

2020 NEWSLETTER



2020 started quietly with Theo and I celebrating New Years Eve and his birthday on our own. On the 16th January Theo and Reinie attended the Downunder ski meeting in the Dolomites, Italy and then had another week skiing the other side of the mountain. Reinie did 360 km of skiing. This was a very special time for father and son. A one off. Unbeknown to them in the Lombardy district close by a virus was taking hold and it would change 2020 and the world.

So, let's deal with COVID19 and then get onto family news. We have all been affected by it. Some worse than others. It has consumed the news and our lives. On 26th March New Zealand went into total lockdown. Only supermarkets, pharmacies and public hospitals were open. All routine surgery and hospital appointments cancelled. Registrar training put on hold. What astounded me is that 5 million people complied with a few infringements. The only crazy thing was the run on toilet paper, how people went from a respiratory disease causing some sort of bowel episode is beyond me. But it was a thing and fights had to be broken up in the supermarket aisles. Flour was also in short supply as people started baking. Zooming became the new big thing. With people working from home doing their meetings, school and uni students having lessons, GP's their consultations, Personal trainers their exercise routines etc. We learnt about social distancing, bubbles, sanitising, being kind and looking out for your neighbours. Our Prime Minister listened to the health experts and she went "Hard and fast" The object was to keep COVID19 out of the community. 10 months later with a few mishaps unlike the rest of the world we are living a normal life with normal social interaction, the only restriction is our borders are closed, we are locked into New Zealand. Everyone who comes into New Zealand has to go into 14 days government run quarantine. COVID19 has had a devastating effect on most of the world. Many deaths, many sad stories and many families torn apart. Our family has been fortunate and at the risk of sounding glib, I want to document our year so it can be seen that there has been some joy and good things

Theo being over 70 was not allowed out of the house except to go for a walk. Every day we took our little Brillo for a long walk and enjoyed the sunshine and the quiet. All private practice was halted and when we did get back to sort of normal the practice has become very quiet. So maybe its time for him to finally put away the scalpel and concentrate on his sculptures. We were supposed to go on a 7-week trip to England, Russia and Portugal to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. That was a no go, so instead we converted a car port into a studio so now Theo is like a real artist. We did lots of things around the house to improve it and we went on a 3-week holiday to the South Island seeing "Our backyard"

2020 has brought several lovely people come into my life. Firstly, Lynne Nicoll managed to find everyone who was in our nursing group 48 years ago and we are on a WhatsApp group. It's like we have never been apart, and Lynn is compiling a book of our stories. I started senior ballet class and have made new friends; we do barre work and floor work all concentrating on core and balance. Through Lynne I have joined her Teacup group and every week we get a topic and write a story about it and read it at a Zoom meeting. It has made me think about many different stages of my life and I love the group and writing. One day a great grandchild will find my writing and hopefully find them interesting. All of these groups have brought such unexpected joy into my life.

Kelly found her soulmate this year. Craig. She met him in January and when we went into lockdown, they decided to do it together. This was in a small apartment. After lockdown they decided that they would make this permanent. Kelly's job at Mercury was affected by COVID19 but after a short-term contract with Airways she got a permanent job with Fletchers. They have ended the year with Kelly being 16 weeks pregnant. So, our first grandchild will arrive in middle of June. This has come as a surprise to all of us mostly Kelly

as she was told because of her age 38, it would be difficult. Craig is a very calm, laid back Kiwi. Theo and I are absolutely delighted with it all.

Fiona after 10 years of rostered shifts, night duty, weekend and afternoons decided to leave Paediatric nursing and go into the Cardiac Cath lab. It has been a huge learning curve. It's very procedural and Fiona likes systems and routine. After 8 months she has mastered the role and certainly her new roster has had a huge positive impact on her health and social life. She is a keen crafter and holds monthly classes making cards. She has also become very involved with the Nursing union --- who knew we had a unionist amongst us?

Reinie started his Orthopaedic training in Christchurch. Kath is from ChCh and it has been wonderful for them to be with her Mum and living next door to her sister. Kath passed her paediatric exams and now only has 3 years of clinical work. Reinie passed part one of orthopaedics but still has 4 years basic, an exam and two years fellowship before he is a consultant. They will remain in Christchurch for another year. In order for them to pass these exams it has taken a huge amount of study hours; this is at the same time as working long hours at the hospital. They have hardly spent any time together for the past 18 months and are going to enjoy the summer being together and reconnecting with friends.

So, as you can see, COVID19 has not been too strenuous for our family. We do not take our luck lightly and are truly grateful for all what we have. We are acutely aware that our family and friends overseas are experiencing a difficult time and certainly do not derive any joy knowing we are in a better position.. Here's hoping that 2021 ends better than 2020, one most always live in hope.

The quote for 2020 is;

It was sent to me during lock down. Not sure of the author.

“When the dust settles,
We will realise how very little we need,
How very much we actually have
And the true value of human connection.”

Be safe, stay healthy and when our borders open we hope to reconnect.