



Newsletter Christmas 2010

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Hi Everyone,

Best Wishes to you all on this lovely late Spring day. Rita & I have just returned from our morning walk of about 5½ km which took us to the mushroom farm for mushrooms and fresh eggs. On the way back we called in at the cherry orchard for a kilo of fresh cherries. Price was good too at \$10. The local strawberry farm is very popular



with strawberries to pick at \$2 per kilo. The strength of the Aussie & NZ dollars means our overseas visitors now have to pay more. Once you got \$3-50 to the £ but now it is more like \$2. European currencies seem quite sick. Good



for our imports though for we bought a new car, a Mazda 3 again. Great car with free servicing for 3 years (parts & labour too). The last one we had for 3 years and only lost \$6000 (£3000) over that period on a trade in.

Rita & I have recently arrived back from our usual haunts on Australia's Sunshine coast in Queensland. We stayed in a new apartment on the Noosa River where Norris could walk down to the water and catch the local bream,



whiting and puffer fish (which are a nuisance to de-hook). The wildlife was amazing still



with flocks of parrots, lorikeets and cockatoos roosting in the trees. Lovely walking through the woods and on the beaches and the local restaurants had our trade each day. We hired a zippy Hyundai i-30 car which was extremely economical. Aussie petrol is reasonable at 75p per litre.

Our U3A groups have been winding up for the year. I held my last session with the computer group last week and look like starting a new group with

windows 7 on a new computer next year. XP has done excellent service over the last 8 years. Rita had her last meeting of "Light on Music" last week where the group watches videos of musicals, many from the classic era of musicals from the 1940's—1970's. (*We both went to see Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers last week -the 1936 Film in Black and White. The cinema where putting on several films of this era and genre*).

Rita has her last Egyptology group meeting this coming Saturday.

The last full meeting of the U3A meets on my birthday; December 7th; where I sum up the events of the year. I have been working on the courses for 2011 and have just sent out the final newsletter of the year. 2011 will be my final session as President for it is a three year position.

Details of our U3A can be viewed www.u3ahavelocknorth.com

David and Diane's families had get-togethers during the year and at Easter went to the Coromandel peninsula for a farm stay and enjoyed farm life.

There was a mussel farm in the bay and the boys went out with the fishermen in the barges to check the mussel lines. On the way out there were opportunities for fishing and they caught lots of cod and snapper. Fresh fish was on the menu that week.

In winter the families met on Mount Ruapehu in a chalet for a skiing holiday and then they came to visit us in Hawkes Bay. The boys as usual were into



flying the model planes. Lots of new models to fly including a model Concorde I made. My plane designs have become larger and more ambitious and two planes now have video cameras mounted on them. You can see an example on this link which I put on You Tube. Copy it into your browser.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xg3kjMEcdk>

During the winter when the weather was wet I mounted the video cam on the dashboard of the car and took a couple of videos. Again you can put these links into your browser.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPc-LLO7juE>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIfe4KqNLAE>



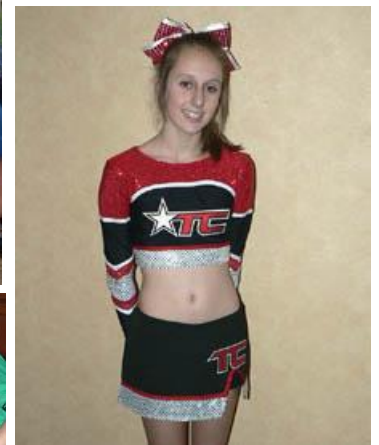
Diane had a conference in Queensland and took the family along. They had a fabulous time in the rainforest and handled crocks and snakes in one controlled area. In January we are all meeting in Wellington and Rita & I will be in a motel for Diane's house will be crowded with four adults and seven children.



The children are growing and Katie and Andrea will be in form 5 (Year 11) next year. Katie is doing two NCEA exams this year and is an accomplished harp player. Andrea is part of the Auckland cheerleading squad and is the girl who is thrown into the air and caught (they missed her once!!). The team went to Australia where they won a gold medal and gained entry to the Florida competition next year. Logan continues to excel in Maths, computing and science achieving leading scores in Australian exams. Adam heads off to secondary school next year at Scott's College and excels at flying. He has able to manoeuvre my Quadra-Copter (a helicopter with 4 fans) around the house and garage far better than David & I so he won that as a prize. Liam has reached the next level in his Tai kwon Do and Kayley, who is starting to chat, had her christening this year. Ella is as usual full of confidence and rides the largest



horse she can find when she visits the animal farm near us. She is also learning the violin and is a "Pippin" and goes to Brownies next year.



The spring flowers have almost finished and the begonias are now in their pots and pushing up through the potting mix. The sweet peas are already in full bloom and we have some very scented varieties which fill both the garden and house with their scent. Our bird life is always encouraged by Norris and Yellow Hammers, finches, Fantails, Tui, Dunnocks, are visible along with the usual Mynas, Thrushes, Blackbirds and Sparrows. My one legged thrush has come back again this year and can almost be hand fed and sings on the rose tree by the window for his food. A pair of Blackbirds is also raising a brood on a ledge Norris made under the eaves and the male bird sits on the spade waiting for worms as I dig in the garden.

Almost time for the Christmas lights again so have a wonderful Christmas and the New Year and a happy and healthy holiday period.

**Best Wishes to you all from
Rita & Norris**

