

KEVIN MATTHEWS - Kevin's Wilderness Journeys
<http://wilderness.esmartweb.com/index.html> (webmaster)

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Greetings all,

Since it has been such an incredibly long time since I've written to anybody I thought it was time to do my duty (though it is actually a pleasant duty) and let everyone know how things are with me at the moment. As is my style I'll try and be as honest about things as I can. Certainly one of my co-managers (more of that later) can testify to my straight forwardness and frankness in presenting my conclusions about matters. She finds it refreshing and humorous at the same time, as opposed to the more general dishonesty and self-preservation that seems to pervade the workplace.

To be honest I don't remember when I last contacted anybody, apart from one particular person I have written to a couple of times this year (though that was some time ago now too). I do know it has been too long and hopefully following this letter I'll be able to keep in contact with some of my past letter writing friends on a more regular basis. I do miss the contact and friendship I have had with a good number of these people, especially over the last year. Yes, I am thinking of people I know in such places as Western Australia, Sydney and even more local folks. But I have to say it isn't as though I have been overwhelmed with letters from any of these people either though :-)

Many people know I have had an incredibly busy year, especially in relation to my work. What has happened? Well after a bit of negotiation (not financial, this I seem to have forgotten about at the time) I agreed to take on the job of Maintenance Manager. This was only after the previous Board of Management had been 'removed,' a few previous managers 'left' and my predecessor confirmed his 'retirement.' With the old wood gone I agreed to take on a job I had more or less previously decided I wasn't interested in. It's amazing what a change in circumstances can do for a place and the attractiveness of a job!

Anyhow, I became the Maintenance Manager of Hawkins Masonic Village at the start of February 2004 and became part of the management team that manages the village. Hawkins Masonic Village is one of the biggest Retirement Villages in Australia and the largest within the fold of the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution of New South Wales. It has hundreds of self-care units, 2 hostels and a nursing home. There is also a new multi-million dollar hostel and an extension to the nursing home to be constructed over the next couple of years. So yeah, it's not a tiddly little place like many around the place that call themselves villages. In fact it is by far larger than probably many towns in rural New South Wales.

Anyhow, with all that rambling let me just say it is a huge job, especially with years of problems to correct as soon as I can. This has included many hours of work after normal hours and plenty of home hours thrown into the mix as well. I'm not really sure when I might get a life after work back, but I'm hoping it won't be too much longer.

I have been able to successfully complete my Certificate in Business Management during my busy working

life this year and I'm glad all that work is now over. It has lightened my load somewhat having that finished and out of the way.

Probably as a result of the long hours and such, I have had periods this year when I've been fairly ill as well. I'm also not sure when I'll have a well week again - hopefully that will be soon too.

Holidays. Well I've had a couple of short holidays and went to Queensland and northern NSW - into the mountains of course! The photos are all on the web site - the link's at the top of this letter by the way. I am hoping to have a couple of weeks off during January for some very needed rest (though I do have some work to do in them - for the village of course).

I've also renewed my interest in Australian wines - not that I'm a drunkard or anything near that. I just enjoy a glass of red or white with my meal. But it has to be Australian! I have my own little wine cooler 'cellar' going now. So I enjoy that. Apparently Martin Luther enjoyed wine as well - not that I'm putting myself into Luther's category.

Talking of Luther, it seems like a good lead in to my next subject - church. 2004 has probably been my worst year as far as church and churches go. I've certainly seen some disgraceful things over the years in churches, but what I'm thinking about here is my inability to find a church that I could happily go to this year. This has greatly disappointed and frustrated me I have to say. Throw in more than a little bit of disillusionment with the Reformed Baptist movement in Australia and I've set myself up for a very poor year as far as church goes.

Now I must add by way of clarification that my disillusionment goes only as far as churches and not to God Himself. However I must admit that my walk with Him is not as good as it should be, which is more than likely a direct result of having nowhere near enough fellowship with His people. Maybe 2005 will bring some welcome changes in this most important area of my life. I do have a couple of possibilities still to investigate for a 'temporary' church to go to and so hopefully I can have a look at these early next year.

Anyhow, I've probably rattled on enough for this letter. I know most people would probably wish their readers a happy Christmas around about now but I won't be doing that. I of course don't celebrate the pagan festival that early Christianity slapped a 'Christian' tag on and made it their own. But this is my view and I won't force it on you. I will however wish you a happy New Year, as well as a safe and happy holiday season with family and friends.

Regards,

Kevin