights...camera and ACTION.

GOOD NIGHT.

**Saturday, October 20**

**6:05 p.m.**

You know life is really like a box of chocolates; you never know what you are going to find inside (*guess what movie just finished watching*).

Well, the day is almost done, and I am just going on the computer.

Imagine a day without a computer. It's almost like a day without sunshine, which we didn't have either.

However, I digress.

It's been windy and cloudy all day with occasional bouts of rain showers.

As well, the OSSTF were holding meetings inside Mary Lou's all day, so the computers were closed off.

Therefore, this morning after breakfast Jordi and I went out, and I bought a newspaper, as they didn't have any here.

Afterwards we played mini-golf with yours truly walking away the victor (*not that anyone is handing out trophies*).

Before long, it was lunchtime and then Lisa and I went to Casino Rama. Overall, I played \$65 and won \$57, so it was not a bad afternoon. (*A fool and his money were only slightly parted*). I was doing terrible until I put \$5 into a Deal or No Deal slot machine and won \$44, which brought me back, which was great. As you can guess, I took the deal. Figured while I could make more, I could lose the entire thing also. Returning to Fern, I tried out the fitness club for a bit (not that great) before switching on the TV and watching...wait for it: FORREST GUMP. Therefore, I put a log on the fire, and we watched the movie.

The sun is slowly setting over Lake Couchiching and the colours are magnificent. The wall of green from the summer is now painted a multitude of magnificent colours.

Soon it will be dinner and more jazz music as we dine.

There is no after-dinner show, but there are a couple of good movies on TV tonight, *Night at the Museum* and *Music and Lyrics*, so we will make it movie night.

Overall, the weekend is not what I thought, but still nice to get away. Actually, Lisa is finding it even more relaxing, as this is our first trip away since her mom's death. She is finding peace in the trip.

I guess you never know what life is going to throw at you. It is just going with the flow and riding the rapids of life. I guess that is the secret.

**9:06 p.m.**

Hi again.

It's me (*like it would be someone else*).

We had a very nice dinner...steaks all around with cheesecake to top it off. Afterwards we just lounged around in the dining room (*something you don't do in summer*) and listened to the music (*which was wonderful*) and finally left. We went and bought Jordi her favourite sweatshirt. Then Jordi and I went and finished off our outdoor checkers game.

(Giant-size pieces...we started the game this afternoon before the rain halted it). This being fall, no one else disturbed the game. If it had been summer, a few more games would have taken place since ours. So we continued with moi emerging victorious. We continued on to Mary Lou's, where the young one and the bearded wonder engaged in a game of pool. Of course, the latter was victorious. Now it's journal time, as you can see.

Then it's back to the room and movie night at the Rosens. OK, so movie night at the Rosens at Fern. I guess that is all for now. Hope to get a computer tomorrow, but if not...that's life.

**Sunday, October 21**

**3:23 p.m.**

Welcome back. We have been home now for a couple hours already, and life is back to normal (too bad). This morning we slept in and before heading for a delicious Sunday brunch, Jordi and I played another game of checkers outdoors. Once again, the bearded wonder proved victorious.

After brunch, we picked up our Fern rolls, checked out and headed out around 11:30, arriving home just before 1 p.m. I did a quick change and went to the unveiling for June Obar's dad. Lisa eventually went to a get-together at Temple Har Zion for the former staff and students.

So that's it. I can guarantee no more Fern Resort in 2007. Fall is such a wonderful time to go there. You do not have the summer traffic or the winter road conditions. There is not as much to do there, but not as much noise either. Good and bad, pros and cons, I guess we have to weigh one against the other. Of course, isn't that what life is all about?

Take care, until next time.



# 2008: A Final Weekend

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**Friday, August 1**

**7:45 p.m.**

Well, we're....BACK!!

Seriously though, did we ever leave? I have always said Fern is a state of mind as well as an actual place.

When last we chatted, we were leaving home at 3 p.m., which we did, stopping off at Tim Hortons for some Timbits before heading up to camp. We arrived about 3:40 and waited for Jordi. Soon after she showed up, a car coming down Reesor Road stopped, turned around and came into the camp driveway. Turns out it was our old friend Lynda Taylor, whom we have not seen in ages. She was driving by (*they live on Reesor Rd.*) and saw us. We chatted a few minutes before I reminded everyone of our drive northwards, and so we left.

Thanks to Bonnie's suggestion, we drove straight up Reesor until it ended at Hwy 48. Driving was pretty great with only one holdup at a traffic light.

We finally arrived at 5:45 and checked into our Bayshore Cottage. Unfortunately, the A/C was not working, so we informed the office. It is working now, but only in one of the two rooms (Jordi's), so it promises to be a hot time in the old town tonight. (*Sorry, could not resist that one*).

I left a message with the owner that I was here, and we will see what develops (*get it, pictures....develops....a photographer's joke*). Right now Lisa and Jordi are playing bingo, and later on we will meet for the evening program, a ventriloquist and comedy show. Dinner was good; I had the prime rib. Once again we have a table in the terrace section just outside the main dining room (*and a bit quieter*). I always love the location as it overlooks the pool area.

Until later... don't sweat the small stuff (*just the big stuff*).

Adieu.

**10:10 p.m.**

Did I say earlier that some things never change...well, they don't because the first bingo game Lisa plays, she wins a t-shirt....she still gets it.

After that and the Deal or No Deal game, Fern version, they had a very good ventriloquist, Mark Crocker, and a comedian, Glen Ottaway, which I really didn't get into and left.

Jordana has already gone back to the room. I think will head there now.....it's been a long day.

Until tomorrow....good night.

**Saturday, August 2**

**10:40 a.m.**

Good morning.

Seems it's either one thing or another....last night I slept lousy as got a sore throat, which kept me up half the night.

Of course, the fact the room was dry didn't help...this morn went into Orillia and got something stronger than the Halls, which Lisa picked up at the Main Inn last night.

This morning met with Mark Downing, and WE HAVE A DEAL. They will take the books on a consignment basis, so will order 20 books to start, and I will make a few dollars a book, and they will make 5%. I can have the books shipped right to Fern, so I don't have to deliver them, and they will be displayed in the gift shop. I will get my money once the books are sold. It was the only way they would do it, but they like my book (*I feel like Sally Field; they like me, they really like me*).

I did a walk around this morn also and took lots of pics. With digital, I am free to shoot as much as I want. This afternoon going to cocktail mixing class, and this evening Lisa and I are going on a cruise on the Lake.

Well, until later...

**4:10 p.m.**

Good afternoon (and a very wet one it is right now).

This morning I took photos around Fern and then went over to the pool area. Before long it was lunch, and we enjoyed lunch outdoors (*ok, it rained very briefly but not much to talk about*).

After lunch, Jordi and I changed and went into the pool before she went to play water volleyball, and I joined Lisa on the deck and read my book.

At 2:30 we went to the Huronia Room to play Shout it out at the Movies (*which was focused on TV this time*) and our team only lost by 4 points (30-26). When it finished, we prepared to leave and noticed that it was pouring, so we did what you do at Fern when it rains...just walk through it and went back to the room.

I was supposed to go to cocktail mixing at 4, but as I was the only one signed up and don't like to drink alone, I passed on the class.

Tonight we are signed up to go on a cruise of the lake, but I guess that will depend on the weather.

Jordana is going to see a movie later in the Teen Lounge, so she is staying on land whatever happens. So until later....I remain yours truly.

**9:35 p.m.**

Good evening.

So where did we leave off....no idea, but after I signed off last I went back to the room and read my book until dinner. Lisa returned with good news that she won bingo again. Dinner tonight consisted of steak.

After dinner, Jordi left us for her teen program while we returned to our room for a bit before heading out on the lake for a one-hour cruise.... It was really enjoyable, as it took us to the other side of the lake, something we usually don't see on tours.

Returning to the resort, we went to Bergwen's to see Comedian Stephen Elvey, which was very good. Nightlife is now performing in Mary Lou's, and The B Movie is starting shortly in Bergwen's. I have not yet decided what to do.

Our last night at Fern always brings some regrets that it is coming to an end...this year is no different, maybe a little bit more so because we just arrived yesterday.....life is changing so much. So much has changed since we first came here in 2000.

Enough reminiscing now...time to return to fun central.

Bye for now.

**10:40 p.m.**

It's me again (*like you were expecting someone else*).

So I stayed at Mary Lou's with the bingo lady (*Lisa*), and we listened to Nightlife...they are always very good.

They are on a break now from their first set...so think will call it a night (*a night*) and head back to the room.

So on behalf of myself and all the little people who bring you this publication....good night.

**Sunday, August 3****10:20 a.m.**

Good morning.

It's only 10:20, and we have done so much already. At breakfast, we filled out our express checkout and handed it in. We went back to the room and packed and loaded most of the car. Found out something interesting (*ok interesting for me*)...seems if you come up for a week, checkout is 11, and you don't get lunch, but if you come for the weekend, checkout is 1 p.m. and you get lunch. So we get lunch and plan on relaxing around here afterwards.

Anyways, after we packed, I headed out onto the lake in a kayak, but the water was so choppy today, and I didn't get far. Every time I would stop paddling, I would be pushed back towards the resort, so I didn't last for an hour out there.

Eventually will hand in our keys and head to our next stop at Mariposa Inn in Orillia, where we will be computer-less for 24 hours (*can you say withdrawal symptoms?*).

Jordi wants to play a rematch of checkers again (*she beat me yesterday, I may have forgotten to mention*), so we will see. Lisa also wants to get a sweatshirt with all her bingo winnings, so have to do that also. In the meantime, meeting family here at Mary Lou's at 11 for a game of Outburst. So until later....

### **1:39 p.m.**

Afternoon....would say good, but time has run out on Fern 2008. After we last chatted, the three of us played Outburst, but lost. Jordi and I then played two games of checkers with yours truly emerging as the undisputed checkers champ of 2008.

Then came lunch to a half-empty dining room, as today is changeover day. In fact, our table was set for dinner, so I don't think they realized we also got lunch. But it was soon rectified, and we enjoyed lunch in the dining room.

Afterwards we loaded up the rest of the car, picked up our Fern rolls, and Lisa got a sweatshirt while Jordi got a t-shirt.

We were going to play mini golf, but there were no clubs or balls around, so I plopped myself into a hammock (*daughter in the next one*) and read. Just came in a few minutes ago, as I think it is starting to rain or will very shortly. The skies are getting black....an eerie quiet is settling over Fern as guests pack up and leave the resort. A few have started to arrive for check-in, but it is still early.

So, I guess that's it in a nutshell.

You know, as nice as vacations are, looking forward to them is almost half the fun (*anticipation*).

What does the future hold in store for the Rosens and Fern Resort? Who knows? I certainly don't, and if I did, wouldn't tell anyone.

In any event, it was a fun weekend getaway, one that may or may not be repeated but will never be the same.

So until we talk again,

### **I'M OUT OF HERE!!**

### **4:45 p.m.**

OK, for consistency I'm using my Yahoo account to send to Sympatico, but we are HOME.

Just arrived about 20 minutes ago, and while suitcases are not unpacked, we are settled in.

When last we spoke, the clouds were overcast, and it looked like a storm. As a result, there was nothing to do at Fern. (*Although Jordi and I did play a game of pool and I just narrowly beat her*). So after much agonizing debate, we decided to shelve the Orillia leg of our trip and head back to Toronto. We went to the car and called the hotel in Orillia and had no problem cancelling, as it is a long weekend. They were more than happy to sell it to another person.

So we made ready and left about 3 p.m.

Of course, the further south we headed, the sunnier it became (*Murphy's Law in reverse*).

But who was to know. It could have rained; it could have cleared up (*in fact the sun was trying to break through, but that was only AFTER we cancelled the hotel room*).

There is no point crying over spilled beer, they say.

So, that's it in a nutshell, and we are back home now. To maintain holiday continuity, we decided not to let anyone know about our early arrival home and went out for dinner tonight and breakfast on Monday.

# 2024: A Weekend to Reboot

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It's been 16 years since the Rosens headed north to our favourite all-inclusive Ontario resort and 24 years since we first visited Fern Resort. What started as a chat about past vacations during a day trip to The Big Apple turned into a real interest in returning to Fern Resort. What will it be like after all these years? I guess you will have to stay with us on the journey to find out. I have no idea what the trip will be like, but I guarantee it will be interesting!

## **Friday, August 16**

### **9:56 a.m.**

The car is packed, and we're ready to head out to boldly go where (stop, that's another trek!). Anyways, let's get this show on the road.

### **11:55 a.m.**

We're stopping for lunch at the Rama Country Market, right across the road from Casino Rama. The drive was good, and traffic was not too heavy. We drove up Bayview to Major Mackenzie and then went north on Highway 404 to Newmarket. Then, we cut across the city to join Highway 400.

### **12:23 p.m.**

Leaving the Country Market, which didn't exist the last time we were here (*It opened in 2016*). It consists of a general store with a Subway and Tim Hortons. We enjoyed lunch at the latter dining establishment.

### **12:29 p.m.**

We're here! Now, you are probably asking yourself, where is here? Why, Casino Rama, of course, back for the first time since 2015.

### **1:12 p.m.**

Leaving Casino Rama. We both played and lost \$20. The place was practically empty.

### **1:18 p.m.**

That's it; we're back at Fern Resort as guests after a 16-year absence.

### **2:25 p.m.**

Greetings from room 608 in the Hearthside building. After our last entry, we checked in and did a walk-around. A lot is the same, but there are several changes, including new areas for hockey and basketball. The tennis courts have been redone, and pickleball courts have been added. There are also fire pits around the resort. Interested guests can sign up to use one of them in the evenings, and the staff light the fires. I'm not sure who pays for the marshmallows. Also, the Macintosh computers are gone in Mary Lou's, replaced by a few video games. I guess the computers are now redundant, as most people are constantly connected to the outside world through cell phones.

Oh yes, after checking in, we got wristbands we must wear all weekend. That is new. I learned this is because people (*not paying guests*) were dropping by and using the resort's facilities. That's it for now. Going to relax. It is very humid outside.

### **4:00 p.m.**

Even though we are alumni, I decided to go on the orientation tour just to get a feel for Fern from a newbie's perspective.

**4:30 p.m.**

Well, that was interesting. It was just our guide, myself and another family. Our guide asked where I was from, and I said, "Thornhill." The other family had initially said, "Toronto," but hearing my answer, they said that "we are practically neighbours," as they live at Bathurst and Rutherford, and they go to church around the corner from us on Green Lane. Now, I am going on the orientation tour of the dining room to see where our table is.

**4:40 p.m.**

I know that was quick. We are at table T4.

**5:10 p.m.**

Where does the time go? I just came back to get my book, *Arkangel* by James Rollins, and am going to join Lisa on the pool deck. Lisa played earlier.

**6:00 p.m.**

Look at the time. That means it's dinner time.

**7:40 p.m.**

We have been back from dinner for about 20 minutes. Dinner was OK, nothing spectacular. The chicken was a little bland, not enough spice. New this year (*well, at least to us*) is the use of robot servers who bring the prepared meals to the dining room, where the wait staff deliver them to guests. We talked to Jordana when we returned, and she is doing well.

**10:22 p.m.**

I guess I should close off this journal for Friday. After dinner, I came back to read, and Lisa went to Mary Lou's. I met her later, and we went to Bergwen's for the evening entertainment.

Tonight's show was Miss Anonymous and her Diva-Soul-Rock Show. The singer, Angie Nussey, was very good, actually great. She closed off with a popular Journey tune about a "small-town boy..." We sat back, munched on popcorn and listened to the "golden oldies." I don't think a lot of the kids enjoyed it, though.

After the show, we went to Mary Lou's for the Silent Disco. That means the music is piped through headphones guests can sign out for at the snack bar here. Finally, Lisa said enough was enough, and we came back to the room. It was a nice relaxing day, but that's what Fern is about: relaxing. So, until tomorrow, good night. For those of you new to this site, Mary Lou's used to be the resort's entertainment hub before the establishment of Bergwen's in 2003. Even after the latter opened, this hall would host secondary entertainment most evenings.

**Saturday, August 17**

**7:37 a.m.**

Good morning. You may be asking yourself why I'm up so early. Well, not only up, but dressed and heading out for an early morning walk. Sounds crazy, right, but it's true. See you later.

**9:35 a.m.**

Good morning again. It was a nice walk. I was the only guest, but that's OK. My guide, Eric, and I talked, and I learned a lot about Fern Resort. At 8:30, I met Lisa in front of The Main Inn. We had breakfast and filled out our lunch card, choosing to eat outside today. We also ordered Fern rolls and honey to be picked up before we depart tomorrow. Funny, it seems like we just got here. We also got our advance registration form for 2025. Unlike years past, we did not fill it out, but instead took it with us. We have no idea what we will do next year.

After breakfast, I signed up for a cocktail tasting class at 4:00. It is run at Bertyl's lobby bar in The Main Inn. It's always good to learn something new while on vacation. We also signed up for a post-dinner cruise, weather permitting, of course.

**11:15 a.m.**

Just checking in. I have been lying outside in a hammock and reading. Oh, the good life. Going to pick up my camera and shoot some photos around the resort.

**1:00 p.m.**

It's me again (*Like, who else would it be?*). We enjoyed lunch at the outdoor BBQ gazebo. It rained for less than 10 minutes, and now it's getting muggy again. I think I'm going to put on my swimsuit and sit by the pool.

**2:20 p.m.**

In the end, I didn't go into the pool. Well, technically, I did, dipping my toe in the water. However, the water was cool, and the sky became overcast and gloomy. It's just not pool weather for me. Instead, I went to The Main Inn and read for a while before returning to the room. The rain finally arrived, and now it's coming down in buckets.

**2:45 p.m.**

Just had a shower and feel so much fresher. Now heading to Bergwen's Theatre for the Birds of Prey show. Usually, this is held outside, but with the inclement weather, it was moved indoors.

**5:05 p.m.**

Hi again. It's been a busy afternoon. The bird show was great and very entertaining. Unfortunately, I had to leave early for my 4:00 cocktail class. The three of us - myself, along with John and Celia - got to choose four cocktails. We enjoyed them all. Before I departed, Lisa arrived as they moved afternoon bingo to the indoor theatre.

**5:45 p.m.**

OK, enough downtime. I'm going to meet Lisa for dinner, and then we are going on a cruise.

**6:40 p.m.**

Back from dinner. We got there a bit early and were served quicker than last evening. Of course, the dining room was not as full as the previous night. We inquired at the front desk, and the cruise is a maybe right now due to possible thunderstorms.

**10:40 p.m.**

Ultimately, we went on the cruise as the sky cleared. However, by the time we neared Orillia, the skies darkened, and it was evident a storm was moving in. So, our captain headed back at warp speed (*not really that fast, but top speed*). We returned at about 8:20 and headed to Bergwen's for tonight's entertainment, but not before I stopped back in the room to put my camera away. Overall, we enjoyed the cruise, but got a bit nervous as the boat kept stalling every time we stopped in the middle of the lake. Oh yes, John and Celia were also on the cruise and sat with us. Tonight's show, comic juggler Craig Douglas, was clearly designed for the kids. I found it a bit lame, but we stayed anyway, again enjoying popcorn. I say if you don't enjoy the show, at least you can like the popcorn. The guy has been performing at Fern for over 20 years, so we probably saw him back in the day when we were younger and travelled with Jordana. I probably didn't like him back then, either.

Afterwards, we moved to Mary Lou's, where post-show entertainment was karaoke. It took them a while to set up, and the kids taking part were less than entertaining. Lisa spotted John and Celia and invited them to join us at our table.

So that's it for tonight. We have another half day here before we ship out. I'm sure it will be interesting. In the meantime, all that's left to say is - good night.

**Sunday, August 18****7:47 a.m.**

Good morning. Would you believe I just got up 20 minutes ago and am now heading out for a morning walk?

**9:10 a.m.**

It was a good walk, and breakfast followed. Time to pack up since today is a travel day.

**9:50 a.m.**

The car is partially packed, and we've settled our bill for the weekend. Going to read now.

**10:50 a.m.**

A quiet has settled over Fern as most weeklong guests have departed. What's left are those just starting their holiday and weekend travellers like us. I've seen this before, long ago, but I am still fascinated by it.

**11:55 a.m.**

Boy, is it hot out. Too bad it wasn't like this yesterday or at least earlier today. I guess it is what it is. We are going for lunch now.

**12:45 p.m.**

Lunch was indoors today. We found out that they moved lunch indoors as it looked like rain earlier. So, that's it. We will take the rest of our stuff to the car and then get rid of our room keys. We will, of course, pick up our rolls and honey. This journal is going mobile. So long from room 608. The room was nice, but we hated the environmental controls.

**1:02 p.m.**

The keys are gone, and the final bill is settled (they forgot to include the cruise on the earlier bill). Heading out now, our next stop – Thornhill.

**3:50 p.m.**

That's it, we're home. It was quite the drive. After we left, the clouds started to roll in, and by the time we got on the highway, it began to rain quite hard. Then came the traffic, and it was bumper-to-bumper for a good part of the drive. It was interesting as the car's GPS had us get off Highway 11 and go through Barrie. I guess it was better than just sitting in traffic. Still, traffic was just as bad when we got back on the highway. The rain was off and on as we entered York Region, so I finally got off at Teston Road, and we made our way home along the streets.

**POSTSCRIPT:**

So, that's it. Fern Resort 2024 is over, and with it, our travels for another year. It was fascinating returning to this place after being away for so many years. Walking around the place brought back so many memories. I guess, looking back on this trip months and years from now, this getaway – now so fresh in our minds – will just become part of the historical record.

Will we return for another visit? Right now, it's up in the air. We will have to see what life holds for us in 2025 and the coming years. Right now, though, I have to say it was fun, it was relaxing, and I came home stress-free. I guess, in the end, that's what you want from a vacation.

This journal is now closed, consigned to the record books.

Safe travels, everyone.

# 2025: A Return to the Edge(water)

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We are such creatures of habit. Having discovered Fern Resort in 2000, we became regular visitors every year until 2008, when we chose to move on and start a new chapter in our lives. Last year, during a drive home from The Big Apple in Colborne, Ont., Lisa and I decided to return for a weekend visit. While some aspects of the resort had remained the same, there were a few noticeable changes. One of the things that stayed the same was their registration system. The process works as follows: the day before departure, guests receive an Advance Request Form, which allows them to book the same room for the same week the next year. At the time, we had no idea what 2025 had in store for us, so we took the form and headed home. Only months later did we decide a return visit was in order. However, unlike our last-minute decision last year, this year we chose to return earlier in the season and stay in one of the Edgewater Cottages, where we had stayed in the fall of 2007. Unlike our last visit to this cottage, this outing is a trip for two, not three.

## **Sunday, June 22**

### **9:19 a.m.**

Good morning and welcome to FR25, our first vacation of the new year. I know, this was supposed to be my second getaway this year, but life intervened and that first vacation has been pushed back, maybe short-term, maybe forever.

In any case, Lisa and I are heading out today for our second post-COVID visit to our favourite Orillia resort. It's important to note (*or maybe not*) that this is the earliest in the season we have ever visited Fern. It's also important to note that this will be our second time staying in the Edgewater Cottages. So much life has happened since the last time we stayed in this type of cabin in 2007.

On to this year's trip now. We are pretty much packed up. Not sure when we are heading out, but will let you know when that happens.

Talk soon.

### **10:15 a.m.**

The car is packed, and we're ready to go, so it's time to get this show on the road.

### **12:09 p.m.**

Good afternoon. After a leisurely drive north, we have arrived at Rama Country Market, right across the road from Casino Rama.

That's right, this is where we stopped for lunch last year. What are we doing here now, you are wondering? Well, having lunch, of course.

### **12:37 p.m.**

Subway is always a good choice for lunch. We finished and are now driving across the road to Casino Rama.

### **1:25 p.m.**

Well, the casino was a lot of fun this year. We both played \$20. Unfortunately, Lisa lost her money. I was up to \$66 before walking away with \$60. Not a bad way to start our holiday.

Now, let's head over to **FERN RESORT**.

**1:37 p.m.**

WE'RE BACK!

**3:00 p.m.**

Finally settled into our room, Edgewater 310. The room is pretty spacious with a back deck overlooking Lake Couchiching. Being Fern alumni, we found a complimentary cooler bag in our room. This was after getting \$30 in Fern money when we registered, which we can use anywhere on the resort.

I was a bit disappointed to learn there is only one activity at the bar during our stay, and no shows after the ski show tonight.

**4:10 p.m.**

Just catching up. I've been reading in the room, and Lisa is sitting outside the Main Inn. It's humid outside but not sunny.

**5:45 p.m.**

Heading out for dinner. Lisa dropped by earlier but has since headed back to the dining room.

**7:20 p.m.**

Dinner was delicious. We both ordered ribs, but I selected the seniors' portion, which means a smaller helping of everything. It was good, but I wouldn't do it again, as there really wasn't enough food on my plate. Fortunately, my lovely wife shared her meal.

Now we are going to an old favourite – the ski show. We loved it when we were still newbies at Fern, but over the years, we became less interested. Oh ya, I asked at the front desk about why the dining room was so empty. I forgot that it's still pre-season at Fern Resort. Right now, they have only 19 of their rooms filled. Quite amazing, when you consider there are about 104 rooms in the entire resort.

**8:25 p.m.**

Back from the first Ski Show of the 2025 season. This was my first time taking pictures of the show with my digital camera. It really made a difference. Of course, I won't know how they look until I get home.

**10:30 p.m.**

Time to close this off for the day. We just had someone from the office come by and explain how the air conditioning system works. It's so beautiful being out on the sundeck watching the sun set and watching the geese swim by (something I witnessed every evening).

Guess that's it for the first day. I will have a lot more to say tomorrow, but until then, good night.

**Monday, June 23**

**7:23 a.m.**

Good morning, campers. Yes, Fern Resort does have the feel of a summer camp. You may be wondering why I am up and dressed so early. (*Well, are you?*) I decided to join the morning walk at 8:00. It seems like it's going to be a very hot and humid day.

**10:00 a.m.**

The morning walk and breakfast were good. I was going to go kayaking, but the lake is choppy, so I'm heading to the pool.

**12:00 noon**

The water in the pool was so nice and refreshing. I swam and read my book, *Never Flinch*, by Stephen King. Of course, I didn't do both at the same time. However, one woman was actually reading her book while sunning herself in the pool. We're heading to the Main Inn now for lunch.

**12:45 p.m.**

Unlike most days, where guests can choose between lunch in the dining room or the BBQ Gazebo, today everyone had lunch indoors. Maybe it has something to do with the heat dome over the entire area. Whatever the reason, I'm just as glad as it's steamy outside.

**1:42 p.m.**

I'm off now to our wine tasting program. Where is Lisa, you may be asking yourself? I think she is already waiting at Bertyl's, the main bar area.

**4:20 p.m.**

I think I've had enough sun for today, so I have returned to the room to read and relax. Now I know what you are thinking. Isn't that what I've been doing all day? The answer is, definitely yes, but I'm doing it inside. I know, it's a distinction without a difference.

The wine tasting was great, and we may actually purchase a few bottles when we leave on Wednesday.

Afterwards, I went to the pool and then went kayaking for the first time in many years. The supervisor on duty suggested I stay in the inner harbour as the lake was choppy. I had no problem following her instructions as the water was indeed rough. I returned to the dock after a quick spin around the inner harbour, returned to the room to get my book and a towel at the front desk and returned to the pool area. It was so refreshing getting back in the water. Eventually, enough was enough. I bought myself a lemonade and came back to the room.

Meanwhile, Lisa is at bingo.

Talk to you later.

**5:50 p.m.**

I've changed and am now heading to the dining room for dinner.

**10:25 p.m.**

Dinner was pretty good for both of us (*chicken/lamb chops*). Afterwards, we went on a sunset cruise. Unfortunately, this being June, we didn't get to see the sunset. Very different from last year's cruise in August, when the sun was already setting early. We did get to see a seaplane take off and land on the lake, which was pretty cool.

Arriving back at Fern, we went to Bergwen's to see Bob Cates, a juggler and variety artist. Much to my surprise and delight, he was pretty good. He also introduced his teenage son and the boy's best friend, who also performed amazing juggling acts. After the show, Lisa and I went to Mary Lou's for a nightcap before returning to the room. I feel like it's been a long day, but a nice and relaxing one.

What's up for tomorrow? I guess you'll just have to wait and find out.

Good night.

**Tuesday, June 24**

**7:30 a.m.**

Good morning. After lying awake for a few hours in the middle of the night, I woke up just a short time ago, a bit sore. I find the mattress a bit too firm. Now I'm up, dressed and ready for another day. The first order of business is the morning walk.

**9:10 a.m.**

We're back from breakfast. Just like yesterday, the morning walk consisted of sports director Mike Stewart, me and another guest, Karen, who is 80 years old.

Afterwards, I met Lisa in front of the Main Inn, and we went for breakfast. There, we filled our lunch option card. That means lunch today is at the BBQ Gazebo.

We also had an interesting talk about our Ottawa trip. I will share details at a later time (*or not*).

That's about it for now.

**9:55 a.m.**

I'm back, and I bet you didn't know I left. I was relaxing (*there's that word again*) in front of the Main Inn, and then Lisa and I decided to take a leisurely walk around the resort. I'm going to change now and go to the pool.

**12:37 p.m.**

Just back to check in and head back to the pool. Lisa and I just finished lunch at the BBQ Gazebo. It definitely was not as busy as in past years. No doubt it's because this is Fern's pre-season. I had a sandwich. Nothing unusual in that, but I was one of the few there who chose that option. Definitely pizza, hot dogs and burgers rule the roost. I'm going to apply sunscreen again and head back to the pool area. Only 24 hours now before this show hits the road.

**2:50 p.m.**

Hi, it's me again. We're both back, having enjoyed being in the pool.

**4:00 p.m.**

That's it for the pool today. My last trek out there, I stayed in the shaded area. No need for shake 'n'bake.

**5:00 p.m.**

I'm showered, changed and have been enjoying my book and a lemonade. (*The bar staff make a great non-alcoholic lemonade*)

**5:45 p.m.**

Heading out for dinner. See you later.

**7:32 p.m.**

Back from dinner. Unfortunately, we have the most incompetent server. To start, after our server took our drink order, he had to come back to our table as he forgot to ask Lisa what size wine serving she wanted, despite her telling him the first time. Then we waited for him to return to take our dinner order, while other guests seated around us arrived and gave their dinner orders. The result is that while we were one of the first to arrive in our section of the dining room, other tables finished their meals before we even got ours.

We finally got our dinners, and our server gave me Lisa's steak, and Lisa got my fish dinner. He reversed this, but unfortunately, my dinner was wrong. It was supposed to be sea bass and rice, not fries. This was quickly rectified. Lisa never got a steak knife with her meal, and when she finally cut into it, the steak was medium rare, not medium well as ordered. We called the dining room manager, Sheri, over and told her everything. She apologized repeatedly and got Lisa a new steak and knife. We also told Sheri we did not want this server at our table tomorrow.

Talking to Karen after dinner, we learned she also had problems with the same server.

At dinner, we also filled out the order form for Fern rolls and honey, which we will pick up tomorrow. We also got the advance registration form for 2026. We decided to take it home and will eventually decide what to do next year.

We are now going to head over to Bergwen's for Fern Resort's 130th birthday party.

**9:19 p.m.**

The birthday party was a fail in my opinion. It was primarily geared to the kids. Most of the older people in attendance left early on, as I did. I returned to the room, got my camera and walked around Fern, taking photos of the sunset. Now, as I write this, Lisa is still there. I don't know, maybe I left too early and should give it another try.

**9:22 p.m.**

Too late. I was going to go back, but as I was leaving the room, I saw Lisa coming back, so that's it for tonight. See you tomorrow.

**Wednesday, June 25**

**7:25 a.m.**

Good morning. Glad to be up and dressed. The bed here is not one to lie in for a long time, as the mattress is hard. As a result, I didn't sleep that great. So, I am going for my morning walk soon and then breakfast.

**9:25 a.m.**

Breakfast service was 100 percent better than last night. We had a young woman who has recently started working at Fern and is attending teachers' college.

Now we are packing up.

**9:50 a.m.**

We've mostly packed (*but definitely not ready to go*). I also put some of our belongings in the car. Now I'm going to change and head to the pool.

**10:00 a.m.**

OK, I'm out of here. See you later.

**11:35 a.m.**

Guess that's it for pool time at Fern this year. I enjoyed having the pool mostly to myself this morning. Back in the room, I will change and go for our final meal here shortly.

**12:35 p.m.**

That's it for lunch. Time to pack up and load the car.

**12:40 p.m.**

We've packed and are leaving the room. This journal is going mobile. So long, Edgewater 310. It was a nice place to stay for a few days.

**1:09 p.m.**

That's it. We've checked out, picked up our Fern rolls and honey. As I mentioned earlier, we purchased a few bottles of wine. The GPS is set, our destination set for **HOME**.

**3:00 p.m.**

The car engine is off; we're home now. Our 12th visit to Fern Resort is over, consigned to the history books.

**POSTSCRIPT:**

This was our first time visiting Fern Resort during the pre-season. It was very different, with many positives and a few negatives. I loved being able to swim in the pool without having to dodge kids and being able to find a lounge facing the pool every day. I also liked being able to find a seat in the BBQ Gazebo during lunch. The resort was quieter than in past visits during the summer season. At first, I viewed it as negative. However, as the hours passed, I came to enjoy the tranquillity. What does it say about me?

As for the negatives, while I enjoyed our cabin, I found the bed much too hard. I was also disappointed by the lack of evening entertainment. As I mentioned earlier, there was no post-ski show program on the first night. On the final evening, the birthday party program was geared primarily to the children in attendance. For such a special anniversary, there should have been something there for everyone.

Ultimately, the big question remains: would we return to Fern Resort again? Right now, the jury is out. We haven't decided if we will return in 2026, and, if we do, when and for how long. So many questions. I wish I had a quick answer, but that would take away half the fun.

No one knows what the future will hold. All I can say is hang on and enjoy the ride.



# 2026: Let's get Edge(y) again!

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I love numbers; such a simple and elegant way to tell a story. So, I thought, what a perfect way to start another journal, Fern Resort 2026. So, here it goes:

While this is the **first** vacation of the year, it is the **second** journal.

This is our **third** visit to the Orillia resort since the pandemic, and our **third** stay in the Edgewater Cottages, the **first** being during an autumn visit.

HOWEVER,

It is now **26** years since Lisa, Jordana, and I ventured north to try out this all-inclusive resort, which is now marking its **131st** anniversary.

So much has changed since our first visit in 2000, the most notable being the absence of our daughter, who actually has never stayed here as an adult.

Still, the place is good, actually great, which I guess is the reason we keep returning. What will happen during our **third** visit in the 2020s? That's still to come. If you really want to know, then stay with us as we head north for a few days of rest and relaxation.

**Sunday, June 28**

**9:45 a.m.**

It's fascinating how life has changed over the years. Twenty years ago, Jordana was at our house, ready to join us for what would be our seventh visit to Fern Resort. In the here and now, Jordana is at our place, going to get in our car as we embark on a new voyage. However, time changes everything. This time, we are dropping her off at the GO station and continuing on our journey. I know it's early, but by the time we get out of here, it probably will be past 10. That's it from home base. This journal is now going mobile. Talk to you later.

**10:00 a.m.**

We're leaving home, heading to the Richmond Hill GO Bus Terminal.

**10:10 a.m.**

First stop: drop off our special passenger as she continues her journey back to Oakville.

**10:20 a.m.**

We definitely didn't plan to stop again in the area, but Lisa wanted to make sure she brought something with her, so we stopped at a gas station on Highway 7. While there, I decided to fill up and get a car wash.

**12:02 p.m.**

We have arrived at Hills Maple Leaf Restaurant in Orillia, where we are going to have lunch. We decided that after two years of eating across the street from Casino Rama, this year we would stop at a local establishment. I'm pretty sure we had breakfast here in 2004 when we stayed at the Econo Lodge down the street.

Anyway, enough history. Let's go eat!

**1:00 p.m.**

The place is small, and it takes forever to get meals, but the food is delicious. We both didn't finish our lunches as the servings were huge. We are now heading to Casino Rama.

**1:21 p.m.**

Arrived at Casino Rama; time to lose some money.

**2:27 p.m.**

We played \$60 between us and walked away with \$17. So it was a pretty good deal. However, the casino is boring; they never seem to change the slot machines. Well, we're off to Fern Resort.

**3:05 p.m.**

Greetings from Edgewater Cottage 303. We checked in about 30 minutes ago. Finding our cabin, we were pleasantly surprised to find a bottle of wine and chocolates on the nightstand. A very nice touch if you ask me. (*Well, you were probably going to!*)

Afterwards, I moved my car closer (*on Lisa's advice*), parking in a handicapped spot and brought in everything using a luggage cart.

Now we're going to chill for a while in our nice air-conditioned cabin.

**3:50 p.m.**

Just got back from the Front Desk, and my "worst fears" were confirmed. There are no wine or cocktail programs this year. Seems some guests who could not get into the program were leaving a lot of online complaints, so they cancelled the program completely. Even worse, the pool deck is noisy with kids running everywhere. I guess it was too much to hope that this year would be like 2025. It's all due to the school year ending days before our arrival.

**6:00 p.m.**

We're going to the Main Inn for dinner. This year, we're back at Table 4, where we enjoyed our meals two years ago. This afternoon, we wandered around and stopped in Mary Lou's for a while.

**7:00 p.m.**

Dinner was OK, nothing spectacular. Much to our annoyance, our server kept asking us if we wanted dessert while we were still eating. We're finished now (*no dessert for us!*). Lisa is sitting in front of the Main Inn (*as she usually does*), and I came back to get my camera. That about catches us up. See you later.

**9:40 p.m.**

After sitting on the pool deck for the past hour watching the ski show, we finally decided to head inside and lock up for the night. This year's show wasn't as good as last year's because we couldn't hear the commentary; the PA system was broken. Instead, they played music over the sound system.

Now, we're sitting on our cabin deck, watching the sun set over the lake. It's quite beautiful. The majestic swans gliding across the water enhance the overall beauty of the scene.

**10:20 p.m.**

Guess that's it for our first day here. Hoping for a better tomorrow.  
Good night.

**Monday, June 29**

**7:40 a.m.**

Good morning. I'm up, dressed and prepared for Fern's famous Morning Walk with Mike Stewart. I'm not sure what today will bring, but I will definitely keep you informed. See you later.

**9:25 a.m.**

We're back from breakfast. After our first meal of the day, Lisa went to the gift shop and bought a T-shirt as she forgot to bring any this year. Next up: change and head to the pool.

**2:20 p.m.**

We're back from the pool (*for now*). We had lunch at the BBQ gazebo and then returned to our chairs. I got lucky this morning, securing two chairs on the deck facing the smaller pool. Even better, both had large sun-blocking umbrellas over them! Today we both went in the water, and I even got a chance to swim when the kids went to their programs. In between swims, I started my new book, *Cold Fire*, created by Clive Cussler. Lisa is showering now, and I'm going to archery soon.

**3:20 p.m.**

I just got back from the 3:00 archery program. The targets were new, and I managed to hit eight bullseyes out of about 20 shots, which isn't too shabby. I left after shooting two rounds because there were a lot of people waiting for their turns, so I decided to retire my bow and come back. Lisa is heading back to the pool, so decided to join her. See you later!

**4:20 p.m.**

Just back from the pool. We were lucky to get the same chairs on the deck. Time for a cleanup and change. Lisa is heading to bingo.

**5:45 p.m.**

We are heading down for dinner.

**7:08 p.m.**

Dinner was delicious, much better than yesterday. Lisa is now camped out at the Main Inn, and I came back to jot this down and read (*of course*).

**7:55 p.m.**

Heading to Bergwen's to meet up with Lisa and see the evening entertainment.

**10:05 p.m.**

Well, we're locked up for the night. This evening we saw Mega Magic starring Mike D'urzo. The show was cute. Afterwards, we went to Mary Lou's for a while and then Lisa went back to the room, while I walked around to take some night photos.

I have to say that overall, today was a very good day. How good you are probably wondering? Well, good enough not to completely rule out a return visit next year. We will have to see. In the meantime, all I have left to say is Good Night!

**Tuesday, June 30****7:35 a.m.**

Good morning. Once again, I'm up and dressed for my walk. It's cooler today, which is great, and they are calling for rain.

**8:30 a.m.**

Signed up for the Sunset Cruise this evening. That meant Mike started the morning walk without me. Fortunately, he and another guest were just a minute ahead of me, and I quickly caught up to them. It was interesting that while there were a lot of people on the walk yesterday, today it was just the three of us.

**9:05 a.m.**

Breakfast was just OK. At our table this morning was an advance reservation form for 2027. We will see what happens next year. If we do return, though, it will be Tuesday to Friday. Going to the pool now.

**3:15 p.m.**

Where did the day go? I was lucky this morning to secure the same two chairs on the pool deck. Lisa eventually joined me before heading off to bingo. When the BBQ gazebo opened for lunch, we left our belongings on “our” chairs, ate and then returned. At 2:00, I went to Archery Long Shot, which was set up in a field by the entrance to Fern. However, after taking a few shots, the heat was getting to me, so I left, returning to the pool deck by around 2:20. Finally, we agreed that we had had enough sun for the day and came back to the room to shower and change.

**5:40 p.m.**

Going to the Main Inn to meet Lisa for dinner (*She was playing bingo*). As to what I have been doing, take a guess. Reading, of course!

**6:50 p.m.**

Good evening. The dinner of General Tso's Chicken was delicious. We are heading out soon for a Sunset Cruise.

**10:13 p.m.**

Well, that's it for our final night here. We started off going on a Sunset Cruise, which was scheduled to leave at 7:30. Unfortunately, it was delayed. First off, a teenage girl decided to casually make her way to the boat even though she was already late. Then we were waiting for two more passengers. Our captain inquired and found out that the two women were delayed in the dining hall as they had not yet gotten their meals. So the captain was told to wait for them. Finally, the captain got word that the missing people had changed their minds. So we finally left 15 minutes late.

I guess they never heard that “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one.”

Departing late meant we arrived back at Fern later than planned. By the time we got to Bergwen's, the Aristov Family Circus Show was almost over. Too bad, because from the little we saw, the show looked good.

Afterwards, there was an astronomy show. We stayed a while but finally decided to come back. Just in time, as a thunderstorm is rolling in.

Anyway, that's my narrative for the last day of June. I hope you enjoyed it. If you didn't, then, oh well, that's life. Good night.

**Wednesday, July 1 – HAPPY CANADA DAY****7:20 a.m.**

Actually, I've been up for a while now. I got up about 30 minutes ago, and the room was extremely hot (*foreshadowing how the end of the day would turn out, but not going to jump ahead*). So I called the Front Desk, and they sent someone to adjust the air conditioning. I figured since I was up, I might as well get dressed.

So, here we are on our final day at Fern Resort for 2026. I have to say that while the beds are hard, I had no problem falling asleep on any of the days here. It must be all the sun.

**7:40 a.m.**

Took some of our belongings to the car.



**9:15 a.m.**

Today we did a half walk. Actually, Mike was amazed anyone showed up for the walk this morning given the extreme heat. We had a problem at breakfast as my breakfast came, while there was nothing for Lisa. Finally, her meal arrived, and it was wrong. So I went to the dining room front desk and complained. Someone came to help and, FINALLY, Lisa got her breakfast.

Leaving the dining hall, I went to the Front Desk and settled our account, using some Fern Dollars to reduce the final bill. Unfortunately, I found more Fern Dollars stuck in my shorts pocket later, but I could not reduce the bill further as the account was closed.

I'm going to change now and head to the pool.

**11:30 a.m.**

What a great morning. Once again, we got the same two deck chairs. The pool was a lot quieter this morning. I think that may be because a lot of people are leaving today. Lisa played bingo and won \$10 in Fern dollars. We are going to have lunch soon, and then it will be time to pack up. I've already taken the towels back to the Front Desk and given up "my" chair. I just came back here, to the cabin, to update you good folks and get our lunch tickets.

See you later.

**12:20 p.m.**

Lunch is finished. We're going to pack up and load the car. Fern 26 is winding down.

**12:35 p.m.**

The car is semi-loaded. Just a few more items, and we hand in our keys. Then this journal is going MOBILE!

**1:00 p.m.**

The keys are returned, and Lisa bought a new sunhat courtesy of the leftover Fern bucks from her bingo winnings. We also picked up our Fern rolls and honey, in case you thought we passed on ordering them to take home. One-word answer to that: **NEVER!**

With that said, we're about to leave. So long, Fern. Maybe we will return, maybe we won't. We will see.

**2:48 p.m.**

We are home. This time we took Highway 12 home. It was a nice scenic drive, but a bit too many traffic lights as we got closer to home.

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**5:00 p.m.**

In case you are wondering, we are still home. Remember what I said earlier about foreshadowing, about how hot the room was this morning. Well, turns out the beginning of the day was the bookend for the end of this Wednesday. After two hours of operating, the house is still sweltering at 81 degrees and not cooling off. The air conditioning is not working. **Houston, we have a problem.** I called the technician who came last week, but unfortunately, there was nothing he could do except advise us to shut it off.

Given the temperature outside, the rest of the week won't be fun. How this situation turns out will be lost to time, as I do not plan to continue this narration beyond today.

**POSTSCRIPT:**

Each time we return to Fern, I feel haunted by memories of our past visits. Without even looking at my past journals, I view those times as a golden age. I know that is the wrong approach cause all it does is make me long for the past and view the present negatively. I did this more on our first day here, but as the hours passed, I settled back into the comfortable deck chair, enjoying the sun, the water, and my book more and more.

Taking the odd moment to contemplate, I realized that life is indeed grand. Perhaps that's the real reason we keep returning to this place. The present is not perfect, but neither was the past. You just have to look for the amazing - the beauty - in small things, like a smile from your special person or the wonder of a beautiful sunset.

That's it for Fern Resort 2026, lock, stock and barrel. We'll take a few months to contemplate the next steps in our Fern journey and let the resort know of our plans. In the meantime, let's just enjoy life. So long, for now.







