



Little did I know when writing our holiday note last year just how much life would change in the Churach Household in 2025. Just before year's end, Karn's chronic lung condition worsened, and she wound up spending Christmas 2024 in St John of God's Hospital, not far from our house. She came home before New Year's Eve but was readmitted the first week of January. She is fortunate to have the best respiratory specialist in WA, Professor Peter Bremner (a Kiwi no less!). He had her up and about by mid-January, though she's needed oxygen since then, a reality that has changed our lifestyle in 2025. As for me, I'm alive and as well as a 78-year-old can be, happily living in Western Australia with Karn and C'Bisket (a/k/a Bicky). Amazingly enough, January will mark 28 years since we immigrated here.

We had booked a cruise from Sydney back to Sydney for April, and former student and best of friends, Carolyn Castiglioni and her daughter, Holly (a/k/a Holden!), arranged to meet us in New South Wales. Sadly, Karn is unable to fly now because of the O2, but she encouraged me to meet our New Hampshire friends in early April. Fortunately, our *hānai* sister, Val DeCorte, came down from the Big Island to visit our mob and stay with Karn for the 10-12 days I was on the Aussie East Coast/Great Barrier Reef cruise aboard the *Royal Princess*. It still amazes me that Carolyn was an eighth-grade student of mine the second year I taught (1970-71) in Providence, RI, and has stayed in touch all these years. She and her hubby visited us in Philly, in Hawaii, and 2025 marked the second trip she and Holly have made down under to share more good times. Thanks, you two!

I haven't had time to write another novel in 2025, but I hope to write more in the coming year. With eleven novels published now, it seems a shame not to complete a twelfth. I continue to present an occasional lecture to community groups, and I've had fun developing my "The Science of Storytelling" talk. Watching the sad attacks on scientific research and personal assaults on scientists, I seem to be transforming that talk into "The Storytelling of Science". Over the past several years, I've grown convinced that actual scientific researchers need to communicate more clearly to the public at large exactly what they do, what they learn and how that impacts everyone.

One of our pups, Bomber (16 years old), passed on in May. He and Rocky were born in the same litter in April 2009, and both lived long, good lives. His brother Rocky left us last year at 15 years of age. Our pets are part of the family, so we adjust to the loss of our friend. Seven-plus decades have taught us that life itself is a continuous flow of changes that we must navigate through along our journey. That can be challenging at times, but it also offers opportunities to use whatever talents we have to do good things, to bond with others in our community both near and far, and to share our lives in whatever way we can. But enough philosophising here – on with the good times, I say!

Thankfully, we have had good times this year. We are so blessed to have such a strong, caring group of mates that are every bit as much family as family. I used the Hawaiian term above, '*hānai*' (informal adoption), which fits along well with another word – '*ohana*' – a greater, more encompassing concept of 'family' that includes friends and blood relatives in relationships that last over lifetimes. Of course, this need not replace our genetic families, and we stay in touch through internet and phone communications. Surely you needn't be Hawaiian to share a relationship such as that.

Here at home in WA, we do have dinner with our mates most weekends, and once in a rare while (let's



TOP: With former student Carolyn (1970-71!) and her daughter Holly, visiting us from New Hampshire. That's the Sydney Opera House behind us.

2ND: Carolyn, Holly and Dan in Brisbane with our old Western Australia mates, Sarah and Neil.

3RD: Carolyn, Dan and Holly on our April cruise.

4TH: With Holly and the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

BOTTOM: With Carolyn aboard the *Royal Princess*.



TOP LEFT: The *Hawaii 8* (minus Bill) at *Donnelly River Village* a few hundred kilometres south of Perth. We rented a 7-bedroom cabin amongst the karri trees.

TOP RIGHT: Val and Dan getting up close and personal with a mob of roos and Mr Emu.

BOTTOM LEFT: Dan and Karn at the crooked Carrot having a coffee with a comfortable couch cut out of an old bathroom tub.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Karn surrounded with some of her favourite WA ringneck parrots.



LEFT: Giving a talk, "The Science of Storytelling", to a Probus Club in Falcon, south of Perth.

MIDDLE: Another presentation to a metro Rotary Club.

RIGHT: Karn is my best supporter, a good thing to brag about after 52 years!



TOP: Part of the old Murdoch University gang, Sandra, Dan, Ken, Graeme and Bill.

2ND DOWN: With Jeff and Teresa, fellow USA transplants.

3RD DOWN: Dan with Jon Zane visiting from Honolulu.

4TH DOWN: Sandra and Dan.

BOTTOM: Karn and Sash.

just say on Saturday nights), we might have a wine or two. And yeah, just maybe... one of my mates will twist my arm, and I give in to tasting a drop or two of a nice single malt whiskey.

In October, the "Hawaii 8" drove south of Perth about 300 kilometres and rented a big (seven-bedroom) cabin at what used to be a logging village a hundred years ago. Believe it or not, it was nice getting away from the internet, TV and even phone networks and just enjoy the Australian bush there. We had all the firewood we could burn at night and all the kangaroos, emus and parrots we could commune with by daylight. Indeed, I'd recommend Donnelly River Village to anyone wanting a bit of time away from it all. Google tells us the permanent population there is 5. When's the last time you booked a spot in a town that had 5 people? Camping, you say. No fair – your tent is no town! We had a full kitchen, a big fireplace, a cast-iron stove, and NO NEWS! Well, you get the idea.

I should clarify the "Hawaiian 8". Seven of us live in Perth Metro, and Val lives in Hilo, Hawaii. Seven of us travelled to the Big Island last year in October. This year, Val was here in April and again in October-November, so the eight were back together again. Poor Bill missed our Donnelly River sojourn because he was giving his gold processing lectures and visiting mine sites in Brazil that week. He keeps telling us he's working, but few of us believe him.

One more time – Merry Christmas and Happy 2026. We remain at 12 Collinson Way, Leeming, WA, 6149, AUSTRALIA. Link us on WhatsApp, at Dan's mobile, +61 0406 533 695, Karn's mobile at +61 0431 274 659, or dkchurach@aussiebbroadband.com.au.

Thanks for reading this far into our Christmas letter! 😊 My closing message for 2025 is based on a lifetime of relationships. I must give credit to my undergrad professors and fellow Proco alumni at St Procopius College (now Benedictine Uni), my professors at the University of Hawaii, my Master's mentor Dr John Fallon at URI and my PhD supervisor, Professor Darrell Fisher at Curtin Uni. All reinforced so much of what both Karn and my folks instilled in us as kids. We are both thankful to all of you for being such good rellies, good friends and many fantastic students over the decades. You are all part of us and make our lives what they are, and you have taught us this: In a world that seems, at best, wounded and, at worst, simply crazy, we need to reach out and spread our care, our compassion, our

love... Set aside political parties, don't fear your religion or lack thereof and try not to fall into the social media trap... Now's the time we all need to pitch in, contribute by starting in our local neighbourhood, and set a positive example for our communities, our children, and generations to come. The holiday message must start with all of us. Peace and love, mates.



TOP LEFT: Dan's birthday dinner in November with Karn, Bronwyn, Bill, Peter, Sandra, Kevin, Jon and Diana, Dan and Steve. Bronwyn made a surprise visit from Sydney and Jon and Diana were visiting from Hawaii.

TOP RIGHT: Karn's birthday celebration in February with Richio, Jenny, Karn, Astrid, Dan, Sandra, Kevin, Steve, Peter and Bill.

BOTTOM LEFT: Drinks and nibbles at our house after dinner

BOTTOM RIGHT: Drinks and nibbles at Peter and Sandra's house on a Sunday afternoon. Val conducted a hula lesson or two.



TOP: The "Hawaii 8" all travelled to the Big Island in 2024 and to Donnelly River in 2025.

2ND: Martin, Betty and Val with us at lunch in April.

3RD: Bill and sister Sue with Dan, Karn and Bicky.

BOTTOM: Bronwyn, Dan, Karn and Bicky.



Check out my technothrillers:
www.churach.com

Love,
Dan, Karn
and Bicky



Bicky
April 2022



Bomber
2009-2025