

Dear Friends

Christmas 2006

This has been a welcome quiet year for us – especially compared to last year. (**You must be kidding! – Ed**) The highlight of the year was attending



Lyndell's wedding to 'Smithy' in July on a remote beach in Golden Bay at the northern tip of the South Island. The spot they had chosen was the Awaroa Lodge, inaccessible by road and normally reached after a four day hiking track in the Abel Tasman National Park – or in our case, by a 30 minute water taxi ride !. The day was perfect - clear calm cloudless winter day. By the time the ceremony ended at 5.00pm, the shadows were long. As the marriage celebrant introduced the newly married couple, a lone Cessna flew by low and slow directly overhead so that the proceedings had to pause because we couldn't hear. We just felt Richard had let us know he was there with us. A very moving and emotional moment.

The next morning the ponds were frozen over as well as the sand on the beach and since the tide was out when we loaded up the water taxis, everybody had to wade out in freezing waters – except the Mother-of-the-Bride who was carried out by her ever-loving husband. (**Hey, I was the only one unable to roll up my trousers – Ed**). The cameras were clicking and rolling – but they were disappointed – no TV bloopers! Paul was the official 'still' photographer, and we think he was the most disappointed.



Earlier in the year, we had driven a mobile home back to Nelson to spend time with Lyndell and Smithy and then go on to Paul's property on the West Coast. Paul came up at the same time, and laid claim to lots of Smithy's surplus 'resource material'. By the time we had loaded up the mobile home for our visit to Paul's, it looked like a truck and there was no room for us except in the front seats!



After their wedding, Mr and Mrs Smith (and Smithy's 13 year old son, Sam) then toured the North Island and spent some time with us on the way to the northern tip at Cape Reinga.

Jan became NZ's youngest OAP (Old Age Pensioner) in August and we celebrated by having a party at a local restaurant and a week in Western Samoa which Jan organised as a surprise for Reg. Reg



was instructed to present himself at the international airport with passport, flippers, goggles and swimmers. He wishes someone had also mentioned clothes! A relaxing time and we absorbed some of the history by visiting Robert Louis Stevenson's home. He was a prolific writer, and produced most of the works for which he is most well known, in the four years he lived on the island, but we didn't climb the hill to his grave site.



Attendances at Jan's Friday morning coffee group from the church, meeting in a local café, has now exceeded over 1000 in 21 months. Even more have been to their occasional special mornings which have featured St Patrick's Day, celebrated Queen Elizabeth 80th birthday (**video available ! – Ed**) , 'Welcoming Spring' and 'Preparing for Christmas'. Jan also took part in period costume for the re-enactment of the landing by boat on the Mahurangi River commemorating the 150th Anniversary of our Church. (**more video available - Ed**) Good fun, but her highlight was being driven around Warkworth in her finery in a 1904 steam powered car.

Jan is teaching Marcus and Larissa the basics of painting, really just to teach them to observe. Their efforts are pleasing. Larissa has also tried her hand at floral art and has also sewn a skirt for herself.



Alternate Wednesdays have seen us in Auckland for her embroidery group followed by dinner with Cherie and the children, or attending dancing classes at the church led by friends who are award winning champions.

We spent a week in Auckland looking after Larissa and Marcus while Cherie was at a Hillsong Ladies convention in Sydney in March, and they have visited us frequently. We have enjoyed the grandparents duties of attending the concerts and school functions they have taken part in.

Reg continues to try to retire, but the demands from the Group keep him driving down to Auckland one or two days per week. However, working

from home utilising the internet, fax, mobile phone etc, means he is still very involved in the Group's business, especially legal, property and personnel matters. In September, he retired from the position of Chairman of the Board of Managers for the Church, but was promptly elected to a position on the central Finance and Administration Committee of the Presbyterian Church of NZ. "No rest for the wicked" – he must be very wicked.!



May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you throughout the year.

Jan and Reg

