



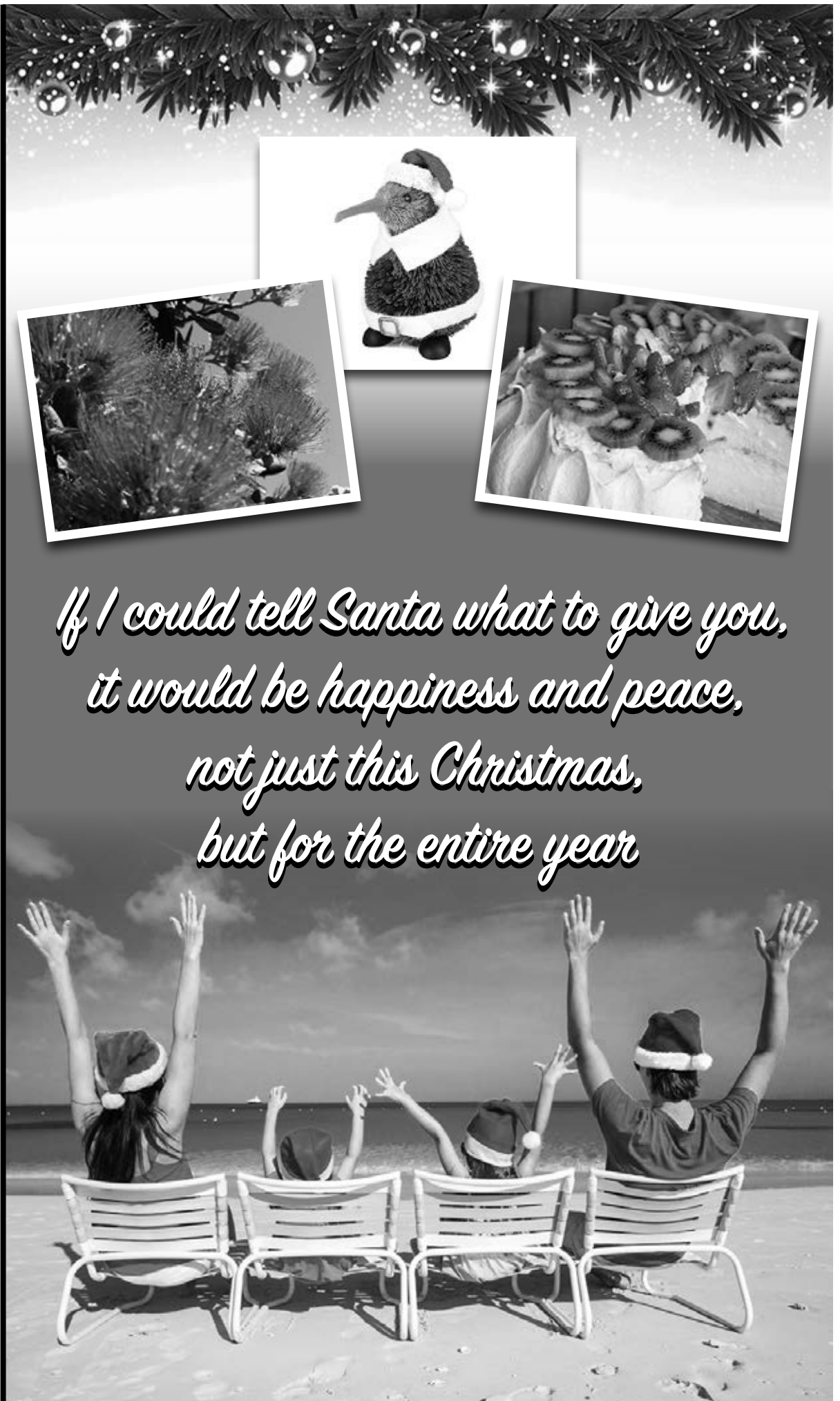
OWN

# News & Views



Summer 2018-2019

Our Women's Network North Shore • PO Box 34-383, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746 • info@own.org.nz • www.own.org.nz



*If I could tell Santa what to give you,  
it would be happiness and peace,  
not just this Christmas,  
but for the entire year*

**OWN is a women's network which connects women through a variety of activities and events which enhance feelings of belonging and well-being**



# Dear OWN members . . .



Our annual **High Tea** celebration on 27 October was a really enjoyable occasion. It was wonderful to see women sitting at tables – conversations glowing and enjoying the wonderful food *Emma* prepared for us. I want to thank *Emma* for the effort she makes in looking after us, helping to set up and clearing up afterwards, as well as doing the catering.

Many thanks to our Secretary *Lennie* who did a great deal of the organising with the *Takapuna North Community Trust* Co-ordinator *Sarah Thorne*. Thank you, *Lennie* for researching and sharing the history behind the term ‘high tea’ which was very interesting. We also thank *Sarah* and the *Takapuna North Community Trust* Board for their invaluable help which means so much to us.

I had feedback from people who said how much they enjoyed our OWN member *Ora* singing. Thank you, *Ora* – keep singing! Many thanks too, to our pianist *Jeanette* who provided a musical background during the celebration.

We very much appreciate *Rosemarie's* commitment to the **OWN News&Views** newsletter and to *Beate* and *Anne Mutu* who send out the issues to our members. Thank you, *Val* and *Pat* for always volunteering to do the registration.

Thanks to *Chris* who brought a wonderful contingent of women from *Settlers* and we hope they will soon become members.

Our **OWN Festival** with the *Theme Life, Love, Laughter* will be held in May, so we hope to see you all there. Any ideas about workshops for the **Festival** will be most welcome. Thank you, *Beate* for keeping an eye on our funding.

Enjoy the spring and the summer in our beautiful surroundings.

*Joan Lardner-Rivlin*  
Chairperson



*Emma and her wonderful catering spread*

## OWN High Tea

Saturday,  
27 October, 2018

Positive Ageing  
Centre,  
Takapuna



*Judy (in her fascinator) and Sany*

## 2019 Subscriptions Are Due

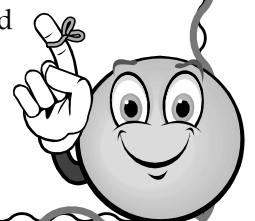
Unfortunately due to rising costs we have had to increase our subs to **\$20**. Some members have been generous in donating more than the amount due and we are very appreciative of this. The annual subs is due on the 1 January, which is the start of our financial year. If you donate more than \$10 we can issue you with a tax receipt (please supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope).

You can pay online / in-branch to our bank account:

ASB Birkenhead,  
Account number: 12-3053-0401733-000

Don't forget to put your name and what the payment is for.

Or, send a cheque to **OWN**, PO Box 34-383, Birkenhead, Auckland 0746.





# Up-coming Event

## OWN Theatre Group Trip

**Joan** (not our Joan)

**When:** 2:00pm, Saturday, 9 February, 2019

**Where:** ASB Waterfront Theatre, Wynyard Quarter

Meet *Joan*: a tough, indomitable woman who'll make you laugh and cry in equal measure. Starring *Ginette McDonald* and her daughter *Kate McGill*, this is a *Tom Scott* production. This should be an excellent show that you won't want to miss.



**Register your interest now!** There are limited tickets at the best price. For more details, please contact *Joan Lardner-Rivlin*, ph: 483-9671.

## OWN Bus Trip?

There has been some interest in a trip to Matakana – the *Brick Bay Vineyard & Sculpture Trail*. The walk is as long or as short as you can manage. We hope to have enough people to make this worthwhile



*A big thank you to Lennie for great work she does for OWN!*

and thought that March 2019 would be a good month weather-wise. We will be looking into cost, and the more people who come, the more economic it could be. We know that it is a long way off, but we need plenty of time to organise it. If you are interested, please contact *Lennie Crawford*, ph: 444-3320, or email: [lenniec@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lenniec@xtra.co.nz)



**Remember to check out our website for news, pictures, events, etc.**  
[www.own.org.nz](http://www.own.org.nz)

## Sweet, but twisted



does that  
make me  
a candy  
cane?

## Wanted

We would like to hear from other OWN Groups telling us what is happening in your Group so that we can share it with everyone.



Also, if you have **any** item of interest that you would like to appear in **OWN NewsViews** please send it to *Rosemarie Carr*, Compiling Editor, email: [rrcarr@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rrcarr@xtra.co.nz) or post to 5 Sandown Road, Rothesay Bay, Auckland 0630.





# OWN Groups



**New**

## OWN Browns Bay Coffee Group

A new *Coffee Group*. Meets at 11:30am on the last Tuesday of the month at *White Flower Café*, Browns Bay. For details, contact *Val Bird*, ph: 475-6601 or email: valbird51@hotmail.com



## OWNs Alone Lunch

Meets on Sundays twice monthly at the *Fairview Retirement Village*, Albany. For details, contact *Judith Sumich*, ph: 478-6618.

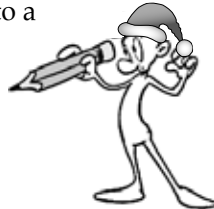
## OWN Theatre Group

Exploring more theatre visits and other activities. For details, contact *Joan Lardner-Rivlin*, ph: 483-9671.



## Heloisa's Art Classes

Classes are held at the *Mary Thomas Centre*, Takapuna on Tuesdays (2:00pm - 4:00pm). The classes are free, but a gold coin donation to cover material costs is appreciated. Classes are limited to a maximum of 10 people, so registration for a class is necessary. Contact *Sarah Thorne*, Takapuna North Community Co-ordinator, ph: 486-2098 or email: office@takapunatrust.org.nz



## OWN Discussion Group

Meets every second Tuesday of the month at 10:00am. We are looking for more people to join in with us. A range of subjects is discussed and it is a very interesting morning held in Room 3 (first floor) of the *Bays Community Centre*, Browns Bay. If you are interested, contact *Jeanne Ford* ph: 410-4803.

**Back**

## Rummikub Club

A good way to keep your brain active. Anyone interested in getting together for monthly sessions, contact *Rika Werner*, ph: 950-6501, or mobile: 022-151-3957.



## Writing for Future Generations (WFFG)

Inform the appropriate Group Convenor prior to attending the Group.



*Browns Bay Group* meets on the second Saturday of each month at the *Bays Community Centre*, Browns Bay. For details, contact *Patricia Russell*, ph: 479-7519.

*Beach Haven Group* meets on the fourth Saturday of each month at the *Cedar Centre*, Beach Haven. For details, contact *Anne Mutu*, ph: 483-7704.

# Remembering Kathleen Sharkey



24 January, 1940 – 16 October, 2018

*Kathleen* was a member of our **Beach Haven Writing for Future Generations** group since its conception. She wrote lovely stories of her life, through which we came to know her really well.

She didn't have an easy life, but dealt with it with humour and practicality and was kind and helpful to others. *Kathleen* had four children, one who had special needs, six grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. She was one of the leaders in *Faith and Light*, a group which supports one another who have a special needs family member. She was also involved in other community organisations.

She will be sorely missed by us all.

Anita Knape





# Christmas at the Beachhouse

In 2001, *Nicki*, her husband *Kevin*, and *James* (two years of age at the time) were living in Minneapolis. *Kevin*, a doctor from Melbourne, was on exchange working at the hospital there. The weather in Minneapolis is harsh – freezing cold in the winter and scorchingly hot in the summer. *Nicki* and *Kevin* had arrived there in February, the coldest month of winter, and snow lay thick on the ground. They did not have a car. *Nicki* broke two pushchairs pushing *James* in the snow.

*Graeme* and I visited them in August. The heat was unbearable. Too hot to be outside. All the

swimming pools are located inside buildings.



As Christmas was approaching, *Nicki*, then six months pregnant with their second child, did not want to have another winter in Minneapolis. *Kevin's* contract was due to finish at the end of February about a week before the birth of the new baby. Solution? *Nicki* and *James* would come home to New Zealand and have a hot sunny Christmas with the family at the beachhouse.

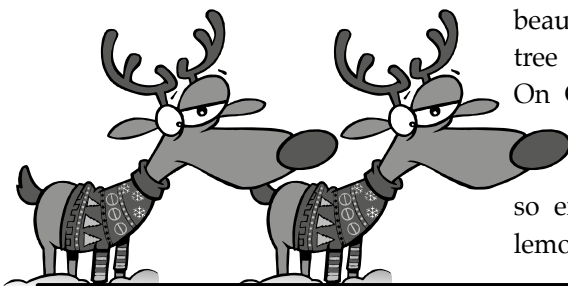
The house was decorated beautifully with a large Christmas tree in the corner of the lounge. On Christmas Eve, *Paris*, *James'* cousin aged five, and *James* nearly three were so excited! They put a glass of lemonade and some Christmas

cake on the deck for *Father Christmas* and a carrot for his reindeer. It took them a long time to go to sleep – they wanted to see and hear *Father Christmas*, but eventually they dropped off.

The next morning, they were up early to see if *Santa* had been. There were lots of presents under the tree. They ran to the ranch slider and looked out. Yes, *Father Christmas* had been. *Paris* said, "I can tell he has been! He has finished the cake and his drink."

*James*, with the wisdom of a two year old, said, "Yes. The reindeer were here. They have bitten into the carrot and they have left poos on the deck." It is amazing how realistic chocolate raisins can look!

*Judy Brocherie*



Sometimes I forget to thank the people who make my life happy in so many ways.

Sometimes I forget to tell them how much I really do appreciate them for being an important part of my life.

So **THANK YOU** all of you, just for being there for me.



## Forgetfulness

**Forgetfulness? No, not me!**  
**There's nothing wrong with my memory**  
**No need for prompts by phone or text**  
**I know exactly what I need to do next!**  
**My mind is full of important data**  
**of things to be done – now or later**  
**I only wish I could recall**  
**where in my head I've stored it all!**

*Patricia Russell*





# BANG!!!



The explosion came from the oven behind me. I nearly jumped out of my skin.

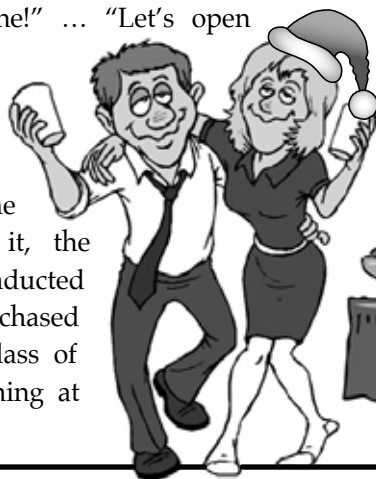
I had just taken the cooked bird out of the oven and put it on the bench. It was 10:30pm on Christmas Eve and we were expecting about 25 people to Christmas Dinner the following day – our family plus partners, my husband’s sister and all her family including spouses, the grandparents, a couple of elderly bachelor uncles, and a few extras. Luckily, I planned to have a cold buffet with that number, so perhaps we could manage with the microwave and the stove top. At that time of night there was no possibility of contacting an electrician. But there was no point in fretting over it, so I went to bed.

In the morning, everything went smoothly and was ready when the family arrived with their various pre-arranged contributions. However, the two nieces came in with an entrée they had proudly made which had filo pastry round it, and which needed an oven to cook it. *Panic Stations!*

The only solution was for the girls to go over to my son’s house a couple of miles away and use his oven. So, off they went, son, daughter-in-law, and the two girls, bearing the delectable entrée.

As it was an entrée, we all had to wait for it. The wine was already opened, so as time progressed it was a case of, “Have another glass of wine!” ... “Have yet another glass of wine!” ... “Let’s open another bottle, shall we!”

Over at my son’s house, the entrée was put in the oven, and, while the four were waiting for it, the two girls had a slow conducted tour of the newly purchased house, and a leisurely glass of Christmas cheer. No rushing at Christmas.



Meanwhile, at home the empty stomachs were rumbling, and responding to the wine. The cheeks were getting pinker and pinker, and the chatter was getting louder and louder. The horseplay started and there was great jollity. Jokes and stories of times gone by were aired. Nobody escaped the teasing. A few skeletons came out of cupboards. In fact, nobody would have received any Christmas stockings if *Santa* had been listening!

At last the entrée arrived and was served, and very much enjoyed. It was a credit to the girls who had made it. Then the rest of the meal noisily followed.

When it was all over and the noise had died down, I sat down next to my brother-in-law. He and his wife in their home were always excellent hosts. She was a great cook, the table always looked exquisite, the wine was carefully chosen to go with the courses, and the background music was always most appropriate. I must confess that I was feeling rather guilty at the shambles we had had.

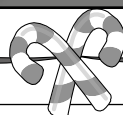
He was sitting in the corner in a large armchair, rounded tummy, pink cheeks, glassy eyes, *Santa* hat a little awry on his head, wineglass dangling over the arm of the chair. I said to him, “What a shambles we have had today ...”

He replied, “Oh no, no, no. Don’t you worry about it. I can’t remember when I last enjoyed a Chrish-mash so mush!”

Jenny Goldsbro



The secret to happiness is ...  
a good sense of humour and a bad memory!





# Tauranga Bay



One year when my children were still quite small, three families – ourselves, my husband’s brother and cousin and their wives, and children – decided we would spend our Xmas holiday at Tauranga Bay, which is situated at Whangaroa, Northland.

My husband and his brother had trucks at the time, so we piled all our things onto both trucks – which included the kitchen sink – and off we went. It is a long way in a truck and by the time we got there all the children were tired and cranky. Imagine seven children under the age of five.

The three men went to work pitching tents and getting our camp site organised. In those days the camp only had the basic ablutions and nothing else. So, kerosene lamps, barbecue, gas stove, and what we three women had decided was absolutely necessary to survive two weeks. It was great for the children as there was plenty of room for them to play and the beach was very safe so consequently most of our time was down there. The men had also managed to tow a boat,

so they were off every day fishing and leaving us women with the children to entertain. The only consolation to this was that we had plenty of fresh fish to eat, which was a bonus.

On the last day the men of course went off fishing and us women as usual with the children were down on the beach. We could not believe our eyes as a plane came in to land in the water right beside us. The children were beside themselves with what had happened. The pilot then came on to the beach and offered to take us all on a ride around the bay and surrounding area. What could we do?

We pooled the last of our money and then climbed aboard. The two littlest ones had to sit on knees, but that was no hardship.

Off we took on the water and what an incredible experience. We saw our husbands fishing, and the pilot was really good taking us all over the bay and surrounding countryside. We landed

far too soon for us, but it must have been at least half an hour. We said our goodbye to the pilot – we found out later that *Captain Fred Ladd* was well known in his seaplane and I feel privileged that he gave us the opportunity to have at least a little part of his history.

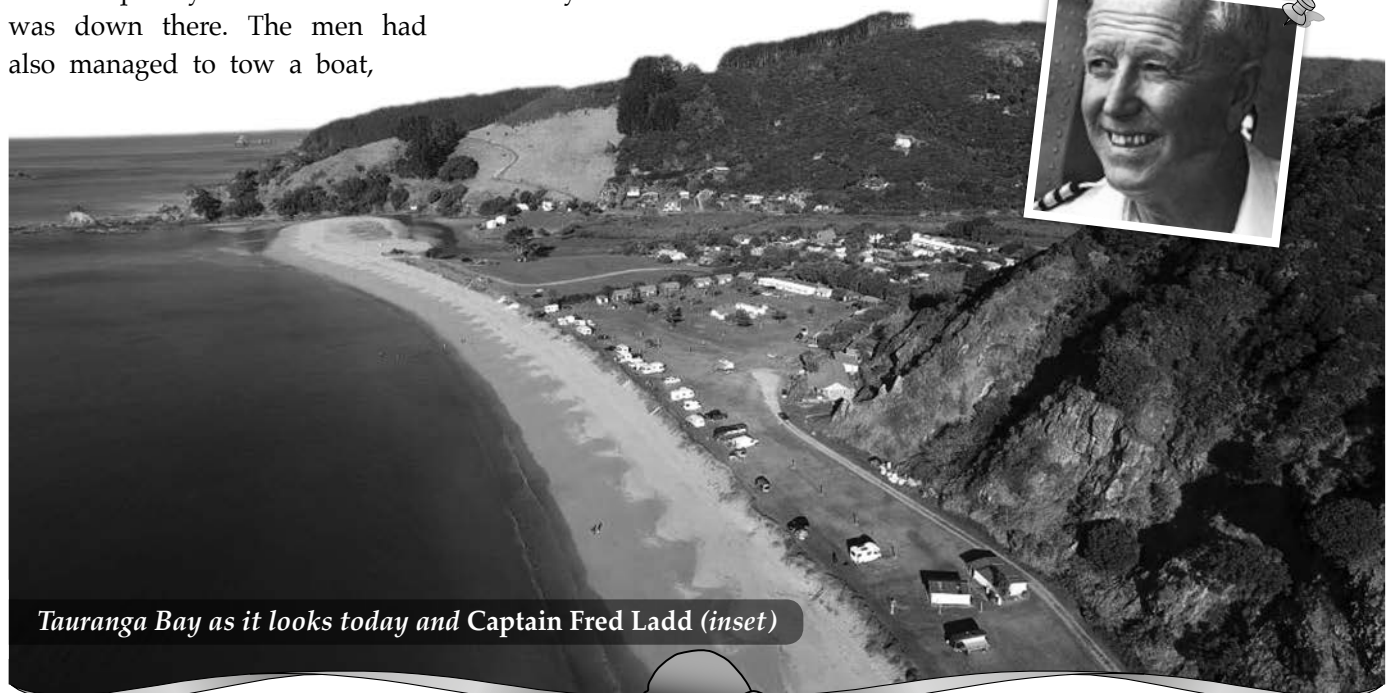
The men of course, when they got back from fishing, were no sure whether to believe us or not but when we told them where we saw them fishing and that we had spent all the money that we had, they then had to believe us.

That was a wonderful way to finish our holiday and also to be the envy of our husbands and friends.



The most talked about episode that *Fred Ladd* did in his latter years was to fly his plane under the Auckland Harbour Bridge in 1967.

*Lennie Crawford*



*Tauranga Bay as it looks today and Captain Fred Ladd (inset)*

# Merry Christmas to My Female Friends

If I were ol' Santa, you know what I'd do,  
I'd dump silly gifts that are given to you,  
and deliver some things just inside your front door,  
things you have lost, but treasured before.

I'd give you back all your maidenly vigour,  
and to go along with it, a neat tiny figure.  
Then restore the old colour that once graced your hair,  
before rinses and bleaches took residence there.

I'd bring back the shape with which you were gifted,  
so things now suspended need not be uplifted.  
I'd draw in your tummy and smooth down your back  
till you'd be a dream in those tight fitting slacks.

I'd remove all your wrinkles and leave only one chin,  
so you wouldn't spend hours rubbing grease on your skin.  
You'd never have flashes or queer dizzy spells,  
and you wouldn't hear noises like ringing of bells.

No sore aching feet and no corns on your toes,  
no searching for spectacles when they're right on your nose.  
Not a shot would you take in your arm, hip or fanny,  
from a doctor who thinks you're a nervous old granny.

You'd never have a headache, so no pills would you take,  
and no heating pad needed since your muscles won't ache.  
Yes, if I were Santa, you'd never look stupid,  
you'd be a cute little chick with the romance of a cupid.

I'd give a lift to your heart when those wolves start to whistle,  
and the joys of your heart would be light as a thistle.  
But alas! I'm not Santa. I'm simply just me,  
the matronest of matrons you ever did see.

I wish I could tell you all the symptoms I've got,  
but I'm due at my doctor's for an oestrogen shot.  
Even though we've grown older this wish is sincere,  
Merry Christmas to you and a Happy New Year.

*Pam Ayers*



## Xmas Handy Hints



### Drink Covers

Use cupcake cases to cover drinks glasses in the summer to prevent bugs from dropping in.



### Fancy Ice Cubes

Frozen grapes are great way to keep drinks cool without watering them down. They also make great summer snacks.



### After Christmas

Use egg boxes to store delicate Christmas tree decorations.

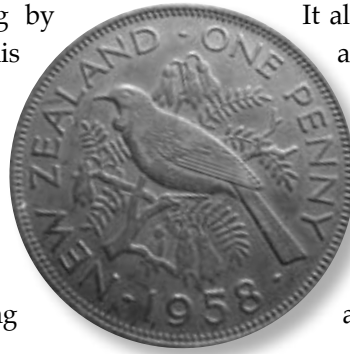




# Five Pennies



In 1959 there was a popular song sung by *Danny Kaye* called **The Five Pennies**. This was often sung at weddings, although it was sung by *Danny Kaye* to his children in the film **The Five Pennies** that same year.



It also cost only 1 penny to post a letter, hence at Christmas time everyone could afford to send a Christmas card to all of their friends. Unfortunately, this tradition is dying out because of the cost of postage.

I will give you a few lines of the song and you may remember it. I am not going to sing it. The song starts off with ...

Very few people had a home telephone 60 years ago and to phone a friend at a public phone box cost a penny.



**This little penny is to wish on,  
and make your wishes come true.**



**This little penny is to dream on,  
dream of all you can do.**



**This little penny is a dancing penny,  
see how it glitters and glows.**



A child's eyes would light up if you gave them a penny. They were quite big and safe to give to little children. It would buy them a penny ice cream or a penny bag of lollies from *McKenzie's*. I can remember when I was at school, we used to buy a bag of salted peanuts for a penny at the school tuck shop.

What was a penny and what was its worth? Anyone 50 years of age and less would not have used them as they disappeared with change to decimal currency in 1967.



Even the *Tooth Fairy* would give you a penny for the baby tooth that dropped out – if you put the tooth under an egg cup at night, in the morning the tooth would be replaced with a penny. Nowadays there would probably be a dollar there.



If I told you that I was going to spend a penny, would you know where I was going? This was a common saying, and still used by us oldies today, because all public toilets used to charge a penny to open the door.

Have you ever had someone say to you, "A penny for your thoughts." Perhaps not. I am sure that you have heard the saying, but everyone is so busy these days they don't have time to daydream.

The value of it was 12 pennies to a shilling, which in today's value is about 10 cents.



A word of advice: look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves.

*Betty Faesen*

'Twas Christmas broach'd  
the mightest ale;  
'Twas Christmas told  
the merriest tale;  
A Christmas gambol oft could  
cheer the poor man's heart  
through half the year.

*Walter Scott*  
Novelist, poet, and playwright



*Merry Christmas*



# Women's Vote



Last month New Zealand women celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being able to vote. I came to New Zealand in 1969 as a 28 year old and had never had a chance to vote in Switzerland. It took until 1971 when finally two fair-minded men in the government changed their mind and voted 'YES'. With a count of 20 to 18, Swiss women became equals in 24 cantons, or areas of the country. However, one canton, Appenzell, held out until 1990. Unbelievable!

Of course, one could blame the length of time it took and all the argy-bargy that went with it on the adopted political system. But this would be totally rubbish. The main reason was men simply considered themselves superior and unfortunately, too many woman also went along with this line of thinking. They saw nothing wrong in being a man's domestic goddess, keeping him happy in every respect, making his home comfortable, and most importantly, keeping the house CLEAN.



This business of being clean was taken seriously by the Swiss Hausfrau. For me, and most other girls at the time, it meant that after we finished the compulsory nine years of schooling, we had to learn how to become housekeepers. This usually involved being sent to a 'fine' family as home help. A lot of Swiss-German girls went to the French speaking part of the country. This gave them the opportunity to learn French, on top of the domestic stuff, and their Mesdames got cheap labour in exchange. Often, it was very hard for these girls to be away from home for the first time, aged just 15 or 16.

For my part, I was sent to a housekeeping school run by the Deaconesses to which my Dad's sister belonged. About one-third of our group of 20 girls came from the French part of Switzerland.

Our day started at 6:30am. We had to shower, dress, make the bed (there was only one proper way to do this, or it would be pulled apart later on), read the bible for half an hour (sitting up straight on a chair in front of the bed), go to a 7:30am prayer meeting (where we'd sing at least two hymns around the table), and then it was time for breakfast.

After eating, we were sent off to different stations around the institution; to the hospital and mental units – either, as nurse aides, or kitchen-hands, and also to the laundry to learn how to iron. How I cursed the doctors' white coats and shirts. But of course, spotless laundry was



important – and our future husbands would be expected to look spick and span.

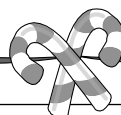
There was also the gardener to help, rabbits to look after, and a chicken-run to tend.

For lunch, we returned to base. The afternoons were filled with lessons in music, handicrafts, literature, how to behave, and all sorts of other useful things, such as how to invisibly replace the heel of a 'holey' sock.

Dinner was early. Afterwards, it was more or less free time. Sometimes, we might have to go and listen to a talk by a missionary, or by a returned sister at the 'motherhouse'.

All this was certainly very beneficial for us girls. But when the rotund Head Sister put on a white glove, got on her knees to check if the dusting under the pedal of the grand piano had been done properly and, if it was not, told us that we cheated the Lord himself, I started having doubts. However, I did learn a lot, and for this, I am grateful to this day.

*Irene Knowles*





I have passed so many people by unintentionally without recognizing them. "Stuck up madam," I heard someone say a few days ago. It has been suggested by some well-meaning people that I buy some better glasses and also get my cataracts done. My cataracts were done several years ago and a great success. New glasses won't help, says the Eye Specialist. So I carry on as best I can and mop up the spillages when I miss the glass or cup – white wine is the worst to gauge when pouring. I either get a very small measure or one filled to the brim and more. Well that's the better of the two as I get more to drink.

never seen her before. Her expression said, 'What an idiot.'

When walking with my daughter down by the beach, a man was approaching, head down wearing a cap, just like my old neighbour used to wear, and hobbling a bit. I'd heard the neighbour had recently hurt his back, so I said a very friendly, "Hello." He turned towards me and lifted his head. He looked sort of pleased at first, but as his gaze took in the wrinkly old face and white hair, his smile dropped and he hurried on his way.

I caught the bus to church this morning and said, "Hello again," to a man seated half way down the bus. "I haven't seen you for a while." He nodded at me and stared as I got a bit closer ... "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were someone else." His wife was sitting opposite and gave me a very dirty look.



Maybe I should wear a sign saying:

**Please acknowledge me if we know each other,  
or ignore me if we're strangers.**

I said hello to a lady ... well I thought I knew her, but the strange look she gave me meant I didn't, and as we got closer I knew I had

I always recognize my daughter's dog when they are down on the beach before I see *Helen*. *Aoife* always comes bounding over when I call her name, so I do get some things right.

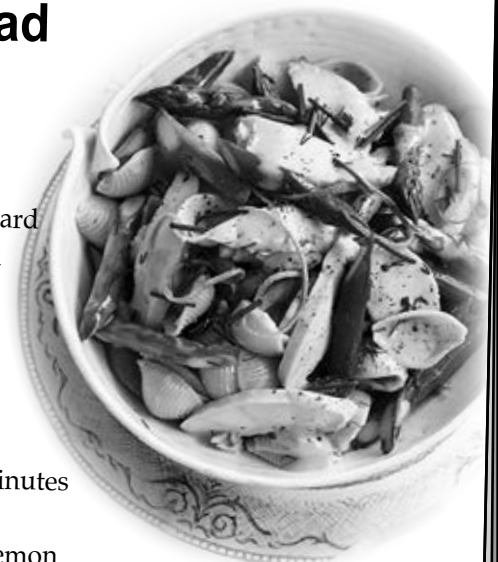
Mary Martin

## Judy's Kitchen

### Summer Smoked Chicken Pasta Salad

#### Ingredients

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 400g of Dried Pasta Shells                                      | 1 Lemon                   |
| 2 Smoked Chicken Breasts<br>(approx. 330g, thinly sliced)       | 2 Egg Yolks               |
| 2 bunches of Asparagus<br>(woody ends trimmed, cut into thirds) | 2 teaspoons Dijon Mustard |
| 2 tablespoons Fresh Dill (chopped)                              | 125ml (½ cup) Olive Oil   |
| ½ bunch Fresh Chives (cut into 2cm lengths)                     | 1 tablespoon Hot Water    |



#### Method

1. Cook the pasta until *al dente*, adding the asparagus in the last two minutes of cooking. Drain and rinse under cold running water. Set aside.
2. Using a zester, cut the lemon rind into long thin strips and juice the lemon.
3. Mix the egg yolks, mustard, and 2 teaspoons of the lemon juice in a food processor. With the motor still running, add the olive oil in a thin steady stream until well combined. Add the hot water and 2 tablespoons of the remaining lemon juice. Process until combined (alternatively use a shop-bought creamy whole egg dressing and add mustard).
4. Transfer the pasta mixture to a large serving bowl. Add the chicken, chives, and Dill. Pour over the dressing and toss to combine. Top with lemon zest.





# Whirinaki Forest



One Summer, *Michael* and I set out on a five-day walk in the *Whirinaki te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park* on the East Coast of Aotearoa. This is a magnificent 'dinosaur forest' with towering Kahikatea, Totara, Matai, Rimu, Miro, and Tawa trees. The tramping track meanders down the forested river terraces with giant podocarps. At one point the river cuts through an ancient lava flow with spectacular results.

As we set off on Day One, it was raining, the river was raging and there was heavy windfall. After a while, a young American woman ran past. She had a heavy pack and we called out, "Take care, take it easy." She appeared to be as high as a kite and shouted that she would see us at the first hut.

Four hours later we arrived at the Central Whirinaki Hut. We were surprised to find a group of hiking friends who told us the track was now closed due to storm damage and that it was unsafe to go any further. This was their last day and they were on their way home. The young American woman had called in at the hut. She reportedly had a bag of white powder and behaved strangely. She was unstoppable and determined to continue to the plateau despite being told the track was now closed.

*Michael* built a roaring fire and we cooked dinner. We decided to stay for a few days until the weather improved. We slept like logs and next day set out to explore nearby. We found a huge cave and the beautiful Whirinaki waterfall. When we returned we were so pleased to have the hut to ourselves.

At dusk we heard dogs barking. Two men approached the hut and sat outside on the deck. They were pig hunters and they looked really fearsome. We gathered our belongings and *Michael* planned to sleep close to



the door of our bunk room to keep us safe. Eventually, we asked the men if they were coming in. They were very polite and said they had not wanted to disturb our meal. They fed the dogs and ensured they were safe, and then introduced themselves whilst cooking their dinner. *Michael* is a hunter and they shared stories. It was a very interesting evening. They told us about their families and how to catch wild boars. We told them a little about ourselves. When I said that I worked in the alcohol and drug field, the youngest man (who had a two-year-old son) said he had wondered if he had an alcohol problem. By the end of the evening he had decided that he would go to an *Alcoholics Anonymous* meeting in Rotorua.

The moral for us was: '**Don't judge a book by its cover**' and '**Nothing is ever as it seems**'.

Next day, the hunters and dogs set out to catch food for their families. The weather was still stormy, so we decided to walk out.

We met a ranger and we were disturbed when he told us there had not been any sighting of the young American woman. He then told us that an American couple had been walking out after four days tramping. The woman had bent down to navigate her way under a fallen tree. As she stood up with a heavy pack on her back, she lost her balance and fell into the river. Her husband could not find her. He was utterly distraught. Her body was found downstream later that day. We were bereft to hear of this terrible accident. We could only imagine how devastating this would be for the husband and their families.

This was a memorable trip.

*Chris Griffiths*

Whatever is beautiful. Whatever is meaningful. Whatever brings you happiness.  
May it be yours this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

