Week 18, Alex

Alex and his school mate Johnnie at St. Clair.

It's interesting how kids become individuals, while inheriting much from their parents. Studies of identical twins separated at birth suggest that the nature/nurture split is about 50/50. Thus it seems inevitable that we become our parents, and yet there's much that's individual.

Alex and I are kindred spirits in some ways and not in others. We're kindred in our love of physical activity and outdoor-adventure-sport: cycling, skiing, and now surfing. We like to push the boundaries and flirt with a bit of risk, albeit calculated and in small doses. And we're prone to obsession: we've been waking up early several mornings a week, and driving the 10 minutes down to St. Clair beach for some surfing before the school/work day begins.

Surfing is a tough sport to learn, especially around here, as the conditions are rarely ideal. We've been catching waves in the white wash, where the surf breaks a second time, as the waves are smaller and it feels safer there. The good surfers go "out the back" and catch the waves when they first break. The goal is to get out there too, because the surfing is better and we'll get less beat up, but in due time. Progress is incremental, though the increments are larger for Alex it seems.
In college, I learned to kayak with a fellow named John Amtmann, and all of the experiences we had learning to boat on the rivers of Montana and Idaho made us great friends. To have that same kind of opportunity with Alex is a true blessing, and I’m very thankful for it.

Some shots from the promenade at St. Clair. We've yet to see the surf as peaceful as in the left-hand picture.

The last day of school for the kids was yesterday. We’re pulling them out a week early and taking off on a trip to Queenstown and Central Otago. Both kids are disappointed to be missing out on the "funnest week of the year".

Alex is graduating from Dunedin North Intermediate (DNI), and the experience for him there has been a breath of fresh air, especially after last year at C.S. Porter, which was his most difficult yet. It seems that he's big man on campus, both literally, because he's begun maturing earlier than most, and figuratively, him being the tall, dark, and handsome American kid with a diffident air. You can tell that he enjoys the situation. I'm glad for the confidence boost it's given him.

Alex ran in the relay for DNI at Otago Champs. Sis and Bro on the right at Otago Champs.