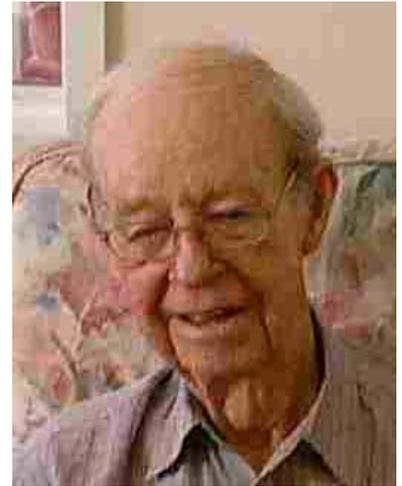


Now in his 100th Year. Yes, a week ago we had a small family celebration for Jan's father's 99th birthday. He is keeping well, but frail. His hearing is a problem to him, and a walking stick or frame are a concession to a little instability, but he still manages an occasional 100 'peddles' on the exercycle in the gym at the retirement home, and maybe does another 100 'just for good measure'. He fends for himself, and only accepts midday and evening meals from the village. Next year we are planning the 'big one'. He celebrated this year's event by publishing his latest (8th) book titled "Does God Answer Prayer" – a glossy 32 page colour production which involved Jan and Reg in much time – they are as relieved to see it published as he is.

Now on the Internet. We had the opportunity to take ownership of the website 'www.west.co.nz' and promptly did so. The plan was to put all of our happenings (including small videos) on the web, and even publish this Christmas newsletter there. Not surprisingly, time is against us (*A good 'retirement' project - J*), but Richard has based his webpage there for all to see on www.west.co.nz/gonewest and all of the family have easily remembered email addresses as 'firstname'@west.co.nz.

99 Today >>>>



Travel this year has been limited to PNG in September/October. Jan spent a week with friends in Newcastle, NSW for the wedding of their youngest daughter before linking up with Reg in Brisbane to travel to Goroka in the highlands of PNG where Richard, Cherie, Larissa and Marcus are now stationed. Shortly after we arrived, we absorbed the Goroka Cultural Festival or 'Sing Sing'.



All of the tribes come out of the hills from their villages in their most fearsome headhunting costumes, and perform 'cultural' (=intimidating warlike) dances with appropriate chanting. Our video captures everything but the aroma! We spent a couple of weeks with the family in Goroka and on holiday in Madang before Reg returned and Jan stayed on for another fortnight. Goroka weather is mild in the highlands at 5000+ feet, but sea level Madang at equator latitudes was hot and steamy.

<<<< PNG Cultural Dancers

Larissa (6) is occupied with school and **Marcus** (4) at pre-school. We attended a delightful term break-up presentation of part of 'Oliver' which was to be the major feature of the end-of-year breakup. On the public holiday celebrating the 27th Anniversary of the independence of PNG from Australia, we spent the day at the Goroka Country club – and it is still possible to sense the style of the Colonial days.

Larissa and friend >>>>



Flying. Reg had the opportunity to spend a day flying with Richard who was First Officer, and Tim Imbrock as Captain in the twin engine 22 seat De Havilland Otter. After flying into the shortest and steepest jungle airstrip in the country, Reg commented that these guys fly fixed wing aircraft into places he would only be prepared to pilot a helicopter. Taking off by barrelling down a steep slope taking 2 tonnes of coffee beans from a native village to market (their only and annual source of income), is no place for the faint hearted – especially if one of the engines decides it's rest time – which one did while Richard was Pilot-in-Command a

few days later. Fortunately they were lightly loaded and were able to climb back up to Mt Hagen and land on one engine with attendant emergency vehicles. The amount of oil on the failed engine revealed that the onboard fire extinguishers would not have been able to control a fire if it had started - but prompt action in the air had avoided an accident. An answer to our constant prayers for their safety.

Twin Otter and Cessna 206 in background >>>>



Lyndell is about to move from the heart of the tourist mecca at Lake Wanaka where everything is too expensive for the ordinary Kiwi, to the southernmost point of the South Island at Invercargill. Prices of land and housing are the cheapest in the country there, but that might be because there is nothing but sea between Invercargill and Antarctica, and the cold winds do blow. There is usually a constant 10 C temperature difference between the bottom of the South Island, and the top of the North Island.

Paul continues doing his thing – whatever that is! Communication is infrequent but he is still based in Christchurch performing optometry on willing subjects who all fall for his charm. When he escapes to his West Coast farm, he watches the gorse grow – much to Reg’s chagrin. Paul is convinced that the gorse provides a good nursery for native plants. Not surprisingly, farmer Reg wants to vigorously debate the fallacy of his logic – a good Father-and-Son ‘discussion’ topic. His property borders on a South Island river, and in a recent canoeing trip, he managed to confirm that neither his mobile phone or expensive digital camera can float or swim. Pictures of his property can be seen on his website at <http://badassbees.com/tiki/tikitour.html>. If you check his prime website (<http://badassbees.com>), you will see his interest in bees – and find that your cursor is followed around the screen by a small swarm that are impossible to shake.



<<<<< Paul and his Trusty Subaru – see his website for more exciting details

Facelifts – no, not personal, but on the Cottage.

We upgraded the exterior of the cottage to match it in with the main house. They now look like they belong together. Early next year we will refurbish the interior. All of the concrete driveways are now complete (over 600 sq m!), so Reg’s excuses for not completing the landscaping have evaporated. Jan has completed two of the five gardens.



BEFORE >>>>



We bought a truck full of large rocks for the gardens, but believe we were had – they have neither flowered or bred. *(They must be all males because they just lie there and do nothing – J).* There are only five major projects left before we can declare the new house project ‘completed’ – well more or less. We can then resume developing the ‘park’ at the rear of the property.

<<<<< AFTER

Jan has had a busy year. She still goes to Auckland on a Wednesday with Reg and spends the morning with her embroidery group ‘Just Sew’, and the afternoon with her father. With a walking group on Monday morning and a Church Home group in the evening, a ladies Bible Study on Tuesday morning, ‘Just Sew’ on Wednesday, a Garden Club on Thursday and an informal coffee meeting on Friday mornings, she is now fully settled and occupied in the district. In addition to this, she has just made the costumes and participated in the choir for a Church production of a nativity play called ‘While Shepherds Watched’ as part of the 150th celebrations of the founding of Warkworth. Any spare time is spent maintaining and developing gardens around the house.



<<<<< Costume Making

Reg is still trying to disengage from Comworth Systems which has just celebrated 20 years of operation (Reg - 15 years). He now works three days for the company in Auckland in the middle of the week, and half a day on Friday from home. However, any time gained seems to have been absorbed in tasks as Chairman of the Board of Manglers for the Warkworth Presbyterian Church where he and Jan recently became ‘unBaptised’ and joined the Presbyterians. When not on the end of a spade ‘landscaping’, he is now into Video Editing and transferring videos onto DVD. *(This is just an excuse to buy a bigger and faster computer – J). (Yeah, so what’s your point? – R).*

As we close this newsletter, we have noted how many messages we have received so far, have asked the same question – ‘Where has the year gone?’. We are no different. So as time runs out for all of us, we again invite you to remember the ‘reason for the season’ and wish you God’s blessing on the year ahead.

With Love from

Jan and Reg

