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Return to home farm pays off for Dairy Award winners

Inaha couple Simon and Natasha Wilkes are Taranaki Share Farmers of the Year for 2020. The announcement was made at the Taranaki Dairy Industry Awards held at the TSB Hub in Hawera on Saturday.

Together with Dairy Manager of the Year Branden Darlow from Inglewood and Dairy Trainee of the Year Sam Dodd from Otakeho they will represent Taranaki at the national finals in Auckland in May.

The Wilkes' milk 320 Jersey cows on an 84ha farm owned by the Merton Family Trust. Their anticipated production for 2019-20 is 110,000kg/MS.

This is the first time the Wilkes' have entered the awards, although Simon had entered the Manawatu Dairy Trainee of the Year several years ago, where he finished third. He met Natasha 12 years ago when they were both students at Otago University. Originally from Rotorua, his first experience of dairying was milking on Natasha's family farm in the summer holidays. Since then they moved back here, taking over the herd from her parents Morris and Debbie Bourke which is ranked in the top one per cent in the country for breeding worth. They are now finishing off their second season, and have one year-old twin boys. When they were awarded the Recording and Productivity



2020 Taranaki Share Farmer of the Year winners Simon and Natasha Wilkes

Award it was commented that they had been able to build on the strong base they had been given.

Simon thanked his mother who had taken on the task of raising the family after his father had had an accident, and he thanked his parents-in-law.

"Morris has taken control of the runoff and is the best calf rearer you have ever seen."

They also picked up the merit awards for Business Performance and Human Resources.

"It's up to us to be the best employers we can be, so we

can attract the best possible people to the industry," said Simon in accepting the latter award.

Runners Up were Philip and Pia Rockell of New Plymouth who milk 208 cows for Kevin and Heather Zimmerman of New Plymouth. This is their third

attempt at the awards. On their first attempt they didn't make it past the preliminary stage and last year they made it through to the awards but went away empty handed. This year as well as finishing second they picked

Continued pages 16-17

Three ambulances attend accident at Okato

Three ambulances were called to an accident early Tuesday evening March 17 at about 5pm.

A 2005 model Nissan Tiida Latio careered off the road,

overturned and ended up back on its wheels in a sloping paddock. The accident occurred about 2kms north of Okato as the car headed north in high winds. The car ended

up about ten metres from the fence and flax bushes, but had travelled some distance inside the paddock. It looked like it had entered the paddock some metres further north, from the disturbance of flax bushes and fencing and maybe rolled backwards in a southerly direction.

Okato Volunteer Fire Service, police and three ambulances were soon at the scene of the accident. Several people were taken to hospital in the ambulances. The car was driven by a woman with three children occupants.

The car was severely damaged with material from the car, such as hub caps, broken glass and belongings strewn through the paddock.

A policeman in a patrol car on the roadside at the scene of the accident commented,



The car was extensively damaged and the occupants taken to hospital.

"It could have been much worse." He was presumably referring to the injury to the occupants of the car.

A local man helped out by directing traffic to ensure no

further accidents. He commented, "There were big gusts of wind through a wind tunnel. Three other cars have gone off the road there in the past."



The vehicle veered off the road and rolled.

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Letters to the Editor

Lizzie Bell story still resonates across the seas

I write to you from Glasgow, Scotland, concerning the “Lizzie Bell Disaster Commemorated” edition of the *Opunake and Coastal News* published in August 2019.

I came across your publication quite by chance on the internet, as I was doing a little research on my great-grandfather, Maurice Mendis Tickell. Imagine my surprise to discover his young face looking back at me from the pages of your newspaper, in black and white, surrounded by the handful of survivors from the sinking of the iron barque off the Taranaki coast in 1901.

Maurice’s experience on the Lizzie Bell is part of family lore. After this disaster, he remained a sailor, and kept an elegant drawing of the ship, which now hangs in my parents’ home. Like them, I had never seen a photograph of the young Maurice before chancing across your coverage of the local commemorations last year. Maurice died in 1941 after a life on the sea. We can only guess now how this apprentice sailor remembered the terrible night when twelve of his shipmates perished.

It is a lesson in the brute contingency of life that I only exist to write you this letter, because Maurice had the dumb luck to take this seat in the lifeboat instead of that, because a stray wave didn’t pull him under, because he somehow tholed the cold which dragged so many of his shipmates out of this world.

In this, I suppose my family

isn’t so different from many others. Generations of us only walk this green earth because our grandfathers dodged bullets, because mortar shells crashed into this trench rather than that one, because a soldier you never knew closed his eyes and shot to miss. Maurice’s story is no different – or not much different. But I’d like to thank you for introducing me to his face, more than a hundred years on and 11,000 miles away.

*Dr Andrew Tickell
Glasgow*



Maurice Tickell, one of the survivors of the Lizzie Bell enlarged from the photo published in the *Opunake & Coastal News* August 2019.

Gym training a success

Since James “Batman” Langton has opened up his gym in Opunake it’s been attracting not just young boxers, but also many rugby players from the Coastal Rugby Club, which include

the Women’s Rugby team and the basketball players also.

Not only is this gym attracting many sports people from around the area, there’s been a keen interest taken by the general public, and according to James, many people have actually stopped smoking, drinking and drugs, and they’re wanting to train well. Isn’t that really something great to see happening?

For this to happen, especially along the coast, it is really and truly brilliant to see nearly everyone regardless of their age or gender now all taking part in some really great and positive way, so remember this, a healthy body brings a healthy mind to everybody. Now just maybe this could have a roll-on effect throughout every town in our province, which I’d like to see happen.

*Tom Stephens
New Plymouth.*

Putting all of New Zealand first

Last week in Taranaki, I outlined New Zealand First’s perspective on the year ahead including the way forward through the economic transformation of our regions.

NZ First believes that the success in our regions is crucial to our wider economic performance. We place our regions at the centre of our political concerns, not as some adjunct to be paid lip service from time to time.

When NZ First entered into a Coalition in October 2017, it was a choice for positive change and a rejection of the status quo. We said that far

too many have come to view National’s neo-liberal agenda not as a friend but as a foe.

The coalition has made serious progress, but naturally after 35 years of neo-liberalism it takes more than one term to change course and realise the social benefits.

Under National, out-of-control immigration numbers gave rise to a plethora of social problems. Our health system, education, and social services were badly run down. Evidence of neglect was everywhere, from people sleeping in cars to rotten walls in hospitals.

We did not create these problems, but it is this government that is fixing them.

The coalition’s recently announced stimulus package re-invests in restoring health and education buildings to the first world standard New Zealanders should expect as a right.

NZ First is also proud of its leadership to ignite the economic potential of our vital regions. The \$3 billion Provincial Growth Fund has been more than welcomed in the provinces.

The fund kick-starts and creates opportunity like a former time when New Zealand was truly “Gods own”.

NZ First is so committed to the provinces flourishing that it regards the PGF in its current form as a pre-condition in any future government formation.

Over our time in Government we have taken serious steps to rebuild our transport infrastructure. It was gratifying to see a \$1 billion funding boost in last year’s budget to support a long overdue redevelopment of KiwiRail.

The benefits are compelling, particularly so for the

ADELPHOS

We sometimes hear the sayings that “revenge is sweet” or “don’t get mad, get even.” It was Martin Luther King who said, “We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the capacity to love. Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.”

We recall the words in the Lord’s Prayer, “...and forgive us our sins, as we forgive everyone who sins against us...” (Luke 11:4 ISV). Aren’t we actually praying for God to forgive us based on whether or not we forgive others? That can be a scary prayer. It’s not that God is unwilling to forgive unforgiving people. No. It’s because their unforgiveness towards others stems from a

Travelling Light

self-absorbed pride—which takes no responsibility to ask forgiveness for their own hurtful words or actions.

In my 12 years experience as a registered family court relationship counsellor, I’ve seen firsthand how egotistical pride energises and emotionally pumps up a couple’s unforgiving attitudes. There’s no winner. And it’s often at the price of a child’s well-being. Pride stops them from asking each other for forgiveness. It becomes a scenario of getting even or sweet revenge. Getting even may temporarily taste sweet in the mouth. But it slowly eats away at the core of their inner well-being.

Forgiving isn’t always easy. But being unforgiving is one of the heaviest self-

inflicted weights that can burden and bow our backs on life’s mountainous journeys. I remember walking in gumboots on an uphill Taranaki paddock in ankle high mud, and getting pretty knackered. An unforgiving attitude can bog us down physically, drain us emotionally and rob us of spiritual peace. Unforgiveness negatively affects our entire being—body, soul and spirit.

The act of asking someone for forgiveness can lift an emotional burden. Even if the request isn’t received, it can still free and unshackle the person requesting forgiveness. Only God can guarantee 100% forgiveness through the Good Friday cross and resurrection of Jesus.

It’s a good idea to occa-

sionally take stock and weigh the baggage we’re carrying around. So isn’t it smart to throw away the unforgiveness we carry in our backpacks and travel that much lighter? But note: Be easy on yourself if you can’t forgive someone right away. It can often take time and prayer because of the horrible atrocities inflicted by others. It doesn’t always happen overnight. Kia kaha: Be strong.

Adelphos

PS. Oh yes, a little bird told me of the inspiring worship, Sunday School activities and after service hospitality they experienced at the little Rahotu Wesley Church. They meet 11:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of every month. Families welcome.

Letters to the Editor



environment as we reduce our reliance on trucks. Investing in our railways also enhances regional connectivity.

But our work in improving our transport infrastructure has only begun. NZ First in 2020 seeks to secure a firm commitment from other political parties to move the Ports of Auckland to Marsden Point in Whangarei.

It is established beyond dispute that the port can no longer function after 2034 and we are determined to begin the shift away from Auckland.

As we work with regional New Zealand, we will turn economic potential into performance. We will put all of New Zealand first.

*Rt. Hon. Winston Peters,
Leader of New Zealand
First*

Corona virus and Oxygen

Viruses are anaerobic which means they do not like oxygen. Cancer is a viral disorder, Ebola, Swynfever, Sars, Flu and Corona virus are some of the many viral disorders.

Oxygen should be the first port of call to treat and cure these diseases.

The orthodox medical practitioners and the pharmaceutical companies do not want to hear this because there is no money in it. Oxygen cannot be patented (hence no money no treatment).

I lost two brothers and a sister through Cancer, however I will never get Cancer because I oxynate my body and take a Magnesium supplement to alkalise my body (Cancer likes an acidic body).

This Corona virus should be treated with an Oxygen treatment, it is cheap and effective. Viruses do not like heat. Eat hot spicy food and if you wash your hands, use hot water

I have not suffered the flu for about 15-16 years because viruses do not affect me. I am 86 years old.

Pass this on.

*Tony Groot
New Plymouth*

Kaponga coming alive

I'd like to say well done Kaponga and keep up the good work.

Seeing that photo of Kaponga's big bright and extremely brilliant welcoming sign done by signwriter Laurence Larkin would really make any visitor welcome to the township of Kaponga, even me.

It's also great to see the Kaponga Progressive Group meets twice a month to discuss how to improve their town, which is to me extremely important, not only for Kaponga itself but for every town in our great province, so keep remembering that every town in Taranaki is just as important as the next one, while it's great to see the Eltham-Kaponga Community Board also being involved.

Now if this group's chairman, Mr Ian Clifton is wanting a walkway from the town to Hollards Gardens, plus there's also interest from Stratford about it being extended from these gardens to Dawson Falls, I'd say to Mr Clifton and his group just go for it, don't procrastinate over it. Just do it, working with Stratford to extend the walkway further than Dawson Falls, and maybe work in with the local iwi also.

I believe also there are plans to have T shirts and sweat shirts with the same design on them as are those now on the way to Kaponga. Spread the word, then I can see other towns will most strongly do the same thing, which will be extremely great to see.

*Tom Stephens
New Plymouth.*



Middletons Bay several nights ago.

Where are we on Coronavirus?

To date there have been eight cases of COVID-19 coronavirus reported in New Zealand.

With a rapidly growing understanding of the COVID-19 coronavirus, experts have been asked what comprised the latest consensus on the virus..

Professor David Hayman, Professor of Infectious Disease Ecology, Massey University School of Veterinary Science, comments: "The virus seems to be spread through the respiratory system, mainly through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air. This means the virus is in small droplets that then land on people directly or on surfaces to be touched later. This is why it is important to stay some distance (currently recommended to be a metre) from a person who is unwell and coughing, why it's important to wash your hands and reduce how frequently you touch the sites where the virus can enter, so eye, nose, or mouth. There is some evidence some individuals might also shed the virus in faeces, but the same hand washing and hygiene procedures should reduce the transmission if so. "Currently it is still not clear which animals were the source of the infection to people. The virus definitely has close relatives in the bats in China, but it may have

been another type of animal that was infected by a bat virus before infecting people, as has been seen with SARS and MERS coronaviruses. A close relative to this was found in pangolins, but from the genetic analyses I have seen these still are not as close to the human virus as the one published from a bat. "The COVID-19 disease has a relatively high case fatality rate overall for an infectious respiratory disease, killing 1 to 2%. However, the data suggest it is very skewed towards older patients, with the percentage less than 0.5% (0.2-0.4%) in those less than 50 and reaching nearly 15% in those over 80. This may lower if it turns out there are a lot of asymptomatic cases with time, but could also increase if those in critical condition in hospitals die. Also, it's worth pointing out while in those less than 40 the fatality rate is reportedly 0.2%, this is still high should this virus infect a lot of people. "The comparison with flu has often been made and in

my opinion it's quite useful. While the virus is a coronavirus, so genetically more related to some common cold viruses, its transmission and the disease is quite like influenza. This is true in terms of disease and some characteristics of the transmission dynamics, though that might change as more data become available. There are some key differences, however, relating to how flu viruses evolve, which affects vaccine development, and in particular the fatality rates: this virus is much more lethal in older people than seasonal flu, though much less lethal in younger ages than the famous and devastating 1918 global pandemic virus." Dr Jennifer Cole, Biological Anthropologist, Royal Holloway, University of London, says "Early estimates of fatality rates tend to be higher and then drop as the outbreak progresses. This is mainly because early figures are based on the more severe cases only - those that seek

hospital treatment - and so don't capture mild cases. It's not until later in the outbreak, when large numbers of people who wouldn't normally have sought healthcare, such as all the passengers on the quarantined ships, everyone an infected person has been in contact with, or the entire population of a town is tested that more accurate numbers start to emerge and the figures settle down. Early cases may also be more likely to result in death as people's symptoms may be more advanced before they seek treatment. The earlier people receive treatment the better chance they may have of making a full recovery. Scientists don't always consider explaining why figures change as more information about a situation emerges, which can leave people feeling confused and not sure whether figures are reliable or not. Estimates and projections should always be put into context. If figures and estimates change, it's important to clearly explain why this has happened."

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COUNCILLOR'S COMMENT

New app keeps you in touch

The new year is flying by and the South Taranaki District Council members are settling well into their roles. There have been a number of workshops and meetings as we work on producing the annual plan. There are some exciting things happening that you can be a part of - one of which is the availability of a new app called Antenno.



Cr Chris Young

Antenno will alert you to things that are happening within the District. You can set the app up to notify you about the places and topics that are of most interest to your community or the wider district. Antenno is free to download and to use. It doesn't ask for any personal information or login details, so it's an easy way to stay informed.

notifications from council about the places you have marked as important to you. The second is being able to report back to council with any feedback or with any issues or ideas. For example, you could let the Council know that there is a water leak, rubbish bins are overflowing or there are potholes on your road all via the app. Once an item has been received it will be logged on the Council's system as a customer request.

There are two ways you can use Antenno. The first is the ability to receive

As you can see this app covers all things to do with the South Taranaki District Council and is a great way for everyone to keep informed. You can download the app from the App Store or Google Play - just search "Antenno". I hope that you check it out. If you want to find out more about how it all works you can go to the Council website www.southtaranaki.com and type "Antenno" in the search bar.

As summer draws to a close, it was good to see the pools around the District were well used. I hope those with dogs were able to get to the Dog Splash Day at Kaponga Pool. It was also good to get through a long summer without water restrictions.

In closing I would like to thank a few local community groups that have led some recent mountain bike events. There is quite a circuit going now with the ride to Rahotu, the Ratapiko loop ride, the Opunake Mountain to Sea and the upcoming Kaponga ride. A special thanks must go to the farmers whose land these rides cross. As well as being great fundraisers it is a fantastic way to see more of our wonderful district.

Councillor Chris Young.

Guardian of the lake speaks his mind

For the last 17 years Rex Langton has taken a watching brief over the Opunake Lake and its surrounds. A member of the Opunake Lions Club, the lake has always been the part of the Opunake Walkway he has taken a special interest in. Last week he was at the Taranaki Coastal Community Board meeting talking about his work and some of the concerns associated with it.



Rex Langton has a long standing interest in the welfare of the Opunake Lake.

These include the state of four culverts channelling stormwater from the town. These include one near Farmlands channelling stormwater into the lake where the channel had never been completed, leading to occasional flooding and blocking of the Walkway. Rex says this is something which the Council have been aware of, but over the course of time little has been done. Other culverts by the lodge and the former scout den get blocked and lead to silting at the lake. The fourth one is by the boat ramp. The mouth is overgrown with grass and never been checked, says Rex.

been looking after their stormwater finishes in the lake," says Rex.

For the last 17 years Rex has been working at the lake, "taking out things which need to be taken out."

"I've always had the District Council and the Regional Council trust my judgment calls," he says.

He sprays around the lake

at times when people are less likely to be around, like early in the mornings, or during work days.

Some of his attempts to beautify the area have met with frustration.

"I've planted 14 nikau palms over the last 15 years and they just keep getting taken."

Then there was the time he planted 12 swan plants, and within three days all of them

had been dug out.

Other forms of plant life have been less welcome, like macrocarpa, and pines which he labels as a "noxious weed." Then there are reeds which are encroaching further and further into the lake, and the raupo, which he says has been doubling in size each year.

"They are so tall, they are blocking off the views of the lake," he says

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Uncompleted reef still causing problems 11 years later

The after effects of the failed Opunake reef are still being felt along the Taranaki coast eleven years after the project was abandoned.

The artificial reef at Opunake Beach, the brainchild of Raglan-based company ASR had been announced with much fanfare in 2006. Four years later the project was dead in the water uncompleted, leaving geotextile bags sitting dormant on the seabed of the main beach.

As reported in the Opunake and Coastal News (February 28, 2019) Opunake man Chris Fuller expressed concern about the speed at which the bags were falling apart releasing geotextiles and plastic particles into the marine ecosystem.

A year later, Chris told the March meeting of the Taranaki Coastal Community Board that the situation had not got any better.

"This is going to roll on for a few years. The project did not go well. Let's do this properly and clean it up."

He said the Taranaki Regional Council, who currently hold the resource consent for the reef had told him they planned to remove the bags by slashing the tops off them, leaving it up to the tides and swell to put them up on the beach where they could be removed.

He said there was no guarantee the plastic wouldn't be washed further out, causing even more risk to ecosystems and food



Plastic lurks underneath Opunake's pristine coastal exterior.

chains.

"I had suggested to the Taranaki Regional Council a year ago that whatever we do, we don't create further harm than we've got already. This places more risk on our environment," says Chris.

He says he understood the contractor had only made one visit to the beach.

Chris said since then local people had been picking up geotextiles along the coast. Three or four months ago one piece was discovered that was too big to be carried away.

"Where are the ones that haven't been washed up? They can't guarantee they will all be washed up on the beach."

He said the \$50,000 allocated for the cleanup wouldn't be enough to fix the problem. He said he would prefer to see something like

what had been done at Mt Maunganui, the scene of another failed ASR Reef project, where the bags had been picked up by boat and taken away.

Board members expressed surprise when told the TRC had opted to slash the bags as a way of fixing the problem.

"I agree it's a crazy way to do it," said board chairman Andy Whitehead. "I'd like to suggest we invite the Taranaki Regional Council to our next meeting to tell us where they are at."

Mayor Phil Nixon said that although it was a TRC responsibility it was something that affected the South Taranaki District Council, so they needed to make their views felt.

Chris said he wasn't interested in apportioning blame. He just wanted to see the problem fixed up.

"In the meantime we've got these things still disintegrating as we speak. They are going into our marine life and into our food chain."

Taranaki Regional Council director resource management Fred McLay says "I sense folks want to go faster with a different method. However, the Council has entered into a contract on the method, so is bound by it.

"The reef project removal is the end of what started as a great innovative community project that has not ended well for most of the parties involved. We are doing our best under the difficult circumstances to remove the reef using the bond funds and method adopted. This will take some time and local support and understanding would be appreciated."

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Biking raises funds for Walkway

The Lions Club Mountain to Sea bike ride was held on Sunday

We had 234 participants and while it is too early to give an indication of profit we are extremely happy with this result.

While the ride is promoted as a family fun ride we do have a race option with trophies given by Energy City Hawera. This year Darry Stevens was first in for the men at 1 hour 18 minutes and Nichola Cox first woman home in 1 hour 36 minutes.

The profits will be going to the work the Club is currently doing on the extension of the Opunake Walkway which



The start briefing gives an indication of the numbers involved and the beautiful day.

we are turning into a loop of approximately 8 km suitable for walking and cycling.

Ian Armstrong
Opunake Lions Club

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The 'Open fire season' is back but please be careful as it's still very dry out there. We have already had controlled burns that have got away into some other scrub. More preparation is required to safeguard the area and keep an eye on the weather.

Pandemic kits have arrived



On Tuesday the Opunake Fire Brigade attended a vegetation fire on the Surf Highway near Opunake.

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on our trucks which contain masks, gloves and goggles to wear at medical calls. Scary times may be ahead, but stopping all big events and meetings hopefully will slow the spread of the virus. We will still respond as normal to callouts.

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Stay Safe

*Craig Dingle
CFO Opunake Fire*

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Police need to hear from you



Constable Matt Stone

Kia Ora Koutou,
It has come to my attention that many incidents such as theft have not been reported

in the Okato area, and likely other Coastal areas, to Police. No matter how big or small, historic or recent, Police need to hear from you. What might seem small to you could easily be the final piece in the puzzle for us.

However, I would like to express my thanks to the large number of people that are reporting suspicious activity. This information is extremely valuable. This thanks can also be extended to the members



Above and left. Police are asking for anybody who may know anything about these two vehicles to contact them.



of the public making Police aware of poor driving. Any Police action or contact can significantly reduce the possibility of deaths on our roads.

Just an update from my last article regarding two burglaries at a Warea address. These are photos of the Ford Transit Van and White Nissan truck I am attempting to locate

regarding burglaries. Should you recognise the vehicles, please make contact.

I enjoyed the recent athletics days at Coastal Taranaki School. I'm sure there are future Olympians among the group.

Until next time, stay safe.

*Matt Stone
Okato Police
matthew.stone@police.govt.nz*

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Times of refreshing for Kenya's heroes

Carey Westwood describes herself as a Kiwi-born Australian living in Nairobi. In 1994 she visited Kenya on her first volunteer trip abroad. It was there that she first met Wanjiru Waithaka(Chiro), whose family were running two community centres in the inner city slum of Soweto in Nairobi.

"That definitely changed my life," says Carey "I came back to Australia and spoke to whoever would listen to me."

She kept going back to Kenya in 1996, 1998 and 2000, before settling there seven years ago. In 2015 she and Chiro set up Mana Springs to help the women of Kenya.

Last week Carey and Chiro were in Opunake where they spoke to a meeting at Soul Kitchen, as well as speaking to Opunake High School students and the Taranaki Coastal Community Board. This is their second visit to Opunake. After meeting them last year, Andy Whitehead was so impressed that he organised another visit for them.

Carey and Chiro say the women are at the forefront of the schools and social programmes looking after the disadvantaged. Through their contribution and their example, they are the grass roots leaders.

"In my society, women are not heard and not valued, but they are given such responsibility," says Chiro. "Without them we don't have strong families, strong churches and strong communities. Everyone is depending on them, but who is looking after them? These



Carey Westwood and Wanjiru Waithaka(Chiro) with some of the Kenyan items for sale after their meeting at Soul Kitchen.

women are the heroes of Kenya. Without them we won't have the nation that we have. If we are going to see a stronger Kenya, we are going to have to strengthen the women."

The name Mana Springs refers to the Maori concept of Mana which includes service without expecting reward, and to springs as a source of refreshment for body, soul and spirit. To that end Mana Springs conducts residential programmes where groups of 30-60 women can get together for three days and two nights to get the support and advice they need and to learn from each other's experiences.

"Some have skills, some

don't," says Chiro. "Others have been on the journey for a long time, while others are just starting."

Carey says this is a time for sharing stories.

"There's power in storytelling, stories of tragedy as well as stories of triumph."

Carey told the meeting at soul Kitchen about her desire for Mana Springs to own a property of about 25 acres where they can hold their programmes.

"One day our hope and our prayer is to have a centre," she said.

There are 42 tribes in a country with a population of 50 million. Thirty seven per cent live in economic poverty.

Carey said she enjoyed being back in Opunake, and she found that throughout New Zealand and Australia that

it was in the smaller centres that their message got the best reception.

Andy Whitehead said he had been impressed with them the last time they had been in Opunake.

"I went to listen and I was so interested to hear about the work they were doing in Kenya."

Andy says he has always had a passion for that country, which he and his family had previously visited.

"The Kenyan people were with treated us so well. They don't have a lot but they were happy with what they have got, so it's good to give something back."

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The lifeblood of rural communities

Reading the Opunake & Coastal News coverage (March 5) of my meeting in Oaonui with Todd Muller got me thinking about how farming has changed over the years. I was reminded that community halls were once the lifeblood of rural

areas and that often they still are. It's always enjoyable hosting visiting MPs from other electorates because it's a great chance to showcase all the good things going on in Taranaki. There's no better example of that than the Oaonui Hall.



JONATHAN YOUNG MP FOR NEW PLYMOUTH

Todd Muller came as National's Agriculture spokesperson to update locals on his thoughts about the current Government's potential impact on the agricultural sector through ETS and Water Management regulations. He was impressed with the attitude of the people he met here. Oaonui has done an amazing job keeping the Hall at the

heart of the community. It's obviously a much-loved facility and a lot of time, effort and money has been put into keeping it in top condition. I enjoyed seeing new refurbishments, while the history of the area is proudly on show from rolls of honour, to the newspaper clippings embedded in table tops.

Farming is very different now from when the Hall was built. The current generation of farmers operate very differently to their parents and grandparents and the next generation will work in their own unique ways. It's an industry that constantly innovates and strives to do better. Our farmers are the best in the world and sometimes don't get the recognition they deserve for their efforts. With mental

health such a serious issue, it's so important that rural people get to know their neighbours and the many events hosted at the hall are the perfect way for that to happen. Like many others around the region, the Oaonui Hall is performing a valuable role, helping strengthen community networks.

I'd like to thank the Hall Committee for their hospitality and the people of the Oaonui area for coming along to meet with myself and Todd. I'd also like to thank former Taranaki King Country MP Shane Ardern for coming, along with Whanganui MP Harete Hipango and representatives from Barbara Kuriger's office. Their presence was a good reminder that National is a team, working together

for all New Zealanders.

I'll have more visitors in the coming months and will proudly connect them with locals. If you have an issue you'd like to raise please get in touch with me: newplymouthmp@parliament.govt.nz

*Jonathan Young MP for New Plymouth
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There is still more to do

Knowing people have your back is a powerful thing. That is why I'm proud to have been reconfirmed as the 2020 Labour Party candidate for Te Tai Hauāuru.

I want to thank all who travelled to my confirmation hui, for their aroha and ongoing support.

Our whānau need a Government that has their backs, like this one does.

At the hui, the room was clear that the compassionate leadership of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is what is needed to continue to put our country on the right track and further improve the wellbeing of families here in Opunake.

With recent changes made by this Government, allowing voting in supermarkets and enrolling on Election Day, having your say has never been easier than it will be on



ADRIAN RURAWHE MP

September 19.

From putting a linear accelerator for radiation treatment into Taranaki for the first time, and Ngāti Ruanui Holdings Corporation Ltd recently getting \$1,450,000 to expand their blueberry operations and grow jobs, to our announcement of completing the refurbishment of the mental health facility in Taranaki as part of our \$300 million boost into health

infrastructure, I am proud of the progress our Government has made in just one term - especially for Māori.

Like you, myself and the Labour Māori Caucus know there is more to do.

At Waitangi, Māori Development Minister Nanaia Mahuta showed how this Government is getting on with the job voters elected us to do, by announcing overdue proposals to reduce rating barriers for owners of Māori land who want to develop their whenua.

By removing the deadlock faced by councils and local Māori landowners here in Opunake and our region over rates arrears, we can empower local government with the ability to write off unrecoverable rate arrears on all land (including general land), and give landowners

a 'clean slate' with which to get more development, jobs and houses underway in our rohe.

While the retention of Māori land is paramount, this is just one of the proposed rates amendments Minister Mahuta is set to introduce in the first part of 2020.

Together with targeted amendments to Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, new and enhanced Māori Land Court services, and the launch of whenua knowledge hub; www.tupu.nz - this Government is reconnecting whānau to their whenua and backing landowners at every level, to confidently make the best use of their land.

Mauriora!

*Adrian Rurawhe
MP Te Tai Hauāuru*

On this month in history Shaun Quincy rows the Tasman

On March 14 2010 Aucklander Shaun Quincy became the first person to row the Tasman Sea from

Australia to New Zealand. The trip took 54 days which included several capsizes in very rough seas.

He set out from Coffs

harbour in New South Wales on January 20 for the 3,900 kilometres rowing epic in his boat Tasman Trespasser. He finally made landfall

at Ninety Mile Beach. However, he had to swim the last 300 metres through the pounding surf.

HARETE HIPANGO MP for Whanganui
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OBITUARY Jeanette Fitzsimons BA CNZOM

Former leader of the Green Party Aotearoa New Zealand Jeanette Fitzsimons died on Thursday March 5 following a fall at her Coromandel property. The cause of death was a stroke and she died the same day at Thames Hospital.



Jeanette Fitzsimons

Jeanette Mary Gaston was born on January 17 1945 in Dunedin. After her family shifted north she attended Waiuku District High School (1957-1959) and afterwards Epsom Girls Grammar (1960-1961). After leaving school she completed a Bachelor of Arts at Auckland University majoring in French and Music. Jeanette played the violin and was considered talented.

She married Bevin Fitzsimons in 1966, and the couple had two sons, although this ended in divorce (1986). She married Harry Parke in 1994. She taught at her old school Epsom Girls Grammar

1966-1967.

Jeanette and Bevin lived in Switzerland for about six years (1968-1974). She was involved in environmental issues and joined Friends of the Earth and the Environmental Defence Society during her time in Switzerland.

After returning to New Zealand she joined the Values Party. She was their Energy Spokesperson from 1977 to 1982. At the General Elections of 1978 and 1981

she was the Values candidate in the Remuera electorate.

From 1980 to 1992 she was a University of Auckland lecturer in Environmental Studies and Energy Planning.

She was a member of the NZ Biological Producers Council, the Environmental Council and was also an environmental consultant.

While the Alliance Party was in existence the Greens was one of the constituent parties. At this time she was Co-deputy leader (1992-1994) and became Greens Co-leader in 1995. She continued in this role until 2009 firstly with Rod Donald and, after his death, with Dr Russel Norman. She was a Member of Parliament from 1996 until her retirement in 2010, mostly as a List MP. However, on November 27 1999 she narrowly (majority 250) won the electorate of Coromandel, although did not retain the seat at the following election.

During her time in Parliament she was Greens Spokesperson in many areas including Climate Change, Energy, Finance and Revenue, Genetic Engineering, Research, Science and Technology, Sustainable Economics, Transport and Treaty Issues. When she retired from Parliament on February 11, 2010 she was replaced by Gareth Hughes.

Her honours include being made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her public service in the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours. In 2007 she was named the NZ Politician of the Year (NZ Herald). In a Colmar Brunton poll in October 2008 she was named as the Most Trustworthy Political Leader.

Since leaving politics she has been involved in various protests such as joining Greenpeace's Bunny McDiarmid in a protest against oil drilling off the

Raglan coast. In 2017 she chained herself to the gate at Fonterra's Cladeboye factory in South Canterbury. Harry Parke and Jeanette enjoyed their 'Pakaraka Farm' in the Kauaeranga Valley, east of Thames, which has solar power and micro-hydro power. They sold olive oil, chestnut

products, pecans and livestock.

Rest in peace Jeanette. You will be remembered for your passion about protecting the environment and your political initiatives as an outstanding Member of Parliament, as well as a graceful humanitarian.

Maori Party calls on Government to release funds to help Maori providers

Maori Party calls on Government to release funds to Help Māori providers Māori Party candidate for Te Tai Hauauru Debbie Ngarewa-Packer says she is relieved the Prime Minister has finally made the big decision to put new restrictions in place at the international border with the aim to 'flatten the curve' of COVID-19 infections.

"The Māori Party has for some time been worried that we as a nation have not moved quick enough to respond. Many other countries like Taiwan have been extremely efficient in responding and putting controls in place.

"The Māori Party is calling on the Government to rise above any differences and work together to ensure our communities are supported."

The Prime Minister has announced unprecedented sanctions requiring all those entering New Zealand from overseas to enter into self-isolation for 14 days.

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer said; "Many of our whānau are living in areas with limited medical services and shortage of GPs. Any outbreak of COVID-19 will stretch these resources even further. So our Hau Ora Providers, Whanau Ora Navigators and Community workers will be needed now more than ever."

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer's appeal to Whanau Ora Minister Henare is, "Now is the time to bury the hatchet and step up release Whānau Ora funds to help our services assist our whanau. Any head start by preparing our people and the communities, we are

all a part of is just one way we can respond right now."

"I have been out and about in our electorate and those I meet have been asking hard questions about community and fears for whanau health including care of our kaumatua during a pandemic. Many are worried for their jobs! So just like the border controls we need to all work together to support and protect our most vulnerable communities.

"While the Prime Minister must be acknowledged for showing strong leadership to slow COVID-19 down, we must encourage the Prime Minister to continue to be bold and follow through with particular attention to our whanau and communities that need it most," said Debbie Ngarewa-Packer.

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Clinic offers integrated skincare service

The clinic known as Integrative Dermatology, offers an integrated approach to skincare. Located in Oakura on Butlers Lane, behind the Four Square supermarket, the facility was opened by Dr Lisa Connelly, a dermatologist, who specialises in all skin conditions as well as hair and nail disorders.

A fully qualified beauty therapist, Lee Newton, also works with Dr Connelly enabling the clinic to offer a full skin care service.

Dr Lisa Connelly who is from Florida in the United States opened the Dermatology clinic 8 months ago. She is a medical doctor who is fully registered to practise in both New Zealand and the States. In addition, she has completed an extra year of training in pediatric skin conditions. Currently she is one of a handful of paediatric dermatologists in New Zealand and the only one in New Plymouth.

She treats a wide range of



Dr Lisa Connelly Dermatologist.

skin conditions in patients of all ages from rashes to skin cancer, eczema, psoriasis,

acne and moles. After practicing in New Plymouth for 4 years she became acutely aware of how fragmented skin care is in the region. Her response was to offer a different approach. As their name implies at Integrative Dermatology you can expect to have all your skin care needs met under one roof. No need to visit one facility for the treatment of your acne, another for a mole examination and yet another for the treatment for skin cancer removal or aesthetics such as botox, peels or fillers.

“Our goal is to provide our patients with complete skin health care,” says Dr Connelly.

They offer full body skin examinations checking for moles and its sinister counterpart melanoma, a potentially deadly form of skin cancer. “We use a dermatoscope,” which Dr Connelly explains magnifies skin lesions allowing for more precise viewing of features under the skin. Patients with concerns about suspicious moles can have their lesions assessed, diagnosed and surgically removed at the clinic; sometimes this all occurs within the initial visit. No need to wait days to weeks for a diagnosis from a doctor outside of New Plymouth or return for a biopsy and later excision. She adds that Taranaki has the highest rate of skin cancer, specifically melanoma, in New Zealand, usually from sun exposure. “We aim to streamline the process for patients so they can have their concerns addressed in as few appointments as possible.”

Lee Newton who is a fully qualified aesthetician works with Dr. Connelly to provide an integrative approach to skin care. Her focus is on helping patients choose the best skin care products to complement the

medical treatment of their condition. “The advantage of integrative medical management with skincare is that it ensures optimum results,” says Dr Lisa.

Lee notes that “Often what I hear from people is ‘We’ve tried everything but your clinic is our last resort.’ We would like for patients to consider us as their first option for their skin issues.

In cases of skin damage, pigmentation and aging, a skin peel which takes off the old skin allowing new skin growth often produces a good result. With acne conditions, for example, Lee recommends skin care products which deliver best results.

Seeking advice and treatment early can be vitally important in the treatment of acne and can stop the condition progressing to scarring which she says can impact on people’s confidence. Teenagers do not have to suffer unnecessarily with acne - sometimes a good basic skin care regime can be the

answer.

In addition to managing the treatment of all skin diseases, Integrative Dermatology also encompasses a broader approach to medicine. “We integrate our approach to skin care with the most up to date methods of treating skin diseases using prescription medication. We combine this with nutritional medicine and the best skin care practices and products for the condition,” says Dr. Connelly. She adds sometimes that involves use of dietary supplements, facials and/or specific skin care products.

Dr Connelly lived in Oakura for 4 years and chose to open the clinic here because of the strong relationships she’d developed in the village. She and her husband, who is also a doctor and works at Taranaki Base Hospital, have three children.

She particularly enjoys Waka Ama which she does at Ngamotu Beach.

Her husband and kids are aspiring surfers while Lisa says with a smile “I try”.



Lee Newton a fully qualified aesthetician.

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Property Brokers now in Taranaki

A nationwide real estate firm now has a presence in Taranaki. Property Brokers has merged with Farmlands Co-operative and will be operating out of Farmlands Branch in Bell Block and will also have a presence in South Taranaki with an office in Hawera. There are currently three sales representatives. These are Paddy Bolger and Paul Northcott who will cover North Taranaki to Stratford and Coastal to Opunake, and former policeman Mark Nicholas who will be operating out of Hawera and will cover up to Stratford, up to Opunake and south of Hawera. Paddy Bolger grew up in Rahotu and prior to entering real estate owned several farms. He has been selling real estate for sometime, "Since July 7 1977," to be precise, says Paddy. A licensed real estate agent he is qualified to run his own branch. Now at 83 and still working full time at real estate, Paddy says he has never been busier, and he also says he enjoys every day. It's a job he clearly relishes

and he likes a challenge. He refers to a one bedroom cottage in Midhurst which he recently listed. "It doesn't leak and the power goes," says Paddy of the modest cottage, adding it's got a good section. Already he's got several people interested and adds "Midhurst's a growing place." Lifestyle properties and bare land in the country are particularly sought after followed by sheep and cattle drystock. Dairy farms rank last, he says. "Dairy farms have been very hard to sell," says Paddy and adds: "People will never buy them cheaper than now," he says and warns "They will go up". The home market in New Plymouth by contrast is "very buoyant," he says. "Real estate is all about location," he says. Since he began in real estate the technical side has certainly changed, says the affable Paddy. Now it's all email," he says, the advantage being everything is in writing, avoiding any confusion. The rules and regulations are also much more complex. Paul Northcott who grew

up on a farmlet in Eltham also has an interest in farming. His grandfather Percy Northcott from Opunake was a well known coastal identity as a stock buyer for Borthwicks freezing works. Paul's father Noel, carrying on the stock buying tradition, also worked for Borthwicks. Paul originally trained as an automotive mechanic moving to Okato in 1991 where he bought his first business Putt and Roebuck, a rural engineering and supply business. He was also an active member of the Okato Volunteer Firebrigade and the Lions Club. Since then he's owned a vehicle dealership and most recently provided health and safety support to farms and rural and provincial businesses in New Zealand. Paul will be focussing on lifestyle blocks and is also interested in the rural side. He and his wife Christine who live on a lifestyle block in New Plymouth are Farmlands Shareholders. Former policeman Mark Nicholas comes from a farming background. His forefathers have been farming in Taranaki since 1874. He has been involved in the property world for

some years, and employed in real estate since 2014. Property Brokers are always had provincial New Zealand as its focus.. and the communities thrive. Where relationships and trust count for everything, a deal is done on a handshake, and locals judge you on how long they've known you." Prior to being involved in Property Brokers Tim managed a company called Hodder & Tolley, coincidentally the same real estate company Paddy Bolger started with in 1977. Property Brokers are also part of the exclusive Leading Real Estate Companies of the World network, giving them global connections to buyers interested in New Zealand. "People come back to us time and time again." The merger with Farmlands, a brand that is synonymous

Property Brokers are hoping to increase their presence in Taranaki and are looking for more salespeople. Focusing on provincial New Zealand with rural New Zealand is a choice that promises to be of mutual benefit. With 70,000 shareholders, Farmland's understanding and knowledge of the land and farming systems, with Property Brokers' real estate skill means customers can make much more informed property decisions, says Tim. "Our combined strengths complement each other giving us the edge on our competitors." Comments Paddy Bolger: The merger represents a real change in real estate. "The partnership means great things for provincial real estate," he says adding we're "proudtobetogther."



Paul Northcott (left) and Paddy Bolger.

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OPUNAKE HIGH SCHOOL

Celebrating student success

from the Principals desk...

Nga mihi o te wa ki a koe me to whanau
Greetings to you and your family

We are now over the mid point of Term 1. It has been another action-packed term with students taking advantage of the diverse and eclectic opportunities available to them. We are constantly looking at improving our lines of communication with students, whanau and the wider school community. The Opunake High School app will enable you to access information from the school as soon as it is available, the app is available to download from the school website to your mobile phone.

I would like to thank our wider school community for your support of the school with our gala. It was fantastic to see so many people enjoying the gala and supporting our school. The money raised will be used to assist students directly with their learning. Students have been representing the school with pride demonstrating our DREAM values at the debating competition, cricket, tennis, bowls, mountain biking and Womad.

Currently we are working with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the other schools in our region regarding COVID-19. This is a fluid constantly evolving pandemic and the advice is we are currently at the "KEEP IT OUT" stage with COVID-19.

Although our focus is on COVID-19, the information given is useful to protect us all from influenza as we head into the winter months. Prevention, education, and information remain a priority for us. Our students, our staff and us as a community have a very large role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through:

- Awareness - know the symptoms and where to get good information
- Vigilance - stay away if you are ill
- Good hygiene - hand washing and drying, good cough and sneeze etiquette will all help prevent spread of a range of ill's as we move into cold and flu season

It is important to note that while we are in the "KEEP IT OUT" phase, school will be business as usual. The Principals and Boards of Trustees of our contributing schools are working closely with one another to ensure students are kept as safe as possible. If your child is anxious/worried about the virus, there is a good video clip from Nanogirl that will help your children to better understand the virus -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPsY-jLqaxM>

With COVID-19 (Coronavirus) let's continue to work together, be alert but not alarmed, and let's keep each other safe. Our school staff and leadership remain well prepared for the possibility that there might be a case in our community. Our school DREAM values continue to play an important part in all our activities. A reminder they are DILIGENCE, RESPECT, EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS, AROHA and MANA. It is important that we continue to care for and support all members of our wonderful school community, especially those who may be impacted by COVID-19 in some way. The Ministry of Health is the best source of information for New Zealand and they update this information regularly -

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback do not hesitate to get in touch.

Noho ora mai ano

Peter O'Leary - Principal



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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

It has been a very busy start to 2020 - already we are at Week 8 on the school calendar and we've ticked off Athletics Day and Swimming Sports (Congratulations to Totara and Karo on winning those events respectively), and Gala has been and gone for another year.

Already in 2020 our students have achieved a number of great successes, proving time and time again that Opunake High School continues to grow good people, and that regardless of how big or small we are, our students can achieve tremendous things. We would like to share some of these successes with you:



SENIOR DEBATING

Kaiah Bloor, Blake Harkness & Tamara Turnbull recently attended the Central North Island Debating Championship along with 13 other teams. They started with a hiss and a roar winning their first three debates, and four from five overall to place third on countback. Ms Anna Debrecey said that the life experience of our students made them stand out from the others and gave them a real advantage.



WOMAD

Five girls - Jasmine Leatherby, Jayda Pattison, Charlotte Manley, Elizabeth Andersen-Gardiner and Ella Griggs - were able to take to the WOMAD stage during the festival as part of a large group performance. Their experience started with a workshop during the week prior to WOMAD, culminating with a live performance during the Festival on the Sunday. Ms Marcia Hales said the girls were absolutely fantastic ambassadors

for Opunake High School through-out the experience. For their participation, all five students and Ms Hales got free passes to this festival. Congratulations girls.



TARANAKI TOUCH RUGBY

Year 10 student Jorja Symes and Year 12 student Kyedon Brewer were selected into the Taranaki Touch U16 Girls and Boys teams respectively. These teams travelled to Takanini for the Bunnings Junior Touch Nationals in late February with the girls finishing 9th and the boys finishing 14th. Well done Jorja & Kyedon.



STUDENT COUNCIL FUNDRAISING FOR UNICEF

On March 17th, our Student Council organised for a school-wide Mufti Day. Conveniently, this day fell on St. Patrick's Day and so the students were asked to dress in green.

The reason for raising the funds was for a child that we sponsor in Africa through Unicef. Ironically, that child's name is Patrick also.

The students were superb in getting into the spirit of the day with some very interesting costumes to say the least.

When you read through the above successes you can see our students are given many different opportunities to shine. From academia to the arts, from sport to social causes we regularly punch above our weight on the local and national scene and we keep on "growing good people for a rapidly changing world"

Congratulations to all our rangatahi for the great start to 2020.

WHATS HAPPENING AT OPUNAKE HIGH?

Despite the ever-changing landscape due to COVID-19, there's still plenty on for our students:

13 REC Cycle Trip - April 1st - 2nd

COL - Teachers Only Day - April 3rd

TSSSA Orienteering - April 6th

TSSSA Golf - April 7th

Bring an Artist to School Day - April 8th

End of Term 1 - April 9th

Start of Term 2 - April 28th

End of Trimester 1 - May 15th

Start of Trimester 2 - May 18th

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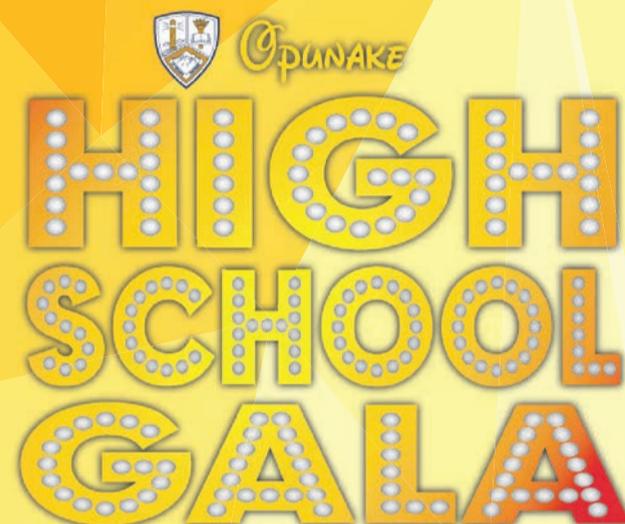
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The annual Opunake High School Gala was held Thursday 5th March and once again proved to be a great evening out for those able to attend. Staff, students and the amazing organisational skills of the Home & School Committee all came together to raise over \$10,000 on the night, with this money to be spent on a variety of projects that benefit all our students.

As you can see from the photos below, a great time was had by the very young to the old (but young at heart) - book in the first Thursday in March 2021 for the next edition!



He waihangatanga o te tangata pai i roto i tenei ao hurihuri

My Dream Job

"I created my very own dream job - one that as a child I imagined a job where I could wear a pink top hat and a tuxedo and eat sweets all day," says Nicci Richards aka The Chocolate Lady.

In 2013 Nicci opened her very first Chocolate Lady shop on Oxford Road.

She recently relocated to just south of Okato on the Surf Highway and, since giving up her job in the Careers department at Coastal Taranaki School, has been extremely busy making chocolates and holding chocolate parties where you can make your own chocolates. They make novel gifts.

Nicci's ambition goes back to when she was a child. After reading Charlie and the Chocolate Factory she remembers saying to her 5 year old self 'I want to be Willy Wonka'. (For those not familiar with the children's book by Roald Dahl, Willy Wonka owns a chocolate factory and anything you could think of in chocolate and sweets he would invent. 'This included flavoured wallpaper you could lick, with snoz berries that taste like snoz berries.' From the book)).

She continues: "I've always imagined the Chocolate



Nicci Richards, The Chocolate Lady. With Easter coming up it could be the perfect time to create your own Easter egg(s), either for yourself or as a gift.

Lady to be the love child of Willy Wonka and Alice in Wonderland where anything is possible...".

It seems that all ages can enjoy chocolate parties from children as young as 2 (more fun than mud pies)

through to adults of all ages including men. One, an international visitor who was reluctantly dragged along by his wife, had a fantastic time and wrote a glowing review of the experience on the internet.

"If you can't walk away from here without being happy there's something wrong," says Nicci.

Nicci has thousands of moulds with a variety of themes from Halloween through to Mothers Day, cartoon characters, babies, cars and houses, indeed pretty much anything you could imagine.

She even has some R18 ones. "We've had quite a few hilarious hen parties".

She's had brides come in and make their own wedding favours - presents to give to their guests.

Nicci also stocks handmade chocolate gift trays that can be bought from her premises. She can also make pretty much anything to

order. White chocolate can be coloured and she has a portfolio of some of her elaborate creations.

A fire engine based on the local Okato Fire truck made for someone who was celebrating 25 years in the Okato fire service demonstrates Nicci's skill (She is a volunteer fire fighter).

Other of her creations include a mini toolkit of individual chocolate tools, an intriguing jigsaw heart, intricate houses, even a chocolate brain! The list, limited only by the imagination, is endless.

She's also made decorations for cakes including a LEGO couple in chocolate for a wedding cake.

At the Okato Christmas Parade she gave out 400 bags of chocolate to children.

Interestingly the décor of her studio which you enter through a tiny mock gingerbread house has what appears to be chocolate oozing down the walls.

But no you can't lick it says Nicci laughing (it's just paint.)

Nicci's motto written in her studio is:

Money can't buy love but thank goodness it can buy chocolate.

But as they say the way to a man's - and a woman's if it's chocolate - heart is through their stomach.

How about a chocolate party?



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On this month in history: Albert Einstein born

On March 14 1879 theoretical physicist Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Kingdom of Wurttemberg, Germany.

He won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. He also won the Copley Medal in 1925 amongst many other honours. He is famous for his Theory of Relativity $E = MC^2$. E = Energy,

M = Mass and C = the Speed of Light.

Due to the persecution of Jews in Germany (he was a Jew) he was obliged to continue his professional life in the USA and officially became a citizen in 1940. He was closely involved with the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton.

Although involved in the

Manhattan Project which developed the atomic bomb he later expressed grave concern about the dangers of nuclear weapons and signed the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. (The Russell refers to Bertrand Russell the great mathematician and philosopher).

He died on April 1955 aged 76.

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OBITUARY: Albert Lawrence Bert Sandford 1928-2020

Family and friends remember Albert (Bert) Sandford as a private, unassuming man, reluctant to accept a Citizens Award from the South Taranaki District Council. He is also remembered as an icon of the Taranaki farming and trucking industries whose name was synonymous with the trucking company he led for many years. He was also a man generous with both his time and his money when it came to local causes, whether it be the local school, rugby club or a host of other clubs and organisations he chose to support.



Bert Sandford and Chevrolet truck.

Bert Sandford who died on February 8 aged 91 was born in 1928. His father, Auroa farmer Ebenezer (Ebbie) Sandford had earlier seen an opportunity when the railway came to Auroa and set up a carrying company to supply local farmers. A World War I veteran, there was a story of him having an emasculated grenade which later became a paperweight. He was known locally as a community-minded man whose door was always open to supporting the local school. He provided free

coal for the elderly and would keep existing stocks at the old price when the price of coal went up. Bert spent five years away from Auroa, and in that time he worked for eight different carriers throughout the Central North Island. He returned home, and after his father's death in 1959, took over the family company, which together with brother Bob, he rebranded as Sandford Bros Ltd. At that time they had "four to six" Chevrolet trucks.

Now Sandfords has around 90 trucks and 137 people on the payroll. Their reach extends from Lake Ferry to Piopio, and across the island to Napier. Trucks have always been a big part of the Sandfords business and the types used have reflected the evolution of trucking in New Zealand. The original Chevrolets would be imported from the United States and their cabs would be built in Paraparaumu. Fords and British brands like Bedfords

and Commers would come later, followed by Japanese models like Isuzus and Hinaus. "If Bert didn't like a truck, her got rid of it pretty quickly," recalls son Phil who now heads the business. Sandfords had been among the first companies supplying fertiliser to Taranaki farmers. In the early days this would arrive off the train from Smart Road in New Plymouth, and be carried in 70kg bags. Bert would later recall a special technique that would be used in manhandling these bags. Back then farmers had

to spread it by hand. After taking over from his father, Bert bought an old dairy factory and used it to store bulk fertiliser. He started up a new company Sandford Spreaders Ltd which stocked Farmers Fertiliser (now Ravensdown) products and operated a loader and groundspread vehicles. The New Zealand Grain Spreaders Association recognised Bert's contribution to farming by making him a life member. Mike Davey who is retiring as Taranaki regional head of Ravensdown knew Bert Sandford since the Farmers Fertiliser days. "Bert always knew where the product had gone. He had a very good mind and had everything written down. His figures were always accurate," he says. Auroa identity Tony Dravitzki commented on his integrity. "His word was his bond and he was as honest as the day is long. "He could change a tyre with his suit on and not get it dirty." Mike Davey said that as Sandfords was then one of the few local businesses, Bert was often asked for money and sponsorship. His generosity towards the

Waimate Rugby Club was such that he was made a life member. Like his father before him, Bert was also a longtime supporter of the Auroa School. At one time Sandfords ran the school bus. The company's furniture truck would even be used to carry students to the annual school picnic at Opunake Beach. As time went on the range of Sandfords activities expanded, to include carrying stock, and picking up hay. The story is told of how Bert turned up at the Otakeho pub one day for a drink only to find his workers there imbibing after a hard day's haymaking. He fired them all on the spot only to rehire them all shortly afterwards. Other activities over the years have included carting metal, running a quarry, and setting up a concrete plant. The other half of the Sandford Brothers name, Bob, who looked after the company's metal crushing and screening plant passed away in 2000. Today the Sandford family name is still very much in evidence, with Phil in charge and grandchildren of Bert continuing to work for the company.

Opunake's latest mural

The latest mural to grace the streets of Opunake is a thumbs up to the young at heart. Completed by Rhonda Crawford and Kirsty Meynell it is on the wall of Tasman Street's Arty Tarts Café wall. Combining "a love of art and a good sense of humour" which both artists exhibit and entitled Skool's Out, Old's In it was done in Banksian style in just a day and a half.



Kirst (left) and Rhonda surveying their new mural.

"It was going to be a more conventional children and pastoral scene" but then we decided to instead feature the older generation says Rhonda. And that age is a state of mind. The painting of the mural had to fit in with the friends' busy lifestyle. Kirsty is in the army while Rhonda who is secretary of the

Egmont Community Arts Council runs her own busy hairdressing salon. The mural leads to Rhonda's courtyard and studio where she can be found from Saturday to Monday painting.

Whatever our age "we can still go out and have fun," is the message said Rhonda. "We want people to have a laugh and a smile." Overall "It's a celebration of the elderly," said Rhonda adding that they have a lot to offer.

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Return to home farm pays off for award winners

Continued from page 1.

up the Farm Dairy and Farm Environment Awards. Josh and Carly Corrigan who milk 355 cows for the D.F.Corrigan Trust at Hawera finished third and picked up the Leadership,



Dairy Manager of the Year Branden Darlow.

Pasture Performance and Health, Farm Security and Biosecurity Awards. When presented with the Leadership award it was commented how they had willingly opened up their farm to the non-farming

public.

Dairy Manager of the Year Branden Darlow is in his first season milking 406 cows on the 153ha T.R.Jane Family Trust farm at Inglewood. Anticipated production

for 2019-20 is 185,000kg/MS. Last year he was herd manager on the 1200 cow Faull farm. Originally from South Africa, he is a motor bike mechanic by trade and has been in New Zealand for six years. This is the



The winners. From left. Sam Dodd, Simon and Natasha Wilkes, Branden Darlow.



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Return to home farm pays off for award winners

first time he has entered the Dairy Industry Awards.

The runner-up was Leroy Hunt who milks 253 cows for the Cameron Family Trust at Okaiawa, and third placegetter was Diego Raul Gomez Salinas who milks 416 cows for the Michael Burr Trust at Stratford.

For Dairy Trainee of the Year Sam Dodd it is second time lucky, having finished third last year. He thanked farm owner Michael Joyce who “gives me a lot of time and reels me in.” This is his third year in the dairy industry, having previously worked for a year at Meremere. Originally from Tauranga, he says he is looking forward to take what he’s learned and apply it to a farm his mother’s family has in the Waikato.

Runner-Up was Meek Cawili of Mangatoki, with Kate Thomson of Patea finishing third.

This year’s awards have been without some familiar faces, like general manager Chris Keeping who stepped down last year, and long serving MC Rob Reid, who this year was replaced by Hamish McKay.



Dairy Trainee of the Year Sam Dodd.

Robert Ervine of the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards Trust spoke about the challenges the dairy industry has been facing this year.

“We’ve had droughts in the north and floods in the south, and Covid-19 has affected our supply chains across the world.” He said Awards alumni

were continuing to make an impact in the industry and in their communities.

South Taranaki District mayor Phil Nixon, himself a farmer and neighbour of this year’s Share Farmer winners expressed similar sentiments when speaking to the Opunake and Coastal News after the winners were announced.

“To me this is the embryo of the future leadership of the industry,” he said.

Awards regional manager Hollie Wham said 65 per cent of this year’s entrants had not entered the Dairy Industry Awards before, and many had been doing other things before they went farming.



The next issue of the Opunake & Coastal News is due out on April 2, 2020.

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Programme to boost high-value products in Taranaki

A new collaboration to boost Taranaki's food and fibre enterprises has been launched by Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor.

The two-year, \$914,000 project dubbed 'Branching Out', will investigate, explore, package, and potentially pilot new commercial opportunities.

The goal is to identify up to a dozen food and fibre ventures that have the potential to boost Taranaki's economy, O'Connor said.

"Taranaki needs investment and support to get promising new ventures off the ground. It's packed with prime food producing areas, and is a hub of innovative and creative businesses.

"While Taranaki has a strong rural economy, it is facing challenges where consumer demand and climatic conditions are impacting the food and farming sectors. 'Branching Out' provides the opportunity to help Taranaki grow new value-add industries, to diversify the local economy and set it up for the future."

Damien O'Connor said a key part of this new project is also looking at ways to diversify and complement existing land-use and value chains, to better support biodiversity and



Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor with Venture Taranaki CEO Justine Gilliland at the launch..

environmental outcomes. Venture Taranaki – Taranaki's regional development agency – is leading the project, in collaboration with the

Ministry for Primary Industries through its Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures fund.

Justine Gilliland, chief executive officer of Venture

Taranaki, said through 'Branching Out', "we want to identify and kick-start new, complementary enterprises, create exciting new job opportunities, support local businesses, and foster expertise that could help provide greater resilience in our region.

"By linking up resources we can scale-up the project and get things moving much faster than we'd otherwise have been able to. The support and interest the project has gained from a number of organisations has been pivotal in getting it off the ground."

O'Connor said this concerted effort of finding complementary regional business opportunities may prove to be a formula that works for other regions too.

"We hope this programme will be a model and inspiration to other regions throughout the country to grow their local economies and boost sustainability."

Justine Gilliland, Chief Executive at Venture Taranaki said they had had a plethora of ideas. These include developing a variety of hop for use in beers that would be specific to Taranaki and put Taranaki at the forefront of beers in New Zealand. Ideas relating to nuts, berries, tea and kiwi fruit had all been suggested. Using quinoa in healthy snacks, exploring fast growing hemp and its many uses were others. Ideas related to the dairy industry include using glass bottles for milk and producing organic milk. "There's an increasing demand for organic milk," said former dairy farmer Damien O'Connor, also for A2 milk. "There's also a huge demand for pasture fed milk."

More information available here – we'll update this as the project gains momentum: <http://about.taranaki.info/Tapuae-Roa/Branching-Out.aspx>

Farmers get a taste of new herd recording tool

Farmers now have the opportunity to learn more about CRV Ambreed's new herd recording and management tool, myHERD.

From June 1 farmers will be able to subscribe to myHERD. CRV Ambreed Information and IT Manager Andrew Singers says the new tool will provide farmers with a highly functional genetics platform that gives them an integrated option in the market.

"myHERD will give farmers a choice when it comes to herd recording and management. Most importantly, myHERD assures the accuracy, security and ownership of farmers' data."

Singers says the development of myHERD reflects the company's desire to offer farmers a future-focused herd management platform.

"Using data captured on farm, myHERD will provide farmers with practical, accessible information so they can make better decisions across their farming business.

"We joined with FarmIQ, one of New Zealand's leading integrated farm software providers, to develop myHERD.

"FarmIQ's Enterprise Dairy product can be integrated with myHERD, allowing farmers to incorporate data from a range of sources and link it all together - from interactive farm maps, environmental plans and health and safety to off-farm grazing and pasture forecasting."

FarmIQ GM Customer Success Jock Richardson says the launch of myHERD on the FarmIQ platform is important as it will give dairy farmers the ability to manage multiple operations related to their dairy farm in one place.

"Both family and corporate farms tell us they get value out of having all their farm data in one place, so they can easily plan and manage their farm system throughout the season.

"There is no limit to the number of staff or third-parties with whom farmers can connect. The farmer has complete control over who has access to the information and who they want making a contribution to the success of the farm.

"By using the myHERD application, dairy farmers have greater choice and more functionality at their fingertips.

"We have long had a deep interest in the dairy space and the EID (Electronic Identification) foundation of the system made it a natural choice for a herd recording system," says Richardson.

"CRV Ambreed offers some of the best genetics in the world and we are delighted to be able to help them bring a world-class, integrated herd recording solution to market."

myHERD is designed to be cost-effective, easy to use and accessible by mobile. Online and offline functionality, means it can be used across properties with poor internet coverage. This has been well tested on the FarmIQ platform.

myHERD will also give farmers comprehensive and easy-to-interpret reporting. They can tailor reports to suit their needs and share them with their breeding consultant, farm advisors, dairy companies, vets and accountants.

Singers is quick to reassure existing CRV Insight customers that nothing is changing just yet.

"Prior to any change, our existing InSight customers will have the opportunity

Continued page 19



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Cattle judging helps young Taranaki dairy farmer see New Zealand



“The schools are a great way to pass on knowledge to the next generation of judges,” said Wayne Taylor. Wayne and his wife Leeanne milk 190 cows near Waitara. He’s helping run four judging schools in the Waikato, Taranaki, Marlborough and South Canterbury. “As an organisation we pride ourselves on our judging schools,” said Wayne. “They enable us to achieve uniformity in the way our judges present themselves in the show ring and the reasons they give for their placings.” New judges start off as associates and often work alongside senior judges in dairy cattle show rings at A&P shows to gain experience. “A number of regions haven’t had cattle at their A&P shows recently because

of the Mycoplasma bovis outbreak,” said Wayne. “The situation has meant there haven’t been as many opportunities for younger judges to practice and hone their skills.” Wayne has been a senior judge for almost 20 years. His stud, Muritai Holsteins, has won the prestigious Valden Cow of the Year competition four times. “I find the skills I’ve developed as a judge come in handy when analysing our cows at home, prior to making mating decisions,” said Wayne. “Understanding the faults in your cows is a huge strength for any dairy business. It arms you with knowledge to help you breed even better cows.” The Stratford judging school was held at the dairy farm of Gary and Karen Peters.

Brad Markham

Bradley Parkes has been a senior judge since he was 18.

Bradley Parkes’ skill for judging Holstein Friesian dairy cattle has taken him around New Zealand and even overseas.

The 33-year-old, who milks 250 cows with his partner Nicole Johnson near Eltham, is a certified senior judge.

The passionate Holstein Friesian breeder is often called on to assess the structural traits of dairy animals entered in shows.

“I find judging dairy cows extremely rewarding. It’s a skill to quickly rank a group of animals in a show ring, or on farm,” said Bradley.

“I especially enjoy providing feedback to people about cows or heifers they have bred and highlighting

their strong points.”

Bradley first qualified as a senior judge when he was 18.

He’s judged in Australia and last year judged the national final of the Holstein Friesian NZ/Semex On Farm Competition.

The regional finals of the popular competition saw 89 breeders put forward 645 animals for judging.

“I got to travel from Northland to Southland to judge the top two regional finalists in each age group,” said Bradley.

“It was a bit daunting to start with, but it was an amazing experience.”

“It was interesting to see how the daughters of a range of bulls performed on farms

in different parts of New Zealand,” he said.

Bradley has to resit his judge’s certificate every two years, achieving a pass rate of at least 80 per cent.

He was one of a number of breeders from the Hawke’s Bay, Manawatu and Taranaki who attended a judging school in Stratford in early March.

The event was organised by Holstein Friesian NZ and was designed to hone the skills of current judges and attract new talent.

Farmers get a taste of new herd recording tool

Continued from page 18

to view and test the myHERD program. This is an opportunity for them to try it out, check out its functionality and see how they could use it to benefit

their farm business.”

Any farmer keen to know more about myHERD should register for updates by visiting www.myherd.co.nz



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Life membership for outstanding swimming coach

A special award was presented on Thursday February 27 at the Okato Swimming Club; Fiona Lacey was awarded Life Membership of the Club by President Angie Barron. Fiona was Head Coach from 2007 to 2016 and now lives in Spain and is on a brief visit to New Zealand.

In her speech Angie said, "It is with much pleasure that tonight we have the opportunity to focus on a very special lady who has made a huge impact on our club. Over many years your passion and strong involvement in our club has seen so many local swimmers start out as littlies learning water confidence progress to widths, then lengths and then go on to compete at a high level. Fiona you have spent countless hours ... teaching, perfecting, encouraging, motivating and inspiring so many coastal kids. For that we are all truly grateful."

Angie went on to speak of Fiona's coaching

club. Over many years your passion and strong involvement in our club has seen so many local swimmers start out as littlies learning water confidence progress to widths, then lengths and then go on to compete at a high level. Fiona you have spent countless hours ... teaching, perfecting, encouraging, motivating and inspiring so many coastal kids. For that we are all truly grateful."

Angie went on to speak of Fiona's coaching



From left, Angie Barron (President), Fiona Lacey (Life Member), Brandi Dakin-Sperscott (volunteer instructor) and Becky Olley (Learn to Swim Co-ordinator).

Age Group Champs, and even one swimmer competing at the Junior Nationals. Many medals and high placings were the positive result as well as the setting of 30 Club records. Brandi Dakin-Sperscott (pictured below) was one of the Club swimmers who attained a high level of performance under Fiona's expert coaching. She has competed at a national level.

In 2013 Fiona was named NZ Swimming Taranaki Volunteer of the Year and she had a major role in Okato Swimming Club being awarded the New Zealand Community Swimming Club of the Year accolade in 2014.

Angie concluded, "We have been extremely lucky and so grateful to have Fiona's input over so many years."

Fiona replied, "This is definitely a surprise. Coaching is my passion and it was a pleasure to serve. You all do an amazing job and I couldn't be happier."

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background. She began her competitive swimming life under the remarkable coach, the late Duncan Laing OBE CNZOM (1933-2008) at the Moana Pool, Dunedin. Duncan coached our greatest swimmer Danyon Loader

who won a silver medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, before winning two golds at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Duncan also coached ten other Olympic swimmers. Fiona joined the Okato Swimming Club in 2006

and, by 2013 as Head Coach, had attained many highlights such as the success of the group of elite swimmers she took to the Aims Games, Central North Island Age group Champs, Taranaki Age groups, the Manawatu

Coastguard votes for merger

Coastguard volunteers and members from around the country voted in favour of merging the organisation's four regional entities and the national body.

"The need for change is clear," says Coastguard Chief Executive Callum Gillespie. "Bringing the national body and the four regional entities together will enable Coastguard to be more efficient and effective in the development and delivery of strategies to meet challenges we face today and in the future."

The most pressing of those challenges is to address Coastguard's

reducing volunteer numbers. Coastguard, like many volunteer powered organisations, is being impacted by changing trends in volunteering worldwide.

"Coastguard is an emergency responder which relies on volunteers," says Mr Gillespie. "Without them, there would be no Coastguard."

"Last year we undertook a comprehensive survey of our volunteers, and it is evident that we need to take action if we are going to retain our incredible volunteers and attract new people to join Coastguard. Integrating the organisation into a strong entity will

provide the platform we need to ensure Coastguard can continue to serve New Zealand communities and save lives at sea."

Coastguard created its four regions in 2004 for the purpose of improving support to its units on the frontline, the decision made will lift the support to units even further Mr Gillespie believes.

"We will continue to operate regional teams who will report directly to Coastguard New Zealand rather than through regional boards," he says. "We will also be able to create a strong shared services model for HR, finance, technology, operations, marketing and fundraising that will enable

us to better support our people, reduce overheads and realise efficiencies of scale previously unavailable to us."

Last year alone, Coastguard's 1,900 search and rescue volunteers gave more than 300,000 hours of their time across operations, training, administration, education and fundraising and brought 6,774 New Zealanders home safely.

"Having the right structure in place to support our volunteers will enable them to focus on doing what they joined Coastguard to do, helping other people and saving lives at sea," says Mr Gillespie.

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Athletics Shield back in Kaponga's hands



Shield, there was also high jump, long jump and relay competitions which didn't count towards the final result.

Kaponga had something else to smile about. They won the adults relay among the schools.

Throughout its history, the shield competition has largely been dominated by Auroa. This is the fourth time Kaponga has won. They were the winners the first time the Shield was competed for in 2001, and followed that up with wins in 2008 and 2011.

In 2003, Riverlea took the Shield in a last hurrah, shortly before the tiny country school west of Kaponga closed down.

Kaponga Amateur Athletic Club life member Helen Cameron who was on the committee at the time the competition was

started says 12 schools had originally taken part, several of which have since closed.

She credits one of Kaponga's sporting icons with getting everything started. Kaponga farmer and ex All Black Kieran Crowley had wanted to bring back the kind of annual sporting event he had experienced in his primary school days.

The Daniel FitzGerald family donated the shield which has been competed for every year since then.

"The Kaponga amateur Athletics Club has always hosted it, and this year many of the old timers came back to help," says Helen. "We've been going for 20 years and we're aiming for the big 25. Let's hope there are still five schools there then."

Kaponga's Athletic success a win for the whole school.

Kaponga School is enjoying its latest dose of sporting success. They have beaten four of their neighbours to grab hold of the Kaponga Amateur Athletic Club Inter-School Athletics Challenge Shield. The Shield has been

competed for annually at Victoria Park, Kaponga since 2001, and this is the first time Kaponga has won since 2011. Other schools competing were Manaia, Matapu, Auroa and St Patrick's Kaponga.

"We're all pretty stoked

about the whole thing," says Kaponga principal Shane Downs.

To gain the title a number of races were run with points being determined by a formula.

"We have got a good bunch of kids and there was full

participation by the school, which is neat," said Shane. "In school house points were up for grabs as well, so that was a big incentive for our kids to participate."

As well as the races which determined who did and didn't go home with the

Manaia Golf

February 24. Monday night Ambrose. 1. Caramel Slice. 2. Otakeho Orange. 3. Manaia Hackers. 4. Golfing Gibbies.

Monthly Tournament. Men. 1. Jamie Johnston 46. 2. Jacob Gopperth 45. 3. Nathan Ngere. 42. 4. Caleb Symes 41. 5. Wayne Baker 41. 6. Logan Kennett 41. Ladies. 1. Dinny Gibson 42. 2. Eve Gibbs 39. 3. Margaret Putt 38.

February 29. Saturday Men. L.Kennett +7. B.Duffus +6. C.Symes +4. G.Elliott +4. P.Elliott +4. Twos. G.Elliott 7th.

K.Otene 9th, 13th.

March 2. Monday night Ambrose. 1. Otakeho Hackers. 2. Otakeho Orange. 3. Tu Meke. 4. Manaia Hackers. 5. Mahi.

March 7. Men's stableford. 1. Jim Ngere 43. 2. Logan Kennett 41. 3. Dinny Gibbs 40. 4. Grant Gopperth 40. 5. Trevor Larsen 39. 6. Phil Elliott 39.

Twos. Neil Scown 9th, 15th. Trevor Larsen 13th.

Junior. Carter Symes 40. Katie king 51. Oliva Symes 52. Hannah Symes 53. Jack Gargan 54.

The Taranaki Seniors

played at Manaia with Trevor Larsen(Manaia) winning the Brimblecomb Cup. This tournament is held every year at Manaia.

18 hole Ambrose. 1. Tui & Red. 2. Tu Meke. 3. Hakuna Matata. 4. Winks Road. 5. The Workers. 6. Otakeho Hackers.

Primary School Junior Tournament. Nine full holes. Divan Denton, Calum D'Angelo. Nine Short holes. 1. Oliva Symes. 2. Tyler Gurkert.

March 14. Saturday Men's Stableford. Kevin Murrell 47. Matt Laing 46. Logan

Symes 45. Bruce Duffus 43. Caleb Symes 42. Nathan Ngere 42. Grant Gopperth 42.

Juniors. Pee Wees 1. Jahkoda Smith. 2. Reiden Robinson. Eagles. 1. Luke Norris. 2. Abby Marsh. The Hawks. 1. Liam Campbell. 2. Payton Siciliano. Magpies. 1. Oliva Symes. 2. Kieran Taylor. 3. Katie King.



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Kaponga WI

Kaponga WI held their March meeting on March 10 at the home of Joy Eliason. Our roll call was "What I like to hoard," and many things were collected such as newspaper clippings, buttons, books, small boxes, wool, ribbons and cardboard for crafts - anything that can be put to use and doesn't get thrown out. One member said that her husband hoards more and another said she misses hoarding since she downsized her living place. Our president Dorothy Hughes was nominated and then awarded a Good Service Badge. It was presented to her by our secretary Fiona Collins on behalf of Kaponga WI ladies. Secret friends for 2019 were revealed and many were surprised as to who their friend was and thanks were given



Dorothy Hughes being presented with her Good Service Badge by Fiona Collins.

all round. We were all given our secret friend for 2020. Margaret Broomhall won the raffle of the day. Competitions were - Red Flower. 1. Jo Ellis. 2. Diane West and Dene Lines. 3. Raylene McDonald. Truffles. 1. Nan Stokes. 2.

Rosalie Gibson. 3. Diane West. How many items you can fit in a small matchbox. 1. Rosalie Gibson 68 items. 2. Carolyn Nicholas 61 items. 3. Joy Eliason 44 items. Lunch comprised of lovely

share finger food. Then a trip down memory lane as we finished the day off by a visit to the Fun -Ho Museum in Inglewood. Another great day had by the members. Jo Ellis.

Manaia WI

The March meeting was held in the lounge of St Cuthberts Church on Tuesday March 3. Phyllis Malcolm reported on the Regional day held in Wanganui and the Rural

Women Health Forum in Stratford that several members had attended. The speaker at the Forum was Dr. Doug Wilson author of the book Aging for Beginners.

The motto for the month was "It's better to look back on life and say I can't believe I did that than to look back and say I wish I did that".

The roll call "My most refreshing drink," had many responses, with lemon drink being the most popular.

Our programme was "a floral workshop with Phyllis." Members made posy bowls that were later donated to residents at Trinity Rest home

The Mary Hutton Trophy was awarded to Nicola Ashley. The Wondering coin was won by Lois Crudis.

Competition results: Shrub. 1. Daphne Ashley. 2. Phyllis Malcolm. 3. Jenny Hamley.

Any other bloom. 1. Joy Brogden. 2. Janice Walsh. 3. Phyllis Malcolm. Home Craft. 1. Jenny Hamley. 2. Daphne Ashley. 3. Ann Chisnall. Hand Craft. 1. Joy Brogden. 2. Ann Chisnall. 3. Phyllis Malcolm.



Kaponga WI members at Fun-Ho Museum.

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22 WHAT'S ON

South Taranaki Theatre-goers are in for a treat, Hawera Repertory's latest offering *God of Carnage* is superb - one of the best plays I have seen. The play, which is ably directed by Clive Cullen, runs from March 20 until March 28. You can buy tickets at Hawera's I-site or Ticket Rocket.

The play was written in 2008 by French playwright Yasmina Reza and was adapted by Christopher Hampton. It has been described as a *comedy of manners* - without the manners. Perhaps, it could

God of Carnage brilliant



From left Michel Vallon (Antony Jones), Veronique (Helen Snook), Annette Reille (Donella Weir), and Alan Reille (Ron Scott).

also be termed a black comedy. The simple but effective set was designed by Clive Cullen.

The play opens with two sets of parents discussing an incident whereby the son of one of them Ferdinand gets angry because another child Bruno refuses to let him join his gang. Ferdinand picks up a stick and whacks Bruno in the mouth, and knocks out two teeth. Both children are aged eleven. "Your son has disfigured my son!" exclaims Veronique.

The acting is simply excellent with the actors well chosen for their respective roles. These include Ron

Scott who plays Alain Reille, Donnella Weir playing Annette Reille, Antony Jones playing Michel Vallon and Helen Snooks playing Veronique Vallon.

The two boys never appear, but a hamster and John Wayne figure - although not in the flesh.

I found the play very absorbing and, for the first half, very funny. As the parents discuss the incident and gradually veer miles off course as the angst increases, the atmosphere became harrowing - although no less absorbing. Just as you think no more can happen, another extra-ordinary thing happens

as the parents become angrier and angrier, not just with the opposing couple, but also with each other. "I'm already doing you a favour being here in the first place," explains Alain, between intervals when his (virtually) endlessly ringing mobile is silent. Imagine how that went down with his wife Annette.

However, I won't say too much more so I don't spoil the suspense - and there's plenty of that.

Everyone who contributed to making this play so engaging must be congratulated. Make sure you see this first class production.

Rolland McKellar

GOD OF CARNAGE

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We have decided to give our restaurant it's own identity. The restaurant will be known as Indian Tadka.

Tadka means, - Tadka is known as "tempering." It is the technique in which whole or ground spices are briefly roasted in oil or ghee (clarified butter) in order to release their essential oils, thus making their flavor more aromatic

Thank you, Opunake, for your continued loyalty and love as we move into another year filled with delicious cuisine, unique cocktails, local entertainment and a great time. Cheers to your

two, and to you, Opunake.

Another year in business means it's time to celebrate. Join us for our Second Anniversary Party on Saturday, April 11 from 6pm till close. That evening the party will gear up as we have a Bollywood dance party from 7:30 - 9:30pm.

This is sure to be a party you won't want to miss.

Dress up like a Bollywood star. You will be welcomed in a traditional Indian style,

A free welcome drink will be waiting for you on your few steps,

A three course dinner menu on Buffet, Photo booth for Stars of the night, Indian style music and dance and more. We have limited tickets due to space arrangement for party. Tickets are available at the restaurant, so get yours now.

Anju will be hosting the party with her teammates.



Join us at Headlands for our Second Anniversary Party on Saturday April 11.

She will help everyone to get dressed and dance along to Indian party music.

If you have any questions please let us know, *Birendra Rawat.*

Please note that we Headlands will now be called Indian Tadka.

Opunake Walkway Family Fun Dog Walk

Come and join Opunake Lakeside Lions on Sunday March 29 for a fun, furry, day out for all the family.

Registration and a Sausage sizzle is from 12.30pm at Sandfords Event Centre carpark. There will be spot prizes for the biggest dog, smallest dog, hairiest dog, and best dressed dog and owner. Dog waste bags and treats are provided along with a water stop at the Lake.

The walk will follow the Coastal Walkway from

Sandfords, with a stop at Middletons Bay for dogs to have an off leash run, and on to the Opunake Lake. Walkers can then return to Sandfords or go on to circle the lake.

If you don't have a dog and can't borrow one, come and join the walk anyway. General walkers are welcome.

Cost is \$10 per dog, and general walkers a gold coin donation.

All dogs must be Council registered and on a lead.

In case it rains, the walk will be postponed until the following Sunday April 5.

This is an Opunake Lakeside Lions fundraiser to kick start our new Youth Project Fund initiative which will benefit local youth and school projects. Lakeside Lions are also the proud sponsor of a Guide dog puppy through the Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dog Centre, and are involved in numerous local Opunake events.

Opunakē Pop-Up Exhibition

For Heritage Week, Aotea Utanganui are showcasing a selection of objects, photographs and ephemera from the northern region of South Taranaki (Opunakē, Pungarehu and Rahotu) at the Opunakē LibraryPlus. We would love to have some of the landscape photography in our collection from yesteryear supplemented with modern photographs taken from the exact same spot (please keep personal safety in mind). Come and have a look while scoping the shelves for your next novel.

Opunakē Pop-Up Exhibition at Aotea Utanganui



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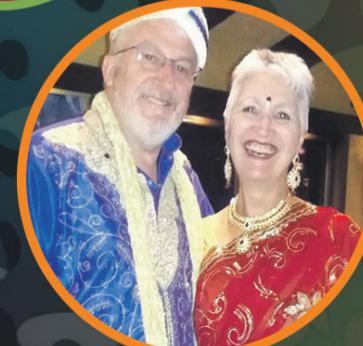
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New venue for Market morning

St. Barnabas will be hosting Market Morning this year at the Opunake Town Hall; not at their Church Hall and Grounds. Last year the weather was unkind to us, and many stall holders who planned to be outside on the lawn were moved into the Hall, which became a tight squeeze. The brave souls that remained outside had to wrap up warmly and one gazebo had to be anchored down with a heavy bricks.

Please remember to come along to the Opunake Town Hall on Saturday March 28 from 10am to 2pm.

There you will find 18 Stalls, selling an assortment of merchandise, which include a large dining table with seven chairs, a Roll Top desk and double bed with rimu head board in excellent



Bob Clark bargain hunter.

condition, antique crockery and vases, quilting, fibre art, wool felting, cards, health

items, paintings, flowers, plants, rustic wooden craft, baking, preserves, crystals, toys, baby clothes, Easter raffle and Bird Box raffle and much more. We suggest you bring your trailer. Rest with a cup of coffee/tea and cake for just \$2 in our café area; perhaps when rested have one more look around.

The parking is flat and easy and just an easy stroll from the main street for those on foot.

Please see our happy pictures from last year, also our posters around town and Opunake Facebook Page.

Maureen Martins
Administrator St. Barnabas



Jenny Bennett sets up for the day.

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Please see Editorial

Professor and the madman

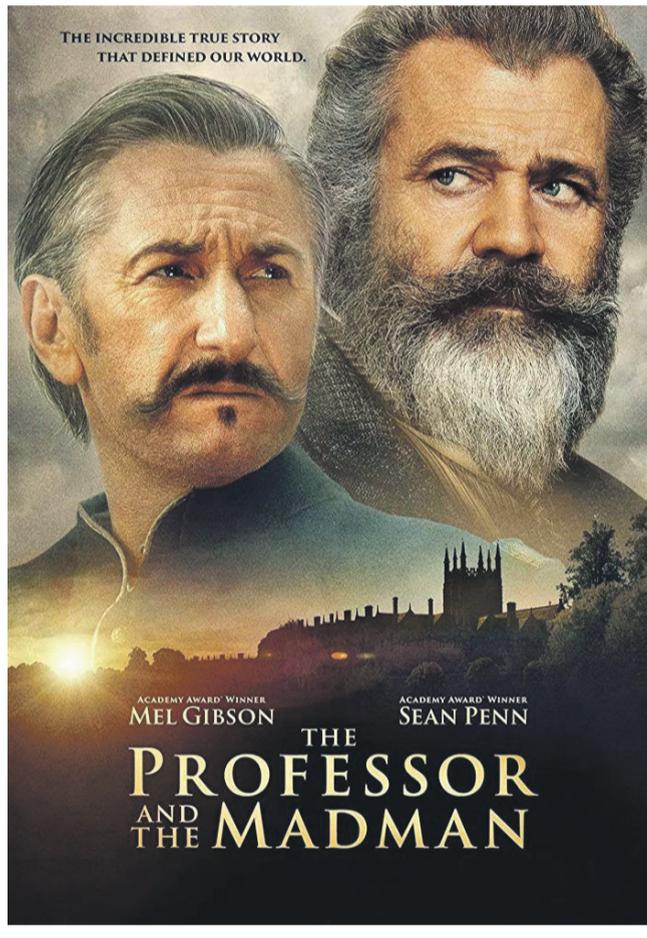
Director: Farhad Safinia.
Writers: John Boorman, Tod Komarnicki. Starring: Mel Gibson, Sean Penn, Steve Coogan.

ARTHOUSE movie - opening at Everybody's Theatre on Wednesday March 25, and also screening on Wednesday April 1 at 1pm.

What a wonderful tribute to Sir James A.H. Murray (1837-1915), Dr William Chester Minor (1834-1920) and Fredrick James Furnivall (1825-1910), and the Oxford English Dictionary. The OED was a faithful friend during my Uni years so am very grateful to these guys for their perseverance. It comprises twelve volumes, and was finally completed on the 1st of January 1928. Seventy years after its conception.

"Every word in action becomes beautiful in light of its own meaning." Sir James Murray

The Professor and the Madman is based on the biopic by Simon Winchester, The Surgeon of Crowthorne. It is well interpreted by John Boorman and Tod Komarnicki. Their screenplay has that engaging structure of one well worth watching. It launches at speed into the opening scene of London 1872, Dr Minor (Sean Penn) in chains, and flashbacks of his crime. A reporter notes - "evades gallows," and we are glimpsed furtive shots of a grieving widow. The pace slows as a second storyline unfolds; James Murray (Mel



The Professor and the Madman opening at Everybody's Theatre on Wednesday March 25, and also screening on Wednesday April 1 at 1pm.

Gibson) and his family are introduced in what could be seen as a first act turning point. I didn't know what to expect with this film, but couldn't tear myself away from the screen. The two separate storylines, as anticipated, become one and the movie hits its stride as the Professor - James Murray and the Madman - William Chester join forces. Steve Coogan plays Fredrick Furnivall, a British scholar, author and co-creator of what

wartime PTSD, and the lack of even adequate assistance to process his pain. Labelled as insanity. Another familiar face (but maybe not the name) is Eddie Marsan who is well cast as Mr Muncie, a security guard at Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum. He plays an integral part in the film for a seemingly minor role, and does so with brilliance.

The Director of Photography, Kasper Tuxen, beautifies what could have been visually tedious. I feel the ending was a tad out of balance with the riveting start, it seemed a bit rushed. Will be interesting to see what you think? I would've liked more of an epilogue in the storyline. There are text epilogues during the final scenes, which suffice to conclude the film and satisfy the need to inform.

Go see for yourself. I was pleasantly surprised.

Quick shout out to All At Sea, screening Saturday March 21 at 7pm.

If you like black comedy then pop along, it has some absolutely classic lines. From the priest -

"My first funeral, and I end up burying myself" and in reply, "Most don't even get the chance to practise."

A great cast, including Brian Cox and Lauren Bacall. The understated consistency of the film flows along at a good rate to keep you laughing, or at least giggling a little bit.

Jane Forkert

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Barrett Cup Tournament



Chris Gawler refereeing a Rahoitu versus Auroa game at last year's tournament. The Coastal Senior Players helped organise the games at the Barrett Cup last year.



Robyn Barrett, Kevin Barrett and Blake Barrett award the Barrett cup to Rahoitu School 2019 winners.

The Barrett Cup Sevens tournament will be held on Sunday March 29. Games start at 9.30. Each school in the Coastal Rugby Club area can submit one team for each grade, under 7s, under 9s, under 11s and under 13s. Under 7s is Rippa rugby, all other grades are tackle. Age is determined as at 1st January 2020. There are no weight or gender restrictions. The tournament is played in bare feet but all children need a mouth guard which will be available for purchase on the day.



COASTAL JUNIOR RUGBY

2nd Annual Barrett cup and fun day

29th March, 9.30am, Rahoitu Domain
U6 to U13 rugby.

Sausage sizzle and drinks and food for sale
Come along and support our future Coastal stars!!

For more information on Coastal Junior Rugby teams and dates contact
Liam O'Sullivan 027 811 1888 or
Cory Helms 027 550 5455

Follow the Coastal Junior Rugby Facebook page for a wealth of information.
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OPUNAKE PLAYERS INC PRESENT

MURDER AND MAYHEM

Two one act plays

"NIGHT OF THE DOLLS"

and

"RINSE THE BLOOD OFF MY TOGA"

1st—6th April
Tickets \$20 at
Sinclair Electrical and Refrigeration

Skullduggery at The Playhouse

Tickets for Opunake Players' new production, "Murder And Mayhem" are available at Sinclair Electrical and Refrigeration.

Two one-act plays will be presented for your entertainment. The first, "Night Of The Dolls" is a murderous thriller which will send chills down your spine and has a cast of several women. It tells the story of a young reporter

and an older woman who... -well, let's leave it at that for now. The other, "Rinse The Blood Off My Toga" is an even more murderous riot and would you believe it, has a cast of mainly men, with a couple of ladies to add decorum (or is that decoration? - never learned Latin at school). It is a somewhat irreverent look at the assassination of Julius Caesar and takes us back to Rome in the year

44BC. The show will open on Wednesday April 1, and run every night at 7.30 pm, closing on Monday 6th. An added bonus is that The Players have some new blood on stage (get it - new blood?) but you'll have to come along to see who it is. And following that, instead of resting on their laurels like the Romans, Opunake Players are straight into preparations for their next production. Everyone will

be familiar with the popular story "Frozen." Well, there is a pantomime version called "Frosted." Yes. Auditions will start at the Playhouse on Thursday April 9 at 6pm. All ages are required for this cool show which will be on stage when? Just before calving starts of course.

Mike Smith



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MARCH/APRIL 2020
Adults \$10, Students 4-16yrs and Senior Citizens \$8, Under 4 free

<p>THE LEGEND OF BARON TO'A Action, Comedy 1hr 53min RP13: Violence, Language Fri 20th Mar 7pm</p> <p>ALL AT SEA Comedy, Drama 1hr 28min M: Wed 18th Mar 1pm Sat 21st Mar 7pm</p> <p>THE WAY BACK Drama, Sport 1hr 30min M:Language, sexual ref Wed 18th Mar 7pm Sun 22nd Mar 7pm Sat 28th Mar 7pm</p> <p>THE PROFESSOR AND THE MADMAN Biography, Drama 2hrs M: Violence Wed 25th Mar 7pm Wed 1st Apr 1pm</p> <p>I STILL BELEIVE Music, Romance 1hr 55min PG Fri 3rd Apr 7pm Wed 8th Apr 7pm Sun 12th Apr 7pm</p>	<p>THE CALL OF THE WILD Family, Drama 1hr 34min PG Sat 21st Mar 1pm Wed 25th Mar 1pm Sun 29th Mar 7pm</p> <p>THE INVISIBLE MAN Horror, Sci Fi 2hr 16min R16:Violence, Self Harm, Abuse Fri 27th Mar 7pm Sat 4th Apr 7pm</p> <p>THE GENTLEMEN Action, Comedy 1hr 53min R16: Violence, Language, Drug Use Wed 1st Apr 7pm Fri 10th Apr 7pm Sun 19th Apr 7pm</p> <p>SONIC THE HEDGEHOG Action, Family 1hr 40min PG Sat 28th Mar 1pm Sat 4th Apr 1pm Fri 24th Apr 1pm</p> <p>DARK WATERS Drama, Thriller 2hr 6min M: Language Sun 5th Apr 7pm Wed 8th Apr 1pm Fri 17th Apr 7pm</p>
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- LISA KEEN - AUDIOLOGY**
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- NEW PLYMOUTH PHYSIOTHERAPY**
Every Tuesday and Friday
- TARANAKI PODIATRY**
Every 3rd Wednesday
- BROWNING & MATTHEWS OPTOMETRISTS**
Every 2nd Thursday
- MIHI'S PLACE**
Every 4th Thursday
- COUNSELLING SERVICES**
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Permanently residing in the building are:

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CHURCH NOTICES

Opunake & Okato Co-operating Parish CHURCH SERVICES

St Paul's Opunake Co-op & Rahotu
Opunake Cooperating Parish St Pauls, Havelock St
9.30am every Sunday and the
Rahotu - Wesley - 11am first Sunday of the month
Oakura - St James - 10am, 2nd & 4th Sundays
Okato - St Pauls - 10am, 1st & 3rd Sundays

Opunake Catholic Church

St Martins, Pungarehu: 8.30am every 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month
Our Lady Star of the Sea, Opunake: 10am every Sunday
Other areas
Manaia - Sacred Heart - 1st, 3rd Sat at 5pm (2nd, 4th & 5th Sat at Hawera's St Josephs)
Kaponga - St Patricks, Sunday 8.45am
All welcome

St Patricks Catholic Church, Okato

Saturday Vigil 6.00pm - 1st, 3rd & 5th Saturdays

The Wave

Pentecostal Church 64 Domett St, Opunake
Sunday Services 10.30am
Women's Group 10.30am Tuesday
Men's Group 7pm Wednesday
Come along or contact
Murray Baylis
027 218 3377

St. Barnabas Anglican Church

141 Tasman St, Opunake
Sunday Services 10am
Communion 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sunday
Prayer & Praise 1st Sunday
Every 5th Sunday all 4 churches gather for a Combined Service

Okato Community Church

Meets 6.30pm Sunday at Hempton Hall.
Everyone welcome

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OPUNAKE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Meeting 1st Monday of each month 5.30pm at Hughson & Associates Boardroom,

Opunake Business Centre, 23 Napier St (opposite CoastalCare Medical Centre)

Next meeting April 6

AGM

Opunake Sporting Shooters Inc.

March 24, 7.30pm

At the Clubrooms, Kaweora Rd

Contact Nigel Bright 027 268 8049

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What's On Listings



ONGOING

Jonathan Young: Need to chat with your local MP Jonathan Young? Jonathan will now hold his meetings at Coastal Care. For more information phone: 06 7591363. Or email newplymouthmp@parliament.govt.nz

Movies at Everybodys Theatre in Opunake: Playing several days and nights each week. Refer timetable in newspaper.

SUNDAYS:

Open Mic at the Rahotu Tavern: Every second Sunday from 1-5pm.

MONDAYS: Tainui Day Centre - St Barnabas Church Hall, 141 Tasman Street Opunake: Each Monday 10 am - 12:230 pm. Information call Jenny 7618080 or Glenys 6558025

Opunake Friendship Club: Meeting last Monday of each month in Opunake Town Hall at 1.30pm. All welcome.

TUESDAYS

Opunake Walking Group: Every Tuesday 10am. Meet outside Club Hotel on Havelock St. Phone Margaret 027 477 5600.

Club Hotel Pool: Tuesday nights. New players welcome.

WEDNESDAYS

Lisa Keen Audiology at Coastal Care, Opunake: Wednesdays 9am - 5pm, for an appointment call 027 591 4222 - 0800 555 676

Schnitzel Night: Every Wednesday at the Stony River Hotel, Okato

Club Hotel Texas Holdem Poker: Wednesday and Thursday Nights at the Club Hotel.

Opunake Embroiders Guild: Meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10.30am-3pm at the Opunake Business Centre, Napier St, Opunake. Just come along or phone Sheryl 06 761 8769.

THURSDAYS

Club Hotel Texas Holdem Poker: Wednesday and Thursday Nights at the Club Hotel.

Coastal Young Farmers: Meet 2nd Thursday of every month at 7pm at the Okato Bowling Club.

Taranaki Country Music Hall of Fame, Manaia: Running every Thursday night from 7.30pm, 11 Surf Highway, South Road, Manaia.

Egmont Euchre Club: Meets every Thursday 1pm at the Opunake Bowling Club

FRIDAYS

Eltham Business Association Friday Markets: 9:30am to 1pm, Carpark of Touch Point, High Street, Eltham.

Singer Songwriters, New Plymouth: Last Friday of the month at Little Theatre, 29 Aubrey St, NP from 7-11pm.

WEEKENDS

The Historic Cape Light & Museum: Open 11am - 3pm weekends, Bayly Road, Warea.

FEBRUARY 21 TO MARCH 19

“Rodin’s Eve” Exhibition: At Percy Thomson Gallery. Refer advert and editorial.

MARCH 18 TO 26

Discover Northland Tour: With Weir Bros. Ph 06 278 5858.

MARCH 20 TO 28

God of Carnage: A Comedy of Manners ... At Repetory House, Hawera. Refer ad.

MARCH 20

Blindspot: At Butlers Reef, Oakura. Refer ad.

MARCH 21

Opunake District RSA AGM: Was to be held at the Opunake Fire Station, 6.30pm. Now postponed.

MARCH 22

The Slacks. And Open Mic: At Lahar, Okato. 4.30-6.30pm.

NOW UNTIL MARCH 28

Opunake Open Studios & Galleries and Ohawe creative Communities: Refer advert for details.

MARCH 24

NPBHS Boarding Open Day: 10.15am to 3pm.

Opunake Sporting Shooters Inc AGM: At Kaweora Rd, 7.30pm. Refer ad.

MARCH 27

Raw Muscle: At Butlers Reef, Oakura. Refer ad.

MARCH 28

Te Kahui o Taranaki Trust SGM: At the Novatel Hotel, New Plymouth, 10am. Refer ad.

Market Morning at Opunake Town Hall: 10am to 2pm. Please refer to advert, editorial, posters & Opunake facebook page.

Family History Expo: At the Community Centre, Albion St, Hawera. 10am-4pm. Refer advert for details.

MARCH 29

2nd Annual Barrett Cup and Fun Day: At Rahotu Domain, 9.30am. Refer advert.

Opunake Walkway Family Fun Dog Walk. Registration and sausage sizzle from 12.30pm at Sandfords Event Centre Carpark. Walk will follow Coastal Walkway from Sandfords. General walkers welcome. Cost \$10 per dog. General walkers a gold coin donation. Dogs must be Council registered and on a lead. An Opunake Lakeside Lions fundraiser.

APRIL 1 TO 6

Opunake Players Inc present ‘Murder & Mayhem’. Refer ad for details.

APRIL 2 TO MAY 30

Opunake Pop-up Exhibition at Aotea Utanganui, Patea. Refer ad for details.

APRIL 11

Bollywood Party in Opunake: At Headlands. Refer ad or call 06 761 8358 for information.

APRIL 25 & 26

Rahotu Hall Fundraiser 8 Ball Pairs Challenge: At the Rahotu Tavern. Refer ad.

OCTOBER 3 & 4

World of Wearable Art, Wellington tour: With Weir Bros. Ph 06 278 5858.

OCTOBER 25 TO 30

Great Barrier Island & Auckland Tour: With Weir Bros. Ph 06 278 5858.

ONE OF MY FAVOURITE BOOKS:

The Quiet American by Graham Greene

In the American police sitcom Barney Miller there is one scene where the officers ask each other at what point they came out against the Vietnam War. Most mention some date in the 1960s. All eyes turn to Dietrich, the station brainbox who mentions a date in the 1950s. That was when President Eisenhower sent the first military advisors there.

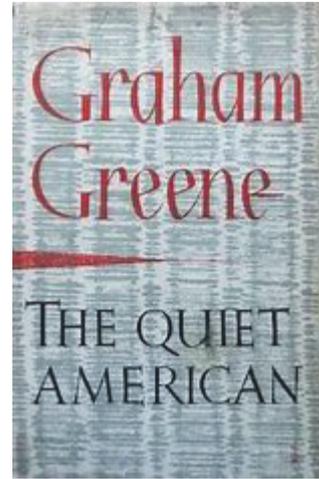
“How old were you then?”
“I was in the fifth grade,” replies Dietrich.

When Graham Greene wrote *The Quiet American* in 1955, he showed a prescience equal to that of the precocious Dietrich. This was one year after the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, but before the Americans became heavily involved in Vietnam.

At the heart of *The Quiet American* is a love triangle. Thomas Fowler is an English foreign correspondent who is the novel’s narrator. He has been in Vietnam too long and is cynical. He has fallen for and moved in with a much younger Vietnamese woman called Phuong. He wants to marry her but his wife in England who is

Catholic will not agree to a divorce.

Along comes the much younger Alden Pyle, an American who is not loud and brash like the other Americans in town. He is the quiet American. An unlikely friendship develops between



him and Fowler. They also become competitors for the affections of Phuong, who is an allegory for Vietnam, caught between competing suitors.

Pyle regales Fowler about the need for a “third way” for Vietnam. The colonialist French are on their way out, and there

needs to be a “third way” to protect the Vietnamese from a communist takeover. The Americans, unlike the French could never be colonialists and have the best interests of the Vietnamese at heart. What’s more tragic is that Pyle actually appears to believe this.

When the Vietnamese warlord, General The, touted by the Americans as the harbinger of the Third Way is responsible for a car bomb explosion leading to many civilian deaths, Fowler rediscovers his moral compass and realises something has to be done. So he conspires in the assassination of Pyle. Or is he just removing a rival for the affections of Phuong?

The Quiet American has twice been made into a movie. The first time in 1958 had Michael Redgrave as Fowler. It removed the novel’s anti American elements and destroyed the story in the process. The second in 2002 featured Michael Caine in sizzling form as the tortured Britisher and was closer to what Greene had intended.

Bryan Kirk

Reunion will remember happy days on the beach



From left: Bill, Owen, Ngia, Roy, Gwen, Betty, Dawn, Joan, Doss, Allie, Jack, Colin. In front is Mabel & Hilton (Skelly).

Twelve Olliver children grew up in a converted boatshed down on Opunake Beach, after what was supposed to be a two week holiday turned into two decades by the sea.

After their father Skelly Olliver returned from World War One he was hit by a terrible flu epidemic. Following a long recovery he became manager of Riverlea General Store.

In 1921 he and wife Mabel moved to Opunake for a short break before heading off to a new job in Pungarehu. They never made it. Instead Skelly broke his leg, lost his new position, and the family

ended up at the beach for the next 20 years.

Later Skelly worked for the Power Board while Mabel raised a brood of healthy, hearty kids without even the joys of running water – unless you count the Spring tides that sometimes washed through their house.

They’re a happy, huggy, feely bunch who are proud of their heritage.

They were the lucky ones, they reckon, growing up full of sunshine, sand and freedom. They can tell some wicked tales, and not ones of deprivation.

They laugh about the tricks they played on unsuspecting

courting couples, filling the dicky seats of their cars up with stones, collecting golf balls whacked off the cliff, or of whitebait scooped by the bucketful for breakfast from the Tail Race.

The Swamp (now the campground) before it was filled, was perfect for playing Hide and Seek, building huts and forts.

They reckon they had the best playground in the world. There are three still living: Joan Jeffries, the eldest aged 103, Owen Olliver aged 94, and Bill Olliver who is 88. All are still living in Opunake.

The Olliver family reunion was to be held on Opunake Beach at Easter, but due to the coronavirus the reunion has been postponed to a later date.

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