



Scott Family Christmas Letter 2016

Dear family and friends,

Season's greetings! We hope you will forgive the long interval between letters. 2014 was our 'annus horribilis' for many reasons and no-one felt like sending out a miserable Xmas letter, and then 2015 just flew by and here we are already at the end of 2016!

This year has been a milestone year for all of us – Jonathan turned 60, Kay 50, Merinda is now a legal adult at 18 and Edwin has officially left childhood now that he's 16.

By far the most exciting news of 2016 (at least for Jonathan and Kay) is that we just bought a new house! (Again? you say. Yes, again.) [17 Hillcrest Rd](#) is one of those houses that you see from the outside and say to yourself, "I'd love to see inside that place." The exterior looks like a collision between a 1940s yellow brick bungalow and 1990s concrete & glass art gallery. When it came on the market we just had to have a look, and we instantly fell in love with it! Close to the university and surrounded by gardens and goldfish ponds, it has a better arrangement of bedrooms/bathrooms for family and guests than our current place. Despite that, we did manage to find room for Ellen & Kaia earlier this year and it was delightful to spend time with them again.

We have loved the quiet leafy outlook of our current light & airy house, but we have been thinking recently that we would like to find somewhere that's a bit easier to maintain. Our settlement date for #17 is 28 February 2017.

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Jonathan (60) has had a year of ups and downs. He was a finalist for a Kudos Award for his work on implantable electrodes, and was nominated for the Nola Campbell award for the use of technology in teaching and an IEEE fellowship. He presented work at conferences in Paris, El Paso, & Melbourne in 2015, and San Francisco and Coffs Harbour this year... but still professes to hate travelling (“What a waste!” – Kay). In spite of graduations, he still supervises half a dozen research students. He claims building the Nixie Chess Set nearly killed him, but he loved building a gorgeous, Jetsons-style Japanese-tram miniature railway side table, made of layered bamboo-composite wood with a glass top. Solar powered and using a single Lithium cell, it runs the tram automatically. He also built a solar-powered Z-scale train set in one of the original walnut, Hewlett-Packard, microwave, cal-kit boxes – something he has “wanted to do for years”. Jonathan has been making progress at appreciating what he has, instead of focusing on the negative. He works long hours giving 110% and vows that next year he’ll try not to say yes to everything at work and then exhaust himself trying to get it done – but he says that every year! Jonathan is looking forward to being in a sexier house with a happier wife, or was that the other way around?

Jonathan & Nixie Chess set

Kay (50) was thrilled earlier this year when she finally graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Graphic Design. A very proud poppa **Denis** (91) flew over to see his ‘little girl’ capped and gowned. Denis has slowed down quite a bit but still has good health and continues to play indoor and outdoor bowls at the RSL and maintain his garden. He wasn’t happy to lose his driving licence this year, but after several near-miss accidents it was for the best. He now gets around Cronulla in a mobility scooter and also takes the bus, and we’ve noticed that his balance and general fitness seem to have improved as a result. In April Kay started working at FindUs Ltd as a Mac operator/graphic designer. The work is not very different from her pre-degree job, but relevant jobs are hard to come by in Hamilton so she feels lucky to have been chosen from over 600 applicants. She likes earning her own money, although next year most of it will go on Merinda’s university & accommodation fees! Kay is looking forward to having more garden for edible plants and maybe room for some chickens in #17.



Kay got her piece of paper!

Merinda (18) is ready to leave the nest. Her exciting news this year is that she’s done with high school! She has applied to Auckland and Otago Universities to do Biomed, the prerequisite course to get into medicine and a number of other disciplines. She’s been accepted into Otago, but is waiting for the results of the final exams to find out if she will also be offered a place at Auckland, her preferred option. At this stage she’s interested in dermatology or optometry as possible careers. This year she got her restricted driver’s licence. In her spare time Merinda likes illustration, cosplay (still dressing up!) and gaming. She feels she has reached a cocktail-making peak after practicing for 10 years and claims her margaritas got her through high school. Merinda is looking forward to stretching her wings.



Merinda as Kiki

Edwin (16) has rocketed up in the last year and at 6’1” is nearly as tall as Jonathan. He grew so fast he got stretch marks on his back! He’s now a senior student and has two more years of high school to go. He has made a good effort to get to school every day this year and do the necessary work to pass his subjects, even though he still hates school. In his spare time he likes gaming, his parrot, gaming and more gaming. Edwin is looking forward to being closer to school, and more gaming.



Edwin rescues a glass-diving kingfisher

Our two outdoor cats, **MeMe** and **Ghost** (10) are enjoying the novelty of scaffolding which allows them to survey their domain from all new angles! They are looking forward (always) to their next meal.



Me-Me and Ghost

Lastly our cockatiel (21 months) variously known as **Birdie**, **Pepé**, **Jacket**, **Buzzard Beak** or simply **The Beak**, has now mastered “Who’s a good boy?”, “Hello Birdie”, “Want a scratch?” and “Hello good boy”. He likes to chew books, magazines and cardboard, and also mangles The Addams Family theme tune in amusing ways. He has entirely forgotten Pop Goes The Weasel, Peekaboo and Happy Birthday, seems to have a fetish for human feet, and will slavishly follow anyone flapping a cloth to sing his little birdie heart out to it. He is looking forward to being let out of his cage.



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Wishing you and your family the

Joy of the Season & Happy New Year!

