

Oakura School off to good start



The 9km walkers set off

The Friends of Oakura School Committee members again held the annual 'Surf to Surf Fun Run or Walk' event on Sunday, February 22nd. With the extremely bad weather leading up to the event, initial entry numbers were low. However, with better weather on the day of the event, late entry numbers boosted the total to 369 entrants, who either walked or ran the 4km or 9km courses. The prizegiving in the garden bar at Butler's Bar & Café saw many happy recipients of the 140 spot prizes. The winners of the major prizes were Keegan Bruckner who won a \$600 Mason Appliances voucher and J G Coughtrey who won the main prize of a \$1,200 travel voucher. Both of these children are pupils at Oakura School. We would like to thank all of the businesses that made donations for spot prizes, Oakura Four Square and Butler's Bar & Café, the major sponsors, and all entrants for making this a fun and successful event. All proceeds from this event will go towards purchasing shade cloth, to be erected in front of Rooms 1, 2 & 3. Friday February 13th 2004 was Beach Clean-Up Day for the whole school at Oakura Beach, from Ahu Ahu Road to Corbett Park. This has been an annual event since 1972 and one that the children enjoy and the community benefits from. After picking up rubbish along the beach, the children enjoyed a swim, a play in the sand and a hot sausage provided by the Friends of Oakura School. Thank you to the NPDC for collecting the bags of rubbish.

Our four Head Pupils for 2004 have been elected. They are Miaana Walden, Melissa Harvey, Toby Andrews and Tyler Bevins. We extend our congratulations to these pupils and wish them well in their new roles.

Cathy Ardern

See more fun run and clean up photos throughout this issue

This month



Whose back is this cat scratching?

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tom

tom is a free, monthly publication delivered on the second Wednesday of the month to all homes and post-boxes from the city limits to Dover Rd.

The Team

Catherine Jones, *ph* (06) 751 3305

Tracey Lusk, *ph*: (06) 752 7875

Antona Wagstaff, *Subeditor*

Kim Ferens, *Features ph*: (06) 7511519

Sandra Lewis, *Advertising ph*: (06) 751 0177

Michelle Powell, *Production*

Subscriptions

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



From Mayor Pete



NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Hi folks!

Our summer has been a bit of a mixed bag of glorious weather chased by rain but, when it comes to the big days, New Plymouth District really knows how to turn it on!

Waitangi Day was a brilliant day in the district, with some of the best weather so far this season. The community went all-out with some great events planned, including a carnival at Fitzroy Beach and a council-organised fun day held at Ngamotu Beach as well as the Flannigan Cup, World A-Class Catamaran Champs ... you name it, it was certainly all happening here! People from all over the district attended these events – if you made the trip, I hope you had a great time!

On another matter, the community meetings held on the Long-Term Community Council Plan (LTCCP – which replaces the Annual Plan this year) have gone very well indeed with some great feedback from the public. The comments provided by people who attended the Oakura and Okato meetings have given us a good direction on what is important to you and what areas the council needs to focus on when it comes to Oakura, Okato and the surrounding areas. Thank you for making the effort to attend the meeting and having your say! We'll now be using that feedback to shape the draft community plan, which will then be released to the public for formal submissions.

Be sure to get involved and make your comments on the plan! It's by letting us know what your opinions are that you can make a real contribution to the future of our district. And remember: if you have any ideas for projects that you'd like the council to help you with, be sure to contact me on 759 6060!

Peter Tennent

Mayor



Oakura School beach clean up

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Councillor's Comments

The meeting in Oakura for the Long Term Community Plan had a greater attendance than the New Plymouth meeting, believe it or not. We had 69 people at our meeting and New Plymouth had 39. The meeting in Okato attracted 9 people; however, Waitara had the highest number with over 90. Staff at the council are now putting together all of the suggestions and then will come back to the public for submissions. Oakura people thought the main things council should be focusing their future efforts on were :

- Sewerage, planning information and consultation
- Retain uniqueness of community
- Re-visit last annual plans
- Continue coastal walkway
- Carparking at beachfront
- Constant community consultation

By now all ratepayers would have received the survey paper from Beca for the sewerage study. Please send these back so we can get an accurate record of what are the requirements of the community.

Last Saturday, tenders were called for the Omata water. I'm not sure of the time limit on this, but I shall keep you informed.

Beca are at the moment also in the process of a coastal management scoping study. They are looking at the New Plymouth area, but particularly the area from Back Beach to Stony River. I have asked that all councillors be present at the presentation when Beca come back to us as it seems senseless to me if only some of us get the information, since funding for any further work will have to be allowed for in the LTCCP.

This week a small meeting of interested people was held with council staff about Matekai Park. This group will be called "Friends of Matekai Park" and will work in conjunction with the council staff on future plantings and tree removal in the park and recommending to council that the 1994 Oakura Development plan for Matekai Park and Shearer Reserve be revised. If you have any queries or good ideas, the contact people are Pam Denny and Graeme Churchill. Very soon the council will be moving in to the park to thin out a group of "Cryptomeria Japonica " or Japanese Cedars, at the northern end of the park.

Oakura cemetery is running out of room! Soon we will see council doing some work at the cemetery to generally tidy the whole place up and to make room for some more grave sites. It was suggested a seat or two be put in the area and that the water supply be moved up by the entrance. If you have any queries or worries please don't hesitate to give me a call.

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The Last Samurai - What Now?

By the time this article reaches you, Venture Taranaki will have presented the 'The Last Samurai' economic report for Taranaki. We all experienced the excitement that The Last Samurai brought to the region, but now we also know that this excitement brought \$50 million to the region. This amount is 58% of the total economic benefit the movie brought to the New Zealand economy.

Venture Taranaki's report also notes that more than a third of Taranaki-based businesses provided a product or service to The Last Samurai. This was mainly through accommodation, transport, food and staffing. In total the project created 1400 full-time jobs and 616 of these were in the Taranaki region.

But what of the future? Will the Taranaki region be given the opportunity to benefit from films such as the Last Samurai being filmed in New Zealand again? Well, if Tom Cruise's parting comments were anything to go by we certainly will! Before leaving New Zealand he stated, "I'm really going to miss Taranaki. I have to say it's one of the best film experiences that I've had, and I've had some great ones and this really just tops it".

Last weekend I also had the opportunity to attend the 2004 Searchlight Tattoo and the New Plymouth District "Best Kept" Competition Street Party. It is refreshing to know that no matter what Hollywood may send our way, we will continue to celebrate our wonderful local traditions with equal amounts of enthusiasm!

Hon Harry Duynhoven
MP for New Plymouth

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Kaitake Community Board

Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)

It has been really great to see the level of interest in both Okato and Oakura at these public meetings. The community board will now consider the ideas, all of which have been taken on board, and issues that were raised at the meetings. As a board we will also decide if there are any other issues and projects that can be put forward. Thank you for the valuable input.

Vandalism

It is sad that the toilets at the end of Ahu Ahu road and the toilet block at Corbett Park have been vandalised over the last few weeks. These facilities are used by the wider community and it is not only the inconvenience (we excuse the pun – ed.) that is unfortunate but also the cost involved in repairing them.

Hope everyone is faring well with all this terrible weather.

Susan Henchman, Chairperson

No Smoke With Fire



As a result of customer feedback, Butlers has taken the initiative in providing smoke-free dining and socialising in 'Butlers Out Back'. With the rugby season in full swing, this bar provides an alternative spot to have a drink

or enjoy one of their great meals. 'Butlers Out Back' is an interesting area with historical photos, the old stone fireplace and even a 40 ft well. There is a view of the Marquee Garden and it is a pleasant place to enjoy the company of family and friends. This is the perfect place to call in for a relaxing drink in a smoke-free environment. Reservations to dine are essential.

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Willy and Jocelyn Wood



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William and Jocelyn Wood have always known “The Good Life” at Omata and 45 years after first moving to the district, have no desire to move anywhere else. The good life started out with a vacant section on the corner of Beach Road and the Main Rd. Beach Road was a gravel dead-end road and the Omata subdivision was in its infancy. The tank farm hadn’t yet been dreamed up. Of course the Omata church and school existed and were the centre of the community. Mr Noel Parker had divided his farm into sections and next door to the Woods’ section was the obligatory Crown section put aside for a park or playground. The subdivision regulations were changed and the Crown section subsequently sold. The Omata development has changed little since but a renewed interest has been sparked recently in lifestyle blocks, making Omata a much sort after location.

Willy started out his working life at Grundy’s as an apprentice mechanic and is now a qualified A grade mechanic. He then worked for W R Phillips doing the milk tanker run which extended from Warea to Brixton. There were 3 tankers that belonged to the Omata Dairy Factory to service and Willy was on 24-hour callout for 12 years. No mean feat when you consider Willy was out on callouts when the babies came along and he couldn’t be with Jocelyn. They have 4 children: Stephen, Christopher (both live in Hamilton), Michelle (lives in Omata) and Tracey (lives in Perth) and 9 grandchildren. In 1971, Willy joined the New Plymouth Fire Board as a driver-come-mechanic. Those were the days when fire fighters slid down fire poles and Willy chuckles over the occasion when he missed the pole and landed in a heap on the floor. His knees were never the same after that! In 1975, the New Plymouth Fire Board became the New Zealand Fire Service. Willy retired at 65 after 30 years’ service. He

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reckons you need a weird sense of humour to be a professional fire fighter and you have to get on really well with your fire fighter mates because you spend so much time with them and you miss out on all the other socialising other people do. Cyclone Bola sticks in Willy's mind as one of the more demanding experiences as a fire fighter: 72 hours without sleep!

Jocelyn was the first face many of us saw when we walked through the door at Omata School. She started working there in 1974 when her youngest child went to school, firstly as a teacher aide helping out in the classrooms then as the office secretary. Joc worked for 22 years at Omata School.

Both Joc and Willy love Omata and would not consider retiring anywhere else. While society is changing around us in many ways and country schools are losing their community feeling to a large degree, that community essence is what they love. They were able to bring up their children in a place where they kept out of trouble and they could enjoy the farm lifestyle without actually being farmers. There was lots of open space around for children to roam over and places to fish, build huts, go eeling, go to the beach and ride bikes. When their children were growing up, they thrived in the tight-knit community and everyone worked together. Working bees were held as picnics, and kids and all joined in. Wood was chopped, churches painted and the school baths, long in disrepair, were repaired and new filtration equipment installed. Along with all the hard work was the social side of a small community – the card evenings, the cricket team and the tennis club, most of which no longer exist because of our busy lifestyles. It was indeed the good life.

Speaking of the good life – what happened to the planned retirement? These two have remained happily busy. Five weeks in London, flitting off to Perth, hopping on the Matchless classic motorbike for a jampot rally, playing bridge, growing a great veggie garden, getting out the 1935 vintage fire engine for a putter, entertaining the grandchildren, looking after a cherished 89-year-old mother and just having as much fun as possible. Why live anywhere else?

By Kim Ferens

Willy and his AJS motorcycle





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If you're wondering where to find one or what they are, let me introduce you to Mr Noel Belcher. Mr Belcher is a retired art teacher who spends some of his time growing and carving gourds.

Gourds are part of the cucurbitaceae family, which are closely related to marrows (squashes) and pumpkins. The bottle gourd or calabash is amongst the oldest of cultivated plants. The hard shelled fruit has had many uses throughout history; for example, it has been used as a container for water, a musical instrument, a decoration and even money, just to name a few.

Mr Belcher has been carving gourds for about ten years. The process begins in the veggie patch at Noel's Oakura residence where he grows his own gourds. After picking, they are usually skinned. Then the carving begins, Noel prefers to work while the shell is still soft and easy to carve. Once the gourds are carved they are allowed to dry for a period of time before being hulled

and decorated. Mr Belcher says the shape of the gourd lends itself to faces but he doesn't like to label his work too much. He works with what he has, using the unique shapes and texture that the gourd produces. Mr Belcher says "gourds have a real life of their own – they are all different and they all react differently".



You can find his work throughout New Zealand and you can view locally and purchase these at the Real Tart gallery in New Plymouth or contact Mr Noel Belcher at ph [06] 7527693.

Tamara Lewis



Is Ann-Marie "tired" of the beach clean up?

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Gerberas smile in Omata



Margaret in a sea of gerberas

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Ray and Margaret Egarr of Omata have a flourishing commercial flower business, producing some top quality cut flowers for the local market. They supply selected florists in Taranaki, as well as attending the Saturday morning market in central New Plymouth where they sell their happy gerberas, callas and lilies. They can also be found at the Oakura Kindergarten gala and on Surf Highway 45. Both Margaret and Ray feel strongly about supporting the local community and have been active community members since their children attended Omata Primary School.

The flower business evolved about 10 years ago, when they grew nerines for the export market. This flower is now out of vogue and there are no incentives to export flowers overseas with the exchange rate being so unfavourable.

Growing gerberas isn't for the faint hearted and while Margaret and Ray say they chose this business for the lifestyle, it is very demanding. There are 8000 bagged Gerberas to attend to on a daily basis – spraying, fertilising, removing leaves, picking flowers and watering. 1000 plants are sold each autumn and spring. Gerberas are gross feeders and require a commercial

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fertiliser high in potassium and a vigilant spray programme to keep insects and fungus under control. Margaret says “We are farming gerberas in an unnatural way so therefore we have to keep up a rigorous spray and fertiliser programme. We expect the gerberas to produce long flower stems, so you need to feed them to do this. The thrill for me is to produce a good quality product that people enjoy and I love working with gerberas.” They get their new stock in as mature plants and they grow these on. To add to the 30 colours already available, there are some new colours being released soon to keep the customers and gardeners interested. The Egarrs sell bagged gerbera plants as well as the cut flower.

It is quite spectacular to see 8000 gerberas flowering at once and you can understand why they are a fashion item in the flower world. According to Ray and Margaret, all the magazines from overseas feature the happy, smiley face of the gerbera. It also has a simplicity that fits in with the contemporary ‘look’.

also be selling bagged hellebores over the winter, so look out for them to go into the garden. And the happy gerberas will brighten anyone’s day.

By Kim Ferens



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This is not just a two person business either, as the Egarrs employ six other people part-time to help out. And this business also has its busy season. From Labour weekend to Mothers’ Day is a 7-days-a-week, sun-up-to-sun-down slog. Careful planning is necessary to ensure the gerberas, callas and lilies are blooming in the right colours for the right days: red for Valentines Day and pink for Mothers’ Day. Bulbs are put into either dry storage or the chiller and are brought out 12 weeks before the needed date.

Look out for the Egarrs at the RSPCA Saturday market. The bunches of gerberas are very affordable and the lilies are really special at Christmas time. Margaret will

Gardening *with* Rosemary Herb

March Checklist

Vegetables:

- An important month for planting the winter vegetable garden.
Plant seedlings of beetroot, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, spinach and silverbeet.

Flowers

- It’s bulb time! Plant daffodils, tulips, ranunculus, anemones, grape hyacinths, irises, freesias, crocuses, etc.
- Cut back, lift and divide perennials.
- Feed all roses.
- Feed ornamental trees and shrubs while they are in active autumn growth.

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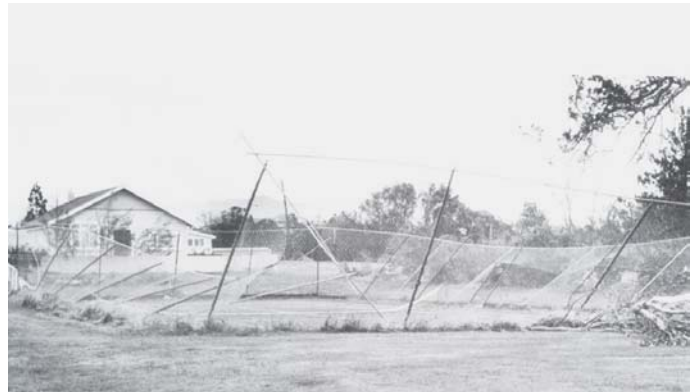
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A Bite of History...

Cyclone Bola

Atrocious weather in February brings to mind an event that occurred at a similar time of year 16 years ago with similar results for many residents of the lower North Island and South Taranaki.

In March 1988, peculiar weather conditions developed in the Pacific Ocean. Bola formed in the early days of March and moved across the Fijian Islands, Vanuatu and Raoul Island and then turned towards New Zealand. As cyclone Bola was heading to New Zealand, a large anticyclone was forming in the Tasman Sea and moving eastwards. These two opposing weather systems met north of New Zealand and Bola came to a halt. On March 7th, Bola's centre was 200 kilometres northeast of North Cape and virtually stationary. With nowhere to go, Bola unloaded on Northland, the Coromandel, the East Coast and Taranaki. Taranaki suffered storm force winds while other areas received torrential rain. The winds continued till March 10th.



Omata School's damaged tennis court

Known facts about Bola:

On March 8th, a dive support vessel "Pacific Atawhai" was sheltering off Oakura and recorded wind gusts of 184 kilometres per hour (97 knots).

The Fire Service responded to 1200 calls for assistance in five days from Oakura to New Plymouth.

220 people were left homeless.

The Department of Education had problems liaising with schools on when they should close and open, so a new system was developed as a result of Bola.

Hurford Rd hall was moved off its piles.

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Omata School closed for 2 days.

Omata School was set up as a Civil Defence Sector Post.

There was extensive damage to new native bush at Omata school.

Omata school tennis court fencing bent and buckled in the winds.

Power to the Omata schoolhouse was cut off for 5 days.

Many trees were destroyed on the Omata school boundary.


By Kim Ferens



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Okurukuru Winery and Restaurant Finds its Feet

Okurukuru winery and restaurant opened late last year with a hiss and a roar. There have been many positive comments about the place and lots of people have been returning for regular meals, me being one of them. While a few people have expressed disappointment about their Okurukuru experience, Paul Hansen, a business partner of the venture and Restaurant Manager, explains that the anticipation and excitement Okurukuru generated meant a huge number of people (exceeding all predictions) wanted to try out the restaurant, resulting in some teething problems. Paul was at pains to reassure me that these troubles have now been rectified. Most people spoke of poor service as the crucial let down and this has been addressed with a Corporate Trainer coming in on a regular basis to give training to the staff.

What sort of restaurant is Okurukuru? The restaurant's own publicity calls it a café/restaurant/function centre/winery. I personally feel that it lacks the ambience and informality of a café and would tend to think of it as a restaurant. The prices are a mixture of what you could pay at any café or restaurant in town and Paul wants to keep them there, so that it doesn't become an upmarket venue that is out of range for the average patron.

The function centre is proving extremely popular. In January and February 2005, the function centre is booked solid with weddings. A rose garden and arbour is underway to complement the wedding theme. Paul says that when functions are held at the restaurant they will not shut to the general public and that they are setting up the entry area to accommodate extra dining. A playground has also been started so families will feel welcome.



Okurukuru wine "Sugar Loaf"

The winery is still (as far as I am concerned) conceptual. The vines were whipped to shreds in the wild February weather and all the grapes blown off. There is widespread scepticism about grape growing in such an exposed situation but I would love for them to succeed against the odds. The Okurukuru wine label called "Sugar Loaf" is already in production from grapes grown in the Marlborough area. In any case, the grapevines make a lovely scenic back drop for the restaurant, as does the breathtaking sea view, making it a unique landscape feature in New Plymouth.

The restaurant's menu, prepared by Chef Simon Houghton, is a wonderful reflection of what New Zealand cuisine has to offer – pan-fried fillet of Egmont Venison, oven-baked cannon of lamb, grilled smoked Hoki with an oat crust, Kikorangi blue cheese and walnut pate, roulade of fresh salmon and fish. Margaret Brooker from Cuisine magazine visited the restaurant in its early days and rated the food average, service poor, and wine poor but highly rated the look of the place. Paul is quick to defend his restaurant from such a review; since he had only been open for two weeks at the time and the restaurant had not quite found its feet, he felt the remarks were not justified. The wine list is constantly under review, some wines being so popular that they have sold out so new wines have been added. A follow-up nine-page spread in Cuisine on Taranaki restaurants, also featuring Okurukuru, will be out shortly. They obviously saw the potential on their first visit, and the 120 lunch diners who flock through the doors each day in the weekend would perhaps agree.



Visitors from England enjoying lunch and the view at Okurukuru

One event that's coming up is the Garden Fete on Sunday 14th March, 10am to 4pm. On offer will be market stalls, live music, BBQ, gourmet food and wine, entertainment. The stalls include original clothing, arts and crafts, furniture and woodcraft, household and garden accessories and plants. Picnic packs can be purchased for \$50: that includes a bottle of Sugar Loaf Chardonnay, 2 Okurukuru wine glasses and a gourmet picnic for two.



The unprecedented interest in a restaurant with such a unique outlook and the fact that everyone who is anyone is talking about Okurukuru, makes it "The Place To Visit!"

By Kim Ferens



Sunday 14th March
10 - 4

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Paladin Park Stud An animal lovers heaven

Recently I visited Michelle MaGrath at her home to view her miniature horses and Siamese cats. The experience was an extremely pleasant one and I came away enamoured with one particular young man of the feline sort! The wonderful thing about Michelle's animals is that they all have such nice natures – and such personalities too. It's not hard to fall in love with either cat or mini horse and want to take them all home!



Pip on the back of Boadicea

How did it all come about? The Park Stud started in 1993 with the purchase of one miniature horse to be a companion to a "proper" horse. Michelle says "We soon found out that

owning miniature horses can be compulsive – like eating potato chips, it is almost impossible to stop at just one!"

What are miniature horses?

Basically, they are just a miniature version of full-size horses – but they are not Shetland ponies. They come in two categories: Category A is 34 inches or less and Category B is over 34 inches but not exceeding 38 inches. (Think of something that comes up to about your waist). Miniatures are known for being well behaved and easy to handle, although stallions are friskier. It is not usual to ride miniatures but light buggies are more commonly pulled behind them. They make good paddock companions or might be a child's first horse, with the advantage of not taking up much space or time to ride. Miniatures can be purchased from several hundreds to many thousands of dollars depending on pedigree, size, show record and the reputation of the stud farm.

Paladin Park miniatures have won many top awards when shown. The process of showing sounded pretty similar to a body building competition!! The minis are put on a strict diet to get them into shape. These horses tend to gobble more food than they need and end up quite tubby so they have to be toned up. Much titivating goes on with mane and coat (including hair dyeing!) to get them ready for the cat walk. They also have to perform in jumping, obstacle and other activities. Paladin Park has not been very active with showing of late due to setting up and running a cattery and veterinary practice. Michelle and her partner Callum are registered NZMHA judges and travel all over New Zealand from time to time to carry out judging appointments.



Raider jumping

thing on four legs – showing off to visitors, nibbling your clothes or getting into mischief.

Indoors the Siamese cats captivate your attention by demanding all of it – and with ten youngsters to keep up with, it's pretty demanding!!



Michelle and Grace

Most of these youngsters have already found homes to go to. I've never really taken to Siamese cats before because of their terrible yowl but their bright blue eyes and chocolate ears are hard to resist, especially with the lovely natures that Michelle's cats seem to have. At about \$350 each they're cheaper than a play station and DVD.

Visitors are welcome but ring first. Michelle and Callum like sharing their enjoyment of the miniature horse and Siamese cats (not to mention the Sphinx – hairless cat) with other animal enthusiasts.



Contact Michelle ph (06) 7527333 or visit www.venusta.co.nz

By Kim Ferens

Judith helps out with the animal maintenance. There are always miniatures to exercise, groom, clip, train or waste time over along with the cattery chores. Grace is the latest miniature arrival. She was born in October and is the most delightful little



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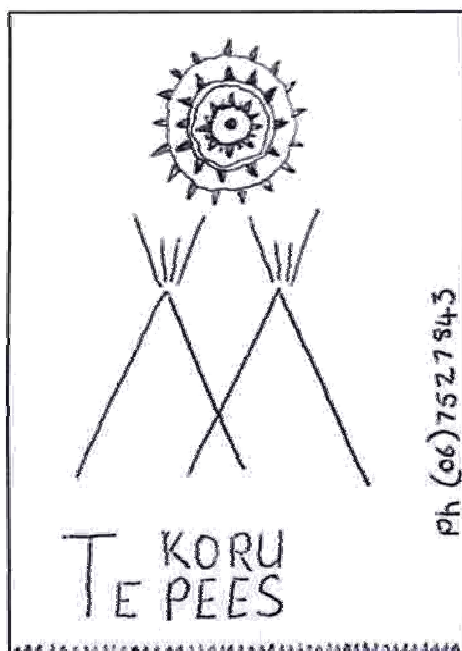
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Kia orana from The Alders

JUST AN IDEA....

While in NZ recently, a very dear friend of mine told me how she had recently joined a second gym - and how good she felt being a member of two gyms. Not that she went to either one very regularly. It was more the psychological benefit of actually having made that step, or steps in this case, toward improving her fitness.

Boy, can I relate to that! Having joined various gyms over the years, I know the psychological benefits of being a gym member and, of course, the joys of a good work-out. But joining a gym *here*? In Rarotonga? In summer, when it's always hot and sunny and humid as hell? I've got to admit the idea, although it has some merit, made me break out into a sweat. But then, I suppose I could just check out the (two) gyms on the island.... just see if they have air-conditioning. Make sure they haven't got too many mirrors (not that I'm threatened by mirrors - in gyms people mainly look at themselves anyway).

So, off on a mission I went. Gym number one - 'Top Shape Health and Fitness'. Right next to my favourite cafe in town, well that's a bad sign for a start. Air-conditioning? You've got to be joking. Downstairs they had the weights room which was a bit on the grungy side for me. Upstairs an aerobics room. Plenty of windows, but it was hot in there when I visited, and guess what time the classes are? Midday. Euch!

Gym number two 'Fitness Cook Islands', more modern looking-equipment, but still no air-con.

So what are my options for getting fit? Walking? - too hot. Cycling? - too hot. Running? - even hotter. I guess I'm just not the type that likes to get all sweaty. I need something more.... lady-like. Which reminds me of when I used to sit with my first-born when she was a baby and *watch* Aerobics Oz Style. That's when I first started thinking about the psychology of fitness. Isn't there a saying about getting fit being 99% inspiration and 1% sweat? Something like that. Well, I think for now, while it's hot anyway, I'll keep fit on the 99% inspiration factor.

Diane Alder

The Alders are an Oakura family who are currently on a two year teaching contract in Rarotonga.

The adventures of Korean Kelly - Part Three

What would Korea be without rugby? The country made famous for co-hosting the soccer World Cup and the 1988 Olympics is yet to discover the wonders that rugby could bring its nation. So being Kiwis in a foreign land, it's second-nature to find and play in any rugby competition that is available. Hence the Seoul Survivors RFC. Canadians, Americans, Kiwis, Koreans, Poms, South Africans, the odd Aussie and Frenchy: we're a mottled bunch but all enjoy getting onto the grass (or lack of it) and having a run around. And it hurts. The thing about Korea is that it doesn't have any rugby fields; instead we make do by playing on dirt, sand and gravel soccer fields that tend to harden in summer into "pitches of pain". There's no more bounce in a tackle or sliding along cool wet grass for a try. Instead its bone-thudding, skin-tearing excitement against the various Korean club and US Military teams that we play. And no, the Korean people who play rugby are not the small, stereotypical Asian rugby players. Do they have taro in Korea?


I have to admit that one of the coolest things about playing on the army bases is that in one military camp the playing field is next to the helicopter landing site. As our games progress, we are sometimes forced to halt as a huge Black Hawk helicopter lands about 50 metres away, and a whole lot of troops file out, arms in tow; then its back to rugby again. Not really something I've experienced whilst playing in NZ. The army bases are something to behold. They're strictly classified as USA territory; troops don't need passports when flying to the bases from America, only US dollars are used, and the supermarkets are crammed full of everything American. It's an uncanny sight to behold... very un-M.A.S.H.

What about the food? I haven't been eating anything too bizarre of late, though have developed an unusual taste for dried squid. These deepwater delicacies are made from the skins of small squid or octopi, which are dried and roasted, resulting in a tough, leathery, somewhat shrivelled version of the original creature. Eating involves myself leaving the apartment, so that Catherine doesn't yell at me for imparting a strong seafood odour throughout the house, then tearing, chewing and cajoling the snack into my belly. Will admit it's a bit of a challenge when it's -10°C outside. The things you do for a meal.

Annyonghi keseyo

Kelly

Kelly Ryan grew up in Oakura and is currently teaching English in Korea



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Magic Trick



You need two pieces of paper

Before your audience arrives, make two tears in each of the two strips of paper, creating three equal strips on each sheet. Do not tear through the sheets completely.

Get a volunteer from the audience. Hand your volunteer one of the pieces of paper. Ask her to tear away the two end pieces from the middle piece in just one tear. She won't be able to do it, but you can!



Pick up the other piece of paper and show her how it's done. Hold one end piece in each hand. Bend over and hold the middle piece with your lips. Now pull the outside pieces, and you will be left with three separate pieces of paper!

TOMkid PROFILE

Suzanne Carswell (Suzy)

Name: **Suzanne Carswell**

Age: **8 yrs**

School: **Omata Primary**



Suzy

my favourite things

Food: **Chocolate**
Activity: **Doing Aerobics**
Game/Sport: **Netball**
Best Movie: **The Lord of the Rings**
Best Friends: **Laura Anderson, Jack Wagstaff, Candyce Shotter**
"When I grow up I am going to own a Zoo"

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Kaitake Kindergarten

Another year is well underway in the busy life of our local kindergarten which accommodates up to 60 local families in early childhood education.

Over the summer the Kindergarten was painted outside and the teachers' office received a much needed 'makeover'.

The pets that live at the kindergarten have returned from a wonderful summer at the homes of some of the children – thanks to those who cared for them over the break.

Our first venture out into our local community for the year is coming up. The Wednesday group of children aged 4 and over are off to discover the delights of the rockpools at the end of Ahu Ahu Road. As well as the excitement of the seashore, a bus ride back to the Kindergarten is guaranteed to seal this trip as a special memory.

Our AGM is also coming up with all parents having an opportunity to join the parent committee and/or serve in one of the roles on the committee.

What a busy year we have ahead!

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Oakura Playcentre

We've had a busy start to the year at Playcentre. Several new families have joined us and are saying how much both the adults and children are enjoying it, which re-emphasises the philosophy that Playcentre is a place for the WHOLE FAMILY.

We actually had 4 days of PD workers in the end as we kept finding more for them to do, and our Playcentre now looks really fabulous. We are going to have these workers in regularly to help keep our property, building and grounds looking good.

To start the new term we had an outing to the river at Corbett Park and a BBQ which all the children enjoyed. Then we had a special "Togs Day" when all the children brought their togs and had fun in the pool, playing with the sprinkler and going down the super slippery slide that Greg made. We suspect that he had as much fun on it as the kids!



Hayden Benton, Quinn Steen and Mostyn Lee having fun at the "Togs" day.

Playcentre is open to all children aged 0-6 years, and we're open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during term time from 9.00am-11.30am. Our fees are a very reasonable \$15 per child or \$20 per family per term - no matter how many sessions you come to - and the first three visits are free for new families wanting to see how we operate.

If you want any more information or have any questions, please call Mandy Robinson on 752 1292 or Sharon Steen on 752 7376.

Otherwise, please feel welcome to come and join us - we're a friendly, fun place and the kids just LOVE it.

Trish Whitney, Playcentre Treasurer

Omata School News

We would like to introduce you to all our classroom pets as we have quite a variety. Each classroom has made a point of having a pet for the children to interact with and to care for.

You have to be really careful when entering room 2 because if Spike is out you really don't want to stand on him and watch out for your fingers in room 5 because Sparky gets awfully hungry!

In room 1 we have two gold fish called Spongebob and Gary. We used to have one called Patrick but he died in the holidays. They are fun to watch and we have to look after them.

by Abbey-Louise Mayhead



Spike is **room 2's** fresh water turtle. She lives in a big glass tank full of shells, rocks and even a water filter. Spike sometimes walks around the room too. We all love Spike!

by Bridget Allen



Room 3 Omata School had two goldfish named Speedy and Comet. After one rainy weekend we found Comet dead in the fish bowl. Luckily we still have Speedy. Maybe we should get him a friend?

by Laura Anderson



Our bird is called Powder Puff. He has been in **room 4** for five years so he is as old as we are! Powder Puff likes honey and toast to eat.



Sparky is our new pet and he is in **room 5**. He is an eel and he likes the dark.

by Helene Fougere

Omata Playgroup

Playgroup is back into the swing of things and raring to go with some exciting new equipment due to arrive in the next week. A special thank you to those who supported our Chalk Toy Catalogue fundraiser. We have been able to order \$250 of toys from Modern Teaching for free because of this - excellent!

With summer here, we can hopefully utilise the outdoor area adjacent to the hall on fine days so don't forget those sunhats and sunblock.

If your child is approaching 4 years of age you might like to enrol them in our pre-school programme. It contains many educational activities that can be completed at home and that will help your child in their early school days.

With many of our playgroup regulars from last year now moving on to school we have quite a young group of children at present. Dates for the remainder of this term are:

Thursday 11 March, Thursday 25th March, Thursday 8th April.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

See you there.

Stephanie Niederberger
ph 751 2722

Plunket coffee mornings

Commencing Friday 12 March the Oakura Plunket committee will be holding free coffee mornings for parents and preschoolers.

These have been run in the past and with a new group of mothers on the committee they have seized the opportunity to offer this once again.

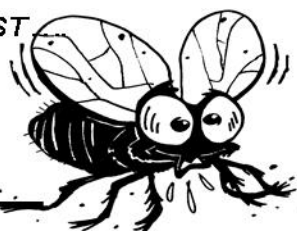
It is a great way to meet others and for children to establish new social interactions in a very relaxed environment.

They will be held each Friday morning between 9.00 – 10.30am at the St James Church opposite the Oakura Hall. For further information contact **Leanne 752 7278 or Catherine 752 7034.**



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Seaweek 2004

March 7 - 14

Welcome to Sea Week 2004. The aim of this year's event is to raise awareness about the amazing marine life that lives in and around the Taranaki region - some of which has probably never been seen by most people.

SEA WEEK 2004 EVENTS

Foreshore Frolics:

New Plymouth walkway champion Grant Porteous leads two one-hour walks along the city's foreshore on **Tuesday March 9** and **Thursday March 11**. Walks depart from the East End Surf Lifesaving Club at 5pm on Tuesday and at 10am on Thursday.

Caring about the Coast:

A public meeting aimed at setting up a Coastal care group in Patea is being held at the Patea Hall on **Monday March 15** from 11am-1pm.

DOC marine and coastal experts Rosemary Miller and Jim Campbell will be on hand to share their experiences of working with marine mammals & coastal communities.

Marine Man:

Don't know your zooanthids from your nudibranches or your hydroids from your hagfish?



Oakura Primary School's annual Beach Clean-up day

Colourful Marine enthusiast and educator Jim Lilley will be talking to Taranaki schools on **Tuesday March 16, Wednesday 17, Thursday 18 & Friday 18**. He will also be conducting an evening talking about NZ's amazing marine life on **March 18** from 7.30pm -9pm at New Plymouth District Council chambers. All welcome.

Passionate and outspoken about all things marine, Jim should make for good interview material. He is also a



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key player in Marine Watch, a volunteer organisation contracted by DOC to do everything from cleaning oil-slicked sea birds, to rescuing stranded whales and seals. So far MW has been involved in more than 1000 call-outs, saving 524 whales and dolphins.

Fishy Fun:

Saturday March 20 from 9am-12 noon sees Jim Lilley hit Puke Ariki Landing with his “pet whale” – where he will be demonstrating whale rescue techniques with his inflatable pontoon. It’s hoped to get heaps of kids and families down to join in the fun.

McDonald’s Mobile Madness:

Local kids have been busy creating their own marine mobile using recycled materials as part of a competition being run in conjunction with McDonald’s Family Restaurant in New Plymouth. Open to all school children in Taranaki, entries will hang from the ceiling inside McDonald’s during Sea Week.

Art at TArt:

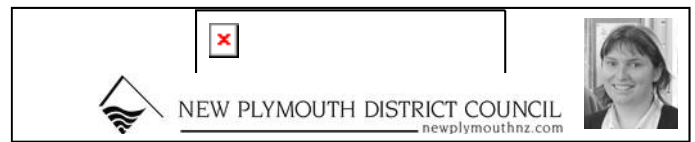
Work by local artists celebrating the marine theme will be on show and for sale at the Real TArt Gallery, 62 Devon St West, New Plymouth from **March 7-21**. (10am-4pm).

Underwater Wonders:

An aquarium containing some of Taranaki’s amazing marine creatures will be set up inside Puke Ariki’s Discovery area from **March 7-20**. Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 9am-6pm. Wed 9am-9pm. Sat/Sun 9am-5pm.

More Marine Magic:

The Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society display on show at the New Plymouth District Council from **March 7-18** features more awesome marine life



Oakura Library With Tara Ward

Hello from Oakura Library,

Our new books in this month include *The Last Samurai* – a great photographic record of the movie filmed in Taranaki, with gorgeous colour photos and interesting commentary from Tom Cruise and Ed Zwick. New Fiction includes Patricia Cornwell’s latest novel *Blow Fly*, Anne Tyler’s new novel *The Amateur Marriage*, and the well-received *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd.

Do you have an event to publicise? You are welcome to advertise any upcoming events on the library’s community notice board.

Library hours: Mon-Fri 10am-12.30; 1-4pm, with a late night each Wednesday 5-7pm. Membership is free and entitles you to use Puke Ariki as well as Oakura Library.

Tara Ward

Directory update:

- Please change incorrect phone number on your directory for ‘personal image consultant’ – Therese Fleming to 752 1331.
- Please note that Helen Fleming is the contact for The Body Shop.
- Contact for Kaitake Netball club is Tanya Farrant 752 1301.

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Recipe

Maple Syrup & Rum Seared Chicken Breasts with Courgette & Ginger Salsa

- 4 chicken breasts
 ¼ cup maple syrup
 ¼ cup olive oil
 4 tbsp dark rum
 grated rind and juice of 1 orange
 grated rind of 1 lemon
 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
 ½ tsp nutmeg
 ½ tsp ground allspice
 ½ tsp freshly ground pepper
1. Make 3 slashes in each chicken breast.
 2. Combine maple syrup, olive oil, rum, orange rind and juice, lemon rind, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and pepper. Place in a snaplock bag with chicken breasts. Massage into chicken well and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, but preferably overnight. Heat BBQ until very hot and place chicken skin side down. Cook 3-4 minutes then turn and cook a further 3-5 minutes or until completely cooked.

Salsa

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 3 courgettes | 3 medium tomatoes |
| 1 tsp freshly grated ginger | 1 small onion |
| 3 tbsp sultanas | 1 tbsp lime juice |
| 1 tsp brown sugar | 1 tsp red wine vinegar |

Peel tomatoes, then finely chop courgettes, tomatoes and onion. Grate fresh ginger then mix all ingredients together. Refrigerate overnight to allow flavours to develop.

Louise Richardson Olive on 45

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Just Jazz Weekend

Dance Highway 45 is running its third successful Jazz dancing competition right here in Oakura over the weekend of March 19th, 20th and 21st. The competition is open to dancing students throughout New Zealand in the age range from 4 to 17yrs.

Our highly sought-after adjudicator for this year is Jason Te Patu, who is based in Auckland. Jason has performed in many well known shows both here in New Zealand and overseas.

Spectators are welcome throughout the weekend. Please come and support this local annual event. Children \$1.50, adults \$2.00 per session.

A huge thank-you to the Oakura businesses that are supporting this weekend and to our major sponsor McDonald's Real Estate.



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Greetings fellow fishos

We have had a few keener members catching good fish over the last couple of months and have seen some excellent snapper weighed in during the "Tri Comps" that have been running between OSC, NPSC & the Fishing section of the NP Club.

Although the weather hasn't been too great, the keener ones are still out catching big spotty sharks and good size kahawai, as well as the occasional snapper.

The NZ Angling & Casting Association National competitions are being held in March in Whakatane. Eight members from OSC are competing in the shores section and two in the casting competition; we hope to come back with a bit of the silverware, as it were.

Worth a mention over the last few months are Wayne Johnston's 12kg spotty shark (new club record) and Merv Krutz's staggering 41kg longtail stingray, caught on an 8kg line (this was quite a mission, and is also a new club record). We also have junior members weighing in regular fish, which is great to see.

As far as popular spots go, there has been no particular spot that has been firing, although there has been a lot of fish caught down at the Lee Breakwater; rumour has it that this could be due to the recent sand dredging.

Oakura Surf Casting Club is holding a **Take-A-Kid-Fishing Day** at the Lee Breakwater on Saturday April 11th. All kids win a prize and everyone is welcome. It starts at 1.00pm and will finish around 3.00pm.

Tight lines...
Debbie E
Club Secretary

classified

Cleaner wanted for Omata area. Regular weekly hours plus additional hours when required. Must have own transport. Please call Lynda Matthews 06 751 1347.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Kaitake Netball

If you are interested in playing netball for Kaitake this year please contact:

**Tanya Farrant 7521301 or
Helen Fleming 7527048**

Netball Competition starts 3 April and
we are practising now!
Come down and join us

Indoor Bowls

The Oakura Indoor Bowling Club invites all residents of the district to come and enjoy the game of indoor bowls. Bowls is also a great way for newer residents to get to know more people and join in with the community. It is also a game that all age groups can enjoy.

We play on Monday nights at 7:30pm from March to September in the Oakura Hall.
We welcome you to come and join our club or even just come and have a try.

For further information contact
Rex Ward (06) 752 7849
Allan Bridgeman 06) 752 7478



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