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**Subject:** Christmas Greetings

Hello Everyone

Well, it's Christmas time which has crept up on us all so unexpectedly. Jillian and I have had hardly any time to absorb the significance of Christmas this year. We have been so busy.

## THE YEAR

The first 6 months of the year we were wondering how we could manage to live on the income I was generating so we began to look at other options. We looked at buying a cattery (which was far too expensive), a Bed & Breakfast (which our accountant would not approve of), then we sold a beach section (quite unexpectedly).

In June I was approached by Peter Jensen to stand for mayor! How flattering was that! We were flabbergasted and contemplated what we were to do. We reckoned that if God was in this conundrum we would soon find out. We agreed to have a go.

For 8 weeks I campaigned on issues I was ignorant of and commented on things I had no idea about. The silly part about it was I had traction with the voters. My opponents were not well known and they didn't seem to relate to the public. Even the newspaper admitted it was a "two horse race". The outcome, a convincing victory which I am now trying to make sense of. As a family we were over the moon and we had congratulations from everywhere. Family, old friends, colleagues, Training College days, several folk from auction days, lots of wedding couples and

some from funerals I had taken. It was amazing.

Since October 9<sup>th</sup> our lives have changed. From a semi-retired state I am now working from 7.30am until often 10.00pm. I am constantly challenged by having to understand the workings of Council and the dreaded media. I am trying to understand my Councillors. Most are very helpful but some are grumpy because they are no longer in a position of responsibility or feel they have been demoted. I am trying to be inclusive, encouraging and helpful.

Jillian, mayoress extraordinaire does her part in a very professional manner. She is by my side constantly and I think we make a good team. We have been out for dinner so many times I can only suggest, "Look at my waistline!" Everyone wants a mayoral presence and as much as we can, we oblige. I must admit it hasn't all been easy but we are becoming used to public scrutiny and I am constantly tired from all the long hours and continual pressure. I also feel very undeserving of my role and I feel unwanted expectations. It is good to know that so many folk are praying for us and this gives us great strength. The best thing has been when people have said, "Do not change from being Morris. Keep being YOU!"

Whangarei is a place I am immensely proud of with its great natural beauty and warm climate. Best of all are the people with lots of communities doing amazing things. Kind folk, who have the welfare of their fellow citizens at heart. I am so proud to be the mayor who leads this district. I hope I can do you all proud, as a family member, as your friend, as someone you know. There is still a bed for you here at 73 Mackesy Road. Don't stay away because I have gained this unmerited status.

God bless you all this Christmas. We look forward to seeing you sometime in 2011. Happy Christmas & a Prosperous New Year.

Love, Morris & Jillian