

As the year commenced, we enjoyed a pleasant summer with **Larissa and Marcus**, enjoying the local beaches each day. After Jan waiting six years, Reg managed to finish a water feature in the front garden and other long overdue landscaping items. Summer continued with local Agricultural Field Days in Warkworth and Dargaville (100km North) – all the other rural things you do when you live in the country – including the Helicopter Champs with Marcus.

April was full of happy times with a visit from **Joyanne and Paul**, young friends from NSW, and a wedding of the son of Jan's cousin to the niece of our bridesmaid, **Margie**, with **Jan and Margie** heading off to Palmerston North after the wedding for a week's R&R together.



**Lyndell** came for a visit in May, and the grandchildren for the holidays in July. Before that, we had another easterly storm with winds Reg measured at over 120kmph on our deck and we again lost some tiles off our roof. The repairers assure us we will be OK for the next one of that strength.

To escape some of the winter, we returned **Joyanne and Paul's** visit, and went to NSW. They took us through the Hunter Valley wine district (hic), and up to Joyanne's parents, **Patsy and Noel** in Newcastle. We finished with a week in the sun in Marcoola, Queensland including a trip to the Everglades inland from Noosa.

**Jan** says the World of Wearable Art she and Margie went to in Wellington in September was a fantastic production – more than just a Fashion Show – looks like Reg will be attending the 2009 show to get his annual injection of 'culture'!

**Reg** had noted an announcement that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was going to grant \$30m in NZ aid to PNG, and decided to advocate some be spent with and through MAF. He planned to hand a letter to that effect to the minister (Winston Peters) at a local public meeting scheduled in late October, but the day of the meeting turned out to be the climax of the intense political problems for the minister. TV cameras waylaid Reg as he arrived at the meeting, and comments from his interview featured that evening on the 5pm National Radio News, and the 6pm TV1 news, in between which times, the minister had been dismissed! So much for Reg's attempt to influence political decision making. He will have to start again with the new minister (who used to be our MP).



We had the grandchildren again for school holidays before we returned to the land of the kangaroo again in October for a week in Adelaide including the Barossa Valley wine district (hic), and a week

cruising the Murray River. The river runs at one mph (it is very flat) - and life in the valley moves at the same pace. The locals are sensitive about comments on how much water there is, but a weir and a lock at Blanchetown some 200 km inland, maintains a reasonable navigable level. The wind along the length of the river simulates a tidal effect, and the water level gauge was indicating 30cm **below** sea level at Blanchetown when we were there.

We then flew to Melbourne and holidayed again with **Robert and Heather Neilson** for a week, exploring the Upper Yarra and Healsville areas. Staying in the RACV Healsville Lodge was enjoyable luxury, with a little wine tasting not going amiss (hic). A concert in Melbourne featuring the Welsh singer Aled Jones supported by the local Melbourne Welsh Male voice choir was special.





We came home in time to vote in the General Election, and then Jan spent two weeks looking after Larissa and Marcus and the dog in Mairangi Bay, with Reg coming and going, while **Cherie** toured Palmerston North and Wellington on speaking engagements about her missionary experience, life without Richard, and Latitude Six '**Coffee for Communities**'. **Larissa** has finished her first year at Intermediate School and is maturing into a really lovely young girl with improving confidence. **Marcus** enjoys school to the point of being awarded a Principal's award for '**Consistent Work habits, sensitivity and strong ethical principles**'. Jan couldn't get over the incredibly busy life the kids lead, especially after school and on the weekends including two dance concerts in which the children performed. She found it very tiring!



We finished a hectic November with a visit to Nelson to spend a weekend with **Lyndell and Smithy**. Lyndell continues to enjoy her job as sous-chef at a very busy restaurant in Nelson.

**Paul and Erin** came up to Nelson with **Miro** who is a gorgeous happy wee fellow, soon to have a brother or sister in early January. Paul works two days a week for a Greymouth optometrist and enjoys spending the rest of his time on his very remote West Coast property raising bees. We all had a wonderful time.

Throughout the year we have taken in some theatre shows, been involved with our usual activities of Church Home Group, and dinners with Jan's siblings. Jan continues with her Embroidery group and Church Friday coffee mornings, and Reg still has his Presbyterian National Church Finance Committee involvement as well as working about 40 hours per month - mostly from home, but with a weekly visit to the office.



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

*Jan and Reg*

