

December 2017

This has been the busiest year we have had. It started in December with me having major spinal surgery and being flat on my back over Christmas and New Year. Very interesting experience being on the other side. Suffice to say a year later I am pleased that I had the surgery as I have had the perfect rehabilitation and result.

2017 started with Theo's 70th Birthday. This was celebrated in Taupo with our family and Kath's Mum and sister Vic. Quiet celebration because I was not able to do much. Kelly made a tribute video for Theo which had greetings from many friends from around the world. The video can be seen on the family website. Many of you are on it and will enjoy what others had to say. In February I was feeling up to my usual party spirit and we had a lovely dinner celebration at our home with 28 friends.

March brought another big celebration. Reinie and Kath got married at Kath's family home in Christchurch. We hired a big house which was party central for our family and friends. We had many evenings of laughter and fun. Reinie, Jenny, Pietie and Charne Booysen joined us along with our dear friends the Hilgers and O'Donoghues. The wedding was a special day, made more special by having it in the family home which had finally been fixed after the earthquake (took 6 years to fix) Marie had done an amazing job on the garden and with the Tepee tent and Kath's decorations it looked just beautiful. The day was filled with such love for family and friends. Reinie and Kath in lieu of wedding presents asked people to donate money to Hastings Women's refuge and NZ Cancer society. They raised \$3,446.00 to be shared between the two.

Reinie worked at Waikato hospital as a non-training orthopaedic registrar. Extremely challenging year for him. Very busy department especially the acute emergency. We had the highest road toll ever this year and it seemed all of them were in the Waikato region and landed up in Reinie's department. Kath was 6 months in Hastings and 6 months in Hamilton which was not ideal for them. Beginning of this month moved back to Hastings where Kath is a paediatric registrar and Reinie continues with orthopaedics.

In April Fiona and Tony got engaged and married on the 8th July. They got married in the beautiful Hamilton gardens conservatory and the reception was at our home. This was a much smaller affair than Reinie's but again filled with such love for family and friends.

In June Theo and I went to Bali to Robbie and Kylie Tait's wedding. This was a 3-day affair held at an amazing resort. Being over 3 days it gave many opportunities for us to catch up with all our family members. One of the highlights for me was the surprise attendance of my brother Simon. After the wedding we spent 4 days at Gili T. Theo and I were bemused why we were the oldest people on the island and everyone greeted us, until we were told it is a party island.

September found us in Cadorna ski field. I skied for the first time since my surgery and was very relieved that I was able to do it. They have some really nice easy slopes. Theo found some more challenging ones. In October we went on 7-day cruise through the Tahitian islands. This is a beautiful part of the world and the scenery was as we expected. We cycled up a mountain on a E bike. I have never cycled up a mountain and now want an E bike to have in Taupo so I can cycle with Theo.

You are thinking that we did nothing but party and holiday in 2017. Just as well we did because the last 3 months were the busiest and most stressed I have ever been in my job. It was my last 3 months which was supposed to be quiet and sort of easing out. That did not happen so I left absolutely exhausted and relieved that I was retiring.

Both of us feel the same about retiring. Having immigrated to New Zealand and having no family and friends on arrival our two hospitals became more than a work place it became our family as well. So it was with intense sadness that we said farewell. We are both proud of our achievements, we have worked so hard and done what we set out to do. Both of us are having our retirement parties in March 2018 when we will be able to enjoy them and enjoy seeing everyone again. There is also an amazing video farewell to Theo from Waikato theatre staff on the website. Have a look.

Theo will continue with private practice next year. I will be helping Kelly with a new business venture that she is starting. This will be launched in April and next year's newsletter I will be able to tell you more. My retirement has come at the right time for me to be able to help with this venture. Kelly has worked so hard in setting this up. To us Gregors who are all medical bar her it is amazing to have a family member doing something so different.

So it's been a full year of wedding celebrations and farewells. As you get older you realise what is important in life and to Theo and I, it is the love for our family and friends that define us, make life bearable, hopeful and filled with joy. There is no bigger blessing than that.

We wish you and your families the very best for the festive season. That 2018 brings you peace, joy and good health to you all.

With our love and best wishes Chris and Theo

Time goes by so very fast,
It's so hard to believe,
It's time for our retirement,
Time for feeling free.

We've worked so very hard,
To make this dream come true.
We have had rough times,
We made it through them all,
We've made the best of what life brings,
And, today we are standing tall.

We hope we have days of happiness,
Not filled with any strife,
We hope that our retirement years
Are the best years of our life.

(Adapted from a poem Harry Sison)