

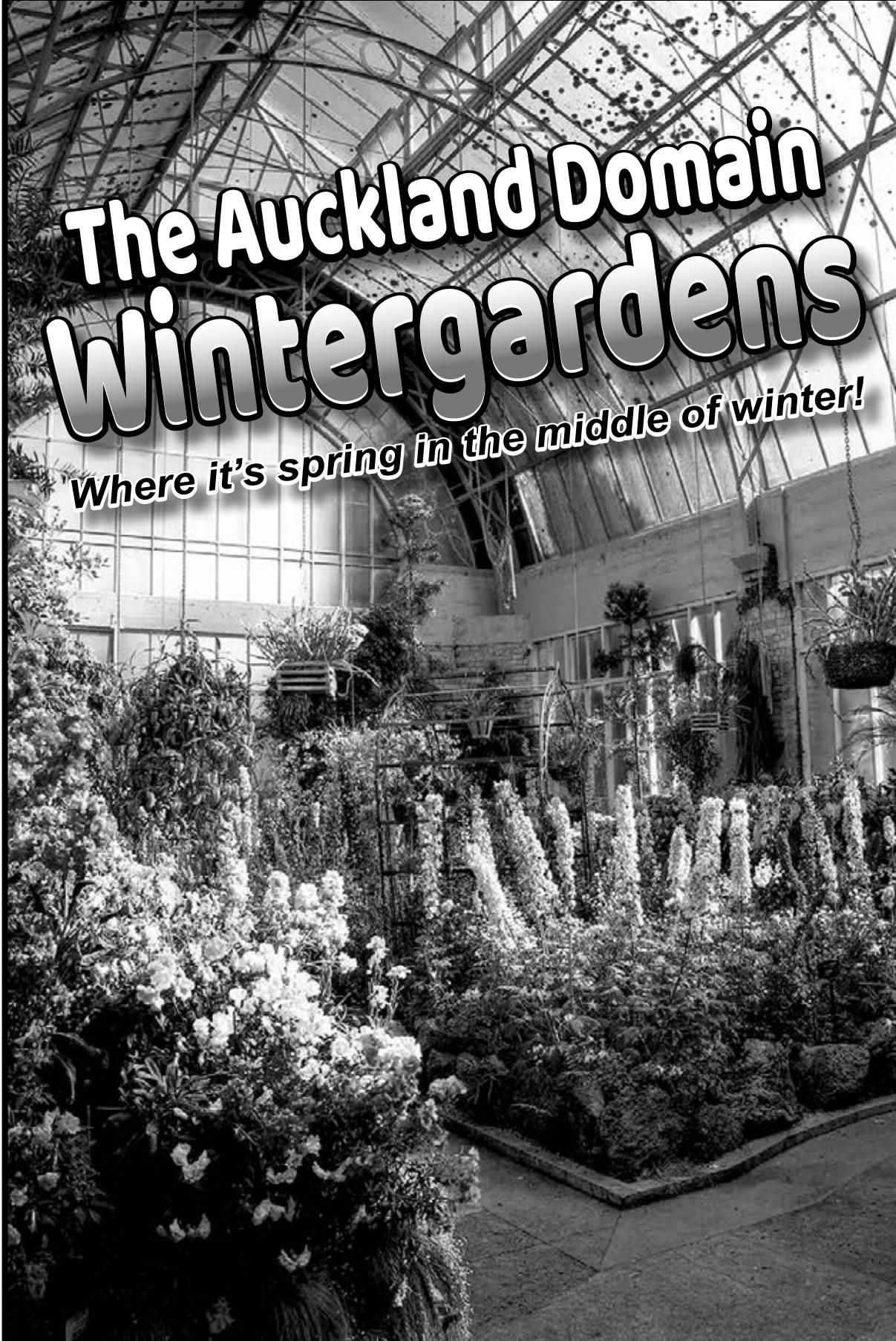


News & Views

OWN

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

Wish someone "Happy Matariki!" on Friday, 28 June, 2024 by saying
Ngā mihi o Matariki, te tau hou Māori!



The Auckland Domain Wintergardens

Where it's spring in the middle of winter!

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 ...

OWN Chairperson's Report, as read to the attendees at the OWN AGM 2024.

In 2023, we had an interesting year. Our **OWN Festival**, held on 1 July, was very successful with everyone enjoying the workshops. The origami workshop created quite a bit of hilarity. We decided not to have an **OWN Festival** for the next year as our funding from the *Devonport-Takapuna Local Board* did not eventuate and *Takapuna North Community Trust*, who have been a big help to us over the years, have had to move premises and their funding has been cut as well.

Unfortunately our **High Tea** event was also cancelled. Instead, your OWN Committee decided to have an **OWN Lunch** at the *Bays Club* on 18 November, which proved to be popular and we will continue to do this at least twice a year.

Our **Games Day** was a fun-filled occasion, with lots of laughter and camaraderie from everyone, and the shared lunch was enjoyed by all.

We hope to have more activities in the coming year and look forward to having you all participate.

My grateful thanks to *Lennie Crawford*, our Secretary, and to the rest of the OWN Committee for all their hard work, including *Dale Everiss*, our Treasurer, in keeping a good eye on our finances. To *Anne Mutu* in ensuring that we all get our copy of the **News&Views** newsletter. To *Jos Coburn* for the fabulous job she does in putting together our newsletter. Also to both *Anne Mutu* and *Patricia Russell* for their involvement in the **OWN Writing Groups**.

Kind regards,

Judy Brocherie
Chairperson



OWN AGM 2024

17 OWN members attended the **OWN AGM 2024** on Saturday, 11 May, at the *Bays Community Centre* in Browns Bay. They all enjoyed each other's company and a catered lunch at the end of the proceedings.

The OWN officers elected for 2024-2025 were:

Judy Brocherie Chairperson
Lenny Crawford Secretary
Anita Knape Treasurer



PUZZLERS

How many can you get?
Answers are at the bottom of page 10 – *no cheating!!*

- ① What belongs to you, but everyone uses it more than you do?
- ② What five letter word becomes shorter when you add to it?
- ③ What five letter word typed in capitals can be read the same upside down?
- ④ I am an odd number. Take away a letter and I become even. What number am I?
- ⑤ There's only one word in the dictionary that is spelt wrong. What is it?
- ⑥ What has 13 hearts, but no other organs?
- ⑦ What goes away as soon as you start to talk about it?
- ⑧ What can you hold in your left hand, but not in your right hand?
- ⑨ How many months of the year have 28 days?



OWN Groups

Check for details by phoning the co-ordinators.

OWN Writing for Future Generations

New members welcome - please inform the Group's Convenor prior to attending.



Browns Bay Group meets on the second Saturday of each month at the *Bays Community Centre*, Browns Bay. For more details, contact *Patricia Russell*, ph: 021-064-9522.

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.

OWN Browns Bay Coffee Group

Come and join us for a cuppa, or maybe lunch. Meets at 11:30am on the last Tuesday of each month at *Sugar n Cup Café*, Browns Bay (79 Clyde Road, opposite *Unichem* chemist). For more details, contact *Judy Brocherie*, ph: 021-0239-4270.



Remember to check out our website for news, pictures, events, etc.

www.own.org.nz

Story Collection by the Late Mary Martin

Many of you knew *Mary Martin*, a valued OWN member, who sadly passed away last year. Her family decided to compile a book of all her stories. It's something she always wanted to do, but, like many of us never quite got around to it. Her son, *Paul*, contacted *Patricia Russell*, the co-ordinator of our Browns Bay *OWN Writing for Future Generations* group offering us copies of *Mary's* book, which we gladly accepted.

Patricia was able to meet with *Paul* to receive the three donated copies (which are available for anyone to borrow) and to thank him on our behalf, for his generous gesture.

Some of Mary's friends from the writing group, holding the books.

Back row (from left): Betty Vaotogo, Lennie Crawford, Patricia Russell, and Judy Brocherie.

Front row (from left): Jenny Goldsbro, Wendy MacLeod, Shirley Williams, and Anne Mutu.



Up-coming Events

Warkworth Museum Bus Trip

We are planning an OWN bus trip to the *Warkworth Museum*, followed by lunch, to take place towards the end of June or in early July.



Lennie Crawford is busy taking numbers and organising this event, so please contact her, ph: 444-3320 to express your interest.



Another Mistaken Identity



"Have you ever been convicted of narcotics trafficking?" "Have you ever been implicated in a crime relating to the importation of an illegal substance?" "Are you a recreational drug user?" These were the questions thrown at me by immigration officials at Christchurch International Airport in December, 1996.

As a self confessed 'goody two shoes', I think my first reaction was just, "I'm sorry, can you please say that again?"

They did and I answered, possibly a little distractedly as I had now been travelling for 34 hours and knew my poor mother was waiting just a few metres away, worried sick about where I was. It was the days when everyday folk didn't have mobile phones, so there had been no way to let her know what was going on and that I wouldn't be disembarking the plane that had arrived five hours earlier!

They ushered me to a private area where the questions kept coming.

"Why had I been in New Zealand for just 10 days in June, 1994?" My brother's wedding.

"Why had I been in New Zealand in August, 1992 for two months?" To see my family before my nurse training commenced.

"Why do you always travel via Asia?" No reason, just the best price and most convenient.

"You say you're visiting family? Why do you arrive in different cities each time you enter the country?"

And so the questions went on.

They disappeared with my passport and came back about 15 minutes later with more people and more questions about my name and any other aliases I travelled under. I could understand this as I had only just renewed my passport when I got engaged two years earlier, so I was told I could travel on it, but to just take my marriage certificate with me, which I dutifully did.

Off they went again.

By this time I was actually starting to get a little worried as there had been quite a bit of confusion at the airport in Singapore. Had someone put something in my bag while I was trying to sort things out?

Finally, after what seemed like an hour, they came back and apologised for keeping me for so long.

It turned out that New Zealand had their very own drug trafficker

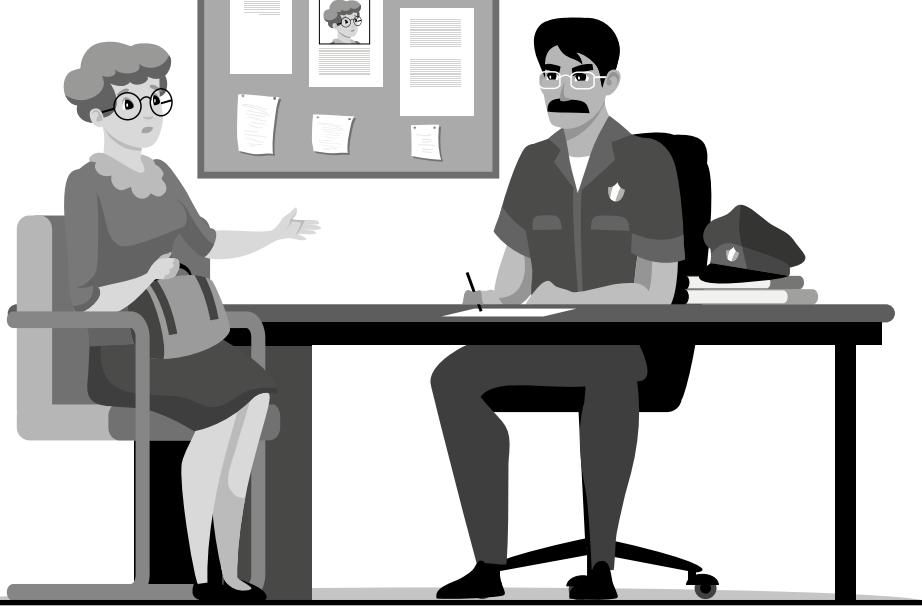
called *Julia Jones**. My maiden name and the name in my passport was *Julie Jones**. We had both entered and departed New Zealand on exactly the same days in 1992 and 1994, so I had definitely raised their suspicions and they were just doing their job.

I suppose this sort of thing doesn't happen any more, now that we have e-gates at airports, but I sometimes wonder what could have happened to me if I'd been arriving in Bangkok, a city that is well known for their stance on drug crime. Would I have been instantly incarcerated in the infamous "Bangkok Hilton" with any questions asked later? Who knows?

But let me tell you ... even with eight years still available on my old passport, renewing it in my married name was the first thing I did when I got home!

Natalie Harwood

* The names have been changed to protect the identities of those involved.





ECUADOR

Otavalo and Baños



I had been studying Spanish for some time, as well as having taken four language acquisition papers at *Auckland University*, but seemed to be getting nowhere. Then the opportunity arose to go to South America with three friends (we had all been learning Spanish for some time). *Jean* had heard about and researched this amazing total immersion deal to study Spanish in Ecuador. For only NZ\$15 a day, it included the homestay with full board, daily Spanish classes (one teacher for two students), and travel to two very different locations in Ecuador.

Thus, in September, 2006, we threw caution to the wind and embarked on our adventure. Our husbands (we had all been married a long time) thought we were crazy, but it is one of the things I have done in my life that I will never regret.



Our first homestay was in Otavalo, in the highlands of Ecuador. As well as visiting schools in some very impoverished Highland villages while exploring the beautiful area, we were amazed to see how water flowed down the drain in opposite directions each side of the equator – north or south.

The famous markets in Otavalo sell the most beautiful crafts, all handmade by the indigenous people. These short, friendly people, with very Indian features, graciously welcomed us strangers. *Diane*, the blond and shortest lady amongst us, even got a proposal



Otavalo market

from a cute little old guy in the village. We suggested she hold out for someone who still had some teeth!

We walked to the school every morning for our three-hour Spanish lesson. *Juan* was the tutor that *Jean* and I had. We called him 'Don Juan' as he was such a flirt, despite being married with a young child. However, he was an excellent teacher and only ever spoke Spanish with us. He was intrigued that our husbands would allow us to go away on our own and also asked how we could trust them while we were away for so long. In one assignment he asked us to tell him what the secret was for such a long and happy marriage. I managed to successfully explain, in Spanish, that the secret was to have a sense of humour, otherwise it would never last!



After three weeks in our first homestay, we were taken by van to Baños. Nestled in central Ecuador, it sits at the foot of the Tungurahua volcano, which had been steadily flowing hot lava and ash since a big eruption in 1999.

Baños (meaning baths) is known as the 'Gateway to the Amazon' and is appropriate due to its dozens of waterfalls, hot springs, and surrounding rivers. A naturally beautiful town with a population of less than 20,000.

Continues ➤



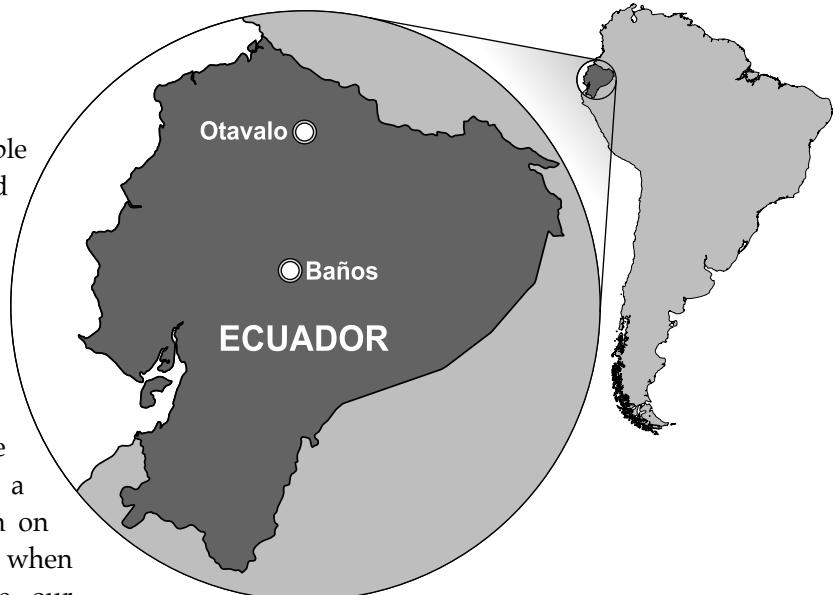
Otavalo indigenous people

◀ continued.

Here, *Gail* and I were hosted by a lovely couple with two young children – *Carlos*, a teacher, and his wife *Anita*, also a professional from Quito, yet they could not afford a car or even a washing machine, hence they took in homestays.

As I mentioned the volcano, Tungurahua was an active volcano. Unfortunately, while we were in Baños, it decided to erupt again. For a number of days previously, the town had been on alert and our hosts had an evacuation plan for when required/needed. We had been told to have our backpacks packed including passports, and air and other travel documents. Warm jackets and shoes were next to our beds, so that we would be ready to go at a moment's notice.

Chunks of scoria landing on the roof of the house woke us before our hosts knocked on our door to say we must go now. We had been sleeping fully clothed, so quickly put on our shoes and were outside the front door when the brother-in-law arrived in his six-seater truck. A mattress was put over the children from both families, all piled in the back and we headed out of town. The bridge over the high ravine that we had to cross was packed with people walking, most with cooking pots held over their heads. We drove up another mountain from which we watched the town



of Baños being sprayed with bullets of scoria. Many vehicles had made their way up to this area which had obviously been used for the same purpose before. We were there most of the night and were given warm drinks.

By daylight, it was considered safe to return to the village, where everything was covered in a thick layer of fine scoria. We helped the villagers, who were obviously accustomed to this, sweep their paths and the street in front of their homes. For them it was nothing out of the ordinary, but for us Kiwis it was quite an adventure and something to tell our grandchildren about.

Rosemarie Carr



The village of Baños

**Quick
Facts**

1. Ecuador is the Spanish word for 'equator'.
2. The national bird of Ecuador is the Andean Condor.



I Remember ...

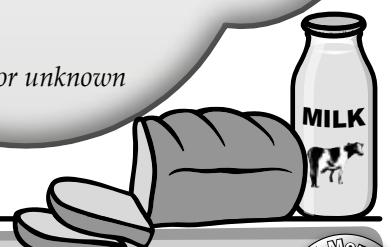
I remember the corned beef of my childhood,
And the bread we cut with a knife,
When the children helped with the housework,
And the men went to work, not "the wife".
The cheese never needed a fridge,
And the bread was so crusty and hot,
The children were seldom unhappy,
And "the wife" was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle,
With the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
Not from a freezer or shop.
The kids were a lot more contented,
They didn't need money for kicks,
Just a game with their friends on the road,
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,
Where biscuits for pennies were sold,
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?
Or is it I'm just getting old?
Washing was done in a wash tub,
With plenty of rich foamy suds,
But the ironing seemed never ending,
And Mum pressed everyone's "duds".

I remember the slap on the backside,
And the taste of soap if I swore,
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of,
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.
Do you think that bruised our ego?
Or our initiative was destroyed?
We ate what was put on the table,
I think life was better enjoyed.

Author unknown



Judy's Kitchen

Recipe supplied by *Judy Brocherie*

Beef Chow Mein

This is a very tasty dish. An oldie, but a goody.

Ingredients

500 grams Lean Mince
1 medium Onion, sliced finely
2 Tbsp Long Grain Rice
2½ cups Water
1 cup Frozen Green Beans, finely sliced
1 large Carrot, sliced thinly like matchsticks
1 Tbsp Soy Sauce
1 Tbsp Worcester Sauce
2 tsps Curry Powder
1 pkt Chicken Flavoured 2 Minute Noodles
½ head of Shredded Cabbage
Potatoes, mashed (to serve)

Method

1. Brown the mince and onions.
2. Add the rice, water, beans, carrots, soy and Worcester sauces, curry powder, and the noodles.
3. Simmer gently for 30 minutes, watching it does not boil dry.
4. Add the cabbage and cook for a further 5 minutes.
5. Serve with mashed potatoes.



Hamilton Jet



My husband decided to buy a brand new Hamilton Jet boat. We had a 14ft boat with outboard, but no, he had to have a new boat.

I must admit that this was a popular buy. All my children learned to water ski behind it and we did lots of fishing and visiting all the islands in the Hauraki Gulf.

One day we decided to go down the Waikato River to Hamilton to have lunch with a friend. We put the boat in at Tuakau and off we went. It was not plain sailing as there were plenty of sandbanks and the river was hard to read. We kept starting and stopping which did not impress me at all. After a couple of hours, with the children deciding to have a sleep up the front as it was pretty boring, the motor decided to overheat.

In his infinite wisdom, my husband took the cap off the radiator and, yes, he got scalded by the boiling water. I told him to put his arm in the water which he did, but it was not very successful as he had to lean over the side and was most uncomfortable. In the end, I emptied the chilly bin and filled it with water from the river. That was fine, as long as his arm was in the water, but as soon as he took it out, "ouch!" It was very sore.

I thought this is 'lovely'. I had never driven the boat before and we had at least another couple of hours to get back to Tuakau. With only a basic first aid kit, I found a tube of Savlon, smothered his arm with it and then bandaged it up. We had our lunch and then off we went again as he was able to drive the boat with hardly any pain.

Fortunately, when we got back to where we started off, between the children and myself, we managed to get the boat on to the trailer and I was able to drive us all home towing the boat.

The next day my husband could not see where he had been scalded. There was no red mark or anything and he was as good as gold. The telling of the story was an anti-climax as there was no wound to show everyone.

We never did get to Hamilton again in the boat, but we did get down to Tuakau with other friends with boats to do some water skiing.

Lennie Crawford



Time For Some JOKES

Did you hear about the mathematician who is afraid of negative numbers?
He will stop at nothing to avoid them.

What do you call a train carrying a bubblegum?
A chew-chew train!

What do you call a sleeping Tyrannosaurus Rex?
A dino-snore!

C, E-flat, and G walked into a bar. The bartender pointed to the door and said, "Sorry, we don't serve minors here."

What do you call an apology written in dots and dashes?
Re-Morse code.

My aunt threw away all of the herbs she no longer uses. Personally, I thought it was a waste of thyme!



A Portrait

He's a large man, larger than life, with twinkling eyes, dark straight hair, and a broad smile. His girth is ample-sized, having loved food all his life. As a young man he played rugby and rowed for his school and clubs. No longer in the prime of his youth, nor as fit as he was then, his well-toned muscles have now turned to fat.

When he arrived anywhere, one quickly became aware of his presence. He had a booming voice that carried across a large area.



Well educated, hard-working, and financially secure, he managed his own accountancy firm with a staff of six people. Life was good for him and he was a very dedicated family man. His wife and six daughters were the centre of his life. He had lost his mother when he was only 14 years old and his only sibling at only 23 years old, so he treasured the family he had now created.

He was a great storyteller, joker, and bullshitter, all rolled into one!

The family home was large with a big back garden full of fruit trees. Having a large family, he decided to get rid of the fruit trees and create a tennis court for us all. What a great idea that was!! Many hours of fun enjoyed by family and friends. My eldest sister and I played tennis for our school.

Rugby was his passion. It took him far and wide. In February, 1957, on a visit to Twickenham, England from Dublin for a big rugby match, he accepted a lift from a friend and sadly, on very

icy London roads, they had an accident, a very bad accident. He being the passenger, suffered the worst injuries. He spent six months in the *University College Hospital*, London, with all ribs broken and knee caps shattered, and the doctors asking my mother's permission to amputate his leg. She refused the permission and, luckily, he walked well for the next 27 years.

On returning home to Ireland, trying to manage his business became very difficult. As he was unable to work for approximately 12 months, he suffered a great financial loss.

He was a changed man, not for the best. Life for the family changed forever. He became short-tempered and very impatient. The three eldest girls were sent to boarding school to ease the stress.

With so many broken and damaged bones in his body, the cold, damp Irish weather affected him badly. His doctors suggested he move to a warmer climate, so with wife and six daughters he emigrated to South Africa. The climate was so much better for him, but climate was never going to heal all the wounds, either physically or mentally.

He never regained his business or financial position, but he made the most of having a good family and fairly good health.

I loved him dearly. He was, my Dad.

Patricia Aagesen

One day a little girl was helping her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink when she suddenly noticed her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast to her brunette hair. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Mum, why are some of your hairs white?"



Her mother replied, "Well ... every time you do something wrong or make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white."



The little girl thought about this for a while and then asked, "Mum, how come **ALL** of grandma's hairs are white?"

Driven To It



When I was a child in London, we used public transport, in particular the Underground 'Tube'. It was convenient and the trains were frequent. Although we had a garage attached to our house in the suburbs, we had no car. They really were a liability on the streets because parking was such a problem. Consequently, we didn't bother about a car. I went to secondary school on the train. My father, in the early days, used a bike to go to work. He was able to keep fit on the bike, and considered that he caught fewer colds in the fresh air, rather than being cooped up with hundreds of people on the train. Later on, he bought himself a small motorbike. And I well remember with shudders how cold it was in the snow on the pillion of that bike!

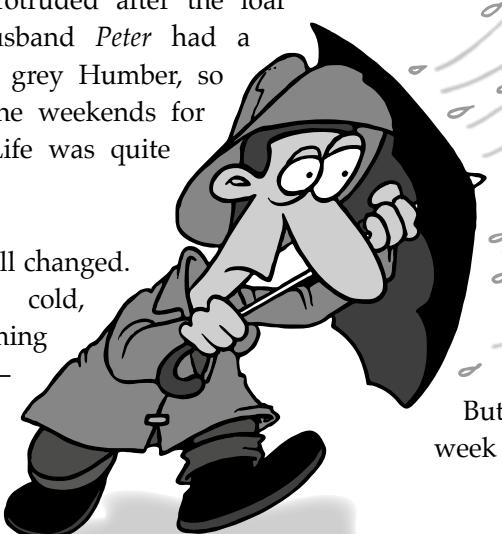
So, when I got married in the early 1960s and came to New Zealand, I was unable to drive. When the children arrived, I walked everywhere, with baby *Claire* lying in the pram, and toddler *John* sitting on a straddle seat over the top of the pram. The *IGA* grocer in Northcote delivered once a week, so I was able to phone my order to him, including meat from the butcher next door, and fruit and vegetables from the shop on the other side. Glass bottled milk was delivered daily by the normal milkman, and *Lanes Bakery* on Onewa Road put half a Sydney Flat loaf into the tin in our letterbox several times a week. The members of the family fought over the "fluff", the soft bit of bread which often protruded after the loaf had been torn in half. Husband *Peter* had a company car at this time, a grey Humber, so we were able to use it at the weekends for visits and other shopping. Life was quite convenient.

However, one August day it all changed. It was dreadful weather, cold, blowing a gale, with rain coming down in horizontal sheets – it was the sort of day when most people would hesitate even to push their pet outside for a comfort stop.

Peter was sick in bed, looking particularly green, so we summoned the doctor. He sloshed in, examined the patient, told us that the patient would live, recommended complete rest, predicted recovery in a few days, and prescribed pills. He sloshed out again, leaving behind a prescription to be dispensed.

Problem. The weather was getting worse and worse. The chemist was at the far end of the row of shops at Northcote, a good mile away from our house. *Peter's* grey company car was parked in our driveway. I knew that the company's insurance covered me to drive it, provided I had *Peter's* permission, and it was a situation of necessity. However, the awful point was that I had to admit that I didn't know how to work the thing! There was nothing to do, but to don the raincoat and boots, and attack the elements on foot!

It was a long, long walk, with the wind almost blowing me over and the rain streaming down. In the deserted streets and amid the pounding of the heavy rain, I swore loudly all the way down the hill, and all the way back up, airing all the suitable vocabulary I could muster, and adding quite a lot of extra embellishments. My face must have resembled the blackness of the elements, and my strides were extremely purposeful as I stomped along. I was far too angry even to feel the cold.



I returned a good hour later, looking like a drowned rat, with pills in hand, announcing that next time I'd drive that flaming car. The patient merely grunted; he was obviously not feeling well enough to share in my disgruntlement.

But my mind was made up ... the following week I had my first driving lesson.

Jenny Goldsbro

PUZZLERS

Answers for the quiz
questions on page 1.

- 1 Your name.
- 2 The word "short".
- 3 SWIMS
- 4 The number seven.
- 5 The word "wrong".
- 6 A deck of cards.
- 7 Silence.
- 8 Your right elbow.
- 9 12 – every month has a 28th day!



The Child in the Gardens: Winter

How sudden, this entering the fallen gardens for the first time, to feel the blisters of the world's father, as his own hand does. It is everything dying at once, the slimed pond and the riffling of leaves, shoes drenched across sapless stalks. It is what you will read a thousand times. You will come to think, who has not stood there, holding that large hand, not said Can't we go back - I don't like this place. Your voice sounds like someone else's. You rub a sleeve against your cheek, you want him to laugh, to say, "The early stars can't hurt us, they are further than trains we hear on the clearest of nights." We are in a story called Father, We Must Get Out. Leaves scritch at the red walls, a stone lady lies near the pond, eating dirty grass. It is too sudden, this walking into time for its first lesson, its brown wind, its scummed nasty paths. You know how lovely yellow is your favourite colour, the kitchen at home. You touch the big gates as you leave, the trees stand on their bones, the shoulders on the vandaled statue are huge cold eggs. Nothing there wants to move. You touch the gates and tell them, We are not coming back to this place. Are we, Dad?

Vincent O'Sullivan



Twinkling in the winter sky just before dawn, Matariki (the Pleiades) signals the Māori New Year – its appearance heralds a time of remembrance, joy, and peace. It is a time to come together and celebrate.

The Nine Stars of Matariki

- Matariki:** Associated with health and wellbeing. It is a sign of good fortune or health. A sign of wellbeing, peace, and good luck for observers.
- Pōhutukawa:** Associated with those who have passed on. Encouraging us to take the time to remember them and acknowledge their impact on our lives.
- Tupuānuku:** Associated with everything that grows in the ground to be harvested or gathered for food.
- Tupuārangi:** Associated with food sources that come from the sky (such as birds) or elevated fruit and berries from trees and bushes.
- Waitī:** Associated with freshwater bodies and the food sources sustained by those waters. It watches over rivers, lakes, wetlands, and springs.
- Waitā:** Associated with the ocean and the seafood that can be harvested from it. Encouraging us to respect our coasts, oceans, and marine life.
- Waipuna-ā-Rangi:** Associated with rain, hail, and snow. Recognising how vital rainfall is to life on earth
- Ururangi:** Associated with the wind. Traditionally forecasts the nature of the winds for the year to come.
- Hiwa-i-te-Rangi:** The 'wishing star', helping us to realise our hopes and aspirations for the coming year and the promise of a prosperous season. Traditionally time to set desires and dreams (New Year resolutions).

Modern Technology

Learning New Tricks



During my lifetime technology has progressed in leaps and bounds, what with computers, emails, digital cameras, and mobile phones, to name a few. It never ceases to amaze me the speed with which text messages and emails are received on the other side of the world. It's hard to keep up with it all when one is getting older – my 10 year old granddaughter is far better than I am.

I got my new hearing aids today, one for each ear. The audiologist programmed them from her computer, which showed a graph denoting my hearing, or rather lack of same. She made a few adjustments so I could hear sounds as I should, but more clearly. They are very small, but I managed to fit them in my ears properly. It felt a little strange at first, but three hours later, I didn't notice them at all. The button is very tiny to alter the sound levels for three different situations. The batteries are even smaller and have to be removed each night, so I worry how I will manage with my old fumbly fingers.

I went out onto the street – good heavens, do all the buses really make that much noise? Undaunted, I walked along the street aware of all the traffic and took refuge in a shop. I bought a new top, but didn't dare try it on as I would have had to take out and replace the hearing aids, better to practise at home a few times first.

There is a crackle in my ears when I put my glasses on – is that my hair, I wonder? My voice sounds different and I don't think I'll sing in church on Sunday. I went down to the beach where it was quiet, but the wind blew quite hard and made funny noises – is there paper in my ears? As I walked along, my plastic bag rustled so loud – I didn't know they made so much sound. Surely, they will hear me in Torbay.

I can hear the birds so clearly now and that brought a smile to my face. This is definitely better.

My husband's voice is so loud now and somewhat harsh, and the TV is louder still. "Do we always have it

up so high?" I ask. There is so much information to read about the dos and don'ts, and how to look after them.

I'll cook supper first and when I turn the tap on, it sounds quite different and metallic as it hits the sink. It's sausages tonight and, from the sound of them cooking, I think they must be sizzlers. The plates and cutlery make such a clatter and the saucepan made a bang when I put it down. Will I get used to all this unaccustomed sound?

The following day, I met my daughter and her family at a netball match, but didn't say I had my hearing aids. There was a lot of noise with people cheering the seven year old players, who were shouting, "Pass to me, to me," to get the ball. I spoke to all the family and, wonders never cease, I heard every word they said. It will be bliss to take them out at bedtime and return to my quieter and more peaceful world. I must remember though, no longer will I be able to get away with, "Sorry dear, I didn't hear you calling."

I bought a new mobile phone this week and, although the same make, I have to press different buttons for what I want. Scroll up for this and down for that, scroll sideways for ... I don't know what. I sent a text to two of my sons saying, "Testing new phone." The replies I had were, "Did you know you sent it in Chinese?" and "I guessed it was you, but I didn't understand your Double Dutch." They are such terrible teases – I assure you it was all in English.

Since we've had Sky TV, there are so many more things to press to watch the screen. I'll have a go ... switch hearing aids to setting 3, turn TV on, then press ... is it green or the red button first? Now I've got "AV2" up on the screen, but is that to watch a DVD, a video, or just TV? I really can't remember.

I will persevere and I will succeed, but tonight I think I'll just read my book instead.

Mary Martin

From her book *Older Women's Network Writing for Grandchildren* (see page 3).