



Greetings to all,

SPECIAL Update



This newsletter is a heartfelt testimony about Alan and me, as we approach a very special wedding anniversary. It is a brief reflection of our life together that I would like to share with you.

On November 27 this year,

Alan and I will be celebrating **40 years of marriage**. It has been an amazing journey for the two of us, from raising six children in the idyllic Noosa hinterland, in Queensland, Australia, to raising over 50 children from dysfunctional, abusive backgrounds, in the southern Mexican city of Tapachula in Chiapas.

As in any marriage, there have been many highs and lows throughout our life together. We started our married life very young, with no financial security, and survived with very few material possessions for a number of years.

We managed to buy our first home on the picturesque coast of N.S.W. after spending two years living in outback Queensland, which I might add, was quite a challenge for coastal 'kids'.

After four years, we sold our home and travelled the east coast of Australia in an old mobile home with three young children under the age of five, discovering the beauty of Australia's amazing coastline. Twelve months later, after an incredible journey exploring bush lands and rainforests, coral and sand islands, and the fascinating Barrier Reef, we settled on an acreage, where we lived in a tin shed, (with no relief

from the hot Queensland sun), for the next three years. We grew our own veggies and managed to collect a number of farmyard animals, including horses and a milking cow, to provide for our family the most natural environment for them to live and grow.

By the time we had six children, the shed had become a home, and we had a comfortable existence for our large family.

Life was good, maybe at times a little difficult, and we certainly did go through some trials with our own teenagers, but generally, life was good. We lived in a beautiful country and had our own home. Alan was satisfied with his work and his business was doing well. He managed to surf on the weekends with the kids and enjoyed playing squash and the occasional waterskiing trip. In addition to caring for a home and small farm, and also raising six children, I did quite a lot of voluntary work, that is, within the church and with Surf Life Saving, which had a huge impact on us as a family. We were also fortunate to spend our annual holidays camping; skiing and snowboarding at Australia's Mt. Kosciusko.



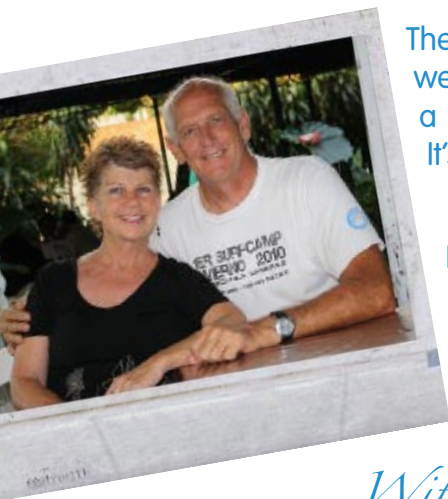
When our six children were young adults, we decided to 'give something back', so Alan and I, as well as our youngest daughter Hannah, embarked on another adventure where we were able to help hundreds of underprivileged and migrant children, and have now made a home for 50 very special young people at '**Misión México**'.



Every marriage has to be worked at and ours was no exception.

We were not exempt from trials and tribulations, especially during the 11 years in Mexico, where Alan and I had to learn to have a lot of patience; with the children in our care; with a new language and culture; with our living conditions; and our relationship.

At times we have been seriously stressed, to the point of wondering whether we could possibly continue doing this work. It has been one of the most difficult journeys one could embark on, that is, to live in a strange country and literally build a home for 50 troubled children and adolescence; to love them unconditionally; to cope with not enough money and yet try and provide for their every need; to be burdened by their pain and to try and counsel them; to lift them up when they are down; to try and correct the wrongs of their upbringing and instill in them good values and respect; and so much more; and, for Alan and I to still have a marriage relationship!

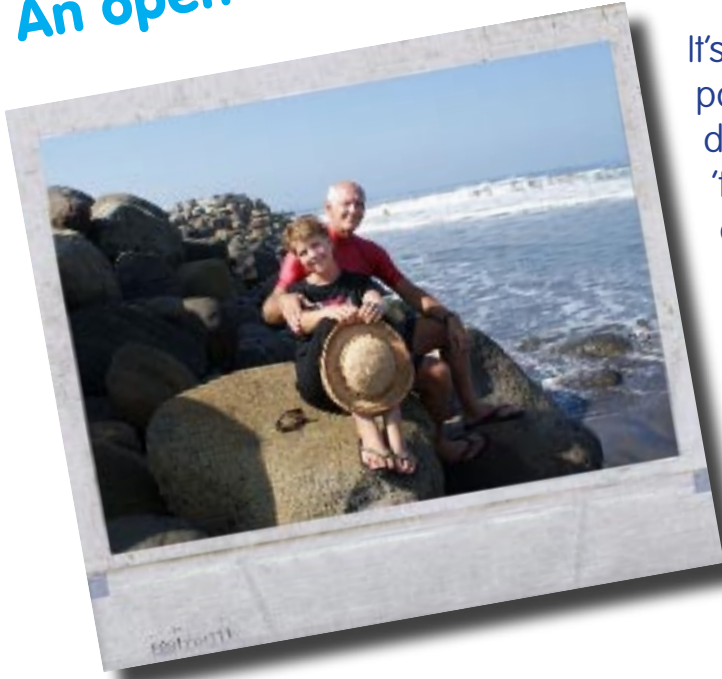


The demands have been great, but we did it, and we are still doing it; we have worked hard and sacrificed much; we have laughed a lot and cried a lot; all this being part of our growth. How could we change anything? It's all part of loving and of living, and of course, there is always hope.

It is a commitment; it's the commitment that we made to each other on our wedding day 40 years ago, to love one another unconditionally!

*With love,
Pam and Alan Skuse*

An open letter to Alan,



It's hard to believe that 40 years have passed since we stood at the altar and declared our commitment to each other; 'that we would love and cherish each other in good times and in bad times; in sickness and in health, till death do we part'.

We were so young when we made that lifelong pledge, yet we had a maturity and depth that was beyond our years. Our dedication to marriage is a wonderful example of true love and commitment.

The births of our children enriched our lives beyond comprehension, each one, a miracle, a gift. And now, how blessed we are to have nine grandchildren and two on the way! Also, to bless us even more, we have a home filled with treasures from heaven; the blessing of so many more children, each one sent to us as a unique gift to protect and nurture. I think we would have to say that we are the richest people on earth!

Every step of our journey has been an experience. There have been difficult times, filled with stress and hardships, and there have been wonderful times, filled with fun and laughter. The hard times were just as important as the good times, and I thank God for them both, because these two sides of life have made us who we are today;

We are two incredible people filled with love, strength and endurance.

I now pray that the rest of our life together is a wonderful, exciting adventure, and that our marriage will be filled with more love, laughter and good times than we could possibly imagine.

*My love always,
Pam XXX*