



Spring 2024

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

# News & Views



OWN

News • Events • Stories • Poems • Jokes • and more ...

## Spring is here!



***The new lambs do bleat,  
and bounce on their feet.  
The crops quickly grow,  
the harvest will follow.***

***The birds cheep and tweet,  
their nests now complete.  
Nature's song is sung,  
and Spring has now sprung!***

*Anonymous*

***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 ...

Spring is now upon us after a very mild winter. Hardly any rain!

*Lennie Crawford* has been trying to organise a bus trip outing, but so far the response has not been very favourable. We will try again in a couple of months. *Lennie* puts a lot of work and effort into organising these outings, and to have hardly any interest shown is very disappointing. Support for these events would be much appreciated. The lunches at *The Bays Club* and the monthly **Browns Bay Coffee Group** at *Sugar n Cup Café* are well supported.

Both the **Browns Bay** and **Beach Haven Writing for Future Generations Groups** continue to meet monthly. The ladies attending enjoy the get-together and camaraderie. The stories are interesting, delightful, and often funny.

OWN can only continue with the support of our members, so next time an event is arranged, grab a friend and say we will support this.

Kind regards,

*Judy Brocherie*  
Chairperson



## 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.



## Up-coming Events

Come along and join us at these great OWN events – the more, the merrier ...

*Get in quick!*

### OWN Lunch

12:00 noon, 21 September  
*Bays Club*, Browns Bay

### OWN Christmas Lunch

7 December  
*Bays Club*, Browns Bay

### Warkworth Bus Trip

To be decided – February or March, 2025

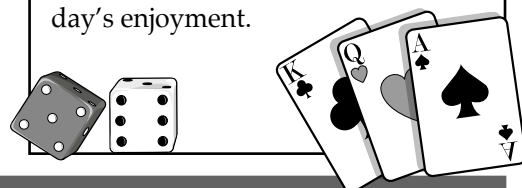
To register your interest (for numbers attending) or for more details, please contact *Lennie Crawford*, ph: 444-3320 or ph: 027-217-4783.

## OWN Event Report

### OWN Games Day

An OWN Games Day, organised by *Lennie Crawford*, was held on Wednesday, 14 August. It was again enjoyed by all the attendees, with much laughter and fun together, followed by a shared lunch.

Our thanks also go to *Patsy* for the hilarious game she brought along. It proved an added bonus to the day's enjoyment.



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



## Wendy MacLeod

*Wendy Gray* was born on 6 May, 1934 in Glasgow, Scotland. Her father was a Minister with the *Presbyterian Church of Scotland*. She had a brother who was 11 years her senior.

Eight years of her early life were spent on the Shetland Islands. Upon leaving school, *Wendy* spent time at the *Domestic Science College*. After graduation she worked as an Assistant Cook at a *Boy's College* and at the *Royal Hotel* in Portree.

*Wendy* also spent time on the Isle of Skye, where she met her future husband *Donnie MacLeod*, who was a carpenter and joiner. They were married on 28 October, 1955.

After the war, men were looking for places of work outside of Scotland. New Zealand appealed. *Donnie* managed to get a sponsor to enable him to work in this

country and on 10 February, 1959, *Donnie*, *Wendy*, and their small son and daughter sailed to New Zealand, arriving six weeks later. They settled in Devonport and over the years, four more Kiwi sons joined the family. Sadly, in 1974, *Donald* passed away leaving *Wendy*, at the age of 40, a widow with six children ranging in ages from 5 to 18 years old.

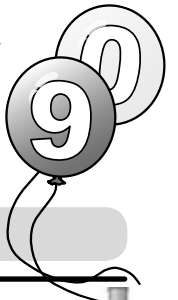
In 1988, *Wendy* travelled back to Scotland, where she spent six months catching up with her many relatives, where there was always a spare bed. Back here, she worked part-time for the company *Lifetech*, which exported plants and also supplied local nurseries.

*Wendy* has been a member of the **Browns Bay Writing for Future Generations Group** for more than 25 years. We enjoy the stories of her life in Scotland, especially while living on the Shetland Islands. *Wendy* also still enjoys going to her Scottish Country Dancing classes.

We wish you all the best *Wendy*, and may you continue to enjoy life to the fullest.

*Judy Brocherie*

Congratulations to *Wendy* on attaining the wonderful age of 90 years old!



## Ancient Wisdoms to Think On ...

Accept what is in front of you without wanting the situation to be other than it is. Study the natural order of things and work with it rather than against it, for to try to change what is, only sets up resistance.

Nature provides everything without requiring payment or thanks, and also provides for all without discrimination –

therefore let us provide the same face to everyone and treat all men as equals, however they may behave.

If we watch carefully, we will see that work proceeds more quickly and easily if we stop 'trying', if we stop putting in so much extra effort, if we stop looking for results. In the clarity of a still and open mind, truth will be reflected.

We will come to appreciate the original meaning of the word 'understand', which means 'to stand under'.

We serve whatever or whoever stands before us, without any thought for ourselves. 'Virtue' or 'strength' lies always in Tao, or 'natural law'. In other words:

**SIMPLY BE!**

*Ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu, as expressed in his work Tao te Ching (circa 400BC).*





# Hosting an Adventurer

Over the years, I have hosted many foreign language students. They have come from many different corners of the world. Both my daughters went away as exchange students – my eldest spent a year in Iceland and my second went to Brazil for her final school year.

One particular student was very interesting. He was Nick, from Greenland. As a child of nine years old, his parents took him on a holiday to the Faroe Islands where he met a Kiwi family. He learned a lot about New Zealand, and it sowed a seed in him to find out more and one day to visit the country. He was an adventurer and crossed the snowy plains of Greenland many times with dogs and sleds.

He came to New Zealand in his early twenties to attend the *English Language School* in Takapuna. Within a few weeks of arriving here, he decided he would like to travel the country. So, he bought a bicycle, something he had never used before. Each weekend he rode from our home in Milford to Long Bay. Then he

took leave from the lessons and decided to ride the length of New Zealand. He got to Invercargil and, with a stiff, sore bum, sold his bike and hitched back to Auckland.

During our many conversations, we discovered his hero was *Sir Edmund Hillary*. As it was 1993, I looked in the local phonebook, found the *Hillary* family's phone number, and arranged a morning tea. So, we set off on the day and I asked him to bring his camera, but he said 'no', because they tell stories in their culture, not show photos. 'Blow that,' I thought, and got my autograph book and

camera! What a special morning tea that was with *John Hunt*, and *Sir Edmund* and *Lady Hillary*.

Back in English lessons the next day, Nick told his story, so the school phoned me to check it was kosher! They came around and took photos, and put an article in the local *North Shore Times* newspaper saying this is what can happen for you in New Zealand!!

Nick remained with us for a few more weeks. On his return to Greenland his father, who was a ship's captain, offered Nick and his girlfriend a cruise to Italy. Wasting no opportunities Nick phoned me to ask if I could organise a Papal visit!! Good sense of humour!

Since his visit to New Zealand, Nick has scaled the seven highest peaks, including Mount Everest. He posts on Facebook and still does very interesting adventures. I think he is now an M.P. in Greenland.

Patsy Agesen



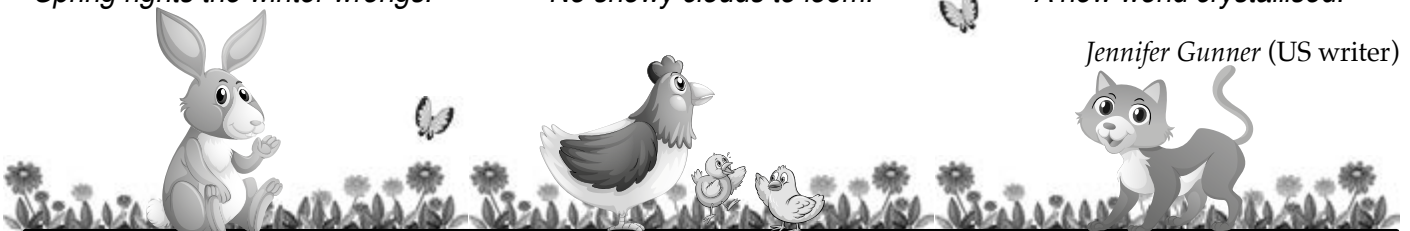
## All The World's Alive Again

*The rabbit hops its gentle step,  
The lark sings lyric songs,  
All the world's alive again,  
Spring rights the winter wrongs.*

*Mother hen protects her chicks,  
White blossoms are in bloom,  
All the world's alive again,  
No snowy clouds to loom.*

*A kitten chirps her tiny mew,  
The child blinks his eyes,  
All the world's alive again,  
A new world crystallised.*

Jennifer Gunner (US writer)



# SAUSAGES



The other day, I interviewed a Hungarian caterer for my radio programme and *YouTube* channel. She and her husband immigrated from Hungary some time ago, and, after a while, they were homesick for their Hungarian sausages. As they couldn't get them in Auckland, they decided to make their own. This was the beginning of their Hungarian catering service.

During the interview, my guest mentioned the Hungarian family celebrations when they made sausages together, which brought back many memories from my childhood in Germany. We have the same tradition in Germany, which used to be a village tradition, but later turned into a family tradition: when a pig was slaughtered, every piece of the pig was used. Some pieces were used for soups, gravy, mince, roast, etc. – and, of course, for sausages.

While not every family had the facilities to slaughter, some families would purchase half a pig or a whole pig and then gather the family for a sausage-making and eating feast.

The historic reason for this tradition is obvious: for many centuries, most families had at least one pig. The pig would eat any food scraps that humans couldn't eat anymore and so they contributed to having less waste – and, especially in the towns, less rats. Usually, the pigs were slaughtered in winter time. That's the season when farmers had the time to cook and to be inside, rather than on the field. The cold outside temperatures also helped when having to keep fresh meat cool for a certain amount of time, which was crucial in the times before fridges or freezers were available.



*Some of the spices used to make German sausages.*

While sausages today are often considered to be unhealthy, the crafted traditional sausages were of very good quality and provided much of the proteins needed during the cold season when the fields were frozen and no fresh vegetables were available.

I still remember the stamps on the pig's skin. They were not like brands on cow's skin in the Wild West movies. They were rather a sign of quality control. When a family decided to slaughter a pig, they first had to organise for a qualified meat examiner to come and inspect the animal the day before it would be slaughtered. If the animal was healthy, it would get a stamp of approval. Then, the pig would be taken to the slaughterer.

Certain parts of the pig, e.g. the head, were immediately cooked in a big pot. The meat from the head was especially tender and delicious. However, I have to admit that I didn't want to watch where it came from. The head meat had to be eaten on the day, so the only time I ever tried it, was at a slaughter feast. The sausages that I couldn't eat and that many people love, are the ones made of blood. Standing at the pot and stirring gave a smell that turned me off.

The sausage making feasts were usually held on a Saturday. The precious roast meat was distributed among the heads of families. My father would take it home and my mother prepared a wonderful Sunday roast. Most of the work at these family events was dedicated to making the different types of sausage.

The German word for sausage, "wurst", is not just the meat in intestine casings. It is instead used for all types of meat that is processed to keep stored in a cool place (not a fridge). The two main types of storing meat were in jars and in small intestines.

The meat in jars was used as spread on dark or rye bread.

The ingredients and spices used for the sausages were family secrets. Every family claimed to have the best sausages. The main spices used were pepper, salt, mustard seed, cumin, nutmeg, cloves, paprika, onions, and garlic.

Continues ►

◀ continued.

When I grew up, sausages were staple food. Every family I knew had sausages stored. I can't remember when I first heard of people who were vegetarians. I guess being a vegetarian was just not possible in a country where the soil was frozen for several months during the winter.

The other part of good sausages is, of course, the way they are prepared and consumed.

Then, we had white sausages, "Weisswurst", that had to be heated in non-boiling water. Once they were hot, they would be cut open, special sweet mustard would be spread on the meat, and it usually goes with a fresh bread roll or a pretzel.

The most popular type of sausage in my home region is "Bratwurst", barbecued sausages. Here, it is important how to barbecue them. In some areas, they use pine cones, in others they use fir cones or specific types of wood. It is amazing what a difference the fire makes!

The "Bratwurst" is traditionally eaten for a Saturday lunch and an essential part of a social gathering



*Bratwurst with mustard and sauerkraut.*



*Weisswurst with mustard and a pretzel.*

around a barbecue and beer. It is not for breakfast, as served in some hotels. When this type of sausage is prepared in a frying pan, it is served with mustard and sauerkraut, or with potato salad. At social gatherings it is eaten with potato salad or green salad or just a bread roll – but always with mustard. The mustard is very important as the sausages are eaten when they are nearly burnt, and the mustard allegedly diminishes the unhealthy burnt parts of the sausage.



Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, I hardly ever eat sausages. I have tried local sausages at celebrations, but they didn't taste even nearly as delicious as the ones in Germany. The only sausages that I have liked here were the South African "Boerewors" I had at a barbecue.

My memories go back to Germany when I think of sausages, but to me, they are also connected to socialising and being with others who enjoy them ... although my involvement in Interreligious Dialogue means I am often in company where the word pork is not even to be mentioned!

Beate Matthies

## Spring Jokes

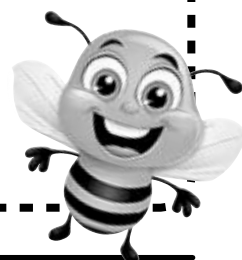
When Spring arrives, the trees breathe a sigh of re-leaf.

How can you tell the weather's getting warmer?  
There's a spring in people's steps.

Why do we never tell secrets in a garden?  
Because the potatoes have eyes, the corn has ears, and the beanstalk.

How do brand-new spring flowers greet each other?  
"Hey, bud!"

Where do bees catch public transport?  
At a buzz stop.





# Pills & Potions



My father was a G.P. in a rural village. Before the Second World War, it was common practice for G.P.s to do their own dispensing of prescriptions – chemists were few and far between in rural areas. My mother had trained as a dispenser, which was quite a common career for women at that time, so she did the dispensing for my father.

The Dispensary was attached to the surgery and together they formed part of the ground floor of our home. When surgery was not in progress, my sister and I liked to watch my mother brewing up her potions. Occasionally we would be allowed to count out small quantities of aspirin tablets and put them into little envelopes and then wet the envelope flap on a sponge and stick it down. I was probably about seven or eight years old and I can remember sitting on the high bench top swinging my legs while I laboriously carried out my task. These days hands would be thrown up at such irresponsibility, but we knew very well that you must never take pills of any kind other than those given to you when you were sick.

For us the Dispensary was a magical place. There were shelves on which stood jars and brightly coloured bottles. The jars were white earthenware with either matching or cork lids. On each one was a gold label with black lettering, and each jar was filled with a different ointment, ranging in colour from white to black and through a whole galaxy of reds, oranges, and yellows. The glass bottles



were mostly brown, blue, and green. All with glass stoppers and some of the bottles were ridged, these contained dangerous substances. Even the large clear glass bottles, Winchesters, were filled with a rainbow of brilliant, coloured mixtures. Ruby red iron tonic and a pale green *Parish's Food*, which was a children's iron tonic.

Along the side wall was a large dresser painted green, the bottom half contained many drawers of varying sizes filled with an assortment of different things, from pill boxes to bandages, and rolls of lint and cotton wool. The tablets, mostly white or pink, were all in large glass containers on a shelf above the drawers. Next to the dresser was a hatch into the waiting room, it was through this that the patients collected their prescriptions.

In the corner of the room stood a large glazed earthenware pot. This was where my mother mixed the cough mixture. She stood with a long paddle stirring the brew – it was dark brown in colour, and it contained a whole raft of ingredients, including

black treacle and liquorice. I do not remember what the other ingredients were. I do know that everyone in the village swore by the efficaciousness of this cough cure.

Occasionally we would be given a piece of the liquorice. It came in small blocks. It was brick hard and it was impossible to bite, so had to be sucked instead. Why we liked it, I don't know – it was unsweetened and it left us with black teeth that needed a lot of scrubbing to return them to their normal colour again. We always regarded these lumps of liquorice as a treat.

All so long ago. Doctors consulting rooms are very different places today. Now it's all stainless steel, computers, and disposable sheets on the high examination beds. Then it was an old Captain's wooden chair in front of my father's roller-top desk, a second chair, and a shabby old chaise longue, and very little else. All very different from now, but not all bad though!

Helen Welch

# It Really Does Take a Village



When I was a little girl growing up in Evans Bay in Wellington, all of my mum's extended family lived within a few miles of us. Nana and Grandad in their little unit in Lyall Bay, *Auntie Maureen* and *Uncle Graham* in Kilbirnie, *Auntie Kay* and *Uncle Jerry* in Strathmore, *Auntie Sugar* and *Uncle Colin* in Mt Cook, *Auntie Marie* and *Uncle Bill* in Island Bay, and *Uncle Kevin* and *Auntie Lorraine* in Newtown. To say we had a village around us was the understatement of the century!

We *Mays* were a sociable bunch and we always had someone popping in for a cup of tea, more often than not a relative. It's only now that I have children of my own that I realise just how lucky we were to have so many people looking out for us, pulling us into line, and cheering us on in whatever we did. If we ever forgot our manners, it seemed like thirty people would all chorus, "What do you say?" So, for all the good, the bad, and the ugly, our manners were impeccable!

The visit we looked forward to most was on Saturday nights when Nana, Grandad, and *Auntie Marie* would call in after Mass. Nana would always bring Super Wine biscuits which were okay, but *Auntie Marie* would bring Mallowpuffs, and if we were very lucky a homemade banana cake with chocolate butter icing, topped with hundreds and thousands. Mum never baked so this was such a treat for us.

*Auntie Marie* was quite the character, now I think about it. She was unable to have children, so, I suppose, had a little extra money in the kitty for luxuries and always seemed so glamorous. She was very slim and always wore high heels, and on the nights she popped in, she would swap these for red high fluffy mule slippers. She would immediately pop on a small floral half-apron with a frill around the edge and get to work making a big pot of tea and arranging the Mallowpuffs and banana cake on a two-tiered tea plate. Sometime during the evening, she would get out her *Oroton* sparkly gold cigarette case and enjoy

her menthol cigarettes. I do remember that she always wore a fur coat and had the longest, brightest fingernails, and even painted her toenails! She also wore lots of eyeshadow. In some ways she looked like a glammed-up *Mildred* from *George & Mildred*, but to me she was just beautiful and so very kind.

*Auntie Marie* was just one of the very strong female characters on my mum's side of the family, so it's no wonder that my dad worked at sea. His cabin must have been such a haven of calm and tranquillity from them all. That said, they must have been such a huge help for mum when dad was away, as I was one of four children, and we could be a rowdy bunch.

But now that I think about it, we were not scheduled to within an inch of our lives, like children these days. We played with the kids who lived next door, learned to swim by mastering the art of not drowning in the sea, and would disappear for hours on our bikes with the strict instruction to be home before the street lights went on. We were not weighed down by stuff, so the biggest stress on those long days out was cycling into a strong Wellington wind in a race to get home in time for the *Wonderful World of Disney* at 6:00pm on a Sunday night. Maybe Mum had a bit more free time on her hands than we thought.

Natalie Harwood



**"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow'."**

Mary Anne Radmacher (US writer and artist)







## About Hugging

### Hugging is healthy.

It helps the body's immune system, it keeps you healthier, it cures depression, it reduces stress, it induces sleep, it is invigorating, it is rejuvenating, it has no unpleasant side effects, and hugging is nothing less than a miracle drug.

### Hugging is all natural.

It is organic, naturally sweet, it has no pesticides, it has no preservatives, it has no artificial ingredients, and hugging is 100% wholesome.

### Hugging is practically perfect.

It has no moveable parts, it has no batteries to wear out, it doesn't need periodic check-ups, it has low energy consumption, it has high energy yield, it is inflation proof, it is non-fattening, it has no monthly payments, it has no insurance requirements, it is theft-proof, it is non-taxable, and hugging is non-polluting.

And, of course, best of all ...

*hugging is fully returnable!!*

## Riroriro Riroriro

Riroriro Riroriro

Grey Warbler

I hear you sing

through the shady bush

I hear you call

Riroriro Riroriro

my senses flower to your song

Riroriro Riroriro

your happy sad song

reminds me of love

flying from the tree

twisting through

the matted vines

growing out of the shade

your waiata

of the rambling stream

you sing in my heart

Riroriro Riroriro

I hope you live forever

you make the moss green

you quench my thirst

Riroriro Riroriro

little bird

seldom seen seldom heard



*Apirama Taylor*

from **When the Sea Goes Mad at Night**

## Did You Know?

The "grey warbler" or "riroriro" in Māori, is also known as the "grey gerygone", "teetotum", or "rainbird".

They are one of the smallest native birds, measuring about 11cm long and weighing up to 6.5g. The adults have a grey-brown head and back with a slight olive-green tint. The face, throat, and breast are pale-grey, and the abdomen is off-white with a slight yellow tinge. They have distinctive ruby-red eyes.

They are common throughout New Zealand's forests, and may be found almost anywhere with some tree or shrub cover, but are absent from open country and alpine areas.

# Baring All

The advertisement in the local paper grabbed my attention:

Evening art classes,  
suitable for all levels of ability.

Bolstered by my 'A' grade for Art in the General Certificate of Education at high school, I was fairly confident this was the course for me. The timing and location fitted in well with my working hours as secretary at the *Royal Station Hotel* in Newcastle. More importantly, the enrolment fee was minimal, the six-week course was being run by the local Council.

Further investigation revealed that I would need to supply my own canvas. Ever practical and economically-minded, Dad found a large piece of hardboard in his shed. He slapped on a couple of coats of white paint and I was good to go. Oil paints and brushes were provided as part of the tuition fee. "Life Drawing" was the theme.

So, Monday evening arrived and, armed with my large improvised canvas, off I walked the short distance to the old red brick building in the middle of town. Easels and stools were already in place, as well as a basic selection of oil paints, palettes, and brushes. Once we were all settled, the teacher introduced himself – a young, attractive man with long hair and casually dressed in jeans and T-shirt. Rather Bohemian looking. My 19 year old eyes were out on stalks when I noticed a hole at the back of his jeans, revealing a patch of bare skin on his bottom. No underpants! How on earth was I going to concentrate?

However, my attention was quickly diverted when I noticed our model – a rather comely, mature woman – reclining on a shabbily upholstered chaise longue. Without any preamble, her robe – a well worn

dress gown – was cast aside and there she was for all to see, as naked as the day she was born. Well, this was unexpected. Where to look? Certainly not at the model! Casting my eyes around the room, the other students seemed at ease and were settling in to the task at hand, while I struggled with acute embarrassment at the vision before me. It was hard enough trying to avert my gaze from the teacher's torn jeans and partially bare bottom.

Finally, I plucked up the courage to raise my eyes. Feigning an expression of deep concentration, I made a start. As time went on, I began to relax, safe in the knowledge there'd be no further surprises ... well, hopefully.



All too soon, the six weeks were up and it was now time to take our "masterpieces" home. Therein lay the next challenge, enduring the 30 minute journey on a busy commuter train to my destination. Suffice to say I drew many curious stares. I silently vowed that should I feel the urge to enrol in an art class again, I'd ensure it was "Still Life" as opposed to "Life Drawing". Painting bowls of fruit or vases of flowers would be far less embarrassing.

Patricia Russell

**"Three things in life  
are important:**

**The first is to be kind.**

**The second is to be kind.**

**The third is to be kind."**

Henry James  
(US author)



## Easy Crème Brûlée



### Ingredients

- 200 grams Mascarpone  
(or Crème Fraiche)
- 1tspn Vanilla
- 400 grams of store-bought Custard  
(about ¾ pkt)
- 1 cup fresh or frozen Raspberries
- ¼ cup Castor Sugar
- Cream (to serve)

### Method

1. Beat mascarpone and vanilla together. Add half of the custard and fold through with a spatula until mixed, then add the remaining custard.
2. Place raspberries in the base of 4 to 6 ramekins. Spoon the custard mixture over the top. Tap the ramekins gently on the bench to flatten the custard surface.
3. Place the ramekins in the fridge for one hour.
4. Once chilled, remove from the fridge and sprinkle the castor sugar over the brûlées evenly. Place under a hot grill to harden and caramelise the sugar, being careful not to burn them.
5. Let them cool.  
Serve with cream.



# The Glory Box

One of my granddaughters turned 18 recently. I had acquired a sandwich maker, surplus to my requirements, and decided to give that to her, along with her usual birthday gift, as she was starting to think about going flatting. When I gave it to her, I said it was for her 'Glory Box' ... "Do you know what a Glory Box is?" I asked.

"No," she said. Times have changed, haven't they?

The Glory Box, Hope Chest, or Bottom Drawer, as it is variously called, must be quite an old tradition. As soon as a girl started working, she started to buy, or in older times, make, her linen, to be put away until she got married.

The first thing I brought when I started to work, was a Glory Box. I think I got it on 'lay by' which may also be something unknown to today's young people. Then I proceeded to buy linen each pay day and gradually filled it up with much pride.

A girl would embroider tablecloths and other napery, and when she got engaged, she would then add her married initial on her linen. I still have a white tablecloth with my mother's married initial and I remember a particularly colourful embroidered tablecloth that she had done, which unfortunately wore out.

When we went home to Denmark in 1983, our cousin showed us a very old chest from her ancestors. In those days a young woman or man would have just such a chest, which contained all their possessions and which went with them when they moved into new employment. She also showed us our great-great-grandmother's sampler, which she had done, aged 13, in 1883. My aunt copied this sampler for me when she herself was about 80 years old, and she embroidered at that age without glasses!

My own Glory Box got borer and had to be discarded, but I bought myself a camphor-wood box. I like having a box.

Anne Mutu







# Visitors Adopted as Pets



Past visitors often surprised. The shining cuckoo/pipiwharau, with its distinctive call stayed for one Spring, while the kaka parrot obliged by staying only briefly, just long enough to be photographed before flying on. Starlings fed babies in the bird box outside the kitchen window one year, restricting my inside movements and two moreporks/rurus amused us by peering at our coffee-drinking on the deck as they sunned themselves for some hours, perched above us on the roof spouting.



I don't have a cat or a dog to spend money on, so, these days, my regular birds have become my adopted 'Very Special Pets' to have conversations with. I'm still forever hoping for their replies.

The resident moreporks/rurus start before dawn, introducing the day. Heard, but not now seen, but still, I offer them a "Good morning". The tuis follow, calling from kahikatea, puriri, and the neighbour's winter flowering pohutukawa. When I appear, they flutter and swoop to nearby trees, chortling at me to hurry up and fill their feeder and bowl – it's amazing how speedily they drink through their sugar water in these winter months, often two feeding at a time.

Flocks of colourful rosellas occasionally screech their presence, while lately, a shy wood-pigeon/kereru has joined the deck visitors, hopping along the railings in his clumsy way and drinking plain water from the large blue water dish. Conversations with him are limited though, as he retreats to the puriri tree if I approach.

Recently, I've excitedly added to my pet numbers. I discovered party food for the wax-eyes/tauhou.

Previously, four had enjoyed feeding on the regular halved mandarins I poked on nails with the apple pieces they shared with the two resident blackbirds. However, putting a special Wild Bird Berry Cake on the bird feeder had 16 of them partying frenetically, giving such joy to me watching from my kitchen window. Their antics kept me enthralled, time not moving. The regular sparrows and greenfinches share the two seed-feeders hanging there, daily fighting each other for perches. This time the sparrows politely waited for the wax-eyes'/tauhou's departure, and then ravenously savoured the Berry Cake too.

Mynas and pigeons aren't encouraged, but visit anyway. I'm waiting to hear the trill of my favourite, tiny grey warblers/riroriro in the karaka trees, hopefully back nesting there in the Spring. A few chaffinches surprise and visit now and then, feeding on the rosemary and lavender bushes, but, sadly, I've only one fantail/piwakawaka (there used to be four) visiting the front garden most afternoons. Luckily, she stays longer with her flitting and seems to be the most appreciative of my lengthy conversations.



Neighbours' night-roaming cats, five of them, are the enemy. Oh, that we could bring in by-laws, like some Australian councils have, to protect our treasured birds.

Some friends tut-tut at my spending money on birds, but for me these delightful creatures lift my day, every day and, so far, I've had no horrendous vet fees to pay for my many little 'adopted pets'.

Jos Coburn



## Some Irish Proverbs ...



To live is a rare thing  
in the world.  
Most people exist,  
that is all.



Our greatest glory  
is not in never falling,  
but in rising  
every time we fall.



You'll never  
plough a field  
by turning it over  
in your mind.

