

TOM oakura

Tall Ferns Select Zoe Kensington for 2010 Team

By Jennifer Gros

"If you have a passion for something, work hard . . . aspire to the top level. Never give up . . . and enjoy it." - Zoe Kensington

Zoe Kensington has been selected to play for the New Zealand Tall Ferns Basketball team for the 2010 season. She was chosen by Sean Dennis, Tall Ferns coach, through her efforts playing for the Taranaki Trojans Women's Team in the Women's League. The Trojans have just completed three tournaments throughout New Zealand, including Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin.

The Tall Ferns coach chose 23 trialists from these tournaments who then went to a five-day camp. There, at the trials, they played a two-test series against Japan. They were then cut to 12 team members, including Zoe, who went on to Wellington to play in the Tall Ferns' first test series against Australia.

Zoe is currently playing for the Under-20 New Zealand Team. They are going to Australia at the end of February to play in a tournament there. She is also looking at a basketball scholarship to America, and is building up to the Olympics in 2012.

Her advice is to work hard. "Keep working at it! If you have a passion for something, work hard. There are a lot of people who do sports just for fun. Aspire to the top level. Never give up, and above all, enjoy it," says Zoe.

Zoe played on the New Plymouth Girls' High School (NPGHS) basketball team, which went to the Nationals this past November in Palmerston North. Their team ranked second in the country. She has just finished high school at NPGHS, and is looking at universities in America where she can play basketball at the collegiate level.



Zoe in her Tall Ferns shirt.

Zoe started playing basketball when she was seven years old, playing miniball in Opunake, which is where she is originally from. Her mum and dad ran the primary

and high school basketball association in Opunake, as well as both playing for the Master League. Their family is now living in Oakura.

It is a real pleasure to bring you TOM-Oakura in 2010. I know I keep saying this, but there are so many interesting people and events happening in Oakura that it is never a hardship finding things to fill the pages up with. In fact, it is more a case of what shall I leave out this month.



As you think back on the decade that has just passed — and it is a good idea to remember that another decade and not just another year has slipped by — ponder the events that shaped where you are today. In 2000, I would never have in a million years thought I would be sitting at a computer tapping out stories and compiling community magazines for others to enjoy reading. In 2000, the priority was getting a good night's sleep and now it is making sure the teenagers are home to sleep! In 2000, I never even had a CD player let alone a computer or a cellphone or iPod, and now the CD player is a has-been and it won't be long before the cellphone and iPod are too.

The gadgets have made our lives more mobile but it's the friends and family that mean the most to me. The ones that have seen 2000 and 2010 with me and the new ones that have come along too. They all have helped shape the future for me and given meaning to the past. I had to laugh the other day when I was buying fish and chips in Oakura and a tourist came rushing out of the shop calling, "Dunky, there's a photo of Tom Cruise buying fish and chips from this shop!!" If you remember, that was 10 years ago so maybe the passing of time isn't that important after all!

Kim

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THE TEAM

Co-ordinator/Features: **Kim Ferens** 06 751 1519
 kim@thetom.co.nz

Advertising: **Cyril Henderson** 06 753 6885
 cyril@thetom.co.nz

Feature writers **Sharon van Dijk**
 sharon@thetom.co.nz

Jennifer Gros
 jennifer@thetom.co.nz

Proof reader: **Maryanne Rossiter Bennett**

Graphics: **Ron Stratford**
 origin@xtra.co.nz

The TOM Group Ltd, 22 Sutton Rd, RD4, New Plymouth
 email: kim@thetom.co.nz

Phone: 0800 THE TOM www.thetom.co.nz

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Wishing you all a prosperous year filled with good health, love, laughter and inspired reading. A big focus for this time of year is the start of a new school year. We are looking forward to seeing the students' smiling faces again!

Our summer reading programme Dive into Books was a huge success, as was our Christmas holiday programme.

For your convenience we have the Oakura sewerage connection packets available here at the library.

If you haven't been to Puke Ariki's website lately check out our new look! Join MY PUKE ARIKI for free and you can "create a profile to share with others" and "post comments and book reviews". It keeps you up to date on what's going on at the libraries, museum and information site.

If you are looking for something different to read in modern adult fiction, the Millenium trilogy by Stieg Larsson will not disappoint. I must say I was reluctant to read it because the title and cover shot didn't appeal to me, but I'm glad I did. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is a riveting, well written novel (see the movie version of this book at the Mayfair, New Plymouth on Tuesday, 9 March with Arthouse Cinema!). We have all three popular trilogy titles here.

Warm regards,

Karen and Vincenza



Hi folks!

I hope you have all had a wonderful break over Christmas and the New Year.

I personally enjoyed spending time with my family in Oakura for a few weeks of relaxation on the beach. The summer weather was a bit of a mixed bag, but the summer attitude — fun, family and community — was as rich as ever in Oakura.

As all the family descend on the beach for some timeout from the usual schedule of work and education, you realise how lucky we all are to live in such a vibrant part of New Zealand where people love to return to spend time with their families.

We're also lucky to have skilled and dedicated locals who give freely of their time to help us make the most of our summer.

The great people at the New Plymouth Old Boys Surf Lifesaving Club (NPOB) did a magnificent job in running this year's New Year's Day Beach Carnival.

Clearly they've had a lot of experience in hosting this hugely popular event, and once again they gave the wider Taranaki community a great excuse to gather and enjoy a day at Oakura Beach. Well done to everyone involved!

And I have another bouquet for the club members, for patrolling the beach in good weather and bad. Oakura Beach is the best in the region, and people come here not only for the great waves and beautiful views, but also for the friendly people and the professional lifeguard service. The men and women of NPOB are stalwarts of the community and their efforts to keep everyone safe do not go unnoticed. Good on you guys.

Meanwhile, after two years of construction on roads and public land, Oakura residents are now able to connect their houses to the new reticulated sewerage system. Everyone who registered to join the scheme should have received a letter from Council staff in mid-January with a step-by-step guide on what you need to do to connect. If you didn't receive one, please phone Drainage Inspector Rob Campbell on 06-759 6060 and he'll get a copy to you.

Thank you for your patience during the construction of this new system!

If you have any feedback to make on the connection process, or if you want to talk with me about any issue, give me a call on 06-759 6100. I'd love to hear from you!

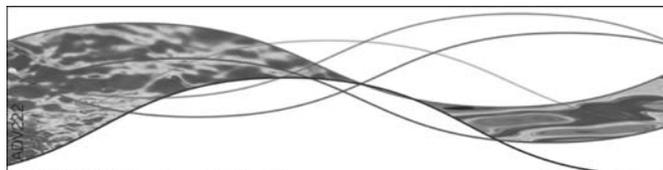
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Around the Village with Jennifer



Santa made a visit to Mini Groovers in December with a sack full of ice blocks, much to the children's delight!



Megan Dixon and friends enjoying a garden style, "Ladies A Plate" shower hosted by Belinda Tran-Lawrence.



Violet Johnson at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party at Tupare Gardens, part of the Festival of Lights Summer Scene.



An awestruck Sunny Evans enjoyed meeting Santa up close!



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Santa Sux?
Dale from Trinity Lawn Care caught lots of smiles in her Christmas Eve Santa attire.



Lee Newton and Leanne Ferguson pose for a photo at an Oakura Desperate Housewives party at the Laughing Buddha.

Caroline Milam
of Oakura in
the Miss Teen
Taranaki
Pageant on
New Year's Day.



Sula and Maryanne Rossiter Bennett at the TOM
Christmas Party hosted by Kim Ferens.



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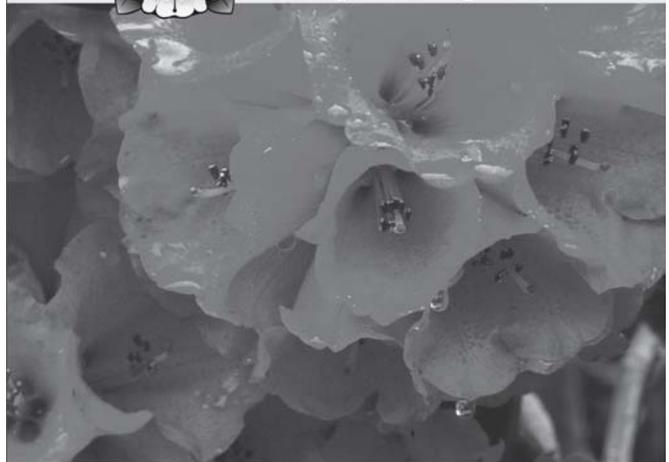


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A Focus on the Year Ahead

Many of you will have enjoyed a relaxed time and good read over the summer break. New years are like new chapters, giving a fresh start and new angle to the continuing story.

We ended 2009 on a more positive note than it started with regard to New Zealand's economy. Interestingly the Gary Morgan Poll found that New Zealand was the most optimistic country out of 33 surveyed, in terms of confidence for 2010. A staggering 73% of New Zealanders are expecting a better year this year than last. No matter what our hopes or expectations are, optimism will only be rewarded through actual effort. If there is one message that must carry through from 2009, it is that we need to produce more and spend less. When economists measure our ability to become prosperous, they measure what we produce with the resources available to us. They measure not just quantity, but also efficiency (productivity). Every person in business will understand that it's not just about increasing sales, it's also about managing costs. Profit and a prosperous life is the combined effect of both. In the first decade of this year we got used to having a lot without too much effort. A prosperous life seemed so easy. This was mostly achieved on the back of borrowing, with the housing boom giving us the collateral for that. However this next year — and the next ten — will require a stronger foundation for our personal and national success than that.

An important component of this step-change is a skilled and motivated workforce, which is why education is central on the radar. A strong focus has been given to the failing 20% in our schools because the cost of such failure to those individuals, their families and society as a whole is enormous. For example, for every person in our prisons, it takes the complete tax take of nearly a dozen hardworking New Zealanders to pay for that. This is money that is not spent on education, health, roads, or the economic development of the country. Added to that the pain to immediate families, as well as to victims of crime, is enormous. The solutions are never simple or immediate. However what makes a government worthy to lead, is having a strong vision and sound policies to better our society.

One initiative that will enable success for people who may be struggling in our present education system is Trade Academies. One has been earmarked for Taranaki. Trades Academies are about relevance — they provide those students who prefer to opt for practical hands-on education experiences with exactly that, and provide them with more opportunities to gain the practical skills they need to enter the 21st century workforce. Without doubt, a relevant qualification enables a person to get a job more easily and get paid a higher rate for that work.

Over the holidays I read a number of articles about national standards in education; some for, some against. The purpose of national standards is to lift pupil achievement by identifying difficulties in learning earlier. The Government is committed to this course and parents are looking for easy to understand reporting so as to partner in their children's education. I would encourage all educationalists to work with the Government in seeing this step-change happen.

We want people to succeed and our nation to succeed. As small as we are, we can! We have begun a new chapter this year. It is a year where steps of action are needed. Our hopes and aspirations will only be rewarded in accordance with the effort we put in to achieving them.

May you have a very rewarding year as you work hard to achieve your goals.

Jonathan Young
MP New Plymouth

Jonathan Young
MP for
New Plymouth



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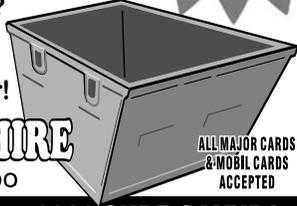
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Oakura Kids Loving Okato Pool

Open Until End of March

Well, the word is out! Oakura families' best-kept secret has been leaked to the press!

I'm sure that I will be in big trouble for putting this in the TOM, but we have to support the Okato Pool so that it will be open for many years to come! I couldn't help but reminisce about my own childhood summers as my kids had a great time hanging out with their friends from the village. At one point, I counted nine families from Oakura at the Okato Pool on a sunny Friday afternoon.

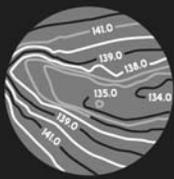


Olivier Stewart, Finn Van Bergen, Patrick Gros, Josh Van Bergen, Parker and Hannah Gros, Tasmin Van Bergen in front of Okato Pool's new sunshade, added this summer holiday season.

Sporting a new sunshade over the picnic area, the Okato Pool is a wonderful spot for a sunny day. The kids can swim under the careful eyes of lifeguards, while enjoying a swim with their friends. Parents can relax, as the pool is no deeper than 1m from end to end. The baby pool has a lot of room and doesn't get any deeper than 60cm. There is a grassy area for playing ball or sunbathing, as well as public showers and toilets for families.

Run by the New Plymouth District Council, prices are at a minimum — only \$2.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children. The Okato Pool will remain open until the end of March from 3pm to 7pm Monday to Friday, and 12.30pm to 7pm on weekends. What a great option to keep summer going a little bit longer!

By Jennifer Gros



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Arden Place Welcomes Santa



The annual Arden St Christmas Party.

A damp evening did not stop the residents of Arden Place and Shearer Drive getting together for their Annual Christmas Street Party. Santa stopped by to give out lollies to the children and he even stayed on to have a meal with everyone. Each year we have the pleasure of meeting and welcoming new residents and getting together with the others.

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The glorious weather finally arrived in the middle of January and while writing this I can see everyone down on the beach in front enjoying themselves — surfers, swimmers, fisher folk and other beach-goers, all relaxing in our superb environment. The beach camp has been hectic and Al and Jan and their team have done a great job keeping everything up to the mark and every visitor a happy camper. The Surf Club has also been busy and the team of young lifesavers has methodically and unobtrusively gone about its important business of keeping all the swimmers safe. Reports indicate that the club had a great New Year's Day carnival too, which is its major fundraiser for the year. All our community volunteers, such as the Surf Club members, need our ongoing support. We all benefit in some way from their involvement.

The sewerage reticulation project is operational and I (for one) am glad that the irritations of the past couple of years will now begin to recede into the distance.

We are indeed lucky to have such a robust scheme with the costs met by all New Plymouth District Council ratepayers, which is not the case in other coastal communities around the country where subjecting existing property owners to the full cost is the preferred option. Murray Gibb, CEO of Water New Zealand, New Zealand's largest water industry representative organisation, says, "The ballooning costs of such schemes are really just the tip of a multi-billion dollar iceberg... There is this almost invisible but massive bill facing the country for the maintaining and upgrading of its water and wastewater infrastructure. This problem has been known for many years, but it doesn't seem to resonate with the public."

A recent analysis of all the 2009 longterm council community plans in New Zealand indicates a combined capital and operational expenditure across water supply, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure of \$28.5 billion. The affordability question, inherent in such figures, has never quite met with the public's agreement, particularly for rural communities with small rating bases.

Gibb states, "If the public were aware of the size and extent of the challenges facing councils in providing water and wastewater services they might better understand the need for longer term funding strategies other than compelling existing property owners to meet the full cost."

There is no doubt that over time the Oakura scheme will pay for itself several times over. Water assets often have useful lives of up to 100 years or more and prudent debt financing will allow for an appropriate level of inter-generational equity. We are very, very fortunate to have our scheme and I commend the Council for its wise decision to forge ahead to fund it and, in spite of all the difficulties, get it up and running.

Recently we were visited by Susanne Prip Madsen from the Norden Association. This group is contracted to audit Blue Flag beaches around the globe by the Federation of Environmental Education, the parent organisation for Blue Flag. We were certainly very pleased to get an A+ result and Susanne commented on a number of occasions during her visit that the ambience of the beach and way the public was interacting in the environment was as good as anything she had ever seen. Of course, the beautiful weather on the day and the fact that everyone was desperate to get out and soak up the sun was a bonus and, of course, we made sure she understood this was just 'your pretty average' day at the beach.

During the holiday break too, our local school hosted a deputation from the district's sister city, Kunming, in China. This was a particularly high-powered group and for reasons best known to the delegation their visit coincided with our school holidays. Their brief was to seek educational opportunities at the tertiary level



Lynne Hepworth, Principal of Oakura School, hosting delegates from Kunming, China, sister city of New Plymouth over the holidays.

and learn about the state primary and secondary sector. We are indebted to our school's principal, Lynne Hepworth, who gave up some holiday time to host the visitors — an interesting exercise as none spoke English and she had to rely on their interpreter to provide the very necessary communication link. Mention must also be made of the teachers who went into school and set their rooms up prior to the visit. Madame Li Yuhua, the deputation leader, is head of the Kunming Bureau of Education and ultimately responsible for the education of 1.5 million students (nearly twice the total number of all NZ students in our state system). Oakura School continues to grow and from my experience I absolutely know all students' wellbeing and learning is in very capable hands. This year will be another busy one for us. In a diverse and expanding community it is important to stay on top of all developments — they will keep coming at us. Therefore we all need to stay on track and make the first year of this century's next decade a memorable one for us all.

Well, that's it for this issue. Ka kite ano.

Doug Hislop (06-752 7324) on behalf of Keith Plummer (06-752 7050), Mike Pillette (06-752 7059), Al Rawlinson (06-752 7178), and Deputy Mayor Alex Matheson (06-756 8080) who is the Council representative on the KCB.

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Dylan Dunlop-Barrett Awarded Sportsman of the Year

“Forget your negative struggles, and focus on a positive approach to training,” says Dylan.

Dylan Dunlop-Barrett has been awarded the New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) Young Achievers Award for Sportsman of the Year. He received the award for the age 12 to 25 category at a special presentation held at the NPDC chambers.

After meeting Dylan, I could see very quickly why he was chosen. He is quite a driven young man, very focused on doing the best that he can in every aspect of his life. His awards, honours and records are very impressive.

Dylan is active in the swimming and surf lifesaving in Oakura at the New Plymouth Old Boys Club, and in Bell Block for the Aquablades team. His coaches are Sue Southgate and Donna Bouzaid. He was nominated by his swim club for the award, and a youth subcommittee decided on the winners.

Dylan holds the New Zealand record for 17 year olds in the 1500m freestyle, and he is the New Zealand Open Champion for the same category in any age group. He also holds the New Zealand Under-19 record in the 200m obstacles, which he won at the Nationals.

These achievements have not come easily as Dylan admits that he didn't really like the water as a kid. He found it to be too cold. But persistence and hard work have paid off, and Dylan trains for his swimming ten times a week, about two hours every session in Bell Block.

He is also doing some cross training with paintball. Yes, this is not an error, paintball! Dylan was recommended this new sport by Glen Anderson, his surf lifesaving coach. He and some friends have been training at a farm on Koru Road. His swim times have dropped considerably. Paintball has improved his aerobic fitness and concentration, which has carried over into his swimming.

Dylan's sister, Ayla, is also an amazing swimmer and surf lifesaver, so he has grown up with the sport. He says that swimming takes motivation and a positive mindset. **“Forget your negative struggles, and focus on a positive approach to training,” says Dylan.**

Dylan has completed his exams at Francis Douglas, and plans to move to Australia to live and train for swimming and surfing. His parents are Noot Barrett and Joy Dunlop.

By Jennifer Gros

Get on Your Bike for the Community

Pukeiti Gardens are on board the current cycling craze and have opened the property to mountain bikes. This year the garden is part of the New Plymouth District Council's Wild West Bike Fest with their own Community Mountain Bike Challenge on 21 February. Josh Cleaver tells me this is a fun event for bike nutters with the added feelgood factor of raising money for a local charity or community group.

It is all pretty easy — organise a team of four people with a reasonable level of fitness with mountain bikes; nominate a charity or community group (say a kindergarten, school, sports group, club); get the nominated group's agreement; fill out the application form; submit and have the entry form approved by Pukeiti; decide on how to raise the money i.e. sponsorship per lap or as a team entry; get a donation; turn up at Pukeiti on the day. There is a maximum of 50 teams in the event.

The course is a relay course with a 10km circuit — 6.5km off road and 3.5km sealed. Up to two riders compete at a time and the point is to do as many laps as possible or as many as you want to. It is not a race and Josh is hoping to get some spot prizes, but really the winners on the day are the charities.

After a twisty start on the road, the riders will go on a roller coaster off-road ride through bush and garden track, then through native and rain forest, before a 2km uphill grass climb back up to the road through regenerating native conservation

forest. Finally a 2.2km section of roller coaster sealed road takes riders back to the transition point.

This event is a wonderful opportunity to ride in terrain that hasn't been open to the public for mountain biking before and the event course is not available to be ridden on any other occasion. This event gives true meaning to the term 'mountain biking' as it is as close to the Egmont National Park as you can get! Give it a go by contacting Josh Cleaver at Pukeiti on 06-752 4141 or email josh@pukeiti.org.nz. More details can be found at www.pukeiti.org.nz.

By Kim Ferens



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Oakura Pony Club

January is an incredibly busy month for Pony Club riders, with events happening every weekend and often through the week as well. Many riders compete around the country, and just a few weeks ago my daughter, Bronte, was lucky enough to be part of a team that travelled to Masterton. The following is a story about that trip.

At the beginning of each year a big teams event, commonly called Equest but more properly called the North Island Pre-Training/Training Eventing Championships, is held. This year the competition was held at Solway A & P showgrounds in Masterton. Generally Oakura Pony Club sends a team of six to this event, but this year there weren't enough available riders, so Bronte was over-the-moon when she was asked to join a team from the New Plymouth Pony Club. I was slightly less over-the-moon when I heard the competition was in Masterton! After Google-mapping the place and realising it was a five-hour drive (add on another hour with me towing a horse in a float, and the necessary caffeine stops) I was barely over the hill let alone the moon. The things we do for our kids....

Like most horse events, this one started at 8.00 in the morning. That generally means getting up around 5.00am to feed, brush, plait and then travel to the venue. That was clearly impossible with a six-hour drive, so the team planned to leave the day before. This meant we could leave at a very civilised 9.00am. The drive was very non-eventful, though I found towing a float through the Manawatu Gorge for the first time a little scary. I've done the Awakino Gorge often enough with a float — but for some reason having a cliff and sheer drop of what seemed a hundred feet down right beside me did make my palms sweat! New Plymouth Pony Club sent two teams, and they were coached by the very able Lydia Quay, who is well known in horse circles as the owner of Clearwater Riding School, formerly of Oakura.

We arrived in Masterton around 3.00pm, in time for some team bonding and organising for the two days ahead. All the riders had to walk the cross-country, which was several kilometres of tree-lined jumps ranging from water jumps, ditches, and (my personal favourite) the 'hot cross bun', which is a small steep hill with four jumps in a square formation on top so the horse has to jump up and then jump down the hill. The Taranaki crew were all really happy that they had competed only the week before at the Okato ODE on the Grayling's property, which was a very challenging course. The course in Masterton seemed easy in comparison.

The first day started with the teams dressage. After the customary official gear-check Bronte's team was escorted onto the field of six arenas. There was one bell rung and the riders all rode their test simultaneously. The team did quite well in the dressage, but not well enough to make the top six. The cross-country was held in the afternoon, and all of Bronte's team cleared the course with ease. Unlike the showjumping in which you can see all the jumps, the cross-country is through trees and over a large tract of land, so generally people sit beside the more challenging jumps, like the water jump, for their entertainment. I was in charge of helping Bronte out at the end of the course, so I stood near the final jump. In cross-country if a horse refuses a jump three times then they are eliminated and they cannot finish the course, so standing by the final jump you often wonder if they'll come flying past or not. I was grateful to the commentator on the loudspeaker therefore when I heard "and now Bronte Alder on Abby Cadabby approaches the water jump — over she goes, no problem there." I knew she would be galloping past soon. Bronte celebrated her clear round on the cross-country by



Above: Bronte riding the cross-country at Equest, January 2010.

giving Abby a well-earned soak with the hose, and then took her for a stretch to eat real grass for a few hours before being put back into her stable. This grazing system was to become a bit of a ritual, with myself and hubby having turns taking Abby to graze throughout the three days.

The third day was showjumping and prizegiving. The showjumping was held in reverse order of placing, with the team coming last riding first. Bronte jumped a clear round again, and was extremely happy. But her score was only one of five, and the team overall came twelfth out of about twenty. At the prizegiving, however, the New Plymouth crew were ecstatic when their near-neighbours from Waitara won the event, and there was much celebration before we all packed up and headed home.

By Diane Alder



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GETTING NET!



Oakura Boardriders

We haven't so far this new year been blessed with consistent sunshine, offshore winds, and swells we can boast about, but we are so lucky that we live in such a magical place with so much to offer and enjoy and so many experiences to participate in. I'm writing this after a lazy afternoon swimming in the cool, clear waters of the Hangatahua (Stony) River, not long after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, which is such a tragedy and can't help but make us appreciate what we have and where we live.

Parihaka is another magical place just off our Surf Highway and its annual festival of peace in early January is worth attending. I always love to go because of the spiritual nature and history of the place, as well as the excellent music, food, stalls and speakers. This year it was great listening to a talk by film makers Mike Smith and Hinekaa Mako about their new documentary on climate change in Aotearoa called 'He Ao Wera'. The couple are now visiting coastal communities encouraging them to discuss and plan strategies to address global warming. The emphasis is on communities working together to deal with this instead of individuals working in isolation. I know that this has been a hot topic in Oakura and with our Blue Flag status, which encourages involvement in protecting our coastal and marine environment, we are making changes. However I feel we could be doing more as a community of people and maybe with Sea Week in March this would be an ideal opportunity for further discussion.

On a lighter note, and as there's been little happening with the club over the Christmas break to record, I'm indulging in a bit of advertising. We'd love to see you at the clubrooms on Friday nights over the summer months where the bar is open and the barbecue is always waiting to be used. As Paul Lobb wrote in our latest newsletter it's the "best little club bar in Oakura" with its "good company and great views."

In the clubrooms we also have on display our fabulous new t-shirts designed by our very creative committee member, Brian Clark (see the logo). They cost \$40.00 each and there is a range of attractive colours and sizes for kids, men and women. You can buy them on Friday nights or from one of the Pauls on 06-752 7556 plobb@ihug.co.nz or 06-752 7126 paul.christophers@stos.co.nz. They are also available at the BC Surf Shack on 487 Devon St East, New Plymouth.

An article about Brian's newly established surf shop (BC Surf Shack) featured in the December TOM. It's not just a shop, but an experience!

Another talented committee member we have is Gary Bruckner who is an internationally qualified surf coach and his Tarawave Surf School is proving most popular. So if you wish to learn to surf or improve your surfing skills, Gary is the man to contact on 06-752 7474 or 021-119 6218.

The contest season has been slow to start with the Opunake Classic compressing into a club contest only this year as it was starting to get too popular and overbearing to run, I believe.

The SNZ Circuit has only seen the Gisborne Pro being held in late November. With the ISA World Junior Championships held in late January 2010 in Piha, the New Zealand circuit resumed after this with the Billabong Pro in Whangamata 29-30 January, and we look forward to the Rip Curl Pro in Raglan 26-28 Feb, and the Nationals being held at Easter in Gisborne.

There is a strong Taranaki contingent who still make the effort to

compete on the SNZ Circuit, with Tyler Anderson being the only Oakura Boardriders member competing at present. His summer has been plagued by injury with a knee rebuild required after an Indonesian sojourn. He is on the mend and just back in the water at time of the TOM going to press and hoping to be near 100% by Whangamata or at least the Raglan competition.

The week leading up to Easter will be a busy time of year with the Taranaki leg of the Women's WCCT, a Pro Junior and the Women's Nationals held on our coast. There is a lot of surfing to come.

The Port Taranaki Summer Series is underway with only Connor Anderson and Seth Marshall from our club competing, with mixed results in tiny surf at Fitzroy for the first contest and Back Beach for the second. There will be one more contest. This series is a great starting place for those Grommets wanting to compete. There are boys' divisions starting at Under-12 and a girls' division starting as there are more girls showing an interest, so any parents keen on taking their kids along please contact Brent Anderson for any information.

Last, but not least, Paige Hareb has been home for a bit of R&R and I guess you have all seen her at the various sporting and social events around the country and at the clubrooms. Over the holiday break she will be heading to the Gold Coast for preparation for the first event of the year and I am sure all our supporters wish her well for the coming year.

Roll on summer! I know the windsurfers and kiteboarders have been enjoying it but the surfers would like less wind!!! I trust 2010 is a year you remember for the many waves, fresh powder slopes and half pipes you've ridden!

Philippa Butt and Brent Anderson



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Lifeguards Keep Our Beach Safe

As usual Oakura Beach is popular again this summer with locals and visitors enjoying the seaside. It does have to be said though, that the weather hasn't been overly 'beachy' and this is reflected in the number of people on the beach — being quieter than usual. The water temperature has also been slow to warm up and that definitely has kept me out of the sea as at 12 January.

Head lifeguard at Oakura Beach this year is Isaac Davies and he is on duty 40 hours a week along with Lisa Zieltjes and Todd Fisher. The trio are employed by Surf Life Saving New Zealand for six weeks during the Christmas school holidays. We are very fortunate to have the local council allocate funding for this important service. Holidays are a busy time of year and knowing that lifeguards are there watching over you certainly makes you feel safe as you swim.

Isaac and his team patrol the beach from 10.30am to 7pm Monday to Friday, handing over to New Plymouth Old Boys (NPOB) volunteer lifeguards who patrol the beach from 1pm to 5pm on weekends and public holidays. There have been no dramas on the beach as I write this, with only one false alarm when a man was out the back of the waves happily waving to his son on the beach, prompting the launch of the inflatable rescue boat (IRB). Isaac is home in New Plymouth for the summer having finished study in Wellington and is this year heading off to Otago to begin a teaching degree. He says he is saving furiously for a trip to Indonesia to go surfing later in the year. Isaac has been into surf lifesaving since he was about six years old and when he was 14 years old, qualified as a surf lifeguard. Being the head lifeguard also requires qualifications in first aid, defibrillation technique and IRB operation.

Lisa Zieltjes is a senior lifeguard at Oakura Beach and is home from university for the summer too. Lisa is doing an agricultural degree at Massey in Palmerston North. She has been surf lifesaving for NPOB since she was 11 years old and loves being outdoors by the sea.

Surf lifesaving sounds glamorous and television programmes like Piha Rescue make it seem like an adrenalin junkie's heaven, but in reality the job involves long hours of standing around in the hot sun (or in Oakura's case, the prevailing westerly wind) just watching the odd swimmer or boogie boarder out in the surf, or on a busy day, hoards of people in a small space.

Isaac tells me Oakura is a relatively safe beach with the only real concern on the beach being the end closest to Oakura River where rips are prevalent. However rips and holes can develop anywhere along the beach so it pays to be careful. Boogie boarders without flippers are also most prone to needing rescue as they easily get swept out with no power to get back to safety. The only other hazards on the beach are horses and dogs, which aren't supposed to be there between 9am and 6pm during daylight saving hours, not to mention bikes. It is also the life guards' responsibility to keep these away from beach-goers.

It is very reassuring as a swimmer to know the lifeguards are on hand and it is part of our summer culture to have them on the beach in their distinctive red and yellow, so if you are down at the beach give the guards a friendly hello as you pass.

Kim Ferens

Isaac and Lisa on duty on a windy early January summer's day.



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TOM Girlz Garden of the Month

The TOM Girlz Garden of the Month for February and recipient of a \$10 gardening voucher from the Girlz Garden Centre is the cliff top garden of Chris and Kate Evans.

Kate is the keen gardener in the family and, as is often the case, husband Chris gets to carry out the technical gardening instructions such as building garden edges and screens and paths. Of course it helps that Chris is a builder and general handyman. Further inspiration comes from friend Tania Brown of Love To Landscape, who did the initial plant layout and continues to give timely advice.

The Evans live in Rahui View in a house Chris built three years ago, on land that was farmland with stock grazing on it not much prior to that. So the garden is a developing one. In fact it has only been in for 18 months and is an ongoing project.

The challenge of the garden is not so much sandy soil, as it is for much of Oakura, but more wind, salt and children. Many plants have blown into the garden from neighbouring properties. This fits in perfectly with Kate's loose gardening philosophy of loving to plant, or rather transplant, unwanted plants and even small trees from friends and neighbours. Four such specimens are pukas from Richie and Beccy Shearer's garden, which came with sage advice from Beccy that "they are not likely to survive". Fortunately she has been proved wrong as they are thriving. Now they are part of Kate's 'collection'.

Alstroemerias are also part of this collection and they were scumped from Sophia Preschool where Adrienne said "help yourself"! An eye-catching feature in the garden is the 'bum pot' planted out with *aristea ecklonii*. The bum pot was given to Kate along with other pots and plants by a friend going off to Nigeria, who upon returning for a visit at Christmas exclaimed "There's my bum pot!" – just like a family reunion. The bum pot is delightfully shaped like a pert female bottom on one side and a meaty male on the other side, so can easily be turned around depending on your preference that day!

Kate says her favourite colours in the garden are reds and oranges, and these colours are interspersed around the garden with flaxes, canna lillies, grasses, alstroemerias, succulents, pittosporums, ligularias (or tractor seats, as Kate calls them), yuccas, draecenas, a specimen frangipani and much more.

Kate puts the lush foliage and exuberant growth down to a wonderful product she discovered at the local SHINE exhibition called Rox Solid. This is an organic composty fertiliser product that sent Kate's plants crazy.

Inspiration comes from a love of being around nature and Kate loves the fact that a garden scene can be so quickly changed by moving plants around — she finds this very creative. The day to day drudgery of weeding is also a satisfying job for Kate, and her children, especially Jay, like to pull out weeds too.

The vegetable garden is a work in progress with Kate learning every day about what to plant and where, and with three lovely raised beds the family will one day be feasting on their own produce.

Kim Ferens



Above: the Evans' new garden developing nicely in Oakura, and below: the bum pot with Charlie the cat enjoying the shade.



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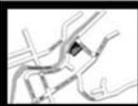
Continue planting lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnip and leeks. Spray at first sign of caterpillars or whitefly with Target, a general garden insecticide, or Nature's Way Insect Spray for organic gardeners.

Flowers:

Deadhead to ensure maximum growth and flowering; feed with Thrive Soluble Fertiliser or Lush Liquid Fertiliser. Water regularly to keep plants growing. Mulching will help conserve water.

Fruit Trees:

Summer pruning of stone fruit trees following harvesting of crops reduces the risk of silver leaf disease later in the season.



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Words on Wheels in Taranaki

They say words have wings but this month they have wheels and they are wheeling around the mountain, all thanks to the New Zealand Book Council.

Over the holidays I met with Sarah Forster from the New Zealand Book Council to talk about the upcoming *Words on Wheels Around the Mountain* tour. This is a very exciting tour and I know many TOM readers will be keen to be part of it, being avid readers and participants in book clubs and groups. *Words on Wheels* is held each year and the Book Council sends five different writers into a different region of New Zealand on its rural tour. The tour is in Taranaki for the very first time and it will be wonderful to hear and see New Zealand literature on offer.

This year on the bus will be [David Hill](#) (Teen Fiction), [Duncan Sarkies](#) (Fiction), [Briar Grace-Smith](#) (Scriptwriting), [Alison Wong](#) (Poetry) and [Janet Hunt](#) (Non-fiction). They'll be travelling to New Plymouth, Waitara, Inglewood, Stratford, Eltham, Hawera, Waverley and Opunake from 12–17 February, appearing at schools, libraries, and other local venues across the region. New Plymouth Mayor Peter Tennent will welcome the writers to Taranaki at a gala opening event on Friday, 12 February at 6pm at Puke Ariki Museum in the city. Everyone is invited to attend.

Words on Wheels began 18 years ago to enable readers in all corners of the country to enjoy New Zealand's variety of great writers and writing. Book Council Chief Executive Noel Murphy says *Words on Wheels* is a cornerstone project for the council. "For 18 years, the tour has connected authors with their readers all over New Zealand at a grassroots level. This year we are excited to be returning to Taranaki for the first time in more than ten years and bringing a stellar line up of authors to the region."

All I can say is if you have the time and opportunity, get along to one of the venues. You will be captivated, motivated and enthralled, listening to passionate people talking about their life's passion — writing.

I felt privileged to speak briefly with one of these stellar authors, David Hill — perhaps one of the more well known of New Zealand's authors. I am sure he needs no introduction. David hasn't been on a tour for five years but he has been on four tours and is clearly excited about the prospect of entertaining



The five writers: top row Alison Wong, Duncan Sarkies. Bottom row Janet Hunt, David Hill and Briar Grace-Smith.

audiences with his rhetoric; excited too about listening to fellow authors talk about their books and New Zealand literature.

David will entertain his audiences with readings from his previous books and he sees it as a great opportunity to bring his characters to life. He tells me these characters and even the scenes are very carefully planned out before writing begins but never work out that way as the plot develops.

Writing is a habitual activity for David and this has made him a prolific author with 28 books and plays to his credit, as well as reviews and newspaper articles. Inspiration comes from the everyday activities that make up the rich tapestry of life and while David says he doesn't have the frenzied imagination of some writers, it is a busy one! One such captivatingly frenzied imagination belongs to Duncan Sarkies, who is on the tour, and David is anticipating many happy moments listening to Duncan's readings. So get along to one of the events below and enjoy!

Kim Ferens

TOM is delighted to have two copies of David's teenage novel "Fire On High" to give away. Send in your name and contact details to info@thetom.co.nz or phone 0800thetom to enter, along with the answer to this question - How many books has David Hill written?

WoW 2010 Itinerary:

Friday 12 February

10.30am (free public event)

Waitara Library Meeting Room, Queen St, Waitara

Bookings: Waitara Library, (06) 759 6060

2.00pm (school event)

Spotswood College, South Road, New Plymouth

6.00pm (public gala opening)

Gala opening for the *Words on Wheels* visit, presided over by Mayor Peter Tennent

Puke Ariki Museum Foyer, 1 Ariki St, New Plymouth

Bookings: www.bookcouncil.org.nz, Puke Ariki Library

Saturday 13 February

11.00am (free public event)

Inglewood Library Meeting Room, 46 Rata St, Inglewood

Bookings: Inglewood Library, (06) 759 6060

7.00pm (free public event)

Stratford Library, Prospero Place, Stratford

Bookings: Stratford Library, (06) 765 5403

Sunday 14 February

7.00pm (public event, fundraising for Hospice Taranaki)

Hawera Library Plus, 46 High Street, Hawera

Cost: \$5 per person, Bookings: www.bookcouncil.org.nz or Hawera Library Plus, 0800 111 323

Monday 15 February

8.30am (school event)

Speed Date An Author event

Hawera Community Centre, Hawera

Information: [Speed Date an Author page](#) School registration: education@bookcouncil.org.nz

5.30pm (public event, fundraising for Waverley Playcentre)

Waverley Library Plus, 58 Weraroa Road, Waverley

Cost: \$5 per person, Bookings: www.bookcouncil.org.nz, or Waverley Library Plus, 0800 111 323

Tuesday 16 February

5.30pm (public event fundraising for the Eltham Village Gallery)

The Eltham Village Gallery, 166 High St, Eltham

Cost: \$5 per person, Bookings: Eltham Village Gallery 10am–3pm

Wednesday 17 February

10.00am (school event)

Opunake High School, Tasman St, Opunake

5.30pm (public event, fundraising for Opunake Volunteer Fire Brigade)

Bookings: www.bookcouncil.org.nz or Headlands

words on wheels 2010
AROUND THE MOUNTAIN

New Zealand Book Council author tour featuring Janet Hunt, David Hill, Duncan Sarkies, Briar Grace-Smith and Alison Wong

Gala Opening: 6.00pm Fri 12 February, Puke Ariki Foyer, 1 Arika St, New Plymouth Cost: Koha

Final Panel Event: 10.00am Thurs 18 February, Upper Cafeteria, WITT, 20 Bell St, New Plymouth Cost: Koha
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Oakura School Year 8 Prizegiving 2009

On Tuesday, 15 December Oakura School held its 2009 Graduation Assembly at the Oakura Hall. The school and parents joined together to celebrate the achievements of their senior students and to present the annual cups and awards. The following students were the recipients of the 2009 Oakura School senior awards.

Winter Cups

Debating Cup: Amy Barron. Netball Cup: Jessica Clark. Rugby Cup: Ben McLean. Athletics Boy: Ben McLean. Athletics Girl: Jessica Clark.

Year 8 Cups

Arts: Ben McLean



This award is given to the pupil who shows a great deal of talent in either the visual arts or the performing arts. This year it goes to a student who shows special talent in drawing and design. He has been fully involved in the special art projects led by Mrs Day this year, and is one of our first art leaders.

Sports: Jessica Clark



This is awarded to a pupil who shines in the sporting field, representing Taranaki, North Island, or New Zealand. This year it goes to a young woman with sporting ability in a number of areas but particularly in netball. She has been a Taranaki representative player for two years now and was awarded the Player of the Season. She also shines in athletics and has taken a leadership role in school sports.

Music: Martin Leith



This is awarded to a pupil who has shown high ability in the musical performance area. This student is a very motivated and talented musician who plays the guitar. He has a passion for rock music and spends a great deal of his spare time practising and perfecting his playing.

Health, Safety and Environment: William Conquest



This award is based around road patrollers who always fill in, are responsible in their role, and are extremely committed to the job; and also to those students who have contributed to the many environment projects that our school is involved with. This year it goes to a student who is always willing to stand in for others for road patrol and carries out his role very responsibly.

Citizenship: Meika Watson Burrows



This award is for the pupil who relates well to their peers, teachers, members of the community, visiting groups and also the younger members of the school. This year's recipient is always positive and friendly towards everyone. She goes out of her way to make others feel included and special and has been a very positive role model to others.

Diligence: Amy Barron



This is awarded to a student who produces quality work, has excellent work habits, always completes work on time, takes great pride in their work, and is committed to any extra responsibilities given. The student chosen for this award has shown an exceptionally high level of motivation and perseverance across the curriculum. She is goal driven, self motivated and sets herself very high standards which she works extremely hard to achieve.

Good Attitude: Milly & Becky Gooch



This award goes to the student who always has a positive attitude towards their work and the way that they tackle any challenges. This year it is shared by two students who just happen to be sisters. These girls have impressed us all with their fantastic attitudes to life. They are positive, caring and supportive to all those around them and have inspired me this year by the strength and support that they draw from each other, and the way that they have tackled their challenges together.

Dux: Ellie Tvrdeich



Dux is awarded to the Year 8 pupil who has had the highest academic achievement this year. All standardised test results are added up and an average is calculated to attain the highest scoring pupil. This student has consistently scored in the top 20 percentile of students her age in all our national standardised tests, and performed with consistently high placements in the ICAS tests this year. She shows high academic ability across the curriculum and exceptional work habits.

Head Pupil Cups

Farrell Robertson, Meika Watson Burrows, William Conquest, Ellie Tvrdeich.



Farrell Robertson

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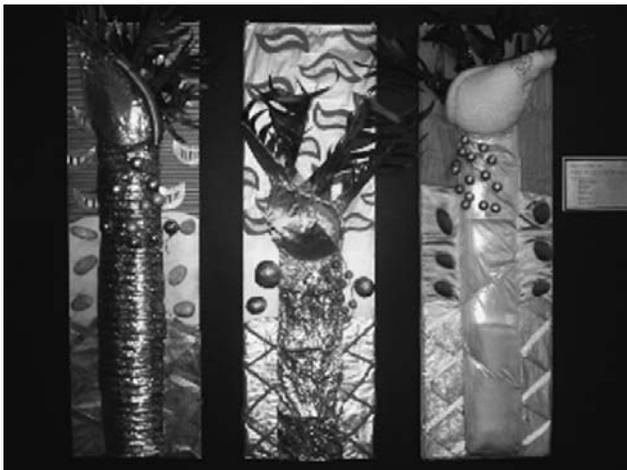
As part of the Roadsafes Taranaki School Bus Safety Conference in November last year, a team from Oakura School presented a Bus Safety programme to Mayor Peter Tennent, Councillors and other community leaders.



Megan Vickers, Grace Powell, Mayor Peter Tennent, Hannah Gros, Emma Brown, Danielle Hood and Ellie Moyes at the Roadsafes Taranaki School Bus Safety Conference. Photograph by Jennifer Gros.

Year 7 and 8 Art Project 2009

Over the last two terms at Oakura School, a group of Year 7 and 8 students led by Mrs Peta Day have been working on a nikau mural for the front office area of the school. The mural was designed by the students and it consists of three panels, which have been created using different materials. The first panel is made of metal and plastic, the second of paper and card and the third of fabric.



The Silver Nikau mural.

Our thanks go to the parents who offered both their time and support with materials and tools for this project. It makes a very attractive addition to our school environment.

Shane Herbert - Lawyer

Civil Litigation

7599119

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2010 Coming Events

February

- 10 Parent Information evening
- 12 Junior rooms picnic day
- 18 Playgroup starts 9-11am
- 25 Senior rooms camp-out night



March

- 4 Rooms 1-5 swimming displays
- 8 Taranaki Anniversary holiday

Congratulations to the following recipients of the 2009 end of year cups.

Community Cup for Arts and Culture:

Phoebe Tomlinson

Home and School Cup for Sporting Excellence:

Bailey Hooson/Phoebe Tomlinson

Staff Cup for Responsibility:

Kristina Hunt/Jeremy Bennetts

Principal's Cup for Leadership:

Nick Parthemore



Phoebe Tomlinson, Bailey Hooson, Nick parthemore, Jeremy Bennetts and Kristina Hunt with their well deserved cups.

TOM Baby of the Month

Miri Janet Fanthorpe-Sandbrook

Miri is the new daughter of Ross and Tara and was born on 14 November 2009, weighing 7lb 6oz. Miri is named after her grandmothers - Miriam (Tara's mum) and Janet (Ross's mum). Miri is photographed at nine weeks and is a beautiful smiley little lady who sometimes makes her mum very happy by sleeping through the night!



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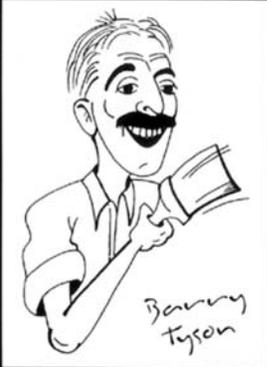
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Freezing Holland holiday for the VanDijks



Jeroen, Shaorn and Liam enjoying a very cold and white Christmas in the Netherlabnds.

As a young girl I had dreams of one day growing tulips and getting a fancy 'van' added to my name. In winter I always felt sorry for the cows outside and wanted them to be protected from the elements in big sheds. These thoughts all before I knew The Netherlands (Holland) existed.

As I grew I discovered the taste delights of fruit stolen, also old cheese and after training as a midwife in the UK I had the idea to one day become a home birth midwife toting my gear on the back of a motorbike in Holland. So imagine my delight to marry Jeroen, an even-taller-than-me Dutchy and to spend time in Holland. Currently, Jeroen and I with our son Liam are holidaying with our Dutch family through one of the coldest European winters since 1981–1982. With heavy snowfall and record low temperatures there have been a number of deaths, widespread transport disruption, power failures and the postponement of a number of sporting events. At times, hospitals were on alert for the copious ice related injuries they expected to receive. Generally the temperature has shivered around zero with the added wind factor chilling it to feel like minus 10. We arrived at Schiphol airport, one of the world's busiest airports just a few days before the failed attack on Northwest Airlines flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit. The would-be bomber attempted to crash the aircraft by detonating explosives onboard however was deterred by the actions of another passenger. The Dutch government is now urging the systematic introduction of body scanners across the EU. With a population of over 16 million people, Holland is 61st largest populated area in the world. As we ventured into 2010 with fireworks to celebrate bringing in the New Year (Oud en Nieuw), it felt like every one of those people was busy for hours with their own pyrotechnics display. Indeed, over 65 million Euro's was spent on fireworks in Holland alone.

The Netherlands is the tallest nation in the world with Dutch men averaging 185cm (6'1"). With all in our family measuring

over 6 foot, we merge with the Hollanders unnoticed. Until we open our mouths that is and our Kiwi accents (even Jeroen who now speaks 'Dingles', a combination of Dutch/English) give us away. And then we forget about learning to speak Dutch as everyone wants to practice their English! My lone sentence of Dutch 'de hond sat op de tafel' (the dog sat on the table) won't get me far I think.

As the ice thaws and tulips begin to arrive in the shops here, I smile as I walk past those cows in their sheds and it's almost time to make our way back home to sunny Oakura.

By Sharon VanDijk

'A Kiwi Christmas' trio wins sandcastle competition

A trio of sandcastles by the Leadbetter/Reilly family entitled 'A Kiwi Christmas' was the big winner at the Oakura Beach Holiday Park sandcastle competition in January. Fifteen teams participated but the trio, including a hokey pokey ice cream cone, a woman lying on the beach and a jandal, was the overall champion. Other entries included a Christmas tree, a seahorse, a mermaid and a turtle. The event is becoming a Holiday Park tradition, now in its fifth year.

The Oakura Beach Holiday Park was busier than ever this holiday season, with the entire park full of campers again this year. It could be that the new barbecue area and trampoline were a huge hit! There were many out-of-town campers, with campers from French Polynesia being the most exotic origin! There were "heaps" of campers from New Plymouth too. The park was especially full for the Fleetwood Mac weekend, which owners Jan and Al Rawlinson say "was really good for us and other businesses in the village. We were able to have a trial run before the season kicked off."



The Leadbetter/Reilly's "A Kiwi Christmas".

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Bellydance

Every Thursday at Oakura Boardriders Club. 7.15 to 8.30pm. Contact Rosalina at 027 739 1380.

Country and Western Club

Every 1st and 3rd Friday from 8.00pm. Contact Betty West, 89 Wairau Rd. Ph 752 7816.

Hurford - Omata - Oakura Rural Women

Meet 2nd Wednesday each month at 1.00pm. New members welcome. Contact Jean Kurth 751 2274.

Indoor Bowls

Mondays 7.30pm at Oakura Hall. Ring Mike Vickers 752 7881.

JKA Karate

Tuesdays at Oakura Hall 5.30-6.30pm. Thursdays at Oakura Hall 6.00-7.00pm. Contact Jim Hoskin 752 7337.

Mini Groovers

Tuesday mornings 10.00am, Oakura Hall. Gold coin donation.

Oakura Pool Club

Meets every Wednesday evening 7pm @ Butlers Reef over winter. Ph Stu 752 7407.

Okato Squash Club

Monday Club Night.

Omata Playgroup

Every 2nd Thursday, 9.00am at the Omata Community Hall. Ring 751 2308 for next session date. All parents and pre-schoolers welcome.

Playcentre

Playcentre, Donnelly Street. Monday and Wednesday, 9.00 to noon.

Plunket Coffee mornings

Wednesday, 9.15am to 11.00am (please arrive before 10.00am). During the winter months, held at attendees homes - please contact Bob Fleming 752 7048 or Fe Burkett, 752 1132, or Claire Florence, 752 7889 to find out where.

Senior Citizens

Meet Tuesdays in St James Church lounge for cards and bowls. All welcome. Phone 753 5705 for enquiries.

St James Church, Oakura

Morning worship 10.00am, 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

St John's, Omata

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Tai Chi

Evening classes starting 1st week Feb, Thurs 6.30pm, St James Church, Weds 10.30am. Ph Joanna Smith Holley 752 1016 for details.

Volkswagen Club

Events range from car rallies, the YMCA climbing wall, camping, BBQ get togethers and sharing good family times and knowledge.

Contact Brian Goodhue, the El Presidente 752 1290, email podsnail@xnet.co.nz

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Please phone 0800 THE TOM with any changes to your listing.

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