

Oakura students help the Little Blue Penguin

Oakura Surfing Celebrity Paige Hareb was the local face for the nationwide Seaweeek conservation project but the real heroes are the little blue fellas – the Little Blue Penguin. These chaps and chapesses come ashore along the Oakura coast and Oakura School have been very busy cleaning up the beach and building nest boxes for the penguins.

Seaweeek began on 2 March and students at Oakura School worked overtime to get 20 nesting boxes built on time for Little Blue Penguins/Korora. Guided by DOC Ranger Nathan Hills and sidekicks Doug Hislop and Ray Priest, the children are to place their boxes on suitable sites.

Little Blue Penguins usually nest in burrows, caves and rock crevices but these areas disappear as coastal land develops. The nesting boxes are popular substitutes and penguins may move in within two to three hours of a box being placed.

DOC Ranger Callum Lilley said, "We know the Little Blue Penguin comes ashore at Oakura and some find their own sites. We won't disturb them but a well-designed nest box is difficult for predators to enter and provides shelter in areas that have been stripped of natural vegetation. They'll be well used."

Homeowners along the beachfront are happy to provide sites on the banks of their sections, and DOC staff and Paige Hareb, national spokesperson for Seaweeek, helped the trusty builders place their nesting boxes on Wednesday 5 March.

At one kilogram the Little Blue Penguin is the smallest penguin in the world. It comes ashore after sunset. This year, some will find a ready-made home.

Other Seaweeek activities included public talks, events, guided walks and childrens activities such as making mobiles of sea creatures, marine costume parade at Puke Ariki, a Little Blue Penguin activity with Rad Readers, colouring in and word game activities.

Top design! DOC Ranger Nathan Hills and Doug Hislop check the nesting box being built by Sean, Martin and William at Oakura School.



*Little blue penguin.
Photo by Paddy Ryan.*



Paige – spokesperson for Seaweeek 2008. Photo by Callum Lilley.

a peek inside

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2008 TOMphone Directory inside

editorial FROM THE TOM ZONE

The sun keeps shining (when it's not raining!), the veges are plentiful in the garden, the grass is green, the air is fresh (especially at 6.30am), the sea has been as warm as a bath, and the village is humming. What more can I say? We really do live in Paradise.

It is so easy to notice what is going wrong or all the bad and evil in the world when for all of that there are heaps of great things all around us. As I see it we have two choices for our view on the world, the choice is yours.

So for the most part, I concentrate on our little paradise.

Tracey

A big thank you to all the people who sent in their wonderful photos for the front cover of the 2008 TOM directory. They are all great photographic shots and we love them all!

TOM dates for April

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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 Okato.

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



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March Checklist

Vegetables:

- This month is an important time to be planting the winter seedlings of beetroot, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, spinach and silverbeet, but do watch out for white butterflies.

Flowers:

- It's bulb time already! Plant daffodils, tulips, ranunculas, anemones, grape hyacinths, irises, freesias, crocuses and so on.
- Cut back, lift and divide perennials.
- Feed and dead-head all roses.
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"Danger and Vanessa would like to thank everyone for their support over the past 5½ years. We have enjoyed operating Café Wunderbar, but after much thought have decided it's time to move on to a new venture. The new owners will take over on the 10th of March, 2008 and it will be business as usual. Once again, thank you and have a safe and happy year."

**Hi folks!**

It turns out that you can have too much of a good thing.

While the fantastic summer weather has been great for us to get out and enjoy this superb district we live in – and Oakura Beach has been looking postcard perfect day after day – our rivers, paddocks and bush areas are really feeling the effects of the long dry spell.

March is predicted to continue with the dry weather, thanks to La Niña. At the time of writing this column the urban and rural fire bans were still in place – but even if the restrictions have been lifted by the time this newspaper reaches your letterbox, please continue to be careful with open flames outdoors! Just one mistake could have a horrible impact on your neighbours and any neighbouring bush.

On the plus side, the previous work to switch Oakura over to bore water has proved a blessing as the low rivers levels in the district haven't affected the town's water supplies.

Having said that, water conservation is always a good habit to practise – regardless of what the weather is doing! The more water we can leave in that aquifer, the longer this source will be able to service Oakura.

Meanwhile, managers, councillors and community board members have been putting considerable work into drafting Budget 08/09. Our focus is on having a budget that fulfils the requirements of the third year of the Community Plan 2006-2016 and is also affordable.

Getting public feedback on the draft Budget 08/09 is a vital part of the process, so please keep your eyes open for information on how you can be involved.

The key dates for Budget 08/09 are:

- 1 12 March: Budget 08/09 approved by the Council for public consultation.
- 2 2 April: Public submissions open.
- 3 2 May: Public submissions close.
- 4 9 June: Public hearings will be held during this week.
- 5 13 June: The Council considers all the public submissions.
- 6 26 June: Budget 08/09 adopted by the Council.

I am looking forward to getting this draft Budget finalised so we can release it for you to read and comment on.

In the meantime, if you have any comments or ideas you would like to forward to the Council, feel free to give me a call on 759 6100 – I'd love to hear from you!

Peter Tennent

Mayor

Tom tidbits

NZ Post Easter and Anzac Day delivery times

Mail will not be processed over the entire Easter break, starting Good Friday (21 March) and finishing Easter Monday (24 March). Processing will resume on Tuesday 25 March.

There will not be mail processing on ANZAC Day (Friday 25 April), but will resume on Saturday.

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HON. HARRY DUYNHOVEN MP for New Plymouth

Schools Plus

It was Hillary Clinton who said, "It takes a village to raise a child," but most of us no longer live in villages, with relatives nearby and friends and neighbours all interested in how and what our children are doing. Many of us no longer have access to supportive extended families and friends with time and skills to invest in our children.

Society, in the form of community organisations, schools and some government agencies, has necessarily moved into the gap and become the surrogate village. The local school is often the community centre and I think this is a development to be encouraged and expanded.

Since Labour took office in 1999 there has been an enormous investment in education. There are now more than 5000 additional teachers and teachers' salaries have risen by 53%. \$2.7billion has gone into, or is budgeted for, capital expenditure – that includes building 14 new schools, 180 new classrooms and 10 new school gyms, modernising existing schools and development for kura and wharekura.

Our best students are up there with the best in the world, performing in the top four, in reading, maths and science. There are more young people in workplace training and more school leavers going into tertiary education.

But, New Zealand has a long tail of non- and under-achievers. At age 18 only 54% of our kids are still involved in any sort of education and 40% have left school without even Level 2 NCEA.

We must do better.

Programmes like Gateway, part of the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, giving senior students the opportunity to learn in the workplace as well as at school, have proven successful in helping students understand the connections between the skills they learn at work and those they learn at school.

In our region, Central, there are 933 young people who are in training or have completed their Modern Apprenticeships.

These programmes give students options – to study and train in areas of interest and value to them. This is critical to the success of Schools Plus. Schools Plus is *not* about keeping students cooped up in schools until they turn 18. It is about offering choices in how to progress learning – maybe at school, maybe in the workplace, maybe at tech or uni.

The result will be more highly educated, qualified and trained young people – essential to the future prosperity and well being of young people themselves, to the community, to business and industry, to the region and to the nation.

The benefits are obvious. People with more education and better qualifications earn more over their working lives. They are less likely to be unemployed. They are less likely to be involved in crime; either the perpetrator or the victim. They are healthier and live longer.

We know staying in school reduces the numbers of inactive youth and the numbers of youth coming into contact with the youth justice system. We know that a good school experience provides young people with the ability to work both independently and collaboratively. We know it helps provide them with a strong sense of identity and citizenship.

The education system must change to meet the challenge of improving our children's education and lives.

But schools can't do it alone. It will need the strong partnership of government, school communities and business. Schools will need to be better equipped to provide students with career advice and pastoral care and to combat truancy.

What do you think needs to change if we are to help our children achieve these goals? A discussion document will be available soon. For this to work, we need the widest possible range of views.

Thank you for taking the time to read my column.

Harry Duynhoven



Hon. Harry Duynhoven
MP for NEW PLYMOUTH

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kaitake community board

The summer weather (except for a few blips) continues unabated. While the crowds have departed, there is still a pretty large cohort of locals enjoying our superb environment. There's something for everyone and just about everyone is doing something! Let's hope it lasts through to Easter and beyond!

Sewerage

Sewerage issues and comment also continue unabated and there still appears to be a number of misconceptions about the project, so I thought I would attempt to clarify the ones I am aware of.

Do you have to join?

No, not unless your existing treatment system/septic tank is defective or you are building a new house. After the scheme is in service, properties still on septic tanks may be inspected at any time by a NPDC representative and required to connect if their on-site system is not operating satisfactorily.

What will it cost to be connected?

There is no Council charge to be connected if you signed up by the January cut-off date. For those connecting at the outset, Council has agreed to construct laterals from the sewer mains on the roadway to your property boundary at Council's cost.

However, the private drainage work on your property from your boundary to your connection point will require a building consent, for which the application fee is \$105. The cost of making the connection to the sewer main and decommissioning and filling in your septic tank will depend on the length of the necessary private drainage work. This will be your responsibility to arrange and fund.

What if your house is on a subdivided back section behind another dwelling?

Some common connections joining several properties are possible and up to seven properties may be joined in this manner. Owners will need to make their own arrangements for private easements across their neighbour's property and for any agreements for common connections.

What are the ongoing costs?

Once connected, the annual charge added onto your rates will be about \$420. All connected properties will be charged the annual targeted rate for sewerage once the scheme is commissioned. This is the same rate charged to all ratepayers in the NPDC area who are connected to the sewer. There is not a separate rate for Oakura residents.

Why should you have to pay for an electric pump?

Due to the topography, some owners (around 60) will need to install private pump stations to reach the sewer mains. It was not possible to design the system to serve all properties with gravity connections. It is generally not economically feasible for Council to install a pumping sub-station for less than 15 residences.

What will happen to your septic tank?

When you connect to the new system, your septic tank and or other treatment system will need to be decommissioned and made safe in accordance with the Council's requirements (Policy P96-012: "... require the system to be opened up and emptied where appropriate and then filled with sand or other similar inert material or generally made safe from collapse or otherwise by an approved method."). You will have to pay for this.

Will someone get in touch with you about your connection?

Those choosing to connect will be required to do so within 12 months of the sewerage system being commissioned – expected in early 2009. Only when the system has been commissioned, will you be able to have your plumber complete drainage work and make your connection.

To determine the location of the laterals (required early in 2008), owners will be approached for information on where they require their discharge point. Owners are advised to consult a plumber to determine the optimum position for their connection. The position of the discharge point is required to be provided in writing.

Your formal application for sewer connection including drainage plan, requires the detailed proposals for on-site plumbing to be provided by you or your plumber. Plans need to show drainage details including septic tank/existing system, to be pumped out and disposed of as required. The application fee for this is \$105.

You haven't signed up but how do you go about getting connected up now the deadline has passed?

You should contact the Council – you may be charged the cost of the connection of the lateral from the sewer to your boundary. The reason for the January deadline is that the Council is about to let the construction of the sewers in separate contracts. The contractors have tendered and organised their work based on the number of connections advised (those signed up by the January deadline). There will be an extra cost if they have to go back and install additional connections, not to mention the extra disturbance to the roads. This is exactly the same process that applies in New Plymouth and other areas that are serviced by the Council sewer.

How much is the project going to cost?

This is a major construction project and Council has approved funding of \$19.1 million for it, of which \$6.1 million has already been committed on design and construction costs and on the supply of pumps and pipes.

Why is Council carrying out this project?

Many current village septic tank disposal methods are proving unsustainable for the future. Sewage contamination could prove a major source of pollution of the village streams and beachfront unless a sewerage reticulation system robust enough to cope with all possibilities is instituted.

The sewerage project is a serious commitment, after consultation with this community, by Council to ensure future public health is not compromised, but is enhanced through minimising soil, coastal and fresh water contamination in our community. Ensuring conservation of such an important coastal place is inextricably linked to our community's values and is a cornerstone of this project.

I hope this has provided some further clarification for readers. The important points to keep in mind are:

1. You don't have to join.
2. Other councils around the country have insisted on sewerage schemes for "at risk" coastal communities such as ours and then demanded that the community pay for it in total. In our case the funding comes from the general rate take across the whole NPDC region. Extra costs for individual homeowners are exactly the same as those charged to any other homeowner connecting to the sewer in the NPDC area.
3. While it is expensive on the pocket, we all know it will never be cheaper.

The Kaitake Community Board is totally committed to ensuring best practice is followed in every instance and no short cuts are taken. We want a stable long lasting system that will serve us well and protect our environment now and into the future.

Nuff said on smelly subjects.

Our next meeting

The next meeting of the Kaitake Community Board is on Tuesday 11 March at 4pm in the NPOB Surf Club. Please feel free to come along if you are interested in the current issues facing us. You are able to address the meeting prior to its start on any issue you wish. If you do, please give me a call so I can ensure you are included on the agenda.

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

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Cup cakes and other things

It came as a shock to me to hear that Snickerdoodles had been sold. I mean Snickerdoodles is our own homegrown success story, regardless of Rick, Rebecca, Ron and Lynette being American. Don't we all love their delicious handmade goodies and pukka coffee? Would new owners respect our bakehouse and do it justice? I called in on Angie Orsborn, the new custodian, to find out.

Snickerdoodles still looks the same, with just a slight re-arrangement of furniture. The breads, sandwiches, pastries, cakes, savouries, biscuits, pizzas and coffees are still the same. The staff are still the same, except for front-of-house manager Corrie Paice (Angie and Peter's daughter) and of course the head baker cum chef is different but you don't see him – Peter Orsborn – unless you are up at three in the morning! Did you know Snickerdoodles provides part-time work for ten staff members?

The essence of Snickerdoodles is the same, but there are a few positive additions – cup cakes. Angie knew how to warm my heart with an array of delightfully decorated cup-cakes. Cakes that make you smile and let me tell you they taste absolutely delicious. Cup-cakes are the latest American craze to sweep the world and Snickerdoodles are bringing them to Oakura. Big and small, Easter, birthday, children, adult, party cake stands, celebrations – whatever the occasion, cup-cakes will fit the bill.

Angie is an ex-local New Plymouth girl who got lost in Auckland for 30 years, where she and Peter owned a café called Barak in Waitakere City. Recently Angie has worked at Shell Todd in New Plymouth. Daughter Corrie is adapting to and loving the slower pace of life in Oakura. The Orsborns are some of the first people to meet the Kamp's on about Day Two of their Kiwi stay. They have felt involved in the set up of



Corrie, Peter and Angie.

Snickerdoodles and Angie says she feels like she is the fairy godmother of the place so the attachment is deep.

The family have lots of wonderful ideas to enhance the all ready successful bakehouse and one I will share with you is ... texting Snickerdoodles with your coffee order so it will be ready and waiting for you when you arrive. How original! I feel confident we have wonderful people taking care of our bakehouse and we can look forward to the continuance of high quality, hand made goodies.

By Kim Ferens



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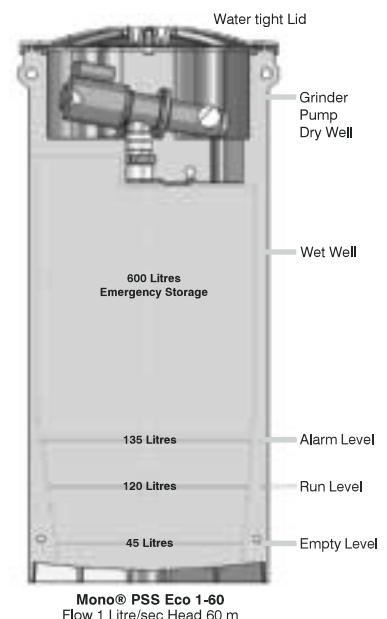


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update from the big red truck

"The best kind of rain, of course, is a cozy rain. This is the kind the anonymous medieval poet makes me remember, the rain that falls on a day when you'd just as soon stay in bed a little longer, write letters or read a good book by the fire, take early tea with hot scones and jam and look out the streaked window with complacency."

~ Susan Allen Toth, England For All Seasons.

Greetings again from all at the Big Red Truck.

February has continued to be quiet for the Brigade, despite the dry weather. Although there has been some localised rain recently, at the time of going to press a total fire ban is still in place for all New Plymouth urban and rural areas. **The fire prohibition means all open-air fires – including coal barbecues, hangi and braziers – are banned, with only gas-fired barbecues allowed outdoors.** Effectively, this means that until the ban is lifted, all fires should be called in to 111 to be followed up.

Here is a little Firewise Quiz for you to ponder as the summer progresses (ideally, you should aim to be able to answer "Yes" to all of them). Good luck:

1. Has your household discussed a fire escape plan with at least two ways out of every room and a safe meeting place, for example, the letterbox or a special tree? (*Remember that very few children will actually be woken up by the noise of a smoke alarm. The adults in the house must be responsible for checking all rooms as part of your escape plan. Be prepared to have to carry kids outside!*)
2. Is there a working smoke alarm in the hallway, every sleeping area and on every level of your home?
3. Do you test your smoke alarms regularly?
4. Do you replace smoke alarm batteries annually or when the unit starts "cheeping"? (*Change your smoke alarm batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings.*)
5. When frying, do you always stay by the stove and keep a pot lid or oven tray handy?
6. Are matches, cigarette lighters and candles kept safe when there are children around, that is, out of sight and well above their reach?
7. Do you regularly clear away household rubbish and keep it away from the house?
8. Does everyone know what to say if they call 111? (*Give the house number, street name, nearest intersection, suburb and city. Give your rural ID number if you have one. Answer the operator's questions clearly.*)
9. Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home and do you keep the garden hose connected?
10. Is your house number easy to see so emergency vehicles can find you?
11. Are the keys kept in the deadlocks on your doors and windows when you are at home?
12. Do you do a "night-check"?
13. Do you make sure your electric blanket is turned off before you get into bed?
14. Do you avoid overloading power points and multi-boxes and use multi-boxes with circuit breakers?
15. Are heaters kept at least one metre away from curtains, furniture and bedding?
16. Do you always keep lighted candles and oil burners well away from anything that will burn easily?
17. Do you always use a spark guard or fire screen with an open fire?
18. Do you stub butts out in a suitable ashtray and empty it regularly?

All the best and stay safe. FF Breeze.

Private property still public issue

It seems very clear cut to me that the New Zealander's right to keep their private property to themselves and only on request grant entry is a very simple concept. Yet Mike Ure of Weld Road is continually put in a position of having to explain and defend his right of ownership to his tiny piece of land bordering the beach. I know the public used to have access over this land and it could take a while to adjust but come on, Oakura, would you like people walking through your back garden?



Mike Ure showing the 'No Access', 'No Thoroughfare' and 'Beach Access' signs.

The Council have put up a sign pointing the way of access along the beach, which does not go through Mike's whanau's property. The Council have also changed the sign in the village (outside the Four Square) that shows a path through the property, to one going along the beach. None of us are ignorant, we can all read. The fence and gate also bear signs declaring the area private property. Mike is an affable guy just quietly raising his kids in the garden of the seashore, on land given to their tipuna by a government grant in 1864 – give them a break!

I asked Doug Hislop from the Kaitake Community Board what his opinion on the matter was and he had this to say: "I'm totally in agreement with the above. People have used this property as a walking track, with most not aware it was private land as it was unoccupied. Habits die hard and some feel aggrieved, but it is private land and Mike is entitled to not only his privacy, but to the absolute right to decide about access, or the denial of it. Let's get over it and get on with more important issues. Mike is one of us, actually a good custodian to have at the end of Weld Road and in the district."

By Kim Ferens



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From Omata to Europe

Zara Brouwers, 17 years, of Omata recounts for us her amazing experience to Europe at the beginning of February where she joined other students from around the world for The Hague International Model of United Nations 2008

I left Auckland airport on the trip of a lifetime with 18 motivated and bubbly young guys and gals. Nerves, excitement and passion were in our pockets and we were all buzzing at the thought of flying across the world to meet some of the most fascinating international students at The Hague International Model United Nations. While we were armed with our research, our logic and our pure interest in speaking truth, nothing could have been more important than our ability to mingle with and befriend unfamiliar faces.

The New Zealand delegation being together for two weeks prior to the conference had forged strong bonds within the team. We had all saved hard for the past six months and found that it had been very worthwhile.

From Auckland we travelled to Bangkok, Thailand for five days, where we enjoyed sunshine, floating markets and our tour guide Charlie, and were left with a more grounded perspective of what life is like in Asia.

From Bangkok we endured a long haul flight to Paris with a restless night's sleep. We arrived dazed but totally exhilarated at the thought of visiting Le Louvre, Notre Dame and the Eiffel Tower. We quickly came to love the most beautiful city in the world – the romance of the French people, the wonderful food and the stunning architecture that sprawled as far as the eye could see. We were privileged to have the opportunity to explore the UNESCO headquarters in both Bangkok and Paris and marvelled at the atmosphere in their great halls.

Our French connection continued as we were bussed to Versailles, where we wandered through the chateau of Napoleon and Marie Antoinette and frolicked in the wintry gardens in coats and scarves. Versailles was one of our favourite spots as we loved being part of a much smaller, intimate and local setting within France.

The delegation then headed to beautiful Switzerland, where we found Geneva to be completely breathtaking. The temperatures of the European winter had cooled further and that only made the hot panini from the side street food stalls taste even more divine. Roasted chestnuts, brass bands and gorgeous, extravagant stores set among the enveloping hills and cobbled streets. We all fell for Geneva after a late afternoon lake cruise that left us numbed and in awe of true beauty.

The team bonding continued as we flew to Amsterdam and travelled north to Den Haag in The Netherlands, yet so did the jet lag. The Hague International Model United Nations 40th Annual Session was undoubtedly the highlight of many of our lives so far. Meeting students from America, England, The Netherlands and especially the Australian delegation was wonderful. Each delegation took a different stance on the issues, ensuring no moment was dull. While we all approached the heated debates with lively Kiwi flare, we were blown away by the sheer magnitude

of the conference. 3,500 students from all over the globe met to focus for five days on the issues facing the world today – from HIV/AIDS, climate change, malaria and severe water shortages to child soldiers, human rights and globalisation. The conference exposed our delegation of 16 secondary school students to the structure of the UN – its powerful yet non-binding decisions, its bureaucracy and inherent frustrations, all of which we all absorbed like sponges.

Twelve members of the New Zealand delegation represented the landlocked country of Bhutan, where Gross National Happiness is measured over Gross Domestic Product, while four members (including myself) represented the International Monetary Fund as a non-governmental organisation. Although NGOs do not have voting rights at an Assembly, we discovered that we have the power to inform and sway the result of a forum, which you can be sure

we tried our hardest to achieve. Offering economic advice and exploring policies became our job for the week at the conference. While in The Hague, the European lifestyle must of course be abided by and when one is in a city of so many excited teens, one must indeed enjoy the thrills of becoming a Dutch youth, even if for only a week... Good times were to be had (within reason of course!). With a real ethos of working hard and playing harder, we all emerged with many stories from inside and outside the conference centre.

Being billeted with Dutch host families for a week was wonderful for all of us, as we felt fully submerged in culture, customs and a friendly family environment (the home cooking was fantastic). It was most definitely a growth experience – one that has been life shaping. The skills that have been implanted in each and every member of the "troops", as we became known, will be carried with us and treasured for the rest of our lives. Most importantly these are: to be yourself, to hold firm to your morals and stay strong on issues you feel are truly important, whether they may be provocative, sensible or outrageous. And of course, just have fun!

By Zara Brouwers



Zara under the Notre Dam.



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Dominica Wearne in action.

Oakura Pony Club News

By Diane Alder

The Pony Club season is rocking on, with ODE ("one-day events") almost every weekend now. For those of you who aren't aware, one-day events comprise the three riding disciplines of dressage, show-jumping and cross country all in one day. In the past couple of weeks there were ODEs at Inglewood and Hawera, and in both these events Oakura Pony Club riders did extremely well.

At the Inglewood ODE Jordan Giltrap riding "Silver Buff" came first in the under-10s with the only double clear in her section (a clear round in show and cross country). Bronte Alder on "Husky" got double clear too and came 2nd in the Introductory Rider under-21s. Anna Hinton came first in the 11, 12 and 13 years. Sophie Anderson came first in the A1 riding "Clifton Polarize", Zoë Laing-Aitken on "Yours Truly" came 2nd followed by Andrea Brewster 3rd on "Beyonce" and Anna Hinton 4th on "Oddspot". In the Novice Horse Kelsi Bolstad and Hayley Beekman came first.

At Hawera's ODE Jordan Giltrap again won the under-10s. Jess Knudsen came first in the 11, 12 and 13 years. Anna Hinton won the Dorothy Campbell class riding "Oddspot", and then came second in the 11, 12 and 13 years on "Sexy B".

During the Taranaki eventing season, the Nicholson Shield is awarded at each event to the pony club who have the top four riders placed overall. At the end of the season the Shield is given to the club that held it the most times, to keep for the rest of the year. Oakura Pony Club won the Nicholson Shield in both the Inglewood and Hawera ODEs, which is a great indicator of exactly how well our little club is doing.

Oakura and Okato pony clubs are joining forces to plan and set the cross country courses for the North Taranaki ODE, being held at the Graylings' property in Okato this year. Then of course there was the Horse of the Year on 5-8 March in Hastings, the huge annual national event. Oakura riders Dominica Wearne and Caroline Beekman represented Taranaki. Oakura will also be represented in the Taranaki team at the North Island Games by riders Amber Parkes (riding "Hammervarian") and Catherine West (riding "First Impulse").

Our next Oakura Pony Club rally is on 20 March, and the end-of-season Gymkhana on 19 April. If you're interested in joining the Oakura Pony Club, please ring our Club chairperson Linda Knudsen on 752 7560 or secretary Diane Alder on 752 1008.

Anyone for tennis?

What a fantastic season so far for the Oakura Tennis Club. As the second round of competition progresses, Oakura teams and individuals are proving to be tough opposition on the courts.

Our Club fields no fewer than twelve teams this season in various grades, with competitors ages ranging from age eight through to sixty-something.

The tennis week starts for four of our teams on a Monday morning, when the Midweek Ladies' Doubles is played throughout the region. Depending on grade and aspirations, teams travel as far as Patea to engage in socially competitive, competitively social, or indeed, socially social tennis.

Friday evenings the Club is represented by our three junior teams, with many players enjoying their first round of competition.

The remaining teams play Saturday, which includes Youth, B grade, Soffe Cup, A2 and Presidents (over thirty-fives), who usually enjoy a game of doubles followed by a beer or wine.

At the beginning of February, Miaana and Josh Walden, both members of the Hareb Deken Soffe Cup team, progressed through to the quarter-finals of the 2008 Midlands Mortgage Trust Lawn Tennis Open Championship – a competition which fields the top players from all over New Zealand. This was a fantastic achievement by the siblings, and we congratulate them and wish them all the best in their future tennis.

We would also like to congratulate all competitors within the Club and wish them well for the rest of the season, whatever grade they may be.

Though many of our members enjoy different levels of competition, the Club also has many social members who enjoy the use of the turf courts (not available to non-members) throughout the year. Members also have the opportunity to attend coaching clinics at the Club, run by John Salsbury of Palmerston North. John is a professional tennis coach and the Club has been very fortunate in securing his services for all ages and levels in both doubles and singles clinics. Keep an ear out for the next time John will be conducting a session.

Anyone interested in joining the Club, in any capacity, can call Club President Dave Marshall on 752 7370, or Treasurer Becky Bruckner on 752 7474.

Watch this space to find out how the season unfolds as our teams progress towards playoffs.

Thanks for your support.

Oakura Tennis Club

Kaitake Netball 2008

The Kaitake Netball Club is entering a team in the Coastal Netball Competition on Wednesday nights in the Sandford Event Centre in Opunake. The season runs from about May to July (to be confirmed) and games are between 6pm and 10pm.

We're looking for a squad of 12 (max) committed players to allow flexibility throughout the season.

If you're interested, we need to know NOW. Please contact either Jo Hill (752 7899) or Bob Fleming (752 7048).

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Dressage for Catherine



Catherine West with Cody left and The Zeus.

Local teenager Catherine West has a passion for horses and in particular, a passion for the discipline of dressage. Over the past wee while Catherine has racked up quite a cache of cups and ribbons, and the talented, dedicated teenager has her sights set on bigger and better goals.

Catherine (13 years) has been riding for six years and competing in dressage for two. Why dressage?, I ask, and Catherine sagely answers that it is the complication of dressage that she loves – it is a challenge to master and takes a lot of practice. And it is a lot of practice and hard work. Catherine is out riding nearly every evening and is not usually seen indoors until after 7pm at night, and most weekends are jam-packed with events around Taranaki and New Zealand. Mum and dad, Jo and Chris, are the dedicated, behind-the-scenes stable hands who support Catherine in her passion. They are justifiably proud of her achievements and work ethic.

Catherine began riding at Clearwater Riding School and now has lessons with Vanessa Way, who Catherine says is her very valued mentor. Catherine has a long term goal to get to the Olympics but in the meantime is wishing Vanessa into the New Zealand team.

Her biggest achievement to date has been winning the Level Two championship on her horse, "The Zeus", in the New Zealand Young Rider Championship, 21 years and under division (remember Catherine is only 13).

Catherine is also the No. 1 junior rider for Taranaki Pony Club and her team finished 6th in New Zealand. In the FEI Dressage World Challenge, Catherine finished 2nd in the 12 –14 years section. She also won the Central Districts Level Two championship in dressage, the Taranaki Level Two championship and was placed 4th in the North Island Open Level Two dressage championship.

Catherine has three horses – Sally, a 22-year-old; The Zeus, a 15-year-old Percheron TB X; and a handful of a lad called Cody, a beautiful, very spirited and mischievous 7-year-old grey (16.1 hands). As well as being a very talented horsewoman, Catherine is also a talented netball player, having represented Taranaki for two years as goal attack. Two years ago Catherine was named the Year 7 Player of the Year. Currently Catherine attends Spotswood College and is hoping to represent the school in netball in the upcoming season. When asked what other hobbies she had, Catherine had to catch her breath and say she didn't have time for anything else – not surprising!

By Kim Ferens



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Slow Food Taranaki

Hello Foodies

Our Blueberry Picking Picnic on Waitangi Eve had a real international flavour. It was delightful to have new families with children from France, Taiwan, Columbia and Finland come along to a Slow Food Taranaki event. Knowing that the kids were romping on orchard grass and chomping on blueberries grown by our hosts Christine and Christof with only natural seaweed and biological control sprays offered a positive setting for our evening's discussion of gardening, food and cooking. Many thanks to our hosts for welcoming us back to their lovely, busy and inspiring homesite.

I've asked my partner, Bruce Miller, if he'd be willing to run a *Knife Sharpening* Slow Food event in the coming months and he's agreed that would be a good idea. If we can set up the grinding stones in "the shed", we may extend the experience to include garden tools such as spades, shovels and hoes. So if you're keen to hone your edges, please give me an email (nelle.rose@xtra.co.nz) expressing your interest, and we'll set a date for a Saturday or Sunday *Afternoon Tea* that whets our appetites and our practical culinary and gardening tools.

Enjoying the sunny summer as slowly as possible ...

Nelle

Slow Food Taranaki

Co-Convivium Leader and Networking Coordinator, Taranaki Environment Centre

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GETTING WET!



Oakura Boardriders Update

Unless you have been asleep under a rock, you'd know that Paige Hareb has continued her great form with a win in a Pro Junior in Coffs Harbour, beating Sally Fitzgibbons, the winner of the Billabong Junior World Champs and present No. 1 of the Pro Junior series. The win puts Paige firmly in the No. 2 position and is a great confidence boost for the rest of her season. I'm sure all of Oakura is wishing her the best. Her year has been set up for a full on assault at the World Qualifying Series, with the eventual goal of a place on the World Tour. If successful, she'll be only the second Kiwi to get there, following in the steps of Maz Quinn and a great achievement.



Paige Hareb.

Over the weekend of 23-24 February, the Boardriders held a Learn to Surf day, which Paige was involved with along with members of the Club. By all accounts the day was a success and loved by all the kids who attended. If you have any feedback or ideas on this type of initiative, please pass them on to a Committee member and we can put it into the planning of more of these days.

The New Zealand Billabong Pro Junior was being held on the Taranaki Coast in early March, with the assistance of the Oakura Boardriders. This brought a lot of Australian and other international competitors into the province and was a chance for the local juniors to have a go against world class competition.

The weekend of 23-24 February also saw the third event in the Corona Crown held at Mount Maunganui. Unfortunately it was another weekend of shocking weather and waves, with "big swells and howling onshore winds" on the first day and, just to finish it off, torrential rain the second day. All in all a very unpleasant weekend, especially for those of us who were spectators, and from comments of the competitors not overly enjoyable for them either. The contest saw most Taranaki competitors fall at the quarter finals stage.

By Brent

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Americarna rolls through town



If the number of cars in the Americarna parade were any indication of the event's success, then you could safely say it was a roaring, tooting, waving success.

Car after car after motorbike revved their way down Oakura's Main Street on 22 February. Spectators lined both sides of the street and every road corner from Oakura to New Plymouth boasted groups of google-eyed admirers. The road gang putting in the sewerage line came to a halt as the procession wound up the Tapuae hill.

Doug Hislop was out with his video camera, getting footage for YouTube, and says he loved the grunty sound of the cars. Little Gina Fraser had a great time with her mum, Bob, learning her colour wheel. As for me, I loved watching the people in the cars – they were having such a good time.

So here's a bouquet to the Americarna organisers – fantastic spectacle, wonderful people – the stuff of dreams for most of us!

By Kim Ferens



A gem on the waterfront



Golden Burmese Pearls.

Rachell Wills, Manager.



In November last year Rob Wright of Moana Ringcraft launched a gem of a business down on New Plymouth's waterfront on Oceanview Parade. Ocean Gem Gallery is nestled amongst the busy hub of established businesses like Hunting & Fishing, Gusto and Chaddies, and is an ocean-themed retail shop selling quality jewellery, kitchenware, knick-knacks, books and cards, all with a touch of the sea about them.

Rachell Wills of Omata is the manager and has a wealth of knowledge about paua and pearls, having managed the original Rainbow Abalone Pearl business for eight years.

Ocean Gem Gallery showcases some of Rob's fabulous craftsmanship with natural paua pearls, freshwater pearls, Burmese pearls complemented with gorgeous precious stones. Rob has made these into necklaces, rings, bracelets and brooches. In fact, Ocean Gem Gallery has one of the world's largest collections of natural paua pearls and these will soon be on display.

Among the many handmade ocean-themed products in the store are Chatham Island paua shells in varying sizes, kina shells, aluminium platters and kitchenware, scarves and lights. Rachell says they have a lot of happy customers who come from overseas and especially England, but while they do cater to the tourist, they are not a souvenir shop in the traditional sense and the main part of their business is to the local market. Rachell says it is working out well, with the surrounding businesses all complementing each other – the bloke might go to Hunting & Fishing, so the lady goes to Ocean Gem Gallery, then they both go out for lunch at either Gusto, the Galleon or the Bach!

Other Oakura local artists also feature in the shop with a display of Fay Looney's books, cards and postcards and Jane Dove Juneau's prints, books, cards and postcards. Anne Marie Vincent has paintings on the walls, featuring the sea and shells.

And of course Ocean Gem Gallery has the wonderful whale mural on the seaward wall. It has been preserved from the Rainbow Abalone Pearl days and makes a glorious backdrop to the Gallery. One of the most popular exhibits in the shop is the fully functioning rock pool situated just inside the door, which is home to various fish and crayfish – a must see for children and adults alike.

Ocean Gem Gallery is open seven days from 10am to 4pm.

By Kim Ferens

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Headlice

Sometimes the start of a new school term can bring an outbreak of headlice.

Headlice is not a sign of poor hygiene! They actually prefer clean hair as they find it easier to feed on a clean scalp, they can spread wherever groups of people work, play or live together.

Headlice are small, flat, insects about 2 - 3mm long. They live on the human scalp which provides food and warmth for their eggs to hatch.

Headlice cannot jump, fly or swim, they spread from person to person by swinging from hair to hair or traveling on personal items such as hair brushes and hats.

Signs of head lice can include **itchiness and scratching** especially towards the back of the scalp and neck. **White specks(eggs)** stuck firmly to the base of the hair or close to the scalp and **lice on the scalp** can sometimes be seen, this can be difficult depending on the colour of the hair, and they can live anywhere throughout the hair.

To make it easy to search for head lice it is best to wet the hair and comb a fine tooth comb through the hair over a sheet of white paper focussing on the area behind the ears, around the hairline and on the crown of the head.

There are many ways to treat headlice, both natural and medicated, it is important to always **read the instructions and follow them carefully** as every headlice treatment is different. For best results use enough of the product to cover all the hair and leave on the scalp for as long as stated. Combing the hair with a fine tooth comb after treatment is also an important step to damage any surviving lice and remove dead ones. Repeating the treatment in 7 days time is essential, this will kill any of the remaining lice that may have hatched in between treatments.

To reduce the spread of headlice it pays to check hair regularly, tie long hair back, to prevent it from coming in contact with other peoples hair, do not share hairbrushes/combs or hats or swimming towels, make sure everyone in your family has their own, cut nails short to prevent scratching and infection, scrub nails daily to remove eggs or lice being trapped in behind the nail and begin treatment at the first sign of infection.

For more information about headlice treatment and prevention phone or call Oakura pharmacy.



It has been another busy summer at the SPCA Animal Shelter on Colson Road in New Plymouth.

In the hour that has passed since I tried to start writing, we have welcomed six kittens, one hedgehog, two rabbits and three very hungry baby birds – as our manager said, all we needed was a partridge in a pear tree.

In November we had our Annual Appeal – our big fundraiser of the year. Thank you to those who helped us collect and those who donated so generously. The appeal was very successful. And a big thank you to Heydon Priest Garage and Oakura Panel Repairs who support us throughout the year.

HELP! To run our animal shelter to its full potential we need help. We rely on volunteers for a couple of hours a day, ideally 8am – 10am, but 9am – 11am is also helpful. During this time we feed and care for the animals at the shelter, then walk the dogs. It is really rewarding work and we desperately need more helpers. We also need gardening done, at any time of day. If you can help or know of someone who could, please phone us 758 2053 or email np.sPCA@xtra.co.nz attn Jackie.

A thought for the day *"Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar."*



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Oakura Pony Club Equestrian Day riders.

Equestrian Day

At the end of the 2007 school year we held our annual Equestrian Day. Ten of our senior pupils took part in the event. The riders were: Catherine West, Georgia Ferris, Nina McLean, Jess Knudsen, Anna Hinton, Rosa Garner, Ruby Tinson, Eva and Alex Reid, and Jordan Giltrap.

This event is an opportunity for our pupils who are part of the Oakura Pony Club to show the rest of the school their skills and how much work and dedication goes into this sport.

The final results were: Winner of the Tasman Oil Tools Equestrian Cup: 1st Equal – Catherine West & Jessica Knudsen, 3rd – Anna Hinton, 4th – Jordan Giltrap.

Beach Cleanup Day

On Monday 18 February, the whole school once again took part in our annual beach cleanup. From Ahu Ahu to Corbett Park, the pupils scoured the beach, the dunes and the foreshore as well as the reserves for rubbish accumulated over the summer. While they did find heaps of often unpleasant (nappies), dangerous (glass) and surprising (a wallet) rubbish, we would think it was marginally less than other years. Maybe the message is getting through, at least to most visitors to our beautiful beach.

After the cleanup, which has actually been happening since the 1970s, the kids had a great picnic, swim, creative sand play and games day at the Oakura River at Corbett Park. This is always an excellent day and, blessed with ideal weather, was a great start to the year's programme. Our next stop was the Marae on the 28th February where we had a powhiri and fun day.

Grace Powell

Congratulations to Max Hardie-Boys on winning the Senior Boys Swimming Championship Cup at the recent swimming sports held at the Okato Swimming Pool.

Congratulations to Abigail Cullen on winning the Girls Swimming Championship Cup.



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TOM welcomes new journalists to the team



TOM journos James, Jessica, Max and Jahla.

Oakura School students Jessica Clark, James Coujhtrey, Max Hardie-Boys and Jahla Tran-Lawrence are our reporters on the ground for Oakura School. They will research, interview, edit, photograph and write future articles on the happenings within the school. I went along to meet and profile them.

Name: Jessica Clark

Age: 11 years

Teacher: Mrs Taylor

Interests and hobbies: Ballet and hip-hop dance since four years old, but only for enjoyment, not to compete. Playing the piano since seven years old. Drawing and photography.

Family: Dad – Brian, mum – Vincenca and a sister – Lea. We moved to New Zealand from California when I was three and have been in Oakura for two years.

Why do you want to be a TOM journalist? I enjoy writing and am curious about things, plus I like taking photos of the natural environment.

Name: James Coujhtrey

Age: 12 years

Teacher: Mr Dillon

Interests and hobbies: I like watching sport, especially rugby, and I like playing tennis, which is fun. I also like body surfing.

Family: Dad – Keith, mum – Shona and a sister – Caitlin. Oh, and a dog – Chester.

Why do you want to be a TOM journalist? I enjoy writing and I want to be a journalist when I am older. I am a curious person and I enjoy doing research. (Pause in interview as James pulls out a tooth and examines it closely! Yuk!)

Name: Max Hardie-Boys

Age: 12, nearly 13 years

Teacher: Mr Dillon

Interests and hobbies: Competitive tennis, skiing and soccer, and other sports for fun, like surfing. Reading adventure and spy novels by Anthony Horowitz, and also writing.

Family: Dad John, mum Jan, a sister – Madeline, a brother – Isaac and a dog –Harvey.

Why do you want to be a TOM journalist? I like writing and photography, and I am interested in finding out things about people and places. One day I want to be a brain surgeon because I love medical stuff!

Name: Jahla Tran-Lawrence

Age: Not disclosed!

Teacher: Mrs Taylor

Interests and hobbies: I like dancing, rock climbing, reading and computers. I read Philip Pullman, and David and Leigh Eddings.

Family: Dad – Tran, mum – Belinda and two sisters – Siani and Bella, pet cats – Smokey and Prince Charming.

Why do you want to be a TOM journalist? I love photography and I like to be up to date with what's going on!

We wish our young new writers all the best in their new position and I am sure their enthusiasm and charm will mean we enjoy many, many interesting reports from Oakura School.

By Kim Ferens

kaitake kindergarten

Gardening with children is fun or "Wow, how does that happen?"

Curiosity is a wonderful thing and something that most children have in abundance: a great deal of which has been generated by our most recent project.

Before the Christmas holidays, the children planted some sunflower seeds. They watered them and kept them in a light, sunny spot and before too long, small green shoots started to appear. The small seedlings were well looked after during the holidays and when the children returned to Kindy, they were amazed to see how much their plants had grown.

Many of the children are now making sunflower inspired pictures to decorate the Kindy walls. This is the first stage of what is termed



Michael in sunflower heaven.

"observational drawing". Eleanor and Robyn took the time to talk to the children about the different aspects of the plants – flower, stalk and leaves. Observational drawing encourages our children to notice different details of an object and then allows them to recreate these through a variety of art media.

Small projects like these can lead to a life-long interest, they can encourage a love of nature, an interest in eating vegetables (something a lot of parents strive to achieve) and if you have a four-year-old like mine, a fascination with all things creepy-crawly and slimy.

Happy gardening, *Gill*

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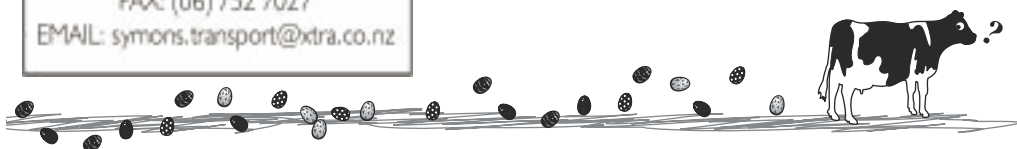
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omata school news

Property matters

You may notice some action around the tennis court this term. The Board of Trustees is having the area enlarged so we can have two tennis courts during summer as well as a full-sized basketball/netball court during the winter months. We have many students playing miniball and basketball during the winter and we have never had a court at school for them to practice on. The new courts will also provide an area for inline hockey and a volleyboard for soccer kicking on one side and tennis volleys on the other. Having the new courts will be a great asset to the community as well during the after-school hours.

The second phase of this development is to enlarge the carpark area to accommodate the many vehicles trying to park in the morning and afternoons. Many thanks to the TSB Community Trust and the Home and School Committee for their contributions towards the cost of the courts, with the balance being funded out of the school property money.

Another development has been the installation of an artificial cricket pitch last month. Our thanks to the Cricket Association and The Southern Trust for their financial support. We will now be able to host the senior games at Omata.

Schools rely extensively on donations, grants and fundraising these days to supply the very best facilities and support for students. Our Home and School Committee has had great support from these businesses for our Gala this month and we would sincerely like to thank them for their generous donations:

Regards

Karen

The Home & School Committee would like to thank the following companies for their support towards our gala fundraising event

4 Square, Oakura	Health 2000	Pure Beauty
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Devon Hotel	New Plymouth Vet Group	The Saltwater Cottage
Devon West Pharmacy	Nickels & Dimes	Tom Thumb
El Condor	Oakura Beach Camp	Top Town Cinema
Elco Canvas	Oakura Pharmacy	Toyworld
Espresso	OfficePlan	Treehouse Bar
Etcetera	Okurukuru	Trick or Treat
Firestone	Pak 'n' Save	Vertigo
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oakura playcentre

We have been lucky enough to purchase a new camera, printer and laminator, which are making it so much easier to add wonderful photos to our learning stories and child portfolios. Thank you to Powerco for the laminator. Here is a sample of what to expect your child to do at Oakura Playcentre!

Playcentre is a great way to meet people in your community, make friends and learn about children. Our session times are: Monday & Wednesday, 9am – 12pm. For more information, phone Melissa Newton on 752 1056.

See you there!



James and Catherine having fun in a box!



Chester enjoys the digger with 'site supervisor' Sue!



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clubs & groups calendar

Plunket Coffee Mornings:

Wednesday, 9.15am to 11am (please arrive before 10am) in the Oakura Board-riders Club.

Mini Groovers:

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

Playcentre

Playcentre, Donnelly Street
Monday and Wednesday, 9am to noon.

Omata Playgroup:

Every 2nd Thursday from 13 March, 9.00am at the Omata Community Hall. All parents and preschoolers welcome.

St John's Omata:

Morning worship 10am 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

St James Church Oakura:

Morning worship 10am 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

Kung Fu:

Monday & Thursdays 6-7.30pm for 12 years and over.
454 Plymouth Rd, phone Joanna Smith-Holley 752 1016.

JKA Karate

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

Yoga:

Tuesday evenings 7.30 - 9.00pm, Sat mornings 9.00 - 10.30am.
Beginners welcome. Phone Sarsha 752 7977.

Oakura Art Group

Tuesdays 9.45am to 12 noon, February to late November
St James Church Hall.
Contact Pat Smith on 752 7515.

Senior Citizens:

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

Indoor Bowls:

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

Country and Western Club

Every 1st and 3rd Friday from 8pm
Contact Betty West, 89 Wairau Rd, Ph 752 7816.



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