



Christmas Greetings



Christmas – Eat Treats!



Lili & Nan in Canberra



Oscar learns to sew



Oscar with golf stick cover

Coming up to Christmas, we are all well but it has been a difficult year for Kim. Her transplanted kidney, after 9 years of service, has failed and she is back on dialysis, something she knows and manages well. However the transition process has meant very close monitoring as they gradually take her off the anti-rejection medication (translate that as a lot of clinic sessions to attend at the Austin) so her week is very busy. It's a case of 'Wait and See' what's ahead for Kim but we are feeling cautiously optimistic that her Parkinson-like condition is improving a little with the reduction in the steroids. Fingers crossed for better movement and less pain for her.

A Wedding, several 70th birthday parties and a Surprise 69th have been lovely occasions for catching up with old friends. We had time with Brian & Eiril at Bairnsdale in May and they came to us in October, so we keep up with extended family doings. No other major tootles but we hope to do a bit more next year.

We've been in Bacchus Marsh for 4 years, a good place to be with our grandchildren at hand and half the travel time to get to Kim. I do a couple of morning School runs – it always surprises me how much conversation you can have in those few minutes we are together in the car.

I asked Lili (10, turning 11 in January 2011) if she would like to fly to Canberra with me, to stay with my friend Carolyn for a couple of nights and go to the National Gallery to see the *Masterpieces from Paris* exhibition. We had a great time, even queuing to go in was fun. It was her first flight so I'm a real contender for Grandmother-of-the-Year!

Oscar (turned 8 in Nov) is learning golf and kindly lets me knit covers for his golf clubs (usually adapted from wild and whacky tea cosies!) The *Sean the Sheep* one gives us all a giggle. He is also getting to know the sewing machine. I do the dangerous stuff – rotary cutting and ironing – and he does the sewing, with the foot pedal on a phone book so he can reach it. Recently I asked him what his favorite colours are. Black and red. Any other colours? And white. Ah, that's because you barrack for St Kilda. NO, I chose St Kilda because those are my favorite colours. Whatever, it's a great colour combination and we are working on a secret project that will keep him busy for some time. He is also the most consistent baker, coming regularly to make focaccias with me.

Toby (turned 6 in August, photo on the next page) started school this year. He is like quicksilver, you never know what he'll be up to next, so it's not restful to have him in the house but he is an engaging fellow. He has always loved counting and shows promise at being a whiz at mental arithmetic games.

Sean & family had a month up north in September – they had to be out of the house for 4 weeks while repairs were made to their water-damaged family room floor. We were on mail duty. There was an ugly moment when I had to email the details of TWO large bills that arrived a day apart, which brought the response from Sean, "Keep an eye on that letterbox too – it is just like a portal of happiness with all that it brings."

Ross still can't resist a computer that is behaving badly though he doesn't get as much work as he would like. His new toy is a Kindle and he is really enjoying using it to read, finds it very comfortable. So he's turning into a reader! Loves his telly, too, especially cooking programs and cop shows.

He is on the Moorabool U3A committee of management but another guy has a stranglehold on the computer teaching so I don't know how long he will continue with the organisational side.



Toby

Rudi, our brown poodle cross, is 15 this month and an old boy now – a bit blind, a bit deaf (some of it selective deafness!) and sometimes a bit confused, but he is still a jaunty character. And little Tash at 11 is also starting to get a bit filmy in the eyes.

My interest in quilts continues. A new shop has opened in Bacchus Marsh and I'm doing some teaching there. I also take a U3A group and we make quilts for children with long-term and life-threatening illnesses at the Royal Children's Hospital. I'm on the committees of Geelong Patchwork & Quilters' Guild and Bacchus Marsh Friendship Quilters, and look after the websites for both groups. We get a lot of donated fabric to make quilts for good causes and I get to sort it, play with it and store it here – what joy!

Then there are the monthly pleasures of French conversation and my Book Group with past staff from Korowa. All in all, there's plenty to do. And I'd better get on with wrapping parcels!

*With love to you all
and best wishes for good health and good times in 2011*

To finish, I'd like to share an excerpt from the book 'All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten' by Robert Fulghum.

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school.

These are the things I learned:

Share everything

Play Fair

Don't hit people

Put things back where you found them

Clean up your own mess

Don't take things that are not yours

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody

Wash your hands before you eat

Flush

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you

Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some

Take a nap every afternoon

When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we

Remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK!

Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm.

Think what a better world it would be if we all - the whole world - had cookies and milk at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all Governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.