

Māra hūpara playground for Parakai

Plans have been revealed for a large playground incorporating traditional Māori play elements, along with a community recreation area, at Kaipātiki Reserve (formerly Parakai Reserve).

Initial design concepts were shared with the community at an open day in Te Whare Oranga o Parakai at the reserve on Saturday, May 29.

The plans are the latest step in the restoration of Kaipātiki Reserve, which is governed by Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara, a management board made up equally of iwi and Auckland Council members.

The concept for the new playground incorporates māra hūpara (traditional Māori play elements), a basketball court, and barbeque and picnic table spaces. The redevelopment will also include new public toilet facilities, paths, and enhancements to the reserve entrance and parking.

The new toilets will be closer to Parkhurst Road to make them more easily accessible by the general public, and a boardwalk will link to the bus stop.

Jane Sherard, chairperson of Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara, hopes work will start on the new facilities around September and be completed in the first quarter of next year.

The concept design aims to appreciate the Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara people, lands,



• An artist's impression of māra hūpara elements which will be part of the new playground
- image: Resilio Studio / Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara

waters, heritage and ancestry. It has been guided by prominent artist and designer Bernard Makoare (Te Uri o Hau; Ngāti Whātua; Te Waiariki; Te Kai Tutae; Te Rarawa; Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu).

In addition to creating a hub for recreational activity, the project aims to enhance the mauri (life force) of Kaipātiki and Te Awa Kahawai (the Parakai geothermal field) so it is healthy and remains a taonga tuku iho (treasure) to be passed on to future generations.

Members from Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara were on hand during the open day, alongside staff and the designers Resilio Ltd, to talk to locals about the plans and the inspiration behind the designs.

There was a free sausage sizzle, games, and a chance to see some of the proposed

play space features.

Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara have a long connection with the geothermal springs in the reserve - springs which were renowned for their natural healing qualities.

The Crown formally returned the reserve jointly to Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara and Auckland Council in 2013 and restored the original name Kaipātiki under the Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara Claims Settlement Act 2013.

Restoration and development of the 18ha reserve is an outcome of the Kaipātiki Reserve Management Plan which sets a vision for the reserve for the next 50 years.

The first phase has already been completed, with the removal of the former

• To page 2

Inside...

- South Kaipara Food Plan ... Pg 3
- Health lunches programme ... Pg 4
- Safety gear for fire brigade ... Pg 5
- Flora Thirkettle obituary ... Pg 6
- Ernie Smith obituary ... Pg 9
- Youth Orchestra playing here... Pg 15

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editorial

It's exciting to see the plans for development at Kaipātiki Reserve in Parakai (see front page). There are a lot of young families in this area, and a new playground will be very welcome - as will all the other facilities planned for the wider community.

And what a playground! None of the rainbow-coloured plastic and metal tubing that seems to have become the default at most playgrounds. Incorporating traditional play elements is a great way to bring some Māori cultural focus to the fore in a way that will seamlessly blend with locals' everyday lives.

It isn't the first of its kind - a māra hūpara playground opened in Mt Roskill a couple of years ago and is an entrant in the 2021 Landezine International Landscape Awards, and the recently-opened Kaukapakapa playground incorporates some traditional features.

Hopefully this is a sign the overly-homogenised playgrounds of the past few decades may become a less common sight.

On the social front, it's great to see local initiatives happening to ensure everyone has access to good, healthy food - see our articles on page 3 about the South Kaipara Food Plan and on page 4 about the local roll-out of healthy lunches in schools.

- Dave Addison, Editor

Feedback closes soon on highway safety

Public feedback on improving safety on state highways in north-west Auckland and Northland - including SH16 between Waimauku and Wellsford - closes on Monday, June 14.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency is seeking community feedback about current speed limits and other safety concerns on the highways, and also to gain local knowledge about how the roads are used.

The roads being reviewed have been identified as ones where lower speed limits could help prevent deaths and injuries.

"We'd like people to tell us about places that are hard to get to or from, how safe they feel crossing the highway or letting their children walk or cycle to school in certain areas, and if there are any other sites or information that we need to be especially aware of," says director of regional relationships, Steve Mutton.

Responses will help determine where speed limit changes could improve safety.

Feedback can be left online at: <http://nzta.govt.nz/northlandspeed> or email: northland.speed.reviews@nzta.govt.nz.

Māra hūpara playground cont...

• From page 1

campground, vegetation work, and reinstatement of grassed areas to return the front reserve to open community space.

A new campground now sits in the mid-reserve and has a three-bedroom bach, a two-bedroom tiny home (with two more to be on site shortly), and fourteen self-contained campervan sites - all of which can be booked for short-term stays through Auckland Council's accommodation booking system.

In time, the middle and back areas of the reserve will also be enhanced.

Jane says the board is excited about the future of Kaipātiki as a revitalised community space.

"Over the last several years much work has been done on planning a future for Kaipātiki as a place for people to share and enjoy - a place that supports the local economy, enhances the unique features of the reserve, and reflects Ngāti Whātua and the local communities.

"The reserve is well-known for the Parakai Springs hot pool complex and the kaupapa of creating a new community space alongside the new accommodation offerings is an important next step towards elevating Kaipātiki as a destination in the South Kaipara, and restoring the whenua to its historical and cultural prominence as a place of healing."

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'Food Plan' on the way

A collective of local social and community organisations is working on a 'food security' plan for the South Kaipara to make sure everyone can grow, buy, share, and eat good food - now and into the future.

The South Kaipara Food Plan follows on from the formation during Covid-19 lockdown last year of the Kai Collective, which was an emergency response to food insecurity in the local community.

But Ana Christmas, executive director of Kindred Family Services in Helensville, says it's an ongoing problem which needs a community response to solve.

"Covid just put a magnifier on an issue that was already there," she says.

The Ministry of Social Development has provided \$20,000 in funding to develop a plan by mid-July, and representatives from Kindred, the South Kaipara Men's Trust, Whiti Ora o Kaipara Charitable Trust, Helensville District Health Trust, Te Ha Oranga, the Helensville Recycling Centre, plus other community members are working toward that now.

"It's important that it's community-led," says Ana, "so solutions come from the community, not a group of agencies."

"We're just setting the framework so anyone in the community can take on a particular project they're enthusiastic about and run with it."

Currently the focus is on getting as many suggestions from the community as possible, and a community dinner held recently to that end attracted around 50 people.

Ana is keen for as wide a variety of people as possible to have their input, and suggests groups of friends, schools, workplaces and other organisations can hold 'food talks' to brainstorm ideas.

People are asked the same four questions:

- What does good food mean to you?
- What supports your community to get good food?
- What makes it hard for your community

to get good food?

- What could be done to increase your community's access to good food?

These questions can be answered online via a link from the South Kaipara Food Plan Facebook page, or visit: forms.gle/PSHkXd7tw5kYPWTV7.

"It's important the plan supports low income people, Māori and Pacific people, and single parents," says Ana.

Already a huge variety of suggestions have been made, including community gardens, lessons in preserving fruit and vegetables, community co-operatives to take advantage of bulk buying, marae-based fish smokers, kerb gardens, seedling swaps, avoiding food wastage, and creating ready-made meals from surplus food.

Barriers to accessing good food include financial issues, physical access, education on how to create healthy food when supplies are low, and the shame some people feel from not being able to provide their families with good food.

The South Kaipara Food Plan is hosting a free 'Food Plan Theatre' event in the Helensville War Memorial Hall on Sunday, June 13, starting 3pm.

The event will be a playful exploration of people's stories and ideas about food using improvised (playback) theatre. Locals can join in the interactive play as an audience member, or become an actor in the show. Details are on the Facebook page, and free tickets are available through eventbrite.co.nz.

Ana hopes the food plan will help cement initiatives that are already in place, and kickstart others to get them going - "to inspire people to do what they've always wanted to do in the food space".

"The community holds the solution."



• Ana Christmas

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Healthy lunch programme launches at local school

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch, but the Ka ora, Ka ako Healthy School Lunches programme launched recently at Parakai School delivers even more - as well as helping children stay healthy and boosting their learning and concentration, it also supports local businesses.

The programme began at the start of the new school term at Parakai Primary on Monday, May 3, and will see every student provided with a daily nutritious and balanced lunch.

The Healthy School Lunches programme is a government initiative to provide a healthy meal to students at qualifying schools, which locally includes both Parakai and Woodhill schools. Nationally around 963 other schools and kura will have joined the programme by the end of 2021.

The aim is to reduce food insecurity and financial hardship, address barriers to participation, and aid children's school attendance, concentration, achievement, behaviour, and wellbeing.

Not only do learner's outcomes improve through having a good lunch, but it's good for local business too.

Parakai 4 Square Supermarket owners Dan and Diana Dale won the tender to supply the healthy lunches to Parakai School, and they are now employing extra staff to help prepare and deliver the 200 lunches each day.

The Dales were already major employers in Parakai, and have a strong

background supporting the local community.

They are regular supporters of the local foodbank, and the Helensville and Parakai schools breakfast clubs. They also won the support of local students when they gave away ice creams after a storm left the store's freezers broken. A 'buy one get one donated' in-store Christmas charity gift initiative resulted in 5000 toys being distributed to Kindred Services, and they matched local



• MP Marja Lubeck enjoys a healthy lunch with some Parakai students during the launch of the Ka ora, Ka ako programme

donations of period products to address period poverty in the community, also through Kindred Services.

Local Labour List MP Marja Lubeck was on hand to represent the government at Parakai Primary and help distribute the first of the school's Ka ora, Ka ako, healthy lunches. She joined principal Yolanda Choromanski and deputy principal Sue Caltaux in handing out sandwiches to children in years five and six.

The lunches were a hit with students - one girl calling out: "I love this. It's the best sandwich ever" as she enjoyed a cheese and salad sandwich along with a yoghurt and an apple.



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Lions donate safety gear to Helensville fire brigade

The Lions Club of Helensville has given more than \$1700 to the Helensville Volunteer Fire Brigade so it can buy 30 torches which mount to the firefighters' helmets - one for every firefighter in the local brigade plus some spares for new recruits.

It's a major safety upgrade for Helensville Fire Brigade which will help protect its volunteers. Previously, local firefighters have had to carry a torch in one hand, leaving only one hand free to control firefighting equipment or to help potentially injured people in a fire or other incidents such as road crashes.

The torches are not only used on night-time calls, but also to help firefighters see through smoke during fire callouts at any time of day or night.

Members of the Helensville Fire Brigade recently gave a presentation on fire safety to Lions Club members, as well as bringing



• Chief Fire Officer Ian Osborne (left) shows Lions Club president Roland Ostring a torch attached to a firefighter helmet

their rescue tender and showing Lions the 'Jaws-of-Life' rescue tools in action.

Many years ago the Lions Club financed the first Jaws-of-Life for the Helensville Fire Brigade. One of the biggest Lions Club projects some years ago was to fund and install two smoke alarms in every house in Helensville and Parakai, which was done with the assistance of local brigade members.

Reading Auckland

As part of Auckland Library's June 'We Read Auckland' celebration, Helensville Library will host a We Read Auckland Booktasting event on Saturday, June 12 from 3pm to 5pm.

There will be four tables of books, each representing one of the We Read Auckland themes: Speak Auckland, Imagine Auckland, Uncover Auckland, and Read Together Auckland (a table for sharing books with younger family members and friends).

Locals interested in taking part should RSVP in person at Helensville Library, message the library on Facebook, or email: helenlib@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

We Read Auckland spans the first two weeks of June, and our local library will also hold 'Read Together Auckland' featuring two Auckland-themed children's sessions, on Thursdays at 10am to 10.30am.

For more on We Read Auckland visit: aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/WeReadAKL.

More frequent buses

The 128 bus service from Helensville to Silverdale via Kaukapakapa and Waitoki has been increased to an hourly service on week days.

The bus service is part of a \$40 million transport programme funded by the Rodney Local Board Transport Targeted Rate.

The Board introduced three new bus services in 2019 on a three-year trial. Auckland Transport (AT) said it would take over their funding and bring them into its network if patronage targets were met.

Route 126 (Westgate to Coatesville) and Route 998 (Wellsford to Warkworth) have both seen steady growth and are on track to meet targets, and will now be funded by AT from May next year.

However the Route 128 service has seen more modest growth and, based on public requests, the local board voted to increase the frequency of the service.

Rodney Local Board chair Phelan Pirrie says the Board is glad to be able to keep investing in transport during a difficult time.

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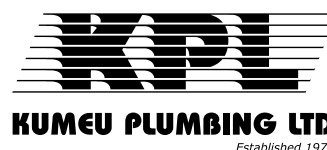
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Two local personalities, brother and sister Ernie Smith (89) and Flora Thirkettle (92), passed away within a day of each other last month. This is Flora's story - Ernie's is on page 9.

Farewell to Queen of the Kaipara

**Flora Margaret Thirkettle (nee Smith)
May 5, 1928 to May 1, 2021**

One of Helensville's true characters, the woman known as 'The Queen of the Kaipara', Flora Thirkettle died at the start of May, just days shy of her 93rd birthday.

A familiar sight around town in her blue tam o'shanter hat and often with a pack of Jack Russell terrier dogs in tow, Flora Smith was born in Te Awamutu on May 5, 1928 to Thomas and Gladys Smith, the first of their nine children.

At the age of 12, Flora's family moved north to a paddock near Whangaroa Harbour. They did it the hard way - they walked, the children all barefoot, taking 10 weeks to cover the 430km distance accompanied by the family's cattle and goats. Flora's job each day was to milk the cow and feed the calves.

The family's life near Whangaroa was subsistence living, eating what they could catch or grow in the garden. She was schooled by correspondence, and she recalled having to either hitch a ride, or walk the 24km to Kaero to visit the dentist.

When she was 20, Flora married a much older widower, 52-year-old George Thirkettle, a Gallipoli veteran and shark fisherman. His wedding present to Flora was her first pair of shoes.

She became stepmother to George's six children, three of whom were young enough to still live at home, and added to that total by having seven children of her own, four sons

and three daughters. With such a large family, Flora is survived by numerous grand, great, and great great grandchildren.

In 1957 with George unwell, Flora and her family moved to Auckland, driving down from their farm near Kaitia on a Fordson Major tractor, towing a buggy with a tent on top for the children to sleep in. They lived for a time with Flora's sister Eve in Massey. The plan was to move to Australia for warmer weather to help George's health, but he died

suddenly leaving Flora, then still only 29, to find a way to support her family, with children ranging in age from just nine months to 10 years.

She wanted independence and a place of her own. Her only areas of experience were fishing and farming, and buying farmland was out of the question.

Flora purchased a house by the Kaipara River in Helensville, which came with an 8m kauri fishing boat called Olive, a dinghy, a pair of oars, and two nets included in the price.

She began earning a living commercial fishing - becoming in the process the first female commercial fisher in the country.

She is quoted as saying that fishing for a living was a matter of necessity, a way to survive rather than a conscious career choice.

She was treated with suspicion by local fishermen when she first started casting her nets, the fishermen's wives having told them not to talk to her. She says it took "years and

• To page 7



• Flora in the wheelhouse

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• From page 6

years" before they came to respect her skill, work ethic, and vast knowledge of the Kaipara Harbour.

For the first nine months Flora's mother lived with her, minding the school-aged children after school while Flora fished. But when Mrs Smith died, Flora could only fish during the weekends and school holidays.

Every weekend and holiday, weather and tides permitting, she would load the children on board Olive and go fishing - four hours on, with two hours off to sleep, according to a Radio New Zealand 'Spectrum' profile of Flora, recorded in 2013. She aimed to work two low tides each day to catch as many fish as possible. During the two-hour 'downtimes' the whole family slept, the children in the bow and Flora alongside the motor.

The children weren't just along for the ride - they were expected to help with the fishing.

"Fishing for yourself is a good idea," she

told Radio NZ. "I like working for myself as you don't have a boss to tell you what to do."

Flora did much of her own maintenance on Olive, reconditioning the diesel engine, replacing planks and ribs and other fittings. She also made and sold nets - something she was still doing well into her 80s.

Over the years she supplemented her family income selling kauri gum, and making and selling shark liver oil, which she boiled down from school sharks using a method she had learned as a child. She bred Corgis to sell, and then when the market for them slumped changed to breeding Jack Russell terriers.

In 1965 Flora became the first woman admitted to the New Zealand Volunteer Coastguard Service - at the time believed to be the only seagoing female member of the service in the world.

As well as raising her own seven children, she was a foster mother to many others, and reclaimed raupō swamp alongside the Kaipara River to create a productive garden.

medical centre notes

Dr Phill Barter has been responsible for these columns for many years but has handed over the reins to me for a while to keep the community updated. As you may already know I have been a GP at Kaipara Medical Centre for the past three years. My partner Tomos Longworth is also a GP at the centre, and we live locally with our two children aged four and one.

I have fielded questions about the Covid-19 vaccination during consultations numerous times in recent weeks. It seems people locally are keen to get vaccinated, which is great. I'm pleased to report that staff at KMC have all been vaccinated. The vaccination being used in New Zealand is the Pfizer vaccine which requires two doses, at least three weeks apart.

Kaipara Medical Centre will not be a Covid-19 vaccination centre, but this information should help you to know when and where you may be vaccinated.

There are four main groups for vaccination. Group 1 (border and MIQ workers) and Group 2 (frontline workers and people living in high risk places) are currently being vaccinated. Group 3 (those aged 65 and over or with certain long-term medical problems) will be contacted about booking an appointment from late May - please be aware there are around 1.7 million people that fall into this category so you may not be contacted straight away. Group 4 (the general population) are estimated to be offered the vaccination from July onwards.

In the meantime please come and get your flu jab with us as you need at least two weeks between your flu shot and your first Covid-19 vaccination.

The information we have on vaccination centres and roll out dates changes constantly so for up to date information and what to expect regarding your Covid-19 vaccine visit: <https://immunisation.northernregion.health.nz>

- Dr Kathryn Elcock



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Seb, a registered electrician with more than 16 years' experience, set up Blackout Electric as a local family owned and operated business, based at Waimauku, in August last year.

After completing his apprenticeship and working for various companies to learn the ins and outs of the industry, Seb decided it was time to build his own business from the ground up.

Within a few months of starting up, the company was doing well enough to take on an apprentice, so Seb approached Kaipara College and its Gateway work experience programme - finding Branden, who is now in his first year of an electrical apprenticeship.

Seb is passionate about passing on his knowledge to others who want to be in the trade, and enjoys seeing them become successful electricians themselves.

In December last year Seb's wife Toni joined

the team full-time to run the administration side of the business.

“Since starting Blackout Electric, we have experienced a huge amount of loyalty from local customers and businesses alike,” says Toni.

She adds Blackout Electric is striving to be the number one choice for local electrical services.

“We hope that as time goes on, when people think of electricians they will think of Blackout Electric.”

The business handles all residential and commercial electrical work, including new builds and renovations, alarm systems, CCTV and AV, and general maintenance - from something as simple as a new power point through to an entire house rewire.

“We pride ourselves on exceeding client's



> Toni, Seb and Branden on a job at South Head

expectations,” says Seb. “We build a relationship with our customers that begins on the first day of contact, and only ends once they're fully satisfied with our work.”

Contact Blackout Electric can be found at www.blackoutelectric.co.nz or email: info@blackoutelectric.co.nz

: Supporting community a top priority

Supporting the local community is a big focus for Nicky Horsbrough, owner of Harcourts the Difference real estate agency in Helensville.

Nicky originally purchased the business from Graeme McLeod - who she learned her craft under - in 2016 in partnership with Tandem Realty West, when it was still located in a little old cottage in the corner of the Countdown supermarket carpark. Then in 2019 she was able

to buy her partners out, and rebranded the company as 'The Difference' - because making a difference locally is so important to her.

The company has a close relationship with Kindred Family Services, actively helping with events such as their annual food and toy drives, as well as supporting the Helensville District Health Trust, the A&P Association, and other organisations. All seven agents support various community groups or schools, with a percentage of commissions going to those.

“Community support is our self-reward,” says Nicky.

It's a ‘people first’ ethos that reflects that of Harcourts' head office, which in 2008 launched the Harcourts Foundation. The foundation supports both Hospice and Plunket, and

provides funds to help with large scale disasters like the Christchurch earthquake, as well as to charitable community organisations for a specific events, projects or initiatives.

The foundation is funded primarily through a percentage of all sales commissions.

Shortly after becoming sole owner, Nicky moved Harcourts the Difference into fully renovated premises at 92 Commercial Road. The extra room has allowed the business to expand, with three support staff, a property manager, and seven real estate agents (up from five when she became the owner) who specialise in a mix of residential and rural properties along with title transfers.

“It's nice to have the team growing,” Nicky says, “and it's good to have new blood coming through.”

She is full of praise for the support her business receives from head office, which provides a big focus on training and is keen to support agents in the different areas they want to focus on.

Harcourts the Difference can be reached at 09 420 7663 or helensville.harcourts.co.nz.



> The Harcourts the Difference team

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NORTH WEST COUNTRY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Two local personalities, brother and sister Ernie Smith (89) and Flora Thirkettle (92), passed away within a day of each other last month. This is Ernie's story - Flora's is on page 6.

Ernie Smith - pacifist, environmentalist

Ernest James Smith
September 21, 1931 to May 2, 2021

Ernie Smith started one of Helensville's longest running businesses, Oikoumene Forest Ltd, which closed in May 2018 after 44 years in operation. The company was named after the ancient Greek word meaning 'all the people of the world - interconnected as one' - a philosophy which guided him in most things says son Chris.

Ernie was born on September 21, 1931, the third of nine children born to Thomas and Gladys Smith. His siblings were Flora (see page 6), Eve, Vic, Bernard, Pat, Fred, Ted, and Bob.

In 1940, aged nine, along with the rest of his family Ernie walked from Te Awamutu to Otangaroa, near Whangaroa Harbour, where father Thomas had bought some land. There, he was put in charge of chopping firewood - something he would take up as a sport in his young adulthood.

Ernie's first job was bee keeping with Arthur Palmer, who became a close friend and mentor and who stayed in touch with Ernie all his life.

Then he became involved in the forestry industry, as a bush worker at Kaingaroa, Tokoroa, Woodhill, and Matahina - "slowly but surely building the foundation for the development of his empire, whilst never spending a cent more than what was absolutely necessary," says daughter Val.

Ernie also helped out his sister Flora a lot, becoming a second dad to her children and living in a small shack behind her house in Helensville for a number of years.

Ernie's first marriage - in his own words a

not well suited match - lasted just six months and ended in divorce in 1952. It was a challenging time for Ernie, and he went to Hamner Springs in the South Island to recover from what is described as a nervous breakdown. Following his recovery he discovered the Riverside Community, a pacifist Christian community near Motueka which is still in operation today, where he had a spiritual awakening and found his style of faith.

He returned to Riverside from Helensville for apple picking season for a number of years.

While at Riverside Ernie met Christine Eleanor Langley, who was on a working holiday in New Zealand from Adelaide, Australia with her best friend Maureen Cook. Romance bloomed, and the pair married on December 26, 1968 at the Riverside Methodist Church in Motueka.

In the following years they raised four children, Chris, Brian, Val, and Cynthia.

Back in Helensville, the family lived first in Puriri Street, then Karaka Street, then moved to Wishart Road, where at the age

of 30 and with the help of church friends, Ernie had planted his first commercial crop of trees in 1961. Around 40 years later some of those trees were felled and the timber used to build a new house.

Ernie had a second forestry block in Wilson Road, South Head called Rangatira farm.

In 1975 Ernie opened Oikoumene Forest Ltd in Railway Street, at the site where he had been selling poles for some time under the name 'Ernie Smith Post

Yard'. Over the years the company had to keep pace with the changing local environment, which evolved from a farming district to a lifestyle-type area, and around 1990 it moved from just selling posts and timber to include hardware, metal gates, and eventually manufactured its own decorative timber gates.

In 2008 Oikoumene joined Buildlink, which increased the company's range of building products, and in 2017 rebranded as a full Buildlink branch, Buildlink West. Oikoumene finally shut its doors in mid-2018 after 44 years in the town.

Gardening was a passion, with Ernie spending three decades turning pure clay into beautiful soil. He and Christine put particular effort into growing giant pumpkins, competing against each other at the Helensville and Kumeū A&P shows - with Christine more often than not taking home the prizes.

Ernie was a pacifist and environmentalist who supported both the anti-apartheid and nuclear-free movements. He loved country music and all things Irish, along with his pet dogs and rabbits.



• Ernie Smith in his favourite habitat

New Op Shop

Proceeds from a new St John op shop which opened in Huapai last month will go toward funding local projects.

Located at 306 Main Road, Huapai, the store was blessed, and officially opened by Kaipara ki Mahurangi MP Chris Penk, on Saturday, May 15 - becoming the 45th St John Store in the country.

Store manager Ferne Shaw says community support has been outstanding.

"They've been so generous with donating a great variety of wonderful quality goods. We've really been taken back by how we've been embraced by the local community."

The store sells new and used clothing, household items, bric a brac, and upcycled furniture. Donations of goods from the local community are welcome.

St John Helensville Area Committee chair, Dr John Elliott says store proceeds will help fund the committee's ongoing projects.

"The store will form an absolutely vital part of funding our local initiatives, including the installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), replenishing lifesaving equipment for the emergency ambulance service, and sponsoring the St John Youth programme," he says.

The St John Huapai store is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm, and Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.

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Helensville A&P Association
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Air base visit popular



• Craigweil House residents Alf, Rose and Elaine sitting in the Hercules Loadmaster at the Whenuapai base

A group of residents from Craigweil House at Parakai got to try out a massive Airforce C-130 Hercules recently - and it was a chance for some to reconnect with old interests.

The group visited the RNZAF Base Auckland at Whenuapai, New Zealand's largest operational air force base, where they were welcomed by Group Captain Andy Scott and Executive Assistant to the Base Commander Alison Elford and learned of the airfield's history.

An RNZAF team had prepared the Hercules Loadmaster for the residents, giving them an inside look and letting them take turns sitting in the cockpit. Avionic mechanic Hope Gregory was on hand to answer questions.

The air base visit was just one of several recent activities for Craigweil residents.

For Anzac Day, in collaboration with the Kaipara Memorial RSA, Craigweil House held a traditional service to remember and pay tribute to our Anzac service men and women. Residents were joined by Kaipara Memorial RSA president Rex Keane and committee member Steve Wilson, who spoke stirring of the courage, camaraderie, and determination of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

Another special event was a music therapy session held by Retts van Dam, founder of the Mapu-I-Musika Therapy Fale in Commercial Road. Retts helped residents with playing instruments, dancing, listening to music, and writing songs.

Art Centre news

Leda Daniel's mixed media work 'Wings of Freedom' won her the People's Choice Award at the recent Art Kaipara members' exhibition at the Helensville Art Centre.

While the exhibition isn't a competition, visitors can vote for their favourite work. Other popular choices were Mike Rowland's 'North Piha', Annabel Brechelt's 'Barn Owl' and Barbara Carter's 'Old Lady'.

For June, as part of the Festival of Photography, the art centre is holding an exhibition with the theme 'Synthesis: the combination of elements to form a connected whole'.

The exhibition will run until Saturday, June 19.

Flax weaving workshops in Term 2 will be held on Wednesday mornings June 1, 9 and 16 by Raranga Whāriki, and a pottery class will be held on Wednesday, June 23. A Kaipara College special needs art class will be held on Thursday morning, June 24.

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"When the Trust had made the decision to sell its residential property in Parakai the choice over which real estate agent to use was an easy one. One agent stood head and shoulders above the rest not only for their experience and ability to sell but also their work within the community and supporting local not-for profits."

Nicky's professionalism and property knowledge was exceptional and her presence within the region is second to none! The communication was clear and concise throughout the whole sale process which ultimately got us the result we so needed! The marketing, using multiple platforms, gave us huge reach and saw that all the open homes were busy.

The sale concluded with the Trust facing offers from four potential purchasers, all of which were not to be sneered at!

Thank you Nicky! You are a legend!"

James Scott
General Manager
Helensville District Health Trust

The Helensville District Health Trust is a community owned, not for profit organisation, established in 1989. And we are delighted to have achieved a successful sale for them, selling the property at 3 Rere Place, Parakai, as a fundraising prospect to benefit our entire community.

We jumped at the opportunity to assist them by providing a free marketing campaign, contributing our commission and marketing costs to maximise the return to HDHT, allowing greater support to our community!

Nicky

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New automotive business opens

Attracting customers to a new business can be difficult - but not so for a new Mill Road mechanical company.

Kaipara Automotive, which operates from Unit F, 69 Mill Road (behind the Sellars & Co law office) had its first week of business

already booked up before it even opened its doors for business on Monday, May 17.

The new business has been set up jointly by James Hannam and Bryce Canter. Bryce runs BSC Engineering in the same block of commercial units, and will be leaving the day to day running of Kaipara Automotive to James and fellow mechanic Shaun Wright.

Between them, James and Shaun have more than 30 years' experience in the trade, and James believes there is enough business for another mechanics in Helensville.

"People go to who they know and respect and trust, and we've got a bit of a reputation with people in this town," says James.

While the pair will handle any mechanical jobs that come their way, former Honda technician James is keen to work on motorcycles, while Shaun is enthusiastic about 4 wheel drives, especially modifications like suspension lifts, turbocharging, and custom fabrication.

It's not James' first foray into owning a business, most recently running a Novus auto glass franchise on the North Shore after working at other local automotive businesses.

A local for 30 years, James lives in Fordyce Road, Parakai and is relishing the five-minute commute to his new business,

and the chance to provide a service for people he knows. Shaun has lived locally for 40 years.

Kaipara Automotive supplies Maxxis tyres - which James reckons are the best



• James at work on a farm quad

available - plus Penrite oils.

Outside of work hours, things motorised still occupy James' time.

A former stock car racer and motocross rider, he's now 'chief mechanic' for his children, who both go to Parakai School and are keen motocross riders themselves, with his son, aged 9, competing on a 65cc bike, and 7-year-old daughter racing a KTM 50. They compete in events organised by North Harbour Mini Motocross.

James' wife Samantha works in a local shop.

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Tennis club roundup

Helensville Tennis Club will hold a combined AGM and prize giving on Sunday, June 27 at 5pm. Those attending are asked to bring a plate for a shared potluck dinner.

Club administrator Gaylene Ashton is stepping down after almost six years in the role, during which time she was awarded 'Administrator of the Year' for 2017/18 and the club 'Club of the Year' for 2019/20 by Tennis Northern.

During her tenure junior membership grew from 17 to 68, and she managed the building and courts through a community lease with Auckland Council. She worked with the redevelopment team which rebuilt all the courts, and the club funded new astroturf. She most recently oversaw installation of a Club Spark membership management system which incorporates online court bookings. It's anticipated the online booking system will be available to the public later this year.

Interclub results - 23 clubs within Tennis Northern, adults play 11 matches over terms

four and one:

- Men's 5, 6th out of 14 teams;
- Men's 6, 2nd out of 12 teams;
- Mixed Doubles 4, 1st out of 12 teams.

Juniors play pre- and post-Christmas rounds, seven matches each round:

- 16-18 Girls Grade C Pre - 2nd out of 7, Grade B Post - 4th out of 7;
- 13-15 Girls Grade C Pre 2nd - out of 6, Grade B Post - 1st out of 6;
- 11-12 Girls Grade C Pre - 5th out of 7, Grade C Post - 1st out of 6.

Brewery continues winning way

Helensville's Liberty Brewing Company has claimed three winning spots in the 2021 New World Beer & Cider Awards Top 30 list.

"Liberty Brewing Company built on all its previous years with a triple Top 30 win this year - another feat from these craft beer darlings who were named the country's best brewery in the last Brewers Guild of New Zealand Awards," says beer writer, author, and chair of judges for the awards, Michael Donaldson.

The local company won in the IPA category with both its Liberty Citra and Liberty Knife Party, and in the Pale Ale class with its Liberty Oh Brother.

The competition was blind judged, with the independent panel unaware which brands they were tasting.

letters

It was a pleasure to be the guest speaker at the recent Te Awaroa Residents & Ratepayers meeting. We discussed that Helensville seems to be the forgotten town when it comes to Auckland Council, in particular with regard to investment into roading, public transport services, and infrastructure.

It was opportune a few weeks ago, when the Director of Regional Relationships from the central Government's transport agency Waka Kotahi NZTA, invited local MPs Chris Penk (National), Marja Lubeck (Labour), Vanushi Walters (Labour), and myself as Auckland Councillor to visit with them to get the latest update on progress on transport infrastructure in the northwest of Rodney.

Unfortunately trains to Helensville, or even to Huapai, are still not supported. Instead Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi NZTA are working together on upgrades that will improve public transport travel time and frequency times for the people who travel by bus to and from northwest Auckland. However, this did not include more frequent bus services to Helensville.

The improvements we were told about were for a bus station at Westgate, and interim bus stops at the Lincoln Road and Te Atatū motorway interchanges. Over the next two years \$85 million has been allocated. As well, upgrading and extending the existing bus shoulder lanes on the northwestern motorway is desired but funding for this is yet to be approved.

There does not seem to be any immediate investment in public transport coming to Helensville.

Particularly heart-breaking is the reduction in funding for rural residents and ratepayers. When I was first elected the road sealing budget was \$10m for 10 years (\$1m a year). With continual determination this was fought for and wins made to increase this to reach \$121m for 10 years (\$12m a year) in the last RLTP budget. In this latest RLTP budget this has been slashed to \$40m for 10 years (\$4m a year). This is a depletion budget for Rodney, not a recovery budget as Auckland Council is marketing it to be.

As if Rodney's unsafe unsealed roads are not bad enough, the maintenance budgets are to also be slashed. Currently averaging \$4.4 million per year, the grading and drain clearing budget is to be reduced by \$800,000 to \$3.6 million per year. Even though Auckland Transport's overall operating budgets have been increased, our area's budgets are being decreased. It is scandalous.

To fight back I regularly meet with the Mayor, the Board of Directors of Auckland Transport, and NZTA. Your local MPs join with me. The justifications we get back are that as long as the Government and Auckland Transport are directing priority funding into public transport for Auckland's large urban centres, cycling, reducing speed limits and wanting people to not use cars, then getting a proportionate amount back for fixing, widening or sealing Rodney's roads simply will not be a priority.

The 10-year budget for where Auckland Council and Auckland Transport plan to spend your rates and fuel taxes from Helensville is extremely disappointing, but I will keep fighting to get back your fair share.

- Greg Sayers
Rodney Ward Councillor
Auckland Council

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from our local MP

I've commented here before that my key role in Wellington is to understand the way that proposed new laws will affect the people of Helensville and surrounding areas. This is the opportunity and honour I have as someone who is both a local representative and who also sits in Parliament.

In that spirit of reporting back to you, I'd like to offer some thoughts on the government's recent announcements about health system restructuring.



The most obvious question is whether services available locally will be better, worse, or unchanged following the restructuring.

A complex proposed new structure is no doubt intended to bring at least some benefits. However, given that it will cost a considerable amount in terms of time, energy and dollars to implement, there will be an enormous opportunity cost.

I should point out at this stage that I don't suppose anyone regards the current health system as perfect. Certain operating mechanisms that are being duplicated by different district health boards should be rationalised. Of course this can be achieved in other ways (for example, by mandating IT systems across various regions) without the wholesale restructuring. Change to achieve maximum benefit with minimum disruption should have been the government's starting-point.

The best guess for this restructuring spend is that it will likely cost up to half a billion dollars. It's a huge amount of taxpayer money to fork out on appointing and re-appointing managers to administer additional layers of bureaucracy, along with changing letterheads and logos of course.

Unfortunately for residents of the Helensville area, there will not be a single medicine funded or operation conducted to show for all that expenditure, let alone new premises built for providing primary health care. In the meantime, the hospitals that serve this area are not particularly readily accessible by everyone, and as always our perpetual population increase must be factored in.

For all these reasons, I am mildly pessimistic about the direction of travel for New Zealand's health system. For the sake of our local communities I would love to be proven wrong. Time will tell.

- Chris Penk, MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi

point of view

Congratulations to everyone involved in ANZAC Day ceremonies across Helensville, Kaukapakapa and Parakai. Though our 'old soldiers' are now fewer in number, more of our community make the effort to attend ANZAC Day events, and it's as important as ever that we remember them.

Our communities were ravaged by wars and many of our local men served but didn't return. We must continue to honour the sacrifices they, and their families, made as well as the impacts on our communities, which were much smaller then.

The work of volunteers in maintaining and cleaning up the old Kaukapakapa cemetery on Peak Rd, to honour the war dead and others of our community, stand along side the efforts of local RSAs in ensuring those who have gone before are not forgotten.

It was also an honour last month to attend the launch of the Government's Healthy School Lunches - Ka Ora, Ka Ako - programme at Parakai Primary. Children are given a nutritious lunch to help sustain their learning throughout the day, and it's a privilege to work alongside local lunch providers Dan and Diana Dale from Parakai 4Square, who do so much for the community.



- Marja Lubeck
Labour List MP in Kaipara ki Mahurangi
marja.lubeck@parliament.govt.nz

Youth orchestra visiting

The Auckland Youth Orchestra will perform a concert in the Helensville War Memorial Hall on Saturday, June 19.

With a theme of 'Love', the concert will feature selected movements from Prokofiev's Romeo & Juliet Suites 1 and 2, Bernstein's West Side Story Symphonic Dances, and the Concert Fantasia on Motives for clarinet by Luigi Bassi, based on Verdi's opera 'Rigoletto'.

The conductor will be Antun Poljanich, and clarinetist Kiara Kong will be the featured soloist.

Kiara, in her final year at Auckland University majoring in music composition, won the AYO's annual soloist competition in 2020, playing the same work she will perform in Helensville with the orchestra.

The Auckland Youth Orchestra, formed in 1948, is a full symphony orchestra comprised of 90 of Auckland's most talented young musicians aged from 16 to 26.

The orchestra toured to Germany and Slovenia in 2018, receiving standing ovations from capacity audiences.



Arts in the Ville turning seven

Art Kaipara has taken over the reins of Helensville's popular Labour Weekend Arts in the Ville festival following the departure of



• Tracey Robert's 'Whimsical Garden' will be back this year

founder and organiser Kura Geere-Watson, who has moved out of town.

2021 will be the festival's 7th consecutive year. Last year 70 artists and groups took part in the annual arts festival, opening their studios and gardens

and exhibiting in popup galleries around the town.

Arts in the Ville was Kura's brainchild and over the years, helped by a small group of locals, including embroiderer Jo Dixey, carver Denise Marshall, and painter Mike Rowland, she turned it from a small event into one which last year attracted over 3000

visitors to Helensville.

This year the stalls in the community hall will be a Makers' Market, where artists, artisans and crafters can show and sell their wares, with the proviso that they must create their items themselves.

The cost to participate in Arts in the Ville is \$50 per person or \$150 for a group of four or more, which includes featuring in the festival brochure (deadline June 30).

Event manager Jo Ogilvie would love to hear from any new artists interested in taking part. Phone or text Jo on 021 071 0246 or email: events@artcentrehelensville.org.nz.

Poems after dark

Helensville's Myra Lloyd "lit up the room" as she acted out a childhood memory of the thrill as her father threw her up into the air and caught her again. It was a vivid memory, vividly performed at the most recent 'Poems After Dark' poetry and spoken word evening held at the Magnify Church Café, says organiser Pauline Denton.

The next event will be on Saturday, June 12 from 6pm to 8pm at the Helensville Community Church, 40 Mill Road. There is a break for supper, so those attending are asked to bring a plate and a \$3 cover charge.

For more information email Pauline: paulinekiwidenton@gmail.com



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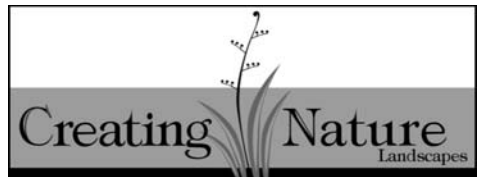
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■ WAITOKI MARKET

Did you know Coatesville was known as Fernilea until 1926? Author Stephanie Schellingerhout will be at the next Waitoki market to introduce her locally based stories about Sheriff and Deputy Dogs' adventures, which take place around this real life settlement.

The market, on Saturday 12th June from 8.30am to 12.30pm, will also feature baked goods, plants, essential oils, locally crafted gifts, homemade and used bargains, preserves, and more. New stall holders should contact Gill on 09 420 3301 or email: waitokihall@gmail.com.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA LIBRARY

Kaukapakapa Library will feature 'Voices from the Past' at its next open day on Sunday, June 20 from 9am to 1pm.

Helensville Museum holds a big collection of recorded interviews featuring the stories of local people, and from public gatherings. These provide both individual and general information on early families, the lifestyle of their times, and records of significant events since the start of the Helensville settlement.

Listen to recordings from Neill Barr, Phyllis Hooper, Roger West, William Tangaroa and more on the day. A list and summary of all the recordings will be available, and orders for copies will be taken on the day. For more information phone Megan on 021 959 017, or email: threehorses@xtra.co.nz.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

The next Kaukapakapa market is on Sunday, June 20 from 8.30am to 1pm. Stalls will feature food, coffee, hand-made crafts, preserves, art, plants, books, bric a brac and collectibles, jewellery, natural soap, gifts, knitting, and fresh fruit and vegetables. Free face painting for children, and live music from duo Barry and Denise playing easy listening classic from 10am to 12pm.

For more information phone Sarah on 0274 831 542 or email her at: sarah1@maxnet.co.nz.

■ ART KAIPARA AGM

Art Kaipara will hold its annual meeting starting 3pm on Saturday, June 26 at the Helensville Art Centre.

■ INT'L WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

A morning of inspiration and motivation is promised at a special event celebrating women making a difference in our community, our country and our world on Friday, July 2 at The Riverhead.

The event, hosted by Helensville-based Kindred Family Services, was to have been held on the official International Women's Day on March 8, but was postponed due to the Level 3 lockdown.

Among the speakers will be Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities, and Minister for Youth; award-winning journalist Barbara Dreaver, TVNZ's Pacific Correspondent; and Waratah Taogaga, teacher and cultural advisor at Helensville Primary School.

Tickets are \$40 and are available from Eventbrite or call 09 420 7992.

■ HELENSVILLE SHOW AGM

The Helensville A&P Association will hold its annual meeting starting 7.30pm on Wednesday, July 14 in the main showgrounds meeting.

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Letters to the Editor: Should be kept to around 250 words and may be edited as space dictates.



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