

# Stroms' 2008



Erik catching air at Whistler



With Debby and Steve at Squamish

As you may have noticed, another year has passed at the Stroms household. This year has been relatively uneventful. None of the grand home improvement projects that we schemed when we moved to La Honda a little over two years ago took place. In the wake of this economy downturn (Have they started calling it recession yet?), we expect the house to remain peaceful for quite a while.

Not having much to work on in the house on weekends, we turned our energy, however much was left after a week worth of work, outward.

The beginning of the year saw us on our road bikes near our home tackling climbs such as West Alpine, Old La Honda, and Tunitas Creek Road etc. In February, Mei participated in the [San Jose King of Mountain Ride](#) up Sierra Road, and placed fourth in her class. After a long summer of directing attention else where, we got back on our road bikes and joined other masochists in the [Low Key Hillclimb](#) Series. Just to be consistent, Mei again placed fourth in the Women's Category. Placement-wise, Erik did better by claiming the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot in the Most Improved category. It's no surprise because on his first ride in the series, he got passed by a rider towing a trailer with a kid inside as well as a unicyclist. Hahaha...



Henry Coe with Derek

In the summer, we did more mountain biking than anything else mainly because Mei was suddenly hooked on it, so hooked that she rode at Water Dog park, a local city park full of singletracks, 68 times this year. People say perseverance leads to success, and Mei proved it. She shaved 1 hour and 23 minutes off of her time from last year at the [Downieville Cross-Country race](#) and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 7 women in her class (compared to 10<sup>th</sup> out 10 last year). Erik went on to prove that perseverance was not necessary for success. He barely rode his mountain bike, not to mention regularly, and he won his class outright at Downieville!



Low Key Hillclimbs

The highlight of our mountain biking adventures though is [our road trip this September](#). We rode (part of) North Umpqua Trail and McKenzie River Trail in Oregon, and then rode at Whistler, British Columbia in Canada. Have you ever seen a wide-eyed kid in a candy store? That's Erik in the bike park at Whistler. He had so much fun riding the crazy big drops.



Little One, the Psycho Kitty

Oh, another highlight came to mind. We had wanted to do this in a while, but

## Over Heard

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(Eating dinner at home)

- What is this? Hair in the bowl just cannot be tolerated!
- Huh? Let me see.... Oh, you mean this short straight blond hair?...OMG, honey, are you shedding?

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(Mei's Text Messaging Inbox)

**Message 22:** Happy Halloween!

**Message 23:** Er uh, Valentine's I mean.

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(Up on a wall in Yosemite. Erik is leading 50 feet above.)

- Honey... (looking up)
- What? (grunting some more)
- I love you! (expecting to hear I love you too back.)
- (Brief pause) You say that to everyone right before they are about to die.
- Huh? Hahaha...

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- What are we doing this July 4th weekend?
- Oh, I don't know...
- How about we climb at Pinnacles one day, Camp at Coe, and ride at Coe the next day?
- Ohhhh... Pinnacles, Coe, camping... are you trying to talk dirty to me? (wink)

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(Text Message Exchange)

**Mei:** When I left, Little One was playing with her little rattling mouse.

**Erik:** Holy Cow! Is she all right?

(Note: For a while before we got Feather Dancer, we could not get the Cat to move.)

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the days were too long in the summer, so we waited until 21 days before Winter Solstice to pull off a [10k ride at Henry Coe](#) with our friend Derek. Here 10k refers to the total vertical feet of climbing.

Road riding...mountain biking... oh, so much fun. But we did not completely forget what brought us together in the first place, climbing. Now that our friend Brad Young's new Pinnacles guidebook is out, I learned that there are 900+ official routes at Pinnacles. Erik is on his quest to climb (read: lead in a good style) all the (79) 5.11s at Pinns, and he is only shy of reaching that goal by two routes. We know where he will be this season on sunny, or not so sunny, weekends.

We did manage to get out to Yosemite and spend sometime with our friends Ron and Liz at their beautiful [Yosemite Blue Butter fly Inn](#) a few times this year. Gone were the days when we cruised up the Rostrum.. Astroman? Oh, so out of reach now. Boy, are we out of shape! But there is some consolation to this: on our anniversary, Erik took Mei up the Northeast Buttress of Higher Cathedral, and we [cruised it](#).

As part of our September road trip, we spent four days [climbing at Squamish](#) with our friends Steve and Debby who flew in from Virginia and California respectively. Maybe Steve and Erik did some much harder routes there, but Debby and Mei had their own proud ascent: they bagged [18 pitches](#) (up to 5.10b) in one push with plenty of daylight to spare. Oh, speaking of Steve, there is a short article in Issue 174 (Jan '09) of Rock & Ice Magazine about him titled "Everyman Salutes | Steve Curtis on trad, family and FAs." In the article, he did not mention his other stunning achievements of his, such as NiaD, Half Dome car-to-car in 16.5 hours, or that time in 2003 when he flew in from Germany, drove to Yosemite, and led every pitch of Astroman without sleep. Instead, he mentioned in the article, "In 2006, Eric Strom and I got on the Rostrum at 10 am, and Eric was married at 4pm." That was so sweet.

What else? Well, Erik finally got braces. No, his good looks do not need those, but his problematic bites need them. Oh, that reminded Mei to ask our friends, Erik and Jenny, for recipes of baby food they make for their almost five-month-old James. We'll be eating those for three years.

At last, we want to announce an important addition to our family, [our Little One](#). Well, that's what Mei calls her in contrast to the Big One she takes care of. Erik calls the cat Psycho Kitty. Yep, she is psycho. At one year old, she came to her senses and decided seven other cats were just too much to deal with or compete with. She abandoned our neighbors and their cats, crossed Ventura Ave, and called our house her home. (Our neighbors were happy that we took her in.) Now, we suspect she is the most spoiled cat in La Honda. The mouse shaped laser pointer we bought for her will be saved for work presentations, and the organic cat nip is now put in our tea. Why? She is not interested in them! Once she went on a hunger strike because we came home too late. But she is a great runner, jumper, and attacker whenever we pull out Feather Dancer. She is cute to watch even when she is asleep. If you find Mei turning house-bound, you now know the reason.

We hope we did not leave anything important out. If we did, you can always find out what's missing from our websites (see the side bar). While concluding our 2008, we wish you a healthy, prosperous, and happy 2009!

With Love,

Erik and Mei