

Bear and Kea's Excellent Adventures • 2010



In January 2010, Bear Giles asked Kristen Elaine Asmus to marry him, presenting her with an amethyst and diamond ring as a token of his intentions. She said "Yes [what took you so long?]," and so began the first year of their married adventures.

The picture at right shows Kea & Bear Giles in formal dress aboard the MS Statendam, somewhere at sea off the coast of Alaska.

Names note: Bear's real name is Bear. After the wedding, Kristen Elaine Asmus shortened her name to Kea [which is the name for an extremely intelligent, curious, and pesky New Zealand parrot] and added on Bear's Giles.

Before we can get to the story of the wedding and the cruise, we have to start with a couple of goodbyes...



In March, we lost our orange tabby cat, Tiberius, to dementia and old age. He was almost 19 when he started losing touch with his surroundings to such a point that he wasn't safe. He was a sweetheart, cuddly mama's boy whose mission in life was to make sure Kea knew she was never alone. That's both good and bad—it's strange now to eat, read, write, and sleep without a cat pawing at us for attention. (His sister, Nyota, died at 15, so we are now cat-less).

In June came even greater heartbreak: Buddy died.



Buddy was my best friend. I adopted him as a pup in the summer of 2000, so we had almost 10 great, fun, silly, and companionable years together. Read my memorial to him at <http://keagiles.blogspot.com/2010/07/memorial-to-buddy-good-dog.html>.



That doesn't mean we are totally bereft...

After Bear's dog, Sequoia, died in May of last year, we adopted this character:



Blue Aroo! He's a 12-yr-old husky mix we adopted from MaxFund shelter. Read his story at <http://keagiles.blogspot.com/2010/04/who-is-blue-aroo.html>.



This year, **Kea** has enjoyed photography, engaging in social media, working out, and

eating sushi and Thai noodles with her friend Karina; **Bear** has enjoyed photography, engaging in deep conversations with friends, and learning more about all kinds of Web languages and tech gadgets.

Here are a few examples of Kea's photos:

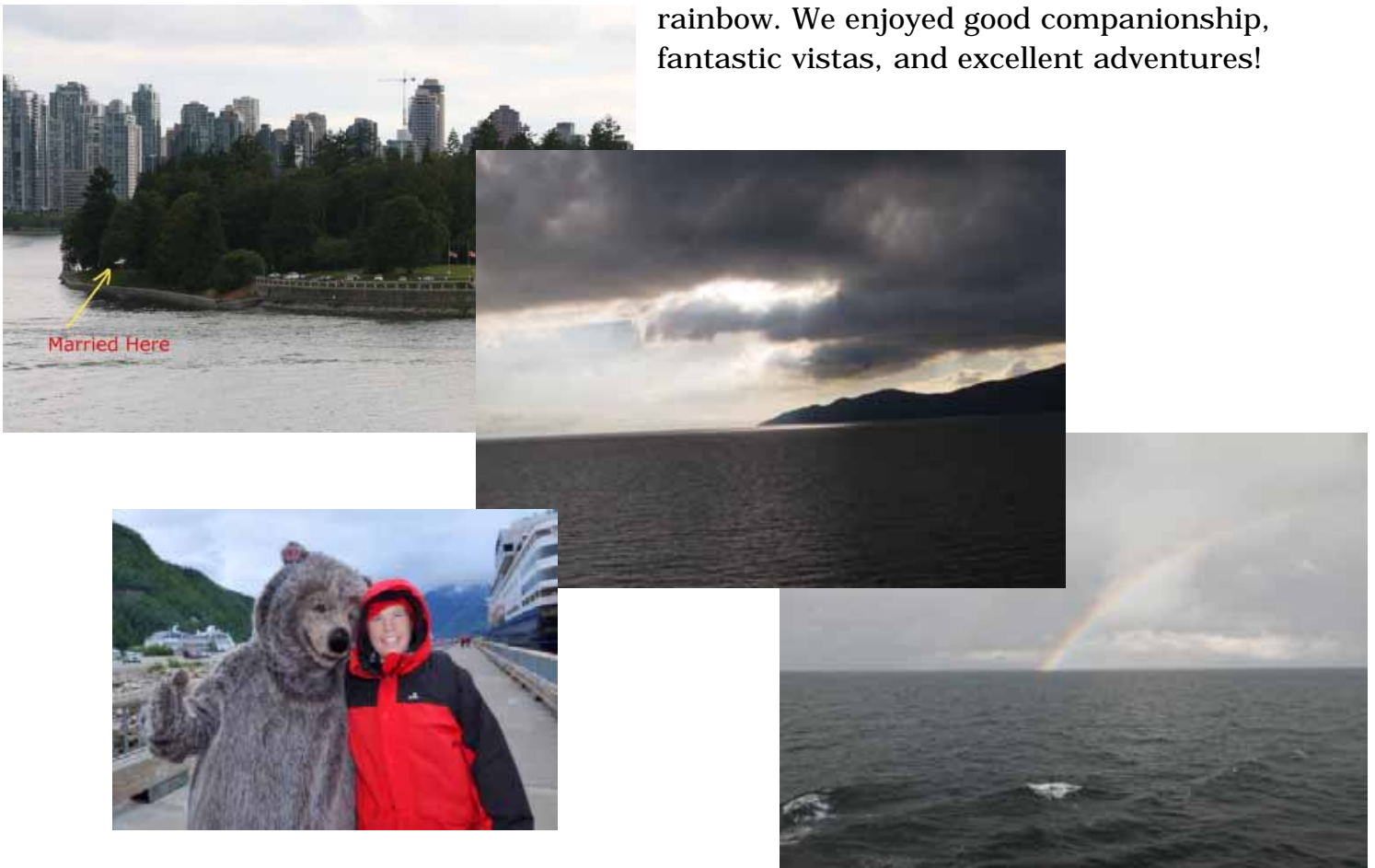


And finally, here are a few photos from our wedding and honeymoon cruise along the Inside Passage from Vancouver to Alaska.

We married on **25 June 2010** in Stanley Park in Vancouver, B.C., Canada:



A few days later, our cruise ship headed out past Stanley Park and out to sea for a 7-day cruise. On the first day of rough seas, we were followed by porpoises—the next day: a rainbow. We enjoyed good companionship, fantastic vistas, and excellent adventures!





Along the way from Vancouver to Anchorage, we were lucky to be able to take part in several "excursions": a long, drizzly hike in the Tongass National Rainforest; zip-lining (see rope bridge, at right); heli-hiking (flying up Skagway River, then hiking 3 miles to catch a train back to the ship), another train ride to the Yukon (to visit sled dogs), and a seaplane flight over the Misty Fjords. We wish we could show you all the pictures here; a few more are posted online at www.flickr.com/photos/keagiles/page6/.

One of our best days at sea was the cruise into Glacier Bay. We quite a few several otters and got to stop long enough to watch calving along the edge of the Grand Pacific Glacier, which dwarfed our ship:



We ended our honeymoon with fireworks (at midnight) in Anchorage on the **4th of July**.

More adventures: A drive through Rocky Mountain National Park in **September**; Kea's **November** trip to Boise to visit her 96-yr-old Aunt Lucia; and a brief **December** vacation in Florida to visit Bear's family and Kea's sister and her husband. **Some final snapshots** (clockwise: Rocky Mountain National Park; elk family in Estes Park; Bear shoots a spider; and surfer, shell, and sandpiper at Cape Canaveral National Seashore):



We end this letter by wishing you all...

**Happy Holidays & a very prosperous, delightful,
and adventurous New Year!**

Also, we want to again extend our appreciation to you for your well-wishes and wedding gifts. We now have a new stove/oven because of your generosity, and so we will be baking happily this holiday season and beyond. We have some beautiful dishes and other kitchen tools to use in our updated kitchen, plus a cookbook for sugar- *and* gluten-free meals (even baked goods!) to help us be healthier in the coming year. Let us know if we can cook something for you!