

TOM *Fitzroy*

JUNE 2011

Pride and passion in the Haka

A study in pride and passion. NPBHS head boy, Isaac Robinson, pictured centre during the Haka Competition. (More on page 3)



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TOM Fitzroy is a monthly publication delivered free to your letterbox in the Fitzroy, Merrilands, Highlands Park, Strandon and Glen Avon areas.

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Points of view expressed in contributed articles are not necessarily the views of TOM

editorial

This month I had the privilege of talking to Ron Phillips, the retiring optometrist from Fitzroy Optometrists. Ron had been in business for 50 years in Fitzroy and been through some tough economic times. He told me his business took 15 years to establish itself. This gave me food for thought – how many business owners today would hang in there for 15 years while they built up their business? We are living in such an instantaneous world where if it doesn't happen now it mustn't be going to happen. Think texting, emails, Facebook, Skype, all instruments of instant gratification. Think of the throw away society we live in – built to last five minutes then buy a new one – by then the business you bought it from has closed down and it can't be serviced anyway.



That recession word is still being bandied about but isn't it good to hear that Fitzroy Village is alive and kicking especially after reading in the Daily Snooze that shops were closing down left right and centre. I'm told you can't find a premise to rent anywhere in Fitzroy so go Fitzroy let's beat the recession! I have been enjoying the autumn harvest of red guavas. I don't usually like them very much – tart little things with hard pips but this year maybe the warmer weather has ensured they are a little sweeter. Try them warmed up nicely by the winter sun, deep purple, plump and nearly falling off the tree – yum!

Kim

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I was lucky enough to attend the New Plymouth Boys' High Inter-house Haka competition recently.

Standing in Ryder hall while four groups of several hundred boys took turns to perform the school Haka was to say the least an amazing experience. The level of pride and passion that the boys put into their performance was incredible and as one judge who I passed in the corridor afterwards said "a very healthy display of testosterone."

Each house has two turns at performing the school Haka which is judged by six independent judges on things like the clarity and volume of their leader as well as the general performance of the group. Usually the competition is held outside on the basketball courts but because of the bad weather predicted was held this year in Ryder hall. Having been fortunate to attend several senior prize giving's at Boys' High where the Haka had been performed for the outgoing head boy I knew what volume and intensity of the boys performance to expect. However I was reminded of this again when I was visiting this month's TOM garden on Northgate. When I mentioned to the owner that I was going to the Boys' High Haka competition they said they usually hear it quite clearly from their home!

Maori Head of Department at NPBHS Colin Maihi has been administering the house Haka competition since 1997. He explained that the current words of the school Haka are based on an earlier bilingual haka written in the 1950's by a student named B.T Reweti. The version performed today was rewritten around 1992 by the Maori HOD Mr Matiu Julian.

Last year a major upset occurred when Syme house was the winner of the Haka competition. This was only the second time a hostel other than Hatherley, the boarders hostel, has won the event. The other time was in 2003 and it was Syme House then as well who were victorious. It was apparent that both Syme and Hatherley houses were very keen to win this year.

Barack House performed first followed by Donnelly and then Syme who were led by head boy Isaac Robinson dressed in traditional costume. He and the other leaders also had their faces drawn with 'moko' and led a very strong Haka. Hatherley performed last on the school stage with all the hostel boys giving their absolute all. From an 'untrained' eye such as my own all four house Haka performances appeared strong and it seemed like there was very little in it. However the judges' expert eyes observed more than mine and their accumulated points saw Hatherley House

named the winner with Syme in 2nd place and Barak and Donnelly 3rd and 4th respectively.

Boys' High have tapped into a fantastic way of generating school pride with the Inter house competition. House teachers, group leaders and house leaders put huge amounts of effort into getting the boys involved in the inter house competition which is fierce at Boys High and covers a spectrum of different contests. From physical endeavours such as swimming and athletics and the tug of war through to cultural pursuits like the Haka competition, house singing, group ensemble competition and debating the boys are given many opportunities to represent their house and ultimately their school with pride.

When visiting international rugby teams come to our region later this year and use the famous 'gully' ground as a practise field I hope they get to experience that Boys High passion and pride with a school Haka performance for it is truly world class.

By Jackie Tomlinson



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TOM Garden of the Month

A tree that many people see as a landmark in our local area is at the front of this month's TOM garden. The tree in question is a healthy yew tree carefully clipped into a fantastic green spiral that catches your eye as you drive past.

It was this tree that first attracted me to the garden and apparently I'm not the first person to want a closer look. When I visited the garden, owners Robin and Marilyn told me that quite a few people comment on the topiary tree and they have even had Japanese tourists stop and have their photo taken beside this 'living work of art'.

The couple have lived at the property for around sixteen years and over that time have put their unique stamp on it. Originally the front garden was just a sloping lawn planted with lots of conifers. Robin with the help of a landscape designer put together a plan that saw the conifers go and the garden get more structure creating different levels and garden areas. One half of the front garden is devoted to plants clipped into various shapes including the stunning yew tree. Robin is self taught in topiary and by experimenting has learned to manage the shape of the yew and the buxus. He says the plants are surprisingly low maintenance and only need clipping a couple of times a year. The couple brought the yew tree from their previous property as it was growing in an old copper and about four years ago they planted it in the ground where it stands now. The trees are very slow growing and Marilyn pointed out a specimen that is several years old but is still very tiny. The rest of the front garden has a variety of trees and shrubs. At the front boundary two large frangipani trees are thriving and are covered in their fragrant creamy yellow flowers every October. It's surprising that these two trees are so happy here on the south side of the property but Marilyn says they started flowering about three years after they were planted and always put on a yearly display. Another unusual plant at the front of the house is a large stag horn fern which is given banana skins to keep it healthy and well fed.

Flaxes and grasses are interspersed throughout the garden as well as a large variety of flowers. Marilyn says she used to have more than forty roses in the garden but now only has four as she didn't enjoy all the maintenance and spraying involved in keeping them looking their best. She has kept her favourite rose though, the 'Mary Rose' a fragrant pinky mauve bloom. Marilyn says she likes all flowers but roses and carnations are favourites.

Robin says he likes to keep busy and when not in the garden he loves building, fixing and creating things. His children and now his grandchildren have always left broken toys outside his garage for fixing. They have even given him the nickname 'geppeto' because of his cleverness in repairing toys. He's even built a model train set that he can put on a trailer for the extended family to borrow and enjoy.

Robin takes care of the heavier manual work around the garden doing the digging, clipping and edges as well as the up keep of the lawns and he says he really likes the lawns to look neat. His creative side is even put to good use here when he experiments with mowing strips

at different levels to create stripes and different textures.

Around the side of the house next to the path the couple have planted rhododendrons, the dwarf variety and aptly named the 'Seven Dwarfs'. It's at the rear of the home where it's very sheltered that Marilyn has her vegetable patch which runs along one end of the property. She has carrots, parsnips, cabbage, broccoli, beetroot and parsley growing and says this is one of her favourite parts of the garden. Two tubs next to the veggie plot contain a healthy crop of strawberries which have only just stopped producing delicious fruit. Near here there is a large daisy bush with a lovely small pink flower that she says is in constant bloom and I was lucky to be treated to a cutting of both the daisy and the strawberry plants to take home and plant in my own garden. Around the back of the property the couple has also indulged their love of garden ornaments with lots of different statues as well as a display of wall ornaments along the back fence. Marilyn has planted lots of flax and grasses in a central garden on the lawn to keep it low maintenance and she has nestled three small deer statues amongst the foliage. Also along the back fence is a large camellia tree that Robin has cleverly clipped into the shape of a heart. This is a real focal point for this part of the garden. This living 'statue' and the couple's collection of ornaments all add to the unique character of the property.

Like most garden lovers Robin and Marilyn obviously derive a huge amount of pleasure from their garden and with the property being on a main route many others also get to enjoy their creative endeavours.

By Jackie Tomlinson



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TOM Garden Competition results

Congratulations to **Keri Drake** who is the winner of our May TOM garden competition. Her correct entry wins her a garden voucher, compliments of **Fairfields Garden Centre**. The correct answers were:



1. Busing Russell.

2. Eagers Funeral Services.



3. Millwards Roofing .

4. Fitzroy School.



5. Boardwalk next to NP Boardriders Club.



6. Coastal walkway East End (end of Nobs Line).

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Taranaki Hockey

The Central Hockey League women's team is top

of the table after five rounds and are now guaranteed a spot in the final in June! From primary school to men's and women's teams, there is a game to be played for everyone. Our hockey season is in full swing. Come and watch some games, we would love to see you there. The Stratford turf is located in Portia Street Stratford, and the Devon Hotel Park is located in New Plymouth.

For more information on where and when games are played visit us at www.taranakihockey.org.nz The Stratford turf is complete. Taranaki Hockey is proud to be able to offer advertising space around the turf. For more information please contact Tania Sheridan - 021 255 2599 - support.taranakihockey.org.nz. Be seen with Taranaki Hockey!

Thank you to all secondary schools and clubs for their timely registrations - looking forward to a fun and busy hockey season. Central Hockey League have announced the U21 squads. Taranaki Hockey Federation wish to congratulate Te Wai Tamati, Sam Glynn & Maree Heal in making the squad. Well done. Taranaki Hockey Federation website has a new look and is updated regularly, feel free to visit us for all the latest news and hockey information.

Local tennis player bound for Turkey in international tennis competition

In October this year local resident Beth Webster will be travelling to Antalya Turkey to represent New Zealand as part of the NZ Senior Tennis Team. At an age where many people would be looking to lessen their involvement in competitive sport Beth remains passionate about the sport and its administration that has brought her enjoyment, success and friendships over many decades.

She became involved in tennis as a young child through her tennis playing parents and this set the course for her involvement with the sport. In fact Beth and her two sisters are all sports lovers with one sister also still involved in competitive tennis and the other athletics. I asked Beth what it was that she loves about tennis and what keeps her so involved and she replied, "I like everything about tennis, it's in my blood. It is such a good game, and I like that it can be competitive. I love the camaraderie amongst the players and I have made some life long friends. It's also a game for everyone - people of all ages and skill levels can play and enjoy."

Beth and her husband Barry moved from Wellington to Taranaki in the early 1980's and Beth quickly involved herself in the local tennis playing scene and its administration. She joined the St Joseph Waiwakaiho Club on her arrival which at the time had two ladies members that she knew. Later this club joined with Pukekura and she played with them until she and Barry went to live in Ireland in 1996. Beth explained that the move to Ireland came about when Barry was appointed General Manager of a Waterford engineering firm and at the time she was really unhappy about the prospect of going to Ireland to live. She went on to say that she thought of many reasons why they shouldn't go, such as; they were too old to change their lifestyle so drastically, her mother was turning eighty, her granddaughter was turning five and she was in the NZ tennis team going to Australia. This resulted in Beth delaying her departure for three months after Barry and she had also said to him if there wasn't a tennis club there she wasn't going! Luckily there was a Waterford tennis club but it had a very long waiting list and you had to apply and send them your tennis profile and then wait to be admitted. Beth didn't have to wait long as she was approved as a member before she even got there. Nevertheless she says, "I hated the first three months in Ireland, I broke out in severe eczema, hated the weather and wanted to come home. Things changed when I was invited to a porcelain painting group by the wife of one Barry's work colleagues. They referred to themselves as the 'blow ins' which was what the Irish called all the new non Irish residents. At porcelain painting, I couldn't paint to save myself but it was here that I met a Hawaiian lady that belonged to the tennis club. She was absolutely floored that I was already a club member and immediately asked if I wanted to come along for a game. She loaned me a racquet and I started playing again. After that things just got better and better. Not only did Beth start playing tennis but this Kiwi 'blow in' gave Waterford tennis a gentle shake up. She introduced to the 'very conservative' Irish club a few things that were done back home in NZ such as mid week ladies tennis and some loosening of rules that previously saw the club gates locked to all at 6.00pm. Beth also had the opportunity of representing Ireland as a resident and played against the UK and Hungary.

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It was obvious talking to Beth that her and Barry's time in Ireland ended up being very special and when they returned in 2001 she says, "Guess who didn't want to come home?" While living in Waterford they hosted many NZ friends, their daughters, grand daughters and Beth's 80 year old mother all visited. Beth says she felt like putting out the B&B sign one year as they had so many overseas visitors. Barry and Beth have returned twice to Ireland to visit their very good friends.

It is apparent that the Waterford tennis club was sad to lose Beth. She showed me the exquisite Waterford crystal trophy that the club gave her when she returned to NZ. She recalls that on a tour of the famous Waterford crystal factory she had admired a trophy that was given to Pete Sampras which had three crystal tennis balls attached to it. This was remembered when they made her a similar trophy. Apparently one of the crystal craftsmen was given a week off work to produce this amazing work of art for her and at the top of the trophy sits a crystal tennis ball.

Once she reluctantly returned to New Zealand, Beth joined the Rotokare Tennis Club where she has been ever since. As well as playing Beth has been heavily involved with administration. All this voluntary work was recognised earlier this year when at the National team's event held in Auckland at Easter she was awarded the prestigious 'Administrator of the Year' award.

The winter months won't see Beth having much of a reprieve from tennis playing. Not that she minds, she is used to preparing for overseas tournaments. This isn't the first time she has been chosen to represent her country and she has a long list of achievements in the sport. Represent-

ing NZ in the Australian team events has seen her compete in Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, Perth and the Gold Coast. In 2005 she travelled to Edmonton to compete in the World Masters Games winning silver in her age group. Beth was part of the Gold Medal winning NZ Ladies 65+ team at the Australasian team's event in Christchurch in 2006. More recently in 2009 she won silver medals in Singles and Doubles at the NZ Seniors National Individual Events held at Blenheim. Also in 2009 Beth was named captain and member of the Ladies 70+ NZ team to contest the World ITF Teams event in Perth.

With the Turkey trip only a few months away I asked Beth what sort of opposition her and her team will face in Turkey. She says the competition will be tough as the European teams get to play each other all year round. With the other three ladies in her team coming from Dunedin, Waikato and Auckland they will be lucky if they have more than one practise together as a team. In Turkey Beth says they play at an amazing tennis 'resort'. It has 65 courts with all the accommodation on site, and because of its fantastic facilities Turkey has hosted the event the last four years.

It was inspiring talking to Beth as she shared her achievements and life experiences. Not only has she pursued her own sporting interests but she was involved with her daughter's sports teams both as a coach and manager when they were young. This involvement along with the huge amount of voluntary sports administration work she has performed over many years is a wonderful gift. Taranaki is fortunate to have its fair share of people like Beth who are happy to 'give back' to the sport they love and the regions sporting community is a richer place for it.

No matter what the result in Turkey, Beth will be a proud ambassador for her sport and her country.

By Jackie Tomlinson



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East End Successful at Local Awards

East End SLSC featured prominently in the recent Taranaki Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence. The club took out Top Patrolling Club, while club members Heath Tarrant (Instructor of the Year) and Grant Crossan (Official of the Year) were also being recognised for their efforts. It was Sam Julian, however who scooped the top award, Taranaki Lifeguard of the Year, as well as another award for Innovation of the Year.

Sam has made a significant contribution to Surf Life Saving in the Taranaki area this summer. As Taranaki Chief Examiner, Sam was responsible for the examination of 50 new volunteer lifeguards during the summer. Assisted by a group of dedicated examiners, Sam's role is to oversee all exams and ensure that new lifeguards have the skills they need to become a Lifeguard.

Under his leadership as Lifeguard Coordinator at East End, the club achieved 100% pass rates on all patrol inspections and took out the award for Top Patrolling Club in Taranaki.

One of the innovations that Sam put in place was a lifeguard scholarship at East End that rewards two promising young lifeguards who have shown a commitment to developing as lifeguards. This year's winners, Rebecca Busing and Troway Hayes will benefit with clothing, equipment and free training courses to help them become better lifeguards.

Emma Crofskey from Fitzroy SLSC was the other local winner taking home the Volunteer of the Year title.

Andrew Cronin

Club Development Officer



Grant Crossan

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Fitzroy Surf Lifesaving Club

Fitzroy Surf Lifesaving Club capped off a great season with their end of year prize giving celebrations. Tickets were in demand with over 80 members in attendance for the dinner and more turning up for the festivities afterwards.

A swag of awards were given out with top honours going to Ron Cole as the recipient of the Stainton Cup for Club General excellence. Fitzroy recognised a number of key people involved with making the season a success including Ross Peters who received the Barry Garcia trophy for Senior Men's General Excellence and Emma Crofskey who received the Barclay Rosebowl trophy for Women's General Excellence. These three people along with the support of many others ensured the club ran well throughout the year and is now in a good financial position going into next season.

Fitzroy also had younger members helping out the club in a huge way including Shaun Burton who was a very proficient patrol member. He trained and competed extremely well in the sprint arena and also helped out with sprint trainings if the coaches weren't available. He received the Velvin Trophy for Junior General Excellence. Evie Trolove was another junior member recognised for her contribution to the new lifeguards, training them for their Surf Award. She was a great patrol Vice-Captain and competed well in her ski events which culminated in a bronze medal in the U19 double ski race with Rebecca Cole at the national champs.

Other club members that competed extremely well at the national champs included the Open Men's sprint relay team of Scott Murfitt (U16), Shaun Burton (U19), Kent Fraser (Open) and Paul Cracroft-Wilson (Open). They ran above their expected potential to gain themselves a bronze medal and were awarded the Stan Alsop trophy for the most improved competitive seniors of the club for the 2010-2011 season. The Jenny Mack Trophy for the most improved competitive women was awarded to the Open Women's canoe crew of Monique Burr, Ally Newport, Kylie Hall and Sophie Trolove. In only their first year of competing together they won numerous local carnival titles, they won the central regional long and short course canoe events and at nationals they were awarded a hard fought silver medal in the short course canoe event.

Sarah Wilson was deemed the most improved competitive junior for the season receiving the Johns Trophy, with Keely O'Keefe one to watch out for in the future, gaining the Manly SLSC Cup for the most improved Cadet with her efforts throughout the season. Our best performed athlete at the Ocean Athlete event was Amelia Riddick who made it to the final rounds in flags and ran her way into the semi finals in the U14 female beach sprint.



Brian Velvin presenting Emma Crofskey with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

The John Law Cup for Cadet General Excellence was given to Mitchell O'Neil for his help around the club and for competing hard over the season. Kirsten Johns' dedication to Junior Surf on a Sunday morning earned her the Nev Gardiner Trophy for services to Junior Surf.

Our patrolling awards, which is at the core of our movement, were well contested with Ross Peters claiming the Hawkins Trophy for Best Patrol Person and also his patrol earning the Most Proficient Patrol award for the 2010 - 2011 season.

Fitzroy Surf Club are lucky to have such supportive volunteers helping our club along and are looking forward to next season where we are heading towards bigger and better things! Wishing everyone a good winter and will see all our current members and any new members next season! Pool nights are Thursdays from 7 to 8pm at the Aquatic Centre, Club Run/Walks are on Sundays at 4pm from the Surf Club and Happy Hour Fridays are now on every Friday from 5 - 7pm at the Surf Club. All members and friends of members welcome. To contact Fitzroy Surf Club you can email fitz-surf06@xtra.co.nz or text 021 586 933.

The Fitzroy Womans winning team in action.



Behind the carved door in Fitzroy

Fitzroy boasts one of the most elaborately carved doors in New Plymouth and it is the entrance to a business that has been running for 50 years – Fitzroy Optometrists. In fact the door is carved and lacquered polystyrene and has been in place about 40 years, so it in itself is an institution.

Fifty years ago Fitzroy Optometrists was called Phillips Optometrists and was run by Ron and Noeline Phillips. They opened for business in 1961 and were one of only four Optometrist businesses in New Plymouth. Ron tells his story.....

"It was very slow at first and we were excited when the phone rang and more so with an appointment. We were the first new practice to open in about 50 years and the other three Optometrists were second generation family businesses. After 15 years we had to take the phone off the hook at busy times. I was reprimanded for having my name in the phone book twice. Back then we were not allowed to advertise or even have a shop window display so hence the brick frontage.

In the 60's glasses were provided with an examination for sight and an examination for eye health was very limited. Referral to an Ophthalmologist was only done if considered necessary. There were no ready made glasses.

There was a very limited choice of frames. Plastic models were made in New Zealand in a highly protected industry. There were three or four styles for women and limited colours. There were two models for men in grey, brown or black. Metal frames were allocated on the size of your practice and were imported. Some even had gold content. Today the choice is unlimited.

Lenses were made of glass and there was no plastic, a limited range of bi-focals and fixed tints but no multi-focals or sun sensitive lenses. Today there is little glass used due to its excess weight and poor safety characteristics. There is a vast variety of plastic materials available with many tint options including sun-sensitive. Bi-focals are still used and about 300 types of multi-focals are available. This accounts for the large variation in prices and often what looks like a 'good deal' can be inferior or outdated lenses.

I am now enjoying my retirement, leaving the practice in the capable hands of my daughter and her husband, Anne and Michael Warner. They will continue the same caring friendly service."

It is plain to see (no pun intended!) that the Optometric world has changed tremendously in 50 years but it is good to see that the core business tenets have not changed. Michael and Anne pride themselves on making their clients welcome and 'putting things right'. The relationships that Ron has established with his clients are valued and nurtured today – the friendly chat is just part of the service. Fitzroy Optometrists have a private consulting room for clients to use to help them with their choice of glasses. They can also provide photos of you with your glasses on to help make the choice easier.

For the past five years Kath Tranter has been the practising Optometrist. She is New Zealand trained and has over 15 years experience, both nationally and internationally. Michael is the Dispensing Optician and Anne is the receptionist. Michael trained as an aircraft technician and was in the Air Force for eight and a half years before coming to work in the business. He gained his Dispensing Optician qualification in 1993 and has a very nifty way of sorting out



Left to right Anne, Ron and Michael.

any problem with glasses. With current technology patients are not left without glasses while their new prescription is made. Fitzroy Optometrists stock Zeiss lenses – a quality German product that is backed by over 160 years expertise. Anne, who has a background in school teaching, will also help clients choose their glasses and wears a pair of very elegant glasses herself.

Call into Fitzroy Optometrists for a level of service and expertise that has stood the test of time but with all the modern embellishments for you or one of your family – you'll soon be seeing why!

By Kim Ferens

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Kath Tranter, Michael and Anne Warner

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Men sing in harmony at local club

Male singers aged between thirteen and eighty plus years were in fine voice at the New Plymouth Club on Saturday May 21st.

The Taranaki Male Choir, Western Peak Harmony a Barber-shop style singing group and 'New Boys' a male voice ensemble from New Plymouth Boys High sang to a large, appreciative audience.

All three groups are under the musical directorship of Krissy Jackson and the programme showcased all the groups' talents as well as Ms Jackson's expertise when they came together for the 'Voice Mail' concert.

The Taranaki Male Choir was formed in 2002, Western Peak Harmony about four years ago whilst 'New Boys' came together this year. The students are a mix of ages and range from Year 9 through to Year 13 students. For most in the group it is their first experience with this type of singing although many are musicians in various school bands. The performance at the New Plymouth Club was the 'New Boys' first public performance and good practise as they prepare for the NZCF Big Sing competition in June. Krissy Jackson has experienced success at this event before when she led the SHGC Tanners in 2009, so the New Boys are in good hands as they enter the world of competitive singing.

All three groups performed a selection of songs as individual groups but came together for the night's finale Pokarekare Ana; it was a great night's entertainment and a wonderful opportunity to hear male voices of all ages singing in harmony.

By Jackie Tomlinson



NPBHS singing group New Boys performing at the NP Club.



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New Plymouth Boys' High School

We are very proud of the following boys –

Liam Paterson – invited to the National Orienteering Development squad.

Balkaran Singh won the Heads Up for Kids competition and was awarded an I POD and a trip.

Javon McCallum won a gold for his beach sprint final in the Surf Lifesaving National competition. He and Zachary Howarth won the beach relay.

Billy Smith, Van Michel and Keegan Paulman excelled in the Taranaki Secondary Schools Shakespeare competition with Billy Smith winning top actor.

Matt Furze, Orin Burmester, Tom Spencer and Hamish Sturmer won the Adventure Racing.

Matt Baxter won the 16 and under 3000m by approximately 160m at the National Athletics in Dunedin. His time was 8.30.68. An eight second personal best time.

The NPBHS Drama Club had three entries this year in the University of Otago Sheilah Winn Festival of Shakespeare in Schools (Taranaki region) on April 14. The boys presented scenes from Romeo and Juliet (directed by Mr Kerr), Twelfth Night (Mr Townes) and Hamlet (Ms Bousfield) and all the actors acquitted themselves well.

NPBHS took out one of the three big awards on the night, with Billy Smith winning direct entry to NSSP for his double performance as the Gravedigger and King Claudius in the graveyard scene from Hamlet. The NSSP (National Schools Shakespeare Production) is a week long intensive course in acting Shakespeare, held in October with professional tutors and directors. This is a huge opportunity for Billy, who is now fundraising the \$1000 needed for fees and travel. From the forty-five students at NSSP, chosen from regional festivals and the national festival, twenty-two will be selected for the Young Shakespeare Company who will travel to England.



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Excellent Shakespeare performances from the NPBHS Drama Club.

TOM Pet of the Month

Name: Max

Age: Three years

Breed: Birman Seal Point cat

Personality: Max is a laid back cat who is a real people lover and is known to everyone in his neighbourhood. He's always out on the street and if you walk past him he will flop on his back in anticipation of quick tummy rub. His owners say he has a lovely personality and is extremely gentle and tolerant with the youngest member of the family. He's also quite cheeky and a bit of a character who is inclined to get into mischief. The day before I visited Max had got himself stuck in a neighbour's cat door. He was firmly wedged in the door that was sized for a feline with a much smaller waist measurement and a little less fur!



Hot tips for cold weather from the Fire Station

Winter Fire Safety:

Winter is always the time that we get the majority of our house fires and there are some common things that are often found to be responsible so with early snow on the mountain it is a good time to look at some tips to help keep you and your family safe and warm this winter.

Electric Blankets:

If your electric blanket or cord is showing any signs of wear have it checked by a service person or replace immediately. Switch it off before getting into bed.

NEVER use pins or sharp objects to secure the blanket to the bed and NEVER tuck it under the bed.

Do not dry clean or use in a washing machine or spin dryer. When putting your blanket away for summer do not fold it - ROLL IT.

Heaters and Dryers:

REMEMBER: the heater metre rule: always keep furniture, curtains, clothes and children at least one metre away from heaters and fireplaces.

DO NOT store objects on top of your heating appliance.

NEVER cover heating appliances.

DO NOT overload clothes dryers and clean the lint filter after each load cycle.

LPG Gas Heaters:

Check that the heater and hose are in good condition and do not show any signs of damage or wear.

If the heater does not light straight away, turn it off and then try again. Don't let gas build up before relighting.

Always have fresh air coming into the room where a gas heater is in use.

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Merrilands Kindergarten

Hello again and welcome to a glimpse of what has been happening at our kindergarten recently. One child brought in a wood pigeon (kereru) soft toy and spoke of seeing real ones in his trees at home. This sparked an interest in native birds with children doing some bird orienteering. They had to find the pictures of native manu that were placed around the kindergarten outside and then put a mark on the pictures on their clipboards. They were very clever at finding them as they are placed at different levels and different locations.

The sandpit remains a favourite with lots of water play being integrated. Guttering is added and sometimes boats are placed in the guttering. Buckets of water are poured in and the children eagerly watch the boats zoom down and dive into a hole they have dug at the end. There were a lot of trucks and cars "stuck in the lava!" at the bottom of the chute as well.

With the wind wreaking havoc, kites have been popular, too. We have made them with sticks and plastic bags which we learned did not fly as well as the ones we made using only plastic bags. We've had some bad luck with two of our drums as they broke. However, luck would have it that a man selling drums stopped by and we now have three new ones that will hopefully be a bit more durable.

The children have been practising their musical talents and we have been practising our patience as the decibels increase! It has been wonderful to see many children's confidence grow as they explore their finesse with the drums and audiences eager to be entertained.

Carpentry has remained a favourite, with children building aeroplanes and helicopters, houses for toys, and just experimenting with hammering nails and various items onto wood.

We had an excursion to see the Capital E Theatre show called "Songs of the Sea." It was a nice follow-up to last term's interest in sea creatures. We celebrated Matariki on the 11th of June at kindergarten and we will report on this next time. All the best and may you all be warm and snuggly as the mercury falls. The snow on the maunga is ataahua (beautiful) though.

From all of us here at Merrilands Kindergarten:

Libby, Brenda, Yvonne, Fortunate, and Denise.



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'Ginger' the cat update

Last month the TOM reported the antics of a lovely ginger cat in the East End area. The friendly feline is a regular visitor around the Big Wave Café and East End beach area. Soon after the story was published a local couple contacted the TOM as they wondered if he was their much loved cat who had vanished some time ago in the area. They decided to go and try and find 'Ginger' to see if he was their lost pet. Well they did find him and as soon as they called his name he came to them and they were pretty convinced he was their missing moggy.....However another TOM reader also contacted the TOM as he thought he knew who Ginger's owners were and he was right.

This adventurous feline named 'Pinkie' definitely has a home and a family but is just very social! Whilst the owners of the missing cat were disappointed 'Ginger' wasn't their cat they're really happy that he is someone else's much loved pet.



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FITZROY CLUBS & GROUPS

East End Indoor Bowling Club meets in the Community Hall Sackville St Fitzroy at 7.30 pm every Monday evening. New members are very welcome. Please phone Betty Death 757 9968.

Fitzroy Outdoor Bowling Club. Season now open and new members welcome – both men and women. Join our friendly members who play on two greens with an upmarket clubroom and fine facilities. Contact President Neville Goldsworthy 758 8846 or Secretary Sherylle Watkins 755 0125.

Fitzroy Scout Group: For boys and girls from age 6. Keas meet on Tuesdays from 5pm - 6.15pm. Cubs meet on Mondays 6.00 - 7.30pm. Scouts meet on Mondays 6.30 - 8.00pm at The Scout Den, Clemow Road Fitzroy (near Lake Rotomanu). Visit us to see what we do. The first term/part term is free! For further details contact the following: Keas (years 1-3) phone Ashley on 06 7583918 / 021 292 2686. For Cubs (years 4-6) phone Cory 06 759 9312 / 027 291 7334. For Scouts (years 7-10) phone Vinnie 06 755 0328/027 486 6210. Email fitzroyscoutgroup@xtra.co.nz

Fitzroy Men's Probus Club meets in the Beach Street Hall, Fitzroy, at 10am on the second Tuesday of every month (except January). New members welcome. Please phone Ian Raine 06 757 5825.

Fitzroy Womens Probus. Beach St Hall, meet 10am 1st Wednesday of each month. New Members welcome. Phone Margaret Stening 757 8890.

Freemasons Worldwide are ordinary men in the community, 21 years and over, of all religions and backgrounds, who share a concern for human values, moral standards, and the rights of individuals. Meeting monthly in Fitzroy. Phone Roger Marshall, 06 759 1755.

Mahjong. There will be Mahjong starting at the Beach Street Hall, lounge room, on Sat 12th March, 1pm-4pm then every Saturday. Everyone welcome, come along and enjoy Mahjong, cup of tea and biscuits. There will be a small prize for hand of the day, \$3.00 each. For details phone 758 1957 or 757 5913.

New Plymouth Chess Club. Every Tuesday 7.30 pm. Clubrooms: 11 Gilbert St (next to Model Trains). For further information contact Errol Tuffrey 758 2626.

New Plymouth Croquet Club

Winter months at New Plymouth Croquet Club Rooms, East End Reserve. *Cards & Rummy* every Friday afternoon starting April 2nd, 1pm - 4pm, \$3; *Mah Jongg* every Saturday afternoon starting May 7th, 1pm - 4pm, \$3; *Winter Croquet* will start on Wednesday 1st June, new members welcome, \$3 session. Please ring Barbara 758 2710 for more details.

New Plymouth Pakeke Lions meet on the last Monday of the month at the Fitzroy Golf Club, 11.30am. Contact President David May 758 4427.

New Plymouth Swords Club - Fencing. At New Plymouth Boys' High Old Gymnasium, off Hobson St. Every Monday night of school term. Juniors 6-7pm. Seniors 7-9pm. For more info contact: John Calcott, Ph 753 9186, jcalcott@paradise.net.nz

Rotary meets every Wednesday night at 5.15pm at the Beach Street Hall. Enquiries to the Secretary, Ross Smith, phone 758 4194. Email: rossandanne@slingshot.co.nz

Santa Rosa Country Music Club meets every Friday night at the Fitzroy Hall, Sackville Street Fitzroy, at 7.30pm till 10.30pm. Information regarding club please ph 021 265 9230 or email lancasters@xtra.co.nz. Entry \$3 non-members, \$2 members. Supper provided.

Taranaki Model Powerboat Club holds a Club Day on the 1st Sunday of every month (weather permitting) at Lake Cowley, just before the Go cart track in Waitara. Contact John Nicholls on 769 9166 or 021 299 4168.

Taranaki Radio Control Car Club. Off-road racing: Club's dirt track by Lake Rotomanu, 2nd Sunday of every month. Contact Greg Mawson, ph 753 7471. On-road racing: contact Selwyn Duthie, ph 06 765 8108. Indoor racing: contact Tracy van Beers, ph 751 1093.

Tasman Club situated at 35 Octavius Place, New Plymouth. Tasman Clubrooms are available for hire. Further information phone 758 5186 clubrooms.

TSB NP Contract Bridge Club plays Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs at 7.20pm and Friday afternoons from 12.45pm at 70 Hobson St. Ph the President 758 8985 or the Secretary 759 0258.

U3A New Plymouth. Monthly meetings are held at the Trinity Church Hall, 8 Henui Street, Fitzroy at 2pm on the second Thursday of each month (except January). Contact the Secretary, 752 3801, for more details - never too old to learn.

Victoria League Bridge Club. Very social bridge, every Tuesday from 1pm to 4pm. Phone 757 5913 for more details.

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