

DECEMBER 2008

GREGOR FAMILY NEWS LETTER 2008

Dear Friends & Family,

Thank goodness 2008 is nearly over. This has been a huge year and that does not factor in the world wide global economy problems.

2008 started off well enough. We went to Italy for Theo's skiing conference and on the way collected Kelly from London. We spent a few days in London. London has not changed except the accents of the people who serve in pubs, shops etc. This year they were all eastern European and Russian. The week in Campitello was great as usual and made even more special having Kelly with us. We spent a few days in Salzburg and much to Kelly and my delight went to the convent where Maria from "Sound of Music" came from. In Austria we learnt of the tragic and untimely death of our dearest cousin Anthony Hoslin from a heart attack. He was a wonderful kind man beloved by all. We are grateful that he came to Theo's birthday in Italy and that we were able to enjoy a special family week.

My exhaustion from starting Cardiac surgery carried on into 2008. This exhaustion was compounded by worry over the serious lack of nurses and doing the annual budget in the first 4 weeks of the year. This year the budget date was brought forward by 3 months. This all resulted in me working 14 hour days and having 3 hours sleep a night. Something had to give and it was my mental health. I had a rather large melt down. I honestly could not approach anything with a rational attitude or response. Luckily I work for an organization that allows you to have free therapy, so off I went. There is something very uplifting and comforting telling a complete stranger all your problems. I highly recommend it.

In retrospect I think this melt down has been in the wings for many years, I just could not ignore it anymore. All these moves, new country challenges, new jobs, family challenges and the death of my mother, none of which were addressed at the time, culminated in a meltdown. My advice after the past year is, if you have issues get them sorted, you will feel so much better and everyone around you will benefit. One good thing happened work wise. I was the only New Zealander to read a paper at the International theatre nurses conference in Australia and had excellent feedback.

Kelly spent the year in London working as a financial journalist for a business magazine. She returned to NZ in December stating that she had loved her experience in London but it was now time to settle down and start a career. In her year she managed to travel to ski in Italy and France. Visit Athens, Budapest, Edinburgh, Madrid and do a two week trip to Vienna, Berlin, Prague and Paris with Fiona. Since her return to NZ she has been showing her good friend Paula Kretzel (school friend from SA and flat mate in London) the country. They spent two weeks touring the

south island and are now at different beach areas in the north island after having a brief stopover in Hamilton for Christmas. In the New Year she will go to Auckland and hopefully get a job.

Fiona graduated from Massey University with a Bachelor of Nursing in May, has completed her new graduate practical year at Waikato Hospital. In July she returned home to live for 6 months and is moving to Auckland in Jan 2009 to work at Starship children's hospital cardiac ward. We have found a wonderful old flat with huge rooms within walking distance of the hospital. Fiona and Kelly will be sharing a flat once again. Fiona had a great month in London visiting and touring with Kelly in Europe.

Reinie turned 21 in Sept. We had his party at an Irish pub in Dunedin. It was great fun. After the party we went skiing in Wanaka for a week with three of Reinie's friends, Fiona and our cousin Robbie Tait (who is working in a Sydney Hospital). Robbie was the highlight of our week, great fun and constant entertainment. Reinie completed a Health Science degree majoring in physiology and achieved excellent marks.

It has been very odd in the past few weeks to have all our children home. For those of you who think that your children leave home once they are adults think again, yes they do, but they keep on reappearing every time money runs out or they need to save on rent so they can go overseas. It is completely different having your kids as adults in the home.

Theo did not decrease his time at work as promised, despite getting a young surgeon to help. He attended conferences in Italy, Hong Kong, San Francisco and Australia. The water colour painting set given in January remains unopened as does the Italian language course. Better luck next year.

Theo and I returned to South Africa in March with our neighbours and good friends John and Lisa. It was great travelling with Kiwis and seeing our country through their eyes. We stayed in Cape Town for 10 days and John and Theo did the Argus bike race. It was great seeing our friends again and I had a memorable birthday dinner with them at Blues in Camps Bay. We went on a 3 day walking safari in the Kruger Park and then stayed at a flash game lodge.

Theo and I then stayed on in Jo'burg. What a bustling noisy busy city it has become. So many familiar places and so many strange and new ones, it was so special seeing our friends and family again. We spent the Easter week end with Eben (Theo's brother) He was very frail and ill and died in August after putting up a brave fight.

So we come to a close of 2008. I am glad of that. 2009 brings with it a fresh slate and on it will be written new challenges, joys and sadness. Such is life.

A saying by Alexander Graham Bell is this year's quote:

*When one door closes another opens:
But we so often look so long and so
regretfully upon the closed door,
That we do not see the ones which open for us.*

We hope that 2009 opens doors that led only to good things for you and your loved ones. That the year brings you all health, peace, joy and happiness.