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MERRY CHRISTMAS

It's always a pleasure to stay in contact, to share our yearly activities with our friends around the world and to wish you a Merry Christmas. Usually this time of year is marked by our summer Mediterranean weather, cloudless blue skies and a brilliant hot sun. This spring has been the coolest on record, with intermittently cloudy skies, patchy rain and daily temperatures in the low twenties, good weather for the Perth reservoirs. The year's activities have been unremarkable for both Don and Lily, with no trips abroad and a great deal of work. Here's our annual roundup of events.

Don was 58 this year and completed his twelfth consecutive year as a school psychologist. For five years he worked mainly in Safety Bay High School, and then for six years in Warnbro Community High School, both about an hour's drive south of Fremantle, on the Indian Ocean. At the end of 2004, Don again changed schools, to Rockingham Senior High School, the school in which he first taught in Australia in 1976. Don remembers that period as a challenging year with a poorly organised school and difficult students who had migrated from English industrial cities. The windswept school, surrounded by attractive xanthorrhoea and eucalypts, is located close to the ocean in the small pretty coastal resort also an hour's drive from our home. The new school is half the size of Warnbro and to-day has a friendly warm cohesive staff, many, like Don aged in their fifties. Don's new appointment made his planned winter three month trip unfeasible, as he has worked hard to establish himself in his new surroundings. He has accomplished this goal with a good rapport from the school principal. He has enjoyed counselling students in the school, and continued his practice of giving short talks to all the year 8 to 10 students every two weeks. Other duties included the occasional intelligence test, teaching a group of boys a period weekly and running workshops for staff.



Late in 2004, Don was badly bothered by recurrent dizzy spells, a concern when driving his car. A week of hospital tests in early 2005, pointed to low blood pressure, a problem mostly fixed by a daily cortisone tablet. A problem with muscular spasm was fixed with another tablet. X-rays indicated arthritis to his hip joints and a twisted spine, the result of nearly thirty years in a wheelchair. A V-track back to his electric wheelchair helps with his posture at home but not with the push wheelchair at work. It has become apparent to Don that the long term effects of quadriplegia are finally catching up with him, and he ought to begin thinking of retirement or at least reduce his two hours of daily driving time, on top of an eight hour daily workload. Consequently, for 2006, Don has cut back his time to three days a week to allow him time to develop some retirement interests.

Other interests that Don has continued through 2005 includes a regular lunch at the Saigon Vietnamese Restaurant in Northbridge, with a group of 6-9 individuals, now labelled as the Prawn heads, acronym for Perth Radio and Wireless Noodle House Eating and Discussion Society. Don's continues with his regular Saturday movies, reading, and exploring Perth's cycle paths by wheelchair. Don enjoys meals with his Canadian geologist friend Anthony, who shares his interest in collecting MP3 disks and regular Saturday night meals with Lily and with Mike Hand, meals notable for an indulgence in red wine. A new activity, made possible by the purchase of a four wheel drive chair with large soft tires, has been crawling over sand beaches and exploring muddy or sandy four wheel drive tracks through the bush in Kings Park and Mundaring.

We enjoyed a week long visit by two Canadian couples, Bill and Sue and Leo and Lana in March, 2005. The period is memorable for its good times and considerable consumption of wine. Anne and Moosa visited us from England, thankfully before the Australian cricket team lost the Ashes.

Lily's sister and her family have also been regularly visitors. Our friends are amazed at the amount of time that we have friends and family to stay. We don't require a booking system.....yet.

Don's sister Margaret Richmond with her husband Ken are well and continue to manage their chicken restaurant franchise in Ridgetown, Ontario. They have enjoyed some ocean cruises and a trip to Florida and were delighted with the birth of their second grandchild.



Don's brother George with his wife Pat are both well with George continuing as a doctor in emergency medicine in Vancouver. George has accepted numerous locums on cruise ships, resulting in several overseas holidays for Pat and himself.

Lily's sister Robyn Liebeck with her husband Ken has enjoyed a particularly good wheat crop in 2005 on their Muntagin farm. They are planning the construction of a new farm house. Their son Curtis, age 13 has attended Scotch College as a residential student near us this year. Curtis has settled into the school well and is making considerable progress in learning to play the bagpipes in order to join the Scotch Bagpipe Band. Britt, aged 10, has done very well at North Merredin Primary School and always enjoys her visits to Perth, and to the Liebecks ocean cottage at Preston Beach.

Lily continues to enjoy her Landscape Architecture studies which consume her days and nights. She completed a computer animation course this year which challenged her greatly. It was pleasing to see that it challenged her classmates more, many 25 years younger than her. Her design projects included the restoration of a rubbish tip, revegetation of a farming shire and plans for a park opposite Auschwitz, in Poland. The course has a high drop out rate and there are eleven students continuing after 40 began the course at the beginning of last year. The small cohort makes great marks harder to get, so Lily works constantly to improve her skills. She has officially resigned her position with the Department of Education and enjoys her life without power dressing and problems.

We love hearing your news, dear friends. Thank you for your ongoing contact. Our thoughts and warmest wishes to all for the holiday season and the new year.

Lily Auld and Don Pugh