

Christmas 2015/ New Year 2016

Dear family and friends,

As usual Christmas has come far too quickly and I have just completed my yearly letter.

2015 has been a year of firsts for some of our family. Reinie and Kath have finished their first year as doctors and are no longer the “newbies”. Fiona’s Tony has started his first job in IT after completing a degree in programming. Kelly started her first business called KFG communications and does freelance work. Pietie and Jenny (family from SA) came on their first visit to New Zealand.

Theo and I have been married for 35 years, which was celebrated in June with friends and family. Special attendee was our nephew Reinie from Singapore. I feel it is a great achievement especially since we still love each other. I am now aiming for 50 years and if any of you out there are available we will have one big party hopefully arranged by my children, as I will be 77. (What a depressing thought - not the 50 years with Theo, the 77 years of me!)

In July we went to Darwin to see Robbie and Emily Tait. Robbie had survived a lightning strike, which caused his heart to stop. We went to see if he was okay. He is more than okay with a good job as a paediatrician at the local hospital and a thriving private practice. Emily has passed all her Ozzie exams and is now a fully-fledged clinical psychologist. Darwin has extreme weather and lots of crocodiles that can swim in fresh and salt water, scary stuff - no water is safe to swim in.

In October at Theo’s ENT conference held in Nelson was a reunion of sorts. At the meeting were Jim and Mary Cleland (NZ) and Rob Hodge (Aus) who Theo worked with in London when he did his fellowship year. They also attended our wedding. John Rutka (Canada) where Theo did his 2nd fellowship in Toronto. John also worked in JHB 1982. Frans and Agnes Hilgers (Holland) where Theo worked for 3 years from 92-95. It was great fun seeing everyone again. Afterwards some of us walked the Abel Tasman trail, which is truly the most beautiful walk I have been on ever.

Reinie, Kath, Theo and Pietie did the Taupo bike race. Pietie did 40km and part of it was up the worst hill. So well done Pietie. It was such fun having them with us in our little house in Taupo. Very busy social time with all our overseas visitors. Then it was December, which we call the silly season in NZ hospitals. Not because of all the Christmas parties but because how busy the hospitals become with everyone wanting their operations before the end of the year. By the time we closed on the 22nd December both Theo and I were utterly exhausted.

Christmas was spent in Christchurch and Akaroa with Kath, her mum and sister. Reinie and Kelly joined us. It was lovely being with Marie and at last her house after nearly 5 years since the earthquake is being rebuilt. Fiona and Tony went to his family north of Auckland.

I gave a talk this year to nurses at a conference on “1915 to 2015 The Changing world of nursing” It was well received so I have been invited to give it at another conference next year. Although staggering advances have been made in medicine and the

knowledge of today's nurses, the thing that patients prize the most in a nurse is "the loving touch of healing hands and a friendly face." The talk made me realise what a privilege it has been to be a nurse and to still love my job 40 years later. I am so happy Fiona is a nurse and carrying on the nursing tradition

Another year for Theo and no let up on his medical commitments. At the end of the year he is giving up the Clinical Directorship. This will be a weird state of affairs for him as for most of his specialist life he has been in charge. This is the first step to retiring. How we do that is for another letter in another year.

At the end of each year everyone reflects on what has happened. 2015 for millions of people has been a year of unbearable pain and sadness with loss of their homes, country and family members. The Gregors in New Zealand are ending the year still altogether, healthy and safe. How lucky we are.

I hope that you were lucky too. That 2016 brings to you and your loved ones peace, hope, friendship, health and love.

My quote this year is in honour of anyone who has stayed married to the same person for a long time and still loves them and looks forward to the next years together. The quote I believe is what makes a good marriage work.

"Love is friendship that has caught fire,
It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving.
It is loyalty through good and bad times.
It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weakness"

By Ann Landers

Go well family and friends.



Theo, Reinie & Chris

Reinie's graduation with Kelly, Kathryn and Fiona

"The two Reinie's"

