

The Valley Profile

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Anzac commemorated, P4-5

'Killer' bus routes protested

By KELLEY TANTAU

Hauraki parents have called a public meeting with the Ministry of Education over "dangerous changes" to college bus routes that would see children walking on some of the region's most deadly state highways.

The meeting, which was planned for Tuesday morning, was called to bring affected families, school representatives, and a ministry spokesperson from Wellington together to discuss the Term 2 changes to eight bus routes transporting students to Hauraki Plains College and some primary schools.

According to the ministry, one of the route changes, Orongo/Pipiroa, will see bus stops moved to allow students "ineligible" for transport to Hauraki Plains College become eligible.

However, the proposed change means students will have to walk along State Highway 25, a busy main highway with no footpaths, to get to the new bus stops.

Parents Karma Vitasovich, Lisa Wiggins, and Angela Jolly said the changes were "dangerous" and would impact on students' safety, attendance, and achievement.

Mrs Jolly, a mother of two college students, said her children would have to walk along SH25 towards Bugger Cafe to the new bus stop. To be worried was an understatement, she said.

"It's dangerous at the best of times, and this is just asking for kids to be killed. It doesn't make any sense."

In a letter to the ministry, Ms Vitasovich said some of the

kids "weren't even old enough to be left alone at home, let alone roadside on one of the most dangerous highways in New Zealand".

"Not to mention," she said, "at some stops, the students will have no choice but to stand on the actual road itself. We also have students with limited eyesight - [being] roadside without supervision is not an option for them."

A recent *Valley Profile* investigation into our roads found SH25, from the SH2 roundabout to Kōpū, had seven fatal crashes over the past five years.

"It's an absolute safety hazard. It doesn't matter what way you put it," Mrs Jolly said.

"I walk to our fenceline in the paddock and it scares me, and that's just because there's people hooning past, let alone walking along the road with no verge, and they're wanting kids to do that?"

Ministry head of education infrastructure service Kim Shannon told *The Profile* the ministry allocated services and funds based on those students most in need of transport assistance, and in line with the school transport eligibility criteria.

College principal Ngaire Harris said parents' frustrations around the changes was "totally understandable and justifiable", especially around student safety on main highways, the cancellation of long-standing bus pick ups, and the challenges of organising transport to pick-up points.

"There are enough challenges about living rurally; cutting back on bus services is adding another layer to that challenge," she said.



The Vitasovich and Wiggins families are concerned about their kids walking along a busy state highway to get to their new bus stop.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

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Town promotion ‘in jeopardy’ in council proposal

By KELLEY TANTAU

The future of Paeroa’s town promotion organisation is uncertain as council proposes to cut funding and look at hiring their own person to co-ordinate events across the district.

As part of their Long Term Plan deliberations, Hauraki District Council wants to cut funding to Positive Paeroa, GO Waihi and Positively Promoting the Plains to just \$10,000 each per year, citing changes to their focus on promotions.

But Positive Paeroa says that amount would only cover the cost of the Santa Parade, and nothing else.

The organisation’s chair, Judith Jamieson, told *The Profile* the proposal came as a surprise.

“They had forecast that the funding would change, because it has been dropping over the last while, but we didn’t know by how much,” she said.

“Positive Paeroa does a lot in the background, and we’ve probably been a little bit guilty of not blowing our own trumpet, because you just kind of get on with it.

“Now, where do we go from here? Will there be a Positive Paeroa from now on?”

Positive Paeroa used to get \$120,000 per year from council, she said. However, last year, they received just \$50,000.

The town promoter role was established in 2000, and aimed to promote and market Paeroa as an “attractive, innovative

and unique place to visit, work and live”, and ensure residents, visitors and tourists were welcomed, entertained and provided with information and assistance while in the town.

They’ve recently organised the popular Paeroa Lunch-time Entertainment Club, have fundraised for the Highland Games, held Twilight Markets, and helped at the Rotary Paeroa V8 and Motorcycle Show. Judith said Positive Paeroa also paid Mercury Energy for “community lighting” to the tune of \$6000-8000 per annum.

A reduction in funding to \$10,000 meant the organisation was at risk of a restructure, and its future could be in jeopardy, she said.

However, Hauraki Mayor Toby Adams said they hadn’t reduced its town promotion budgets as such, but were proposing to shift the budgets around so they aligned more with the purpose of its new committee, Manaki Toiora, which is “all about lifting the mana and wellbeing within our communities”.

“Under the proposed new model, some of the funds would go towards the district-wide events co-ordination role, business support and town promotional activities, with the remainder distributed to other projects and initiatives that focus on things like providing healthy and affordable homes in our communities,” he said.

Council chief executive Langley Cavers said the proposed



new events co-ordination role within council would likely be a full-time paid position.

“We haven’t developed a job description for the role at this stage, however it’s envisaged it would provide support to local business, community groups, and organisations in a number of areas including event management, volunteer recruitment and training, and district and business promotion,” he said.

Positive Paeroa said it will be submitting against Hauraki District Council’s LTP promotions proposal, with hearings taking place on May 18 and 19.

Submissions to the LTP must

be received by this Friday, April 30.

Meanwhile, Thames-Coromandel District Council confirmed the three-year funding agreement between council and the Thames Business Association (TBA) comes to an end in June.

Across three years, the TBA received \$229,000 from council to get the association established, and chief executive Sue Lewis-O’Halloran said it was now time “for a hand up, not a handout”.

“I’ve been here a year now and the first thing I identified was that we must not be de-

pendent on council for funding us; we have to have a diversified revenue stream. So, we have set about doing that.”

The TBA has implemented its membership programme, and was working on establishing sponsorships and partnerships to help fund the association, she said. It would still like to be able to go to the Thames Community Board for assistance with some of its major events.

“We are putting things in place to ensure the future of the TBA, and I believe we will find the funding because we have a strong case for support,” Sue said.



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A lone bagpiper leads the Thames Anzac parade down Pollen St. Photos: THE VALLEY PROFILE

Lest we forget

Hundreds turned out to honour service men and women in Anzac parades along with dawn and civil services throughout the Thames Valley region on Sunday.



Many took part in the Paeroa parade.



Hauraki Plains College students take part in the Ngatea parade.



A St Joseph's School student lays a wreath.



A flagbearer leads the Paeroa parade.



St John take part in Thames.



Hauraki Mayor Toby Adams, centre.



Ngatea kids walk in the parade.

Did you know..?

..the Hauraki District Council is proposing a reduction in the funding for Positive Paeroa to \$10k per annum?

Please show your support for the organisation that has steadfastly supported Paeroa for the last 20 years by making a submission to the Hauraki District Council's Long Term Plan (LTP) and be sure to let council know what's made Paeroa positive for you.

*Simply go to [weneedtotalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/alice/](https://www.weneedtotalk.hauraki-dc.govt.nz/alice/)
Submissions close 5pm, Friday 30 April.*

Thank you.



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The Kerepehi Brass Band took part in both Ngatea and Paeroa parades.



The flag is raised at the dawn service in Kerepēhi.



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Waitakaruru School students.



Paeroa Lions walk in the parade.



The Thames Troubadours.



Hauraki Plains College students and veterans lead the Ngatea parade.



St Francis School students carry wreaths.



Many people took part in the Thames parade.

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Valley Profile celebrates 1st birthday by publishing weekly

The past year has been tough for business in the Thames Valley, with the Covid-19 pandemic wreaking havoc for many businesses along with other challenges, such as one of the worst droughts in history.

So taking on a newspaper business a year ago probably wasn't the greatest of timing for experienced journalist Teresa Ramsey.

Teresa took over the well-established *Plains Profile* newspaper in March, 2020, renaming it the *Valley Profile* and extending its circulation from the Hauraki Plains to also cover Paeroa, Thames and the Thames Coast. She was about to put the first issue together for print when the Level 4 shutdown was announced, putting a stop to any chance of delivery.

"That 4-week wait was horrendous, just the uncertainty," she said.

"I had just resigned from a good national job and now I didn't know if I was even going to be able to get this new venture off the ground. It was a massive risk and a stressful time.

"Fortunately, our advertisers remained loyal and extremely supportive of what I was trying to achieve - to get top quality local community news back into the Thames Valley region."

The first issue of the *Valley Profile* was put together during the Level 4 shutdown and was delivered on the first Wednesday in May - in the middle of Level 3.

"This meant gloves and strict distancing rules for our newspaper delivery people, and also family and friends picking up more than half a dozen paper runs as many of our delivery people were vulnerable to the Covid-19 virus and couldn't venture out.

"I was determined the first issue would get to every letterbox in the Thames Valley though."

That first issue was just 16 pages but as support for local community news grew, so did requests for advertising, which meant the paper grew to as many as 36 pages in October before settling at a steady 24-28 pages.

"I'm so grateful to all our advertisers, they



The *Valley Profile* has been able to provide 100 per cent local news for the past year, thanks to local support.

are what keeps this newspaper going and developing, giving us the opportunity to deliver that important local news to connect our local communities," Teresa said.

"Without advertising, there is no paper."

Support remained huge, and many offers to contribute from members of the community also flowed in, leading to a variety of top quality photos, reports and content to complement stories celebrating local champions, events and general news.

Before long, Teresa was able to employ full-time advertising manager Nikki Sanders then reporter Kelley Tantau. The pair, along with part-time graphic designer Geoff Sanders and a dedicated distribution team, were essential for the paper's transition

from monthly to fortnightly in December.

Now, thanks to the team's hard work and massive ongoing support from advertisers, the *Valley Profile* is publishing weekly from May 5 - with 12,500 copies delivered to every letterbox in the Thames Valley every Wednesday, plus bulk distribution around the Coromandel Peninsula.

"It's the perfect way to celebrate our first birthday," Teresa said.

"We weren't quite ready to make the leap to a weekly print but with two corporate rags breathing down our necks, we knew going weekly was necessary if we wanted to give the *Profile* and local news a chance."

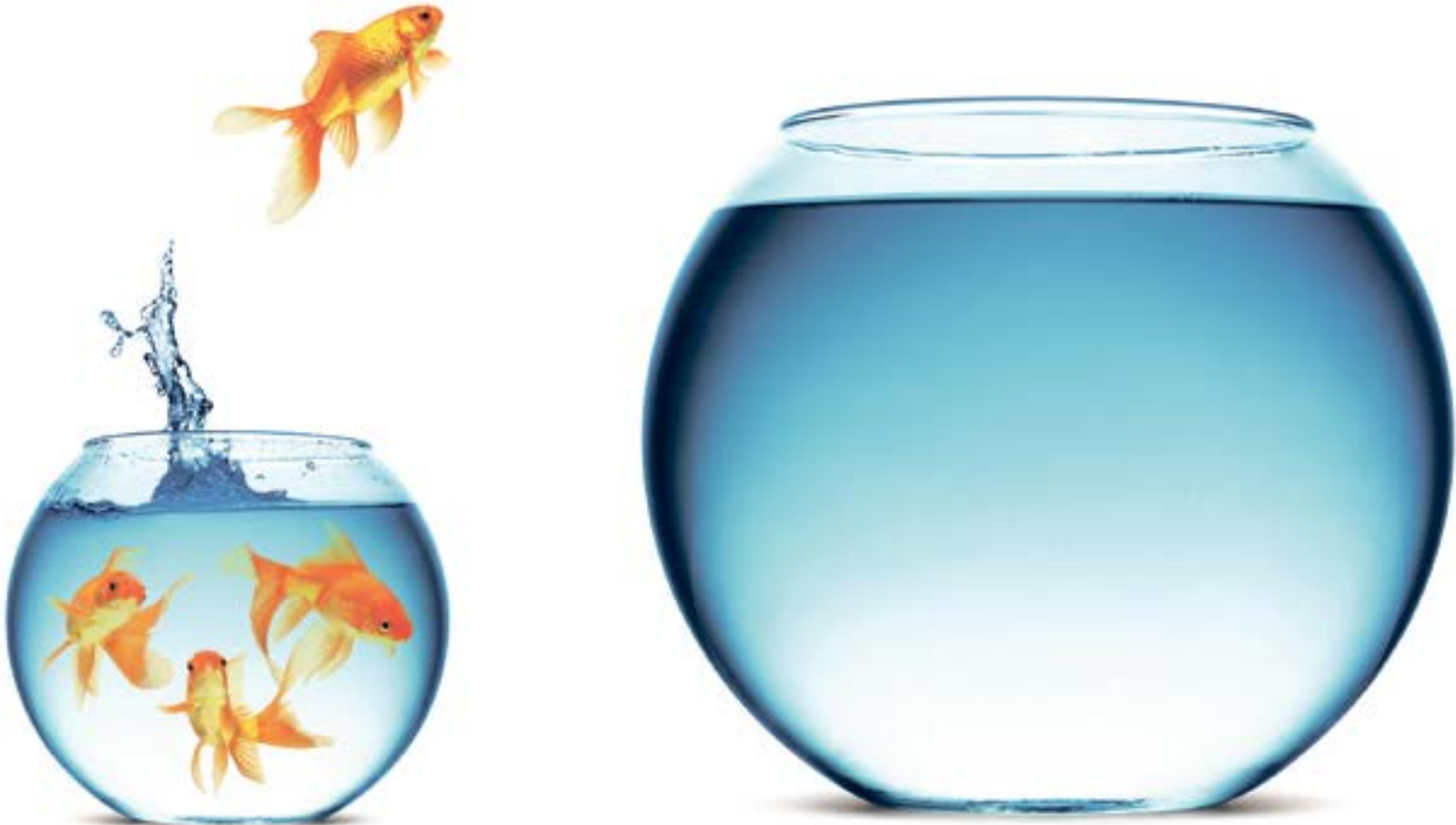
The *Profile's* point of difference is that it's locally owned and operated by people pas-

sionate about our region, she says.

"And we are ahead of the rest with two experienced journalists on the ground, which means we can cover our big events, sit in on council meetings, and uncover the truth about what's happening in this district.

"Already, we are leading the way when it comes to local reporting and we're also able to offer our businesses a voice with our extremely popular advertorials plus advertising and classifieds at reasonable rates in a paper that's read from cover to cover.

"It also means we care if any of our paper routes can't be delivered, we step in and do it ourselves - even during a pandemic, because our local community news must always get through."



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The Valley
Profile

Solarpunk festival cancelled, but passion remains

By KELLEY TANTAU

A first-time festival which was to take the vision of Solarpunk to the streets of Thames has been cancelled, but those passionate about the art movement have ensured the vision will endure.

Solarpunk Aotearoa was planned for the town in May, and was to be “in essence, one big party”, featuring live music, exhibitions, creative workshops, trade expos, and talks, among other community projects and displays.

However, organiser Deborah MacDonald Brown said since Totally Thames - who were presenting the festival - obtained \$6000 in funding from the Thames Community Board in August to run the event, no action had been taken to better the local environment - the fundamental ethos of Solarpunk.

“We as a team are absolutely passionate about taking action to do with the environment,

but since we got funding, we haven’t actually done anything active to change the environment in which we live,” Deborah told *The Profile*.

“We have been tied up in governance and funding applications, we’ve got ageing volunteers, people with competing priorities, we’ve got Covid anxiety, and we’ve got deep divides within our community.

“We’ve got a hugely passionate team, but we’ve been tied up in governance knots ... the funding process is very difficult.”

- Deborah MacDonald Brown

“So while we’ve cancelled the festival concept, we’re going to start acting now.”

A tree planting will take place on May 9 at Burke St Reserve, in Thames, and what will follow in the future will be workshops, talks, and exhibitions,



Deborah MacDonald Brown says although the festival won’t go ahead as planned, Solarpunk will be ever-present within the community. Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

Deborah said.

It will be a change for Solarpunk Aotearoa’s core team of 12, who are “divorcing governance” and going out on their own, she said.

“We’ve got a hugely passionate team, but we’ve been tied up in governance knots... and you have this governance structure so you can receive funds, and the funding process is very difficult.

“So, we decided we can do most of what we want without funds.”

This new direction was proven possible at a recent Solarpunk meeting, in which team members put in \$1000 of their own money to pay for the trees involved in the May planting.

“We’re wanting to have something happening monthly, and then at some point in the future, if somebody wants to set up a new governance structure and do [the festival], we’re open to that.”

According to Solarpunk Aotearoa, Solarpunk was described as an art movement

that encouraged people to envision a more sustainable and optimistic future in the face of threats from environmental destruction and climate change.

The May 9 tree planting would celebrate mother earth, Deborah said, and people of all ages were encouraged to attend.

DETAILS: Mother’s Day Tree Planting, Sunday, May 9, 10am to 4pm. Meet at Burke St Reserve, by Seagull Refuge Centre. Bring along your gumboots, forks, buckets, and drink bottles.



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Woman’s past helps others get ‘out of the gutter’

Walking inside Susanna Kruger’s home office is like being welcomed in by an old friend.

There’s an ease to her movements, a warmth in her voice, and it’s here, with a view of the Firth of Thames, where Susanna sits down with her clients, self-representatives, using her own past experiences to save them from the “unnecessary pain and loss” she suffered through the New Zealand Family Court.

“People often ask me: ‘Aren’t you getting depressed listening to all these people’s stories?’ and I say no, because the moment I meet them, I can help them go from being a victim, to becoming a victor. So there’s nothing to be depressed about there.”

Susanna moved to New Zealand 21 years ago from Namibia, South West Africa. In her home country, she had a top job in government consultancy, and specialised in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport.

Arriving in Auckland, however, with two young daughters, she had to “basically start at the bottom”. And, after going through a rough divorce, finding a job became hardly possible despite her achievements, as employers said she had “no Kiwi experience”.

Instead of being disheartened, she became inspired by the Māori way of thinking.

“I realised that my personal philosophies actually tied in very much with Māori philosophies. I went to free Māori courses and formal studies, but it wasn’t really to learn Te Reo as such,” she said. “In hindsight, I think it was more for me to be able to appreciate and articulate my own culture, and to find a place I could belong, because I felt like an outsider everywhere I went.”

Susanna went on to represent herself throughout her divorce at the Family Court. Doing so, she stumbled across other people who didn’t qualify for legal aid or had given up on the legal process. She began to help them. Since



Legal and business consultant Susanna Kruger wants to help people avoid the pitfalls of law and money.

Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

2017, she was mentored by a former lawyer and became an Accredited McKenzie Friend Professional. She even published a book examining the language of the New Zealand Family Court.

Researched in law and qualified in business, Susanna now works from her home in Thames as a legal and business consultant, and aims to help people out of the same “gutter” she was once in.

“I see family violence as a family standing together to ostracise one person in the fam-

ily, just because that person doesn’t fall in line or has fallen in the gutter.

“When a family ostracises one member, the one who is struggling, it will take that person at least 10 years, even if they are very determined, to get themselves out of the gutter.

“I’ve calculated my personal loss from my divorce to be \$500,000, and in learning from others’ stories, a big part of the losses was only possible or was enabled by family violence. It [family violence] happens; I’ve seen

it with clients in all the different cultures and socio-economic groups. It happens in the best of families,” she said.

Susanna specialises in protection and parenting orders, relationship property division, probates, and administration of wills. She is also passionate about getting people, particularly women, into business.

She will present free family court workshops the first Saturday of every month at the Thames Library, 10am-12pm. To get in touch, email susannakruger20@gmail.com.

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World War I veteran lost in Pipiroa house fire



As part of a Valley Profile series, **MEGHAN HAWKES** explores our local history by seeking out stories of life and death in the Thames Valley

The sight of Edward Arthur's unmilked cows at Pipiroa disturbed George Goldthorpe. It was a late February afternoon in 1923 when George stopped by the farm. He looked about and called but got no reply. He had seen Edward around noon that day when Edward mentioned in passing that his wife and young baby were staying with Mrs Arthur's ill father at Waitakaruru. He had sent the other two children, aged 13 and 9, that morning to join their mother. George went home but at 8.20pm he returned and made a further search for Edward but he had vanished.

In the early hours of the next morning William Ganley, a farmer at Pipiroa, got up and looking out the window saw Edward's house, about 100 yards away, on fire. He called his mate John Galvin and they ran over

but found the building had been practically destroyed. The roof had fallen in and the flames were licking the skeleton of the building. They knew Mrs Arthur had gone to Waitakaruru but were not sure where the children were. As far as the fierce heat would permit they made a desperate search. The cowshed was also searched, but there was no trace of anyone.

John Kelly, the local store-keeper, arrived at the scene about 6am but by then the house had burned to the ground. John had seen Edward the previous afternoon when he came to his store about 4.45pm for tobacco and cigarettes. John searched the smouldering ruins and made the grim discovery of a body on the wire mattress of an iron bedstead lying on the ground where Edward's bedroom had been. He threw water over some still flaring flames then left to inform the police. Constable Devereaux of Kerepēhi caught a launch that was just on the point of leaving and was soon on the spot.

It was thought Edward had used an open fireplace in the dining room to prepare his evening meal, and went to bed shortly afterwards, and that a cinder from the fire ignited the building. But at 2pm the constable found Edward's coat hanging up in the milking shed and a letter in the inside pocket addressed to Mrs Arthur. In the presence of Mrs



Dairy farming at Pipiroa in the 1920s. Photo: SUPPLIED

Arthur's brother he opened the letter. It intimated clearly that Edward had intended to take his life that night.

Edward was from Kent, England, and had been in New Zealand about nine years. He had served with the Rifle Brigade in World War I during which he was wounded. Since returning from war, he had farmed on a small acreage at Pipiroa. The farm was likely a result of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, which allowed returned servicemen to be granted farmland on generous terms and to apply for cheap finance to develop it. But much of the Hauraki Plains land was totally unfit for dairying. Drainage was incomplete and roads unmetalled and impassable in winter. By 1923 this was the sorry plight of the soldier settlers on the Hauraki Plains who had paid excessive prices for land which was undrainable and practically worthless. As well as economic difficulties, returned soldiers were often suffering from shell shock and struggling with the aftermath of war wounds, all ordeals which could merge into a tragically lethal combination.

Edward is buried at Shortland cemetery, Thames.

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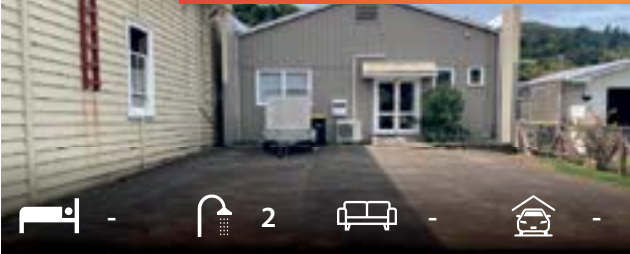


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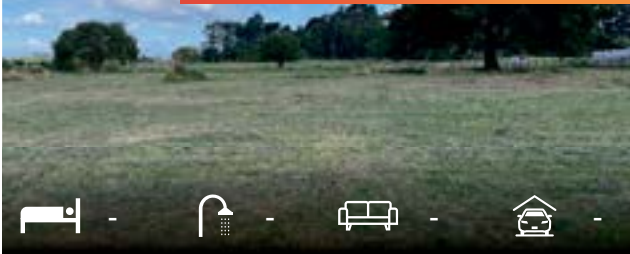


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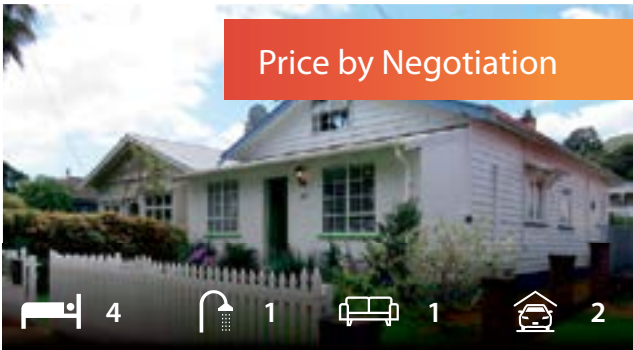


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Environment DNA tests planned for region’s streams

By KELLEY TANTAU

Worms, freshwater jellyfish, pigs, cats, and humans have all shown up in DNA results pulled from a Thames stream.

What wasn’t found was any evidence New Zealand native fish kōkopu and kōaro existed in the sample area, surprising a local conservationist.

To encourage citizen science, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have sponsored Environmental DNA (eDNA) kits around the country.

NZ Landcare Trust Waikato catchments co-ordinator Ric Balfour has 10 of these kits, worth \$200 a pop.

He will be working with catchment groups and land-owners across the Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata-Piako to discover what is present and absent in their streams.

“You collect the water sample with a syringe, squeeze it through a filter which traps the fragments of DNA, and then you run about 4-5 litres [of water] through it.

“That gets bagged up and sent to Wilderlab in Wellington, and they take 2-3 weeks to analyse it,” Mr Balfour said.

From a pilot test taken with the help of Thames High School students at Karaka Stream, eDNA results showed 193 fragments of oligochaete worm; 153 fragments of longfin eel; 116 fragments of torrentfish; and 104 fragments of freshwater jellyfish. There were also 71 fragments of human DNA, and

eight each of dog, cat, and pig.

What the results did not produce was any evidence that any galaxiidae or small freshwater fish, such as kōkopu, was present in the Karaka Stream, which Mr Balfour expressed shock at.

“They should be there, and that really stood out for me,” he said.

“I have detected them in Tararua Stream and I know they’re in the Kauaeranga, so what that means is by having that big structure that was downstream of the [Karaka Stream] sample site, I suspect that inanga, or whitebait, which are the young of kōkopu, haven’t been able to get up there.”

The sample was taken at the end of Bella St, upstream from Thames Hospital, and gathered information from up to 1km, Mr Balfour said.

Another surprising result from the pilot was the presence of torrentfish (panoko) and bullies, such as toitoi, as well as blackbirds and house sparrows, of which there were 37 and 11 fragments found, respectively.

Their presence in the stream could be determined by a drop of a feather, Mr Balfour said.

“This is a very exciting new tool that’s going to be available as part of water quality monitoring, and you just wouldn’t be able to find half of these species by the normal techniques of fishing with a net or picking up rocks.

“This is a whole new level,” he said.



ABOVE: Thames High School students work in the Karaka Stream, which was the site of a pilot eDNA test.

RIGHT: NZ Landcare Trust Waikato catchments co-ordinator Ric Balfour will be undertaking eDNA tests throughout the Hauraki and Coromandel regions.

BELOW: The lack of galaxiids in the Karaka Stream surprised test-takers.



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Rural Life

Workshops announced at Kerepēhi P3 field day

By KELLEY TANTAU

Workshops to help farmers construct their required Farm Environment Plans were announced at last week's P3 Monitor Farm Field Day in Kerepēhi, with the first intake to be in May.

At the field day held on the Burton Farm on April 20, DairyNZ Waikato regional leader Wilma Foster and P3 Trust chair Craig Zydenbos announced the establishment of the workshops, which will help farmers put together their plans to recognise on-farm environmental risks, and potentially improve their bottom line.

According to DairyNZ, farm environment plans were unique

to a property and reflected the local climate and soils, the type of farming operation, and the goals and aspirations of the land user.

Inherently, all farmers wanted to look after the land, Wilma said, and an environment plan was one way to do it. The free workshops would run over two years and were open to all farmers in the Waihou-Piako catchment, which included the Hauraki Plains.

They had already obtained a lot of industry support, Wilma said, and would be project managed by Dairy Training tutor Mark Speight.

For information on how to sign up to the workshops, contact mark.speight@dairytraining.co.nz.



More than 20 people turned out to the Burton Farm on April 20 for the Monitor Farm Field Day. Photos: KELLEY TANTAU

BELOW LEFT: The environment plan workshops will be project managed by Dairy Training tutor Mark Speight.

BELOW: DairyNZ Waikato regional leader Wilma Foster said the workshops were open to all farmers in the Waihou-Piako catchment.



P3 Trust chair Craig Zydenbos talks about the workshops.

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Patti Wicksteed opens the celebrations at Stepping Out's 25th birthday.

Photo: SUPPLIED

‘Stepping Out’ in style to mark 25 years

A Thames-based mental health and addiction service has been able to acknowledge its 25 years in the community, after Covid-19 put a halt on celebrations last year.

Stepping Out Hauraki held its silver anniversary event at the Union Parish Hall in Thames recently.

It was an opportunity for past and present members, stakeholders, allies, and associates to come together, manager Jo Burns said.

“We wanted to celebrate not only Stepping Out as a stand alone consumer-led service running for 25 years but, more importantly, the successes of those who we have supported over those years.

“Peer support is an integral and important role in the recovery and ongoing wellness of tangata whaiora

and now a recognised and accepted component of recovery.”

Stepping Out is recovery-focused and offers rural outreach support groups throughout the Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki regions, reaching those needing support and those living in isolation.

“We are very much a consumer-focused service and anyone who is supported or becomes a member has a role and input into the daily running of our centre,” Jo said.

“Our hope is that we continue to operate and provide this amazing and unique service to our local community for many more years to come.”

For more information, contact Stepping Out Hauraki, Ph 07 868-5595 or free phone 0800 127 877.

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SPORTS

Memorial tournament held

After two open tournaments cancelled because of weather conditions, it was a relief for the Paeroa Bowling Club to not only conduct competition, but also be host to eight teams from outside clubs for the final sponsored tournament of the season.

A total of 16 teams competed in the Val Morrison and April Leonard Memorial Tournament for the Val Morrison Cup, one of the more prestigious trophies in the club cabinet. Val Morrison and April Leonard being prominent in the Paeroa Bowling scene for a number of seasons, holding executive positions over the years Val Morrison being a past life member.

The Val Morrison Cup was presented to the Tui Park team from Te Aroha of Peter Ferguson (skip), Geoffrey Carseldine (2), and Craig Townsend (lead), by Vivian Gerrard of Arkwright's Antiques sponsors for the tournament and Sue Christie daughter of the late Viv Morrison. Peter Ferguson was also in the inaugural winning team when the cup was first presented in 2014.

Although the weather was variable during the day the success of this prominent and final tournament of the year was evident.



Thames Croquet Club holds fundraising competition for flood damage



Lightning and thunder, heavy bouts of rain, and the odd spot of hail, did not deter 40 keen croquet players from enjoying a day of high quality, and very competitive, croquet on the lawns of the Te Aroha Croquet Club.

Players were from clubs representing Te Aroha, Mor-

risville, Matamata, Paeroa, Hamilton East, Claudelands, Katakati, Tauranga and Mt Maunganui. The event was in aid of raising funds towards the refurbishment of the Thames Croquet Club lawns which are still suffering from the after effects of the big January, 2018, storm and subsequent seawater flooding. The Thames Club lawns are not in a suitable condition for competition play, though club level play is possible. We acknowledge the generous offer from the Te Aroha club in allowing us to use their lawns.

Play was in three divisions, premier, intermediate and primary, with the winners of each division having to be decided on Hoop Differential (number of hoops won) as each won an equal number of games.

A great day's play was followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea provided by the ladies of the Thames Club and the raffle draw with a number of quality prizes donated by Thames businesses and Thames club members.

RESULTS: Division 1 (Premier): 1 David Roberts and Jim Peck of Katakati, 4 wins and +1 hoop; 2 Clive Taylor and Neil Constable of Katakati, 4 wins; 3 Pat Anderton and Noeline Posselt of Paeroa, 3 wins. Division 2 (Intermediate): 1 Leo Craig and Heather Aitken of Matamata, 4 wins with +15 hoops; 2 Sandra and Chris Bird of Paeroa, 4 wins and +7 hoops; 3 Alan Butchart and Chris Lewenden of Claudelands, 4 wins and +3 hoops. Division 3 (Primary): 1 Colleen McKee and Kay Ferguson of Paeroa, 4 wins and +6 hoops; 2 Lyn Prestage and Marie Kendrick of Claudelands, 4 wins; 3 Ann and Bob Anderson of Matamata, 3 wins.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Frights and fun at Thames show

REVIEW
I'll Be Back Before Midnight
By KELLEY TANTAU

There were frightened jumps, then muffled laughs, as audience members willingly went out for a night of “scary entertainment” at the hands of Thames Music and Drama.

What resulted was a thriller play that increased in tension from the first scene, and provided theatregoers with a psychological whodunnit that unraveled across two acts with efficient mystery.

The opening night of *I'll Be Back Before Midnight* by Peter Colley on April 22 saw a four-person cast - the timid Jan (Hilary Rodley), *Bee Gees* fan Greg (David Singleton), charismatic Laura (Erin Wigley), and whiskey-drinking George (Stuart Floan) - fill the nostalgic cottage set out in rural countryside.

Jan had recently come out of hospital, and spent the duration of the show doubting her consciousness and tugging at the sleeves of her dressing gown.

Her husband, Greg, tried to help ease her anxious mind - before the arrival of his manipulative and beautiful sister Laura, that is.

George, the owner of the farmhouse, was a nonchalant, whiskey-drinking teller of horror stories, who casually mentioned to the fearful Jan



The strong cast of Erin Wigley, David Singleton, and Hilary Rodley combined to make for an intriguing performance.
Photo: KELLEY TANTAU

frightful tales of runaway leopards and chainsaw-wielding head-loppers.

The combination of all these things allowed the show to play out as one would expect, with an introduction, a hint of deception, building intensity, a climactic event, a red herring, and a resolution. There were also some unexpected laughs, as well.

It made for a more than watchable performance, and the actor's abilities were only strengthened by an impressive set constructed by Norm Hammond and Paul Silvester.

Kudos must also go to the special effects, sound, and lighting team of Martin Rodley and Tina Haakma. From the chimney gag in the opening

scene, to the use of black-outs and hand-held lighting, not to mention the foreboding use of a heartbeat, the effects were a crucial element to the play and they were done to an impressive standard.

Directed by Asha Peppiatt, *I'll Be Back Before Midnight* brought all the wonderful things of theatre together: a cast who stood out as individuals and an ensemble, set and costuming that evoked a certain aura, and special effects that immersed an audience enough to scare the bejeezus out of them.

DETAILS: *I'll Be Back Before Midnight's* final three shows will be on April 29-30; and May 1 at 7.30pm at Tararu Cultural Centre, tickets \$25pp. Tickets: www.thamesmad.co/music-hall.



The City of Auckland Singers return to Thames next month to perform some “old favourites”. This well-established show choir is passionate about entertaining their audiences. Popular music is the main focus - classic hits from the 50s to the present day, and talented soloists and trios add variety to the programmes. The group also has some New Zealand music. “We look forward to presenting some old favourites such as *Old Devil Moon*, *Memory*, a rousing Medley of songs from the 60's, and also some more modern songs such as *Perfect*, *Amazing* and *What Do I Know*,” a spokesperson said. “We have a lovely mix of enjoyable music to share, and our *Forever Country Medley* will be a great way to finish the concert for our friends in Thames.” The Thames Music Group concert begins at 2pm on May 2.

TICKETS: Adults \$20, TMG members \$15, students \$5, under 12 free.

Caitlin Smith band to perform

B*rave Caitlin Smith's Imaginary Band* is in town on 4 May from 7:30pm at the Kauaeranga Hall.

Caitlin Smith (piano and vocals), Lance McNicholl (guitar) and Steve Cournane (percussion and cymbals) are a dream team performing jazz and folk music.

Legally blind since birth, Caitlin is a mesmerizing, prolific and passionate performer, and a huge fan of Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen. Caitlin Smith is a song-poet and story singer, and a tireless advocate for accessibility issues and the healing and transformative power of creativity. A vocal and song-writing coach to many of our best-known artists, Caitlin



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Commemorating the 1981 Paeroa Floods
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Weddings & Events

Corbett House open for weddings

David and Anja Corbett have been running Corbett House in Hikutaia as a Bed and Breakfast for approximately three years. They are thrilled Corbett's are once again at Corbett House after thirty five years and want to continue celebrating the historic nature of the property. They provide three upstairs rooms for their guests and endeavour to give them a homely country experience while they are there. Along with a complete kitchen renovation, they had an American style barn constructed towards the end of 2019 and finally completed with the addition of the cedar doors just in time for their daughter's wedding in January 2020. The barn is large enough to accommodate around 100 guests seated. The wooden pole barn has a unique rustic feel to it and the heritage colours and three cedar doors make a strong design statement.

David and Anja received many positive comments from those who attended the wedding, suggesting the barn and park-like surroundings would make an ideal wedding venue. With mature trees and extensive lawn areas, it provided the perfect background for the wedding with ample shade and rustic seating for the ceremony. Located towards the back of the 1 hectare property, it affords privacy and compliments the original home which is a homage to the arts and crafts movement. Previous owners have respected the original design of the house which offers a wonderful setting for wedding photos both inside the house as well as around the well established gardens and mature trees surrounding the property. The house can provide the bridal party with accommodation and is perfect for wedding preparation.

Their daughter Natalie has become actively involved in promoting not only the Bed and Breakfast aspect of Corbett House



but also in promoting weddings at Corbett House. Her graphic design background is ideally suited to promoting both aspects of the business and she has provided her expertise with designing the Corbett House website as well as the logo and all aspects of design related to the Corbett House brand. She is interested in wedding planning and all the aspects that go into running a seamless and stress-free event.

Where possible Corbett House promotes and uses local vendors to supply everything needed for a successful day and Natalie enjoys meeting and working with them to realise the clients ideas.

David and Anja welcome any enquiries for those who are planning a wedding and look forward to working with clients to provide a truly special day.

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Weddings & Events



Top tips for your special day

Taryn Baines from Make Your Day Events shares her top tips for planning a wedding on the Coromandel or Hauraki Plains.

1. How to pick a venue? The number of guests you plan to have helps narrow this down. If you want it all sorted for you and you just choose the menu and drinks list, then an all inclusive venue is the way to go. If you'd rather choose your own caterers, provide your own beverages and are happy to organise the day itself, then a local hall or backyard wedding is a great option.
2. Looking for your vendors and not sure where to start? There is a great local directory of our amazing vendors online at: www.yourcoromandelwedding.co.nz.
3. When choosing your photo locations, work out the travel time between each by hopping in the car and timing the trip, then add 5-10 minutes to allow for bathroom

- breaks and rounding up your bridal party.
4. When planning an outdoor ceremony, think about shade to protect from the sun if having a summer celebration, and also consider potential poor weather - do you have the option of using your reception space as backup? You may not need to use it but it takes away the stress if you have one sorted. Your backup location needs to be on your marriage license.
5. If you need some extra help on the day for a DIY option, consider hiring a local sports club or community group to do the clean up etc – this helps them with their fundraising and takes the pressure off you and your families.
6. Be sure to take time during the day itself to pause, take it all in and bank the moments into your memory because as they say “time flies when you are having fun”.

An unromantic plans a wedding

The guest list is getting bigger. Another name, another stomach to consider, another set of eyes to watch as I likely fumble over vows which were constructed with equal parts romance and jest in mind: Don't be too loving, you'll laugh. Don't make too many jokes, you'll cry.

An anxiety brews long before the wedding date approaches, and I'm torn between tradition and timidity. I want the whole hog, hotel nuptials with 150 guests, but then I remember I don't know that many people.

I want an elopement, just the two of us on an island in Greece, but then I remember the pandemic and how the world has changed a lot since last year. Luckily, there are other people more equipped at dealing with the lovey-dovey than I. There are photographers who thrive on it, celebrants who live for it, and venues who pride themselves on it. There are options for the extravagant and options for the ones who are winging it.

And while I still haven't learned to say the f-word in public, my "fiance" and I are in the very early stages of planning our wedding.

The nuptials at this rate will take on the appearance of a family dinner with a sheepish but steadfast declaration of commitment, and that's okay.

Because maybe there won't be a string quartet, a flower girl delicately dropping rose petals along the aisle, or a bridal party sitting at a round table.

Maybe instead there will be good company, a summer night, and two unromantics at the altar.

- Kelley Tantau



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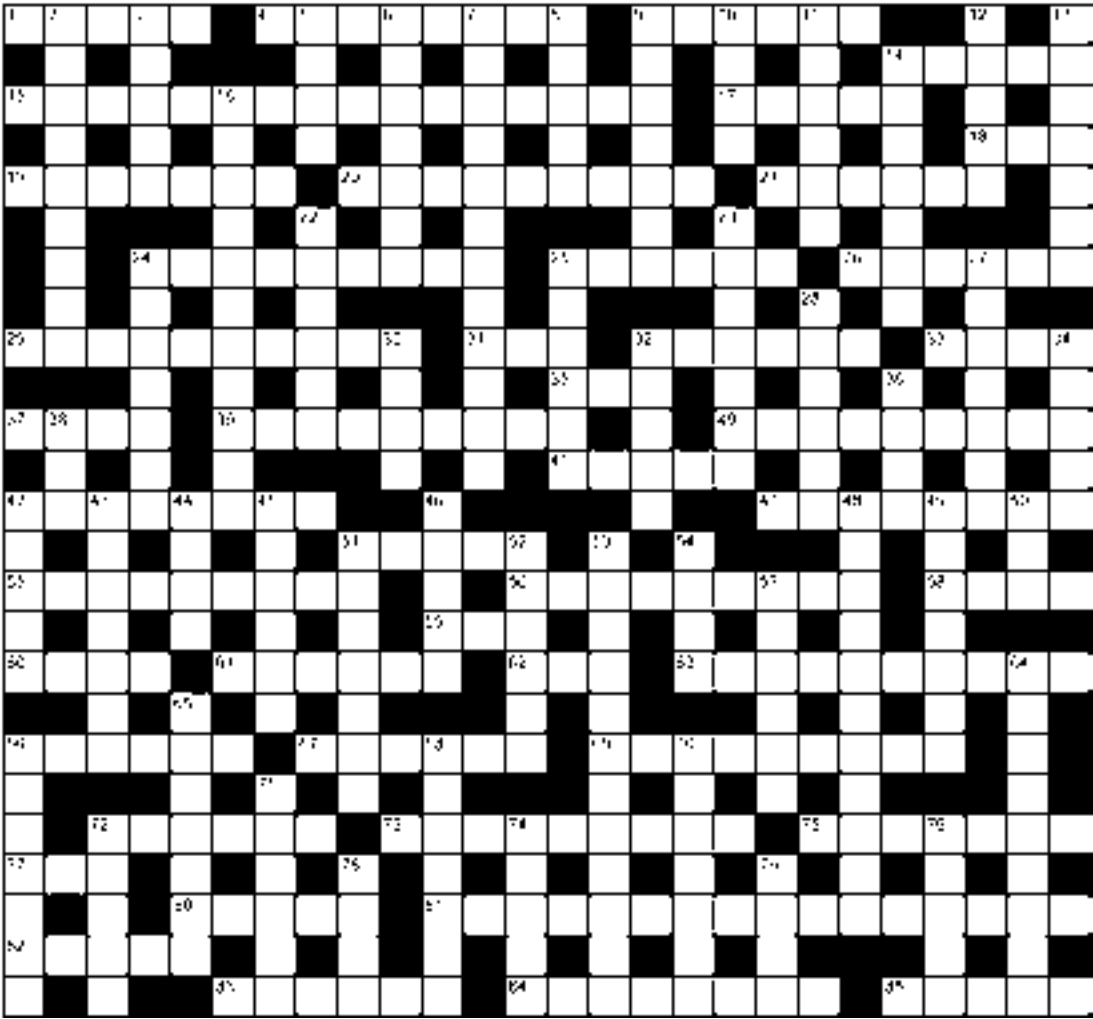


JUMBO CROSSWORD

18


- ACROSS**

1 Over (5)
4 Bare (8)
9 Rudderless (6)
14 Chew noisily (5)
15 Begin with no resources or advantage (5,4,7)
17 Climb (5)
18 Muck (3)
19 Germ (7)
20 Swollen-headed (9)
21 Intersecting (6)
24 Mysterious (9)
25 Spasmodic (6)
26 Eat alfresco (6)
29 Singer-poet (10)
31 Unused (3)
32 Official order (6)
33 Dirty fog (4)
35 Day before (3)
37 Head and shoulders sculpture (4)
39 Examples (9)
40 I mend albs (anag) (9)
41 Soft, fine net material (5)
42 Contravene (8)
47 False teeth (8)
51 Hair dye (5)
55 Lack of symmetry (9)
56 Old style suitcase (9)
58 Bird house (4)
59 Able-bodied (3)
60 Wide smile (4)
61 Rider's seat (6)
62 Promissory note (3)
- 63 Extended (10)
66 Woven container (6)
67 Baby's toy (6)
69 Laird (9)
72 Pressing (6)
73 Make uneasy (9)
75 Ridicule with satire (7)
77 Chest bone (3)
80 Rowing team (5)
81 Take risks (5,4,4,3)
82 Broken piece of pottery (5)
83 Robust (6)
84 Aridness (anag) (8)
85 Barrister's instructions (5)
DOWN
2 Petty fault-finder (9)
3 Blunder (5)
5 God of thunder (4)
6 Deep perception (7)
7 Firework display (12)
8 Calendar numbers (5)
9 Nonbeliever (7)
10 Jeopardise (4)
11 Engaged man (6)
12 Hidden obstacles (5)
13 Wildly disorganised (7)
14 Tuneful (7)
16 False account (11)
22 Raise in relief (6)
23 Result (7)
24 Globe-circling line (7)
25 Least (6)
27 More agile (7)
- 28 Medium's meeting (6)
30 Not imaginary (4)
32 Distributes cards (5)
34 Vapours (5)
36 Angle (4)
38 Vase (3)
42 Cake covering (5)
43 Material (7)
44 Not in action (4)
45 Cheerfully sociable (6)
46 Stab (5)
48 Bird heard after dark (11)
49 Ill-defined (7)
50 Ovum (3)
51 Progress (7)
52 In operation (6)
53 Agitator (12)
54 Relate (4)
57 French sweet (3-3)
64 Something included with letter (9)
65 Pretended (7)
66 Waterside plant (7)
68 Dry (7)
70 Kenyan capital (7)
71 Chess piece (6)
72 German submarine (1-4)
74 Change (5)
76 Fireside accessory (5)
78 Celebrity (4)
79 Accurate (4)



ACROSS: 1 Ended, 4 Stripped, 9 Adrift, 14 Munch, 15 Start from scratch, 17 Scale, 18 Goo, 19 Microbe, 20 Egotistic, 21 Across, 24 Enigmatic, 25 Picnic, 29 Troubadour, 31 New, 32 Decree, 33 Smog, 35 Eve, 37 Bust, 39 Instances, 40 Mandibles, 41 Tulie, 42 Infringe, 47 Dentures, 51 Henna, 55 Imbalance, 56 Carpetbag, 58 Cage, 59 Fit, 60 Grin, 61 Saddle, 62 IOU, 63 Lengthened, 66 Basket, 67 Rattle, 69 Landowner, 72 Urgent, 73 Discomfit, 75 Lamppost, 77 Rib, 80 Eight, 81 Stick your neck out, 82 Shard, 83 Sturdy, 84 Sardines, 85 Brief.

DOWN: 2 Nitpicker, 3 Error, 5 Thor, 6 Insight, 7 Pyrotechnics, 8 Dates, 9 Atheist, 10 Risk, 11 Nairobi, 71 Knight, 72 U-boat, 74 Coins, 76 Poker, 78 Star, 79 True.



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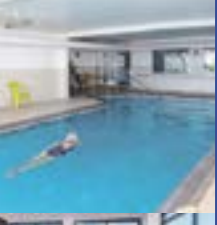
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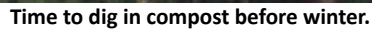


The last month of autumn is looming and the perfect time to do some important soil nourishment. Continued warm weather and some welcome rainfall has prolonged the growth of plants and unfortunately weeds. It is an ideal time to remove weeds and dig in compost and nutrients for soil health before the ground becomes too heavy and cold. Mulching after this provides a blanket to keep soil warm and prevent weed growth.

Continue harvesting autumn treats of feijoa, guavas and tamarillo as they ripen. Apples, pears – continue late season harvesting. Once harvest is over and leaf fall is complete, these can be pruned and sprayed. Citrus – fertilise around the base out to drip line. Strawberries – prepare beds for sowing young plants in June - November. Harvest available vegetables planted late summer such as beetroot, cauliflower, cabbage, spinach and lettuce. The ground is still warm enough to be planting lettuce, spinach and brassicas. The last of the tomatoes are still ripening if a little slower due to shorter days. Continue to sow seeds of broad beans, peas, lettuce and spinach.

Thinning carrot seedlings will help them develop fully and avoid short misshapen produce. Transplant the thinnings to increase overall yield. It is a time consuming task but well worth the effort. The herb garden can be tidied up by cutting back lightly to refresh the plants and allow for new growth.

As gaps appear in spots around the garden, sprinkle annual seeds of poppies, calendula, cornflower, marigold, stocks, alyssum to name a few. Before planting dig in compost and sheep pellets. Cover seed with a fine sprinkling of seed raising mix if you have some.



Autumn is the best time for planting new shrubs and trees so they can get established over the cooler winter months.

It is time to plant new season's daphne, camellias and rhododendron. These will add welcome colour to the garden in winter and early spring. May is the last time to be planting spring bulbs such as daffodils, freesia, hyacinth, jonquil, Muscari and tulip.

You still have time to plant lilies, they are easy to grow and can be planted any time between May and September. Dig in bulb food before planting and cover with 100mm of soil. Once dahlias stop flowering, the tubers and gladioli corms can be lifted and stored in a dry place ready for replanting in spring. Plan for the addition of new roses by preparing the soil by adding compost. New roses should be coming into garden centres next month. Existing roses can have a light tidy up and spray with a copper spray.

The compost heap will benefit from the addition of the autumn leaf fall. Many tree leaves are a particularly rich source of plant nutrients and make a valuable contribution to soil fertility. Turn compost heaps over regularly.

- Ngatea Garden Circle

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31 Non planting Day	<div>May 2021 Moon Planting Calendar</div>				1  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	2  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs
3 Non planting Day	4 Non planting Day	5 Non planting Day	6  Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	7  Plant root crops. Liquid Feed	8 Non planting Day	9 Non planting Day
10  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	11  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	12  New Moon	13 Non planting Day	14 Non planting Day	15 Non planting Day	16  Plant above ground Crops. Liquid Feed
17  Plant above ground Crops. Liquid Feed	18 Non planting Day	19 Non planting Day	20 Non planting Day	21 Non planting Day	22 Non planting Day	23  Plant above ground crops
24  Plant above ground crops	25  Plant above ground Crops. Liquid Feed	26  Full Moon	27 Non planting Day	28 Non planting Day	29  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs	30  Plant root crops, trees and shrubs



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ENTERTAINMENT

Neil Diamond honoured in show



The Sweet Caroline Tour: A Tribute to Neil Diamond is scheduled to stop at the Thames War Memorial Civic Centre on May 13 as part of a national tour.
Young but accomplished Australian musician and performer Zac Coombs is certain to be the highlight – his portrayal of Diamond's unique voice is uncanny, his love of the songs is obvious in every performance, and every story told carries that nostalgic Diamond lilt.
Aside from the artistry of Coombs, audiences can expect custom-designed concert production and a live support band to round out the two-hour theatre experience.
The set list is a veritable soundtrack of the past 60 years, featuring tracks that have been played countless on records, in concert, on the radio and in movies, and some still chanted in the biggest sports arenas in the world today, including *Sweet Caroline*, *Cherry Cherry*, *Red Red Wine*, *Crunchy Granola Suite*, *Shilo*, *Cracklin' Rosie*, *You Don't Bring Me Flowers*, *Both Sides Now*, *Heartlight*, *Forever in Blue Jeans*, *Song Sung Blue*, *Brother Love's Travelling Salvation Show*, *I Am... I Said*, *Girl You'll Be a Woman Soon* and lots more.
Tickets are on sale now at eventfinda.co.nz.

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Punk'd parade

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A sea of red alter egos join the parade.



Led by the iconic Steampunk train and tractor, the parade drew thousands of visitors into Thames on Saturday.



A steampunked pram.



The parade was fun for all ages.



An elaborate mask



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