

TAKE ONE MOMENT

FEBRUARY 2012

TOM OKATO

A Christmas Parade to Rival all Parades

Runner-up in the decorated bike competition
was Nicholas Roebuck, seen here with his
Dad, Frank Roebuck.

- more on pages 6 & 7



TAKE ONE MOMENT

TOM OKATO

TOM-OKATO is a free, monthly publication, delivered on the second Wednesday of the month to all homes and post-boxes from Timaru Road to Bayly Road.

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

E D I T O R I A L

If someone had said they were going to put on a Christmas parade in Okato that would better than that of New Plymouth and indeed most other New Zealand cities, and that they would then feed the entire village, one would have found it difficult to believe. But that is just what New Zeal Church did on Sunday, 11 December 2011. It was an amazing event, which brought the entire community together. It was made possible by the effort and generosity of church members who organised the event and donated food, others who made donations, and the Niwa family and their supporters who so generously put down the hangi. What an amazing effort. Thank you! We hope you enjoy the picture montage in the centre pages of this issue.

In this, the first issue of Okato TOM for 2012, it seems appropriate to take a look at our New Year's resolutions and review how they are going. Kerry's son-in-law, Chris, suggests that most of us just copy and paste last year's pledges and wishes everybody better luck this time round!

Kerryn Moffitt will be writing some stories this year. We welcome her to our team and look forward to bringing you lots of interesting and stimulating stories about local people and events.

'Til next month,

Milly and Kerry



**TOM dates to
remember for
March 2012
issue:**

Copy and ads -
13 February

Distribution -
24 February

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Ride and Win!

Send in your ride sharing stories (kim@thetom.co.nz) and go into the draw to win a \$30 music voucher. Liz Beck shares her story below.

Being the Council's Let's Go Travel Planner Liz is passionate about 'walking the talk' but living 27km out of town makes the usual walk, ride or bus choices tricky to commit to on a regular basis. That's where ridesharing comes in. "When I first moved into the area nearly a year ago I put a notice on Gloria and posters up in my local shops asking if anyone was interested in ridesharing and I have managed to rideshare most weeks since then," says Liz.

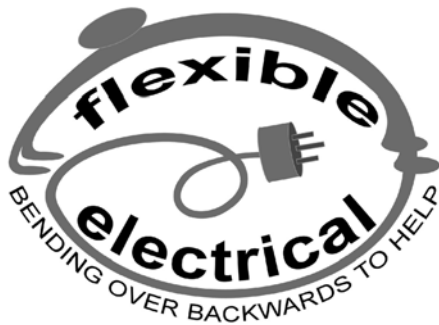
"The rideshare group that I share with have a loose arrangement where we send round emails at the end of the week to arrange rideshares for the following week as well as who's going to drive each trip."

Liz estimates she saves around \$85 a fortnight in petrol and she likes the way it has helped her to meet people in her community. She also acknowledges it makes her work smart as she can't always stay another five minutes to finish a task or answer an email. The only drawback to ridesharing that Liz has discovered is that she can't have impromptu drinks after work!

"What puts most people off ridesharing is the 'what ifs', but many workplaces have a 'guaranteed ride home' set up where there is a pool car to use in an emergency, but in 11 months of ridesharing I've never had to call on a system like that."

"No matter if you live rurally like me, or just five kilometres away by taking someone else to work you are reducing the number of cars on the road, saving money and maybe even building a great friendship!"

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Christchurch Rocks

The first thing you notice when you drive into Christchurch is that the gardens are dead. Not the ones around people's homes, but the ones in roundabouts and alongside roads; the ones usually looked after by the Council. This is not to say that the Council are neglecting their duties. Just that they have greater concerns than looking after the gardens of the Garden City.

They have earthquakes to worry about. And they might be in over their heads.

The 5.8 quake hits on the 23rd December and Liz and I watch the change that comes over the people in the room. The difference is bizarre. Logan (our 5 year old) shows indifference towards his first ever earthquake, whereas Liz's parents are hysterical as they clock up their ten thousandth. Ten thousand earthquakes in less than two years! You'd think they'd be used to it by now but obviously they aren't. Liz and I just wonder how long it's going to take. The house rocks, slides, and twists, or at least the land under it does. It's all over in less than ten seconds and I'm left feeling somewhat disappointed. Nothing fell. All falling things broke ages ago. I try not to be flippant but seeing John and Barbara running around like headless chooks makes it hard. Logan is the only one who follows correct earthquake procedure and has rolled himself into a turtle on the floor.

Barbara gets out the green Post-it notes she uses to mark new cracks. This is for when the building inspectors come back. Their house has Post-it notes in every room. But they're lucky. Their house isn't so bad. Others aren't so lucky.

I drive into Christchurch following the route I used to take when I worked there. A 5m high mound of gravel running for two miles beside the road is new. It's covering what used to be a 20m wide grass median strip.

The building where I worked is gone. Completed in 2009 it stood for 18 months. Now it's a vacant lot. Vacant lots are scattered all over the place and it's hard to remember what used to fill them.

Colombo Street is the main street of Christchurch and before coming here television had given me the impression that it would be closed off and deserted. It's not! It's packed



with people and cars. For every vacant lot there might be five shops still operating. It's Christmas and the place is packed.

I walk the length of Colombo Street and although it's ghoulish I admit that I'm looking for destruction. The Blue Jean Café is a pile of rubble and splintered wood. It's surrounded by security fences. I'm not alone in taking photos.

There are empty buildings sporting huge cracks and it's a bit unsettling walking beneath their awnings. Harvey Norman has relocated, its building is now a shell, boarded up and covered in scaffolding. The Stationery Warehouse is gone, as is the Funky Pumpkin. The IRS building is empty, its car park gone.

Central Christchurch is a Dead Zone. Colombo Street continues but access is denied due to a 2m high security fence separating us from what was Christchurch's business hub. Cathedral Square is hidden behind broken buildings. The Grand Chancellor looks like a high-rise car park now that its walls have been removed. The Crowne Plaza Hotel is split in half. A lot of the buildings look okay but their proximity to those about to collapse make them instant danger zones. Thousands of businesses have been displaced. Liz's old work building is gone. I walk along the security fence that will turn out to be 3.5km long. There are soldiers scattered here and there guarding the cordon. They look bored but happily pose for photos.

There's a shrine overlooking where the CTV building used to be. The fence is covered with flowers, photos and cards. It is here that two of my old workmates died, working in a building that had been marked safe after the September 4 quake. It's quiet and the CTV building has been wiped away. If not for the shrine I would not even have realised it had been located here. There's a card from someone wishing that she had known that her brother would only live to 33; she wouldn't have wasted so much time fighting with him. The card from his 6 year old son is worse. It's a weird feeling standing there where so many lost their lives. In the end you can only pay your respects and move on.

I follow the security fence all the way around to the new container mall in Cashel Street. It's fantastic. The company I used to work for have relocated here although pretty much everyone I knew has scarpered; one to Slovakia. The container shops are SOLID and some are so well disguised that you





could almost believe it wasn't a container. Apart from the cordoned off area Central Christchurch is vibrant and alive.

Another mate, Steve, is a mailman and has offered to show us around places he's discovered while doing his rounds. The absolute randomness of the earthquake's destruction is revealed when we drive down streets where one side has houses that are red stickered (unliveable) while opposite them the houses are fine. Likewise a green sticker house could be surrounded by red stickers. Some roads start fine and then drastically fall into liquefaction. There are metre-high piles of liquefaction outside houses while one street over everything is fine. Some roads still have portaloos. Temporary water hoses run alongside footpaths and emergency power cables are strapped halfway up power lines. You can instantly tell an abandoned house because the lawns are overgrown. We see a lot of broken chimneys, and a heap of houses sinking into the ground but nowhere do we see signs of vandalism. You'd expect empty houses to eventually have their windows smashed by vandals. But not one! No graffiti, nothing! Steve believes that Christchurch people have been through too much to tolerate that rubbish and that because everyone is in the same boat there's a kind of respect. Especially for those who have lost everything.

Two of my old workplaces and one of Liz's is gone. But who cares? They're only buildings. Christchurch will rebuild. There are containers stretched alongside the cliffs of Sumner to safeguard traffic against falling debris. Christchurch knows there will be more quakes. The news on TV would have us believe that Christchurch is a dying city. Scarred, yes. Dying? No way!

Christchurch You Rock!

By Jason Komene





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Okato's Community Christmas Parade and Hangi/Barbecue

Okato celebrated Christmas 2011 with a parade followed by a free community hangi and barbecue, which fed an estimated 750 people. There was a pipe band that included the Queen's Piper, Ross Duncan, about 25 floats, decorated bikes, vintage cars, marching girls and, of course, a very jolly Santa who arrived by sleigh. The occasion was organised by New Zeal Church, who would like to extend a huge "thank you" to everyone who made the event possible. They extend special thanks also to Allan Niwa and his partner, Christina, other family members and their helpers who so generously put down the hangi. This picture montage gives an overview of the occasion.

Written by Kerry Lilley

PHOTOS BY EMMA GRYLLS, KERRY LILLEY,
NICK FENNER, STEVE HOOKER, AND ANGELA
MCFETRIDGE



The pipe band warmed up, supervised by Robert Morgan. Left to right are Raewyn Lawn, Ross Duncan (the Queen's piper), Hamish Hislop, Treishka Morgan and Robert.



The decorated bikes were judged by Kate Lilley and Chris Rendall...



The wise men, Tom Taingahue, David Moffitt and Murray Burmeister, conferred before the parade.



... and first place was awarded to Jessie McDonald.



Okato Vet Clinic staff and their float, Snoopy's Christmas, ready to roll.



The winning float was by Care and Craft.



Sue Taingahue and Linda Hill admire the runner up float by Twilight Quilters.



St Patrick's float featured a nativity scene.



And New Zeal Church hoisted angels on high.



Santa had a treat for every child.



The hangi is lifted ...



... and served by Joy Burmeister, Meika Watson-Burrows, Kat Moffitt and Stella Bond.

TOM Sports



Inline Hockey

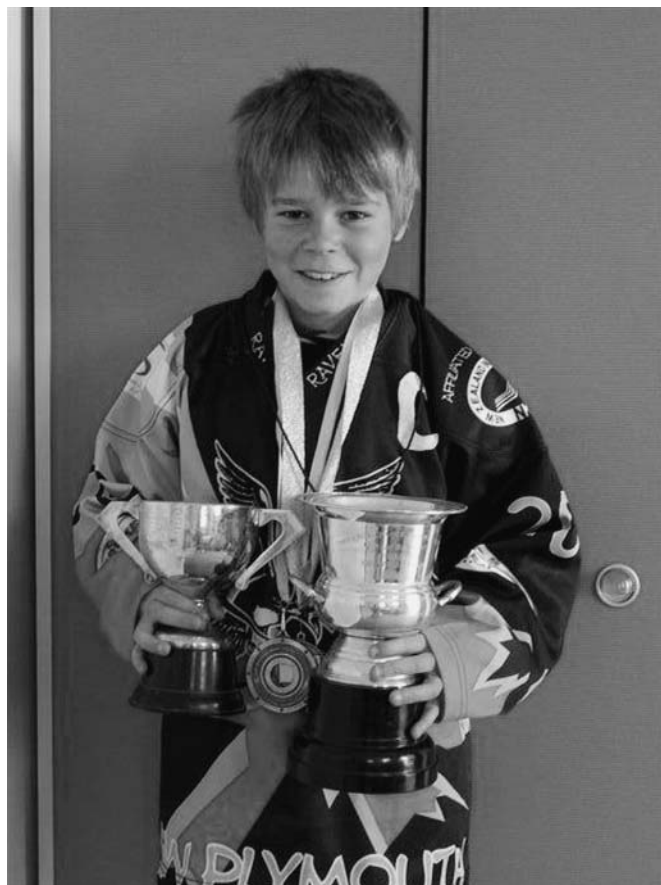
SELECTION FOR NZ TEAM

Hayden Luckin (aged 12) recently tried out for the New Zealand Inline Hockey Team (12 & Under). Hayden says there were two trials and he didn't think he did so well in the first one as he had had a sore foot, but thought he did better in the second trial. He was relieved to get the e-mail advising he was successful. Hayden says, "I was stunned really. I told Mum and Dad then was texting everyone. Then I had a look at the list to see who else was on the team. There was only one other player from New Plymouth, Jack Howatson, but I knew others from having played against them. I felt honoured to be in the New Zealand team."

Dad Jay says, "Hayden had set making the team as one of the goals for the season. For him to do it was a real achievement."

Mum Kelly says, "Hayden has never been one to sit and watch TV much and is always outside with a stick and puck, or bat and ball." Jay and Kelly are both very proud of him.

Teams are selected in ten grades for the Oceania Inline Hockey Championships, which alternates between New Zealand and Australia each year. This year it is conveniently being hosted in New Plymouth, from 13 to 18 April. Teams compete in a five-game series and the overall points winner is awarded with the Tasman Trophy (currently residing in Australia). Hayden says his team will have two weekends of training camps in New Plymouth, which will be their only opportunity to practise as a team. Other than that he will be working on his fitness at home. Hayden runs, swims and works out at the skate park. He is grateful to be allowed to use the Coastal Taranaki School gym to practise and have a few hits with his mates, as it is a long drive to his Ravens Club in Fitzroy. Kelly says that Hayden



A justifiably proud Hayden.

is dedicated to his own training and fitness and has a good understanding of what is required at that level of sport.

Hayden is an all-rounder on the hockey rink, playing both on defence and attack. Mostly he has been playing defence as he has a really long shot so can shoot well from the back. Hayden doesn't limit his sporting talent to inline hockey. He rates cricket just as highly and also enjoys field hockey, rugby and touch rugby. Hayden has a long-term goal also. When he's older he would love to be selected for the NZ Worlds Team and travel overseas to take part in an Inline Hockey Worlds Championship. In the meantime, well done on your NZ Team selection, Hayden — what a fantastic accomplishment! Let us know when you bring home that trophy.

Other locals who have also been selected for New Zealand teams are Kayden Gibson (U18) and Rodney Cruden-Powell (U14).

by Kerrin Moffitt



Hayden in action at the Nationals.

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Okato Playcentre

Happy New Year! First of all, we would like to thank Goodin Contracting for allowing us to be a part of the Okato Christmas Parade, and even chauffeuring us. It's a brave man who'll allow his truck to be festooned with tinsel and laden with resplendent fairies, miniature superheroes and jungle animals. Thanks, Mark.

Maybe 2012 will be the year that you learn to enjoy being with your infant/toddler/young child even more. I once gave a friend a very bad CD for her birthday. The idea was that with a single CD I could, by mere contrast, improve her entire collection. After all, there is nothing like a change of perspective to transform your experience. So it is with knowledge. Sometimes all it takes is a little understanding, and your world is created anew. Knowing what a child is capable of can transform the moments you share with your child. For example, it helped me when I found my toddler holed up in the pantry, happily smearing peanut butter all over himself, to remember that toddlers are impulsive, curious, and learn with their whole bodies.

Did you know that Playcentre provides free parent education, leading to an NZQA-recognised Playcentre Diploma in Early Childhood? "Easy, now," I hear you say, "the last time I generated a coherent thought it roared through the desolate landscape of my barren mind like a freight train." So, let's not rush things. If you choose Playcentre, you will be eased into training with a simple, 3-hour introductory course. Anything afterwards is optional. You may decide not to take it any further. But you might discover, since a fundamental component of the courses is learning through observation and experience with children, that you have come to know your child better. That may result in improved parent/child interactions, which may produce a happier home environment. You might be inspired to join your child's journey of discovery, learning alongside them as they explore. You might learn to value your child's play as meaningful, developmentally vital, and fun. You might respect that your learning is supported and enhanced by your relationships with other parents, rather than dependent on "experts". At the very least you'll get to stick your fingers in the paint and squish some clay.

New families are always welcome at our centre. Please feel free to drop in during session, or call or text Renee on 027-326 5479 if you have any questions. Playcentre sessions for 0-6 year olds run Tuesdays and Thursdays starting January 31, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.



The garden.

Emma
enjoying a
Lego-Fest.



The Christmas parade float.





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Coastal Young Farmers has just hosted the National Bank Young Farmer Contest 2012 at the end of last year (17 December). This completed a successful year for the new group, which has only been running for 6 months. They have had great reviews for the district final, not only from the contestants themselves but the other organisers and the public, giving praise on the quality of the modules and the standard to which the contestants had to reach. Mentioned too were the different modules and how each of them tested the contestants, allowing each one to show different strengths.

Following the practical day they held a quiz night where, after a series of industry, world and agricultural questions as well as an impromptu speech, the winner of the District Final was found. First place went to Cameron Shaw from Palmerston North Massey University Young Farmers. Second Place went to Dougan Butler from North Taranaki Club. Both will be competing in the National Bank Young Farmer Contest Taranaki and Manawatu Regional Final in March 2012. Our very own Daniel Fisher and Sam Lawn came third and fourth respectively.

Young Farmers would like to thank everyone who supported them with the day.



Cameron Shaw
completing the Riparian
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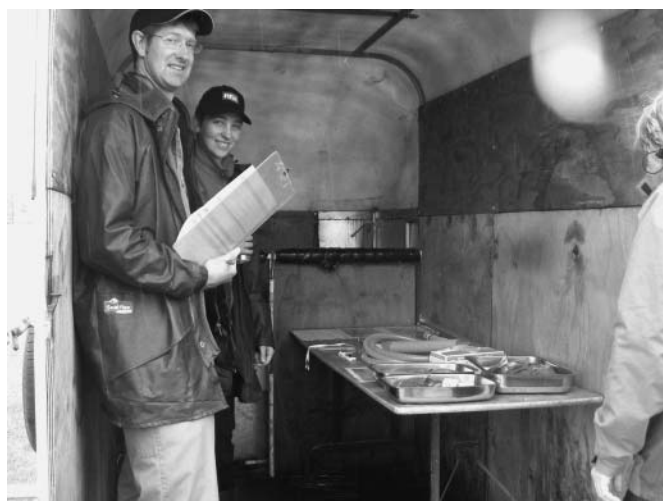
Coastal Young Farmers is still welcoming new members so if you are interested in finding out more or want to see what is involved, you are more than welcome to come along to our monthly meeting held the second Thursday of the month at the Stoney River Pub at 7.30pm.


Alexandra Lawn



Sean Richardson checking over the Chainsaw
for this module.

Pete Morgan and Ashley Downes with the vet
quiz for the Animal Health module.







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Coastal Garden Circle

Meet every third Monday of the month. Contact Rae Hooker 752 4086.

GymSports Oakura

Gymnastics for youngsters from 5 to 9 years old at Oakura Hall every Wednesday afternoon during the school term, 4-5pm. For further information phone NP GymSports on 06-758 8277 or 027-341 4200.

Highway 45 Craft

Meet weekly on Monday mornings 10am - 12noon at members' houses. Contact Iris Putt 752 4182.

Historical Society

Meets quarterly in the Community Trust Hall. Contact Iris Putt 752 4182.

JKA Karate, Okato

Monday and Wednesday 6pm - 7.30pm in Coastal Taranaki School Gymnasium. Contact Nicci 752 4529 or 027 259 6223.

Kaitake Community Board

Teresa Goodin (027) 454 3585 or teresagoodin@xtra.co.nz

New Zeal Church

Service 10.30am, Sundays at St Luke's Hall. Contact Angela and Kevin McFetridge 752 4993.

Okato Bowling Club

Club day held every Sunday at 9.30am onwards. President Bruce Peacock 752 4538, Secretary Fiona Liddall 752 4509, Contact women's section Lauren Bright ph 752 4874.

Okato Co-operating Parish Women's Fellowship

Meet bi-monthly, first Wednesday of the month in St Luke's lounge, 1pm. Lorraine Whittle 752 4359. Harvey 752 4568.

Okato Fire Brigade

Weekly. Monday night trainings, 7pm - 9pm.

Okato Lions

Contact Merv Hooker, ph 752 4086.

Okato Squash Club

Club nights on Mondays from 7pm. Everyone welcome. Phone Cheryl 06-752 4097.

Playcentre

Main Road, Okato (over the Stony Bridge). Tuesday and Thursday, 9.30 - 12.30pm. Contact Rachel 752 4463.

Playgroup

St Lukes Hall, Main Road, Okato. Wednesday morning 10am-12 noon. Contact Danelle 752 4916 or Angie 752 4445.

Plunket

Meetings held every second Thursday of the month. Jaclyn 752 4872.

Pony Club

Contact Michelle Beekman on 7527056.

Probus

Meet every third Friday at the Oakura Golf Club. Contact Margaret Hodges 752 1371.

St Patrick's Church, Okato

Saturday evening mass 7pm.
Inquiries to Steak Goodin 752 8160 or Nora Fox 752 4062.

St Paul's Church

10am services. Congregate first and third Sunday of the month. Contact Jan Putt 752 4188.

St Peter's Guild

Meet 4th Friday of each month. Angela Montgomery 752 7738.

Tennis Club

Contact Maree Moffitt 752 8107 or Raewyn Lawn 752 4466.

Tumahu Golf Club

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Tumahu Rural Women

Meet every second Wednesday of the month, 1pm at alternate members' houses. Contact Joyce Downes 753 4122.

Warea Tennis Club

Contact Jan Brophy 06 763 8666.

Please contact Milly 752 4425 for any additional listings or amendments.