



November 2023

# Home & Country

Tōkū Kāinga me Tōkū Whenua

- The end of an era
- Outside the square “Circles”
- Colourful cat beds a hit

THE NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF  
**WOMEN'S  
INSTITUTES**  
(for home & country)

## WI Activities

### 90th birthday celebrations for Taupo WI

The Taupo WI held its 90th Birthday celebrations at the Taupo Women's Club in September.

The cameo theme was created by secretary Colleen Yeoman and was on the invitations, name tags, programme and birthday cake, adding a lovely touch.

The theme for the day was black and white — black and white serviettes, bling vases with white chrysanthemums and primulas, the black and white balloons were eye catching and a white wreath of silk peony roses design was created by treasurer Felicity Uri.

Present on this special day was our National President Jude Vaughan, Vice President Judy Cathcart, Executive Officer Colleen Dryden, Rotorua Federation President Margaret Hayes, the Mayor of Taupo David Trewavas and his wife Anna Trewavas.

The birthday cake was iced by the president's daughter Bridgette Winchester from Waipukurau.

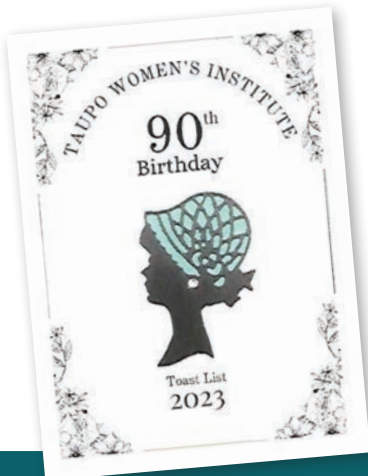
All members and visitors kept to the theme of the day and dressed in black and white.

Music was played by Barbara McLachlan.

Members and guests were met with a glass of bubbly on arrival and a delectable high tea was served.

A candle was lit, and a minute's silence was held for the past president Pat Rodgers and for past members.

Our 90th birthday was celebrated in style, and everyone agreed, it was a great success.



*Above photo by Jude Vaughan*



## Kuriwao WI gets into the “swim” of things

Well, who would have known how confident and courageous the women of Kuriwao WI, South Otago Federation, are?

Recently, we witnessed the uncovering of New Zealand’s next swim suit bunny. A role we did not think would happen again since our honeymoons. This, though, is my imagination getting out of control. I will fill you in with what really happened.

A group of very dedicated women dusted off their yellow polka dot bikinis and partook in an aqua fitness

session at the Gore Pool. For some reason, the swimsuits didn’t fit like they did 20 years ago.

We were very lucky that there were a variety of floating aids provided as part of the session. To be fair, this did save us from having to fill out incident reports. What a great workout, and a few laughs. A real blast.

After working off all those calories we went to the Thomas Green Cafe for lunch. We also welcomed a new member, Toni Williamson. Great food and a great group of women.

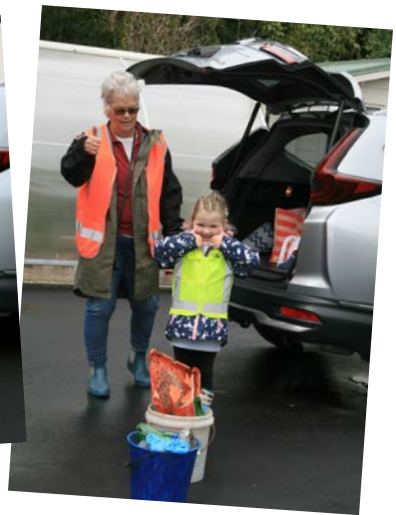
## A cleaner West Coast

The West Coast WI ladies were out early on the Monday morning of Clean Up New Zealand Week, braving the

weather and picking up rubbish on the roadside leading to Shantytown, which is a well-known tourist attraction.



*Left: Bernadette Stenhouse, Judy Wood, Mary Findlay, Chris Black and Scarlett Olsen with some of the rubbish collected.*



*Right: Chris Black and grand-daughter Scarlett with the thumbs-up for her bucket-full of rubbish.*

# New Zealand Women's Institutes



**Founder:** Miss A. E. Jerome Spencer OBE,  
Homemaking, Co-operation and Citizenship



**Patron:** Her Excellency The Rt Hon. Dame Cindy Kiro, GNZM, QSO,  
Governor General of New Zealand

**Jude Vaughan:** President,  
Chair - Mealing Estate Trust, Chair - Barbara Wood Memorial Trust

**Website:** [www.wi.org.nz](http://www.wi.org.nz) **Charities Services registration number:** CC 23683

**Theme: Vision for All**

**Project: Looking for Opportunity in Your Community**

**Judy Cathcart** – Vice President / Chair,  
Lead Membership Committee Trustee,  
Barbara Wood Memorial Trust

**Adrienne Allen** – Co-Lead Promotions &  
Operations Committee  
Finance Committee

**Toni Brumby** – Vice President  
Co-Lead Promotions & Operations Committee  
Trustee, Barbara Wood Memorial Trust

**Jessie Hopkinson** – Lead Social Issues Committee  
Trustee, Mealing Estate Trust

**Mary Reet** – Honorary Finance Officer  
Trustee, Barbara Wood Memorial Trust

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## **HOME & COUNTRY ADVERTISING CHARGES**

### **For a WI member:**

Full page B&W	\$190
½ page	\$100
¼ page	\$55
Inside front/back cover (colour)	\$260

### **For non-members:**

The addition of 15 percent to these prices.

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*Front Cover:*

*At close range and from the safety of a boat, a bird's-eye view of a waterfall tumbling into Lake Taupo.*

*Photo: Judy Cathcart*

*Jude Vaughan's photo opposite:  
Toni Williams, Ashburton Courier*



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# From the President



Kia ora koutou. Hello, WI members.  
Kei te pēhea koutou? How are you?

## **New Beginnings and starting on the path to an Exciting Future**

A new year is lurking on the horizon, a chance for us to reflect our past and make way for new things, new beginnings and new potential possibilities. There will be challenges to test our mettle and dedication to this organisation. Some of those challenges will prove a step too far at first, but we have to move towards this new chapter.

Before any new journey we need to close the door and be able to move on without seeking reparation for past hurts and disappointments. One of those regrets, for some members, is the cessation of the Home and Country *Tōkū Kāinga me Tōkū Whenua* in its traditional format as a printed in-house magazine. But you cannot go back in time and undo mistakes; all you can do is learn and move through the chaos

that it has caused and focus on making better decisions in the future.

However, as I have said before - "Out of crisis, comes opportunities." We have the exciting opportunity to begin a new format of communication involving social media and technology. It is normal to experience a fear of change but embracing that fear is the way to overcome that uncomfortable feeling of the unknown. Let us try and see what pans out over the next few months. We may be pleasantly surprised at our ability to cope and manage. Accessing an electronic newsletter via your smart phone or reading online through the website could be a piece of cake. Or, perhaps your own WI could print out the issue and everyone take a turn in reading the hard copy before sending on to another member. You will not know until you are flexible and willing to try. There will be a necessity for interesting copy with clear photographs to be sent to the national office so a new habit of reporting local events will be another exciting challenge for us all. Now is the time to celebrate the success of your WI. Did you have an interesting speaker? Did the presentation highlight a social issue that we should know about nationally? Was there a great workshop where learning a new technique was the order of the day? Where did you meet and what was yummy on the menu that day? What are you doing for a special meeting in the coming months? - You could be organising a bus trip to the theatre or a museum so advertising this in the NZFWI e-newsletter, your local federation's

WI members (or a visitor) may like to come along and share the outing. The new format has such a huge potential for you to embark on providing interesting reports that can be shared throughout the country. As any news editor will tell you, there is no issue if there is no copy. The success of this venture sits with us all to contribute or collate WI news regularly. We will be very grateful for those members who are committed to making this new communication system work.

***The past, not only shapes our futures, but gives us the strength to reinvent ourselves. Societies with a long and deep past are powerful entities.***

The coming year will bring the possibilities of co-operating together as WIs of dedicated members nationwide continue to work towards making well thought-out goals happen. It is no good just coming up with an idea or project if we are not brave enough to embrace those opportunities and just do it. As an organisation full of talented, dedicated women, who have a wealth of knowledge and abilities, the NZFWI is lucky to have this database of expertise, incredible skill sets and common sense. To make these hard decisions, it will take strength and fortitude; to be courageous in facing the future. There is no room for fear and apprehension. If there is a minute chance that we can act together and be significant locally, as well as at nation level, then success will follow.

There are so many social issues that are currently relevant to us all here in New Zealand, Aotearoa, that the NZFWI needs to be a conduit for

empowerment and information to all women in our communities. We are needed and we must not give up on the effort to “pass on a good thing.” We have so much to offer, it is time to dig deep and start talking out aloud to make our voices heard throughout the country. Women are looking for a safe place to meet with other like-minded individuals to find friendship and support; a chance to be herself for a couple of hours and that place is the WI. As WI members and as remarkable women, we have extraordinary challenges ahead of us, which will be an exciting adventure of tremendous potential.

***“I am very optimistic for the future and I am sure that you are too!”***

May I take this opportunity to wish all the members season’s greetings “Mere Kirihimete”, and enjoy the summer holiday month. Ensure you help make some wonderful memories with friends and family by sharing together the celebrations – don’t

stay in the kitchen...the washing-up can wait... you might miss out on a special, magical time. To those treasurers working on the WI finances – thank you for your accuracy and diligence towards the completion of the financial data. I know the finance team will appreciate your dedication.

To WI members who have been unwell, I wish them a speedy recovery and extend my deepest condolences to those members’ families who have lost loved ones.

***Mā te wā***

***Jude Vaughan, National President***

**Bank account numbers:**

***The New Zealand Federation of Women’s Institutes:***

03-0518-0013797-00

***Barbara Wood Memorial Trust:***

03-0518-0303997-00

***Mealing Estate Trust:***

03-0510-0876029-00

## Birthday Congratulations

### 90-year birthdays

***Joan Humphrey***

*Taradale WI, Northern and Hawkes Bay*

***Betty Knight***

*Whangarei WI, Whangarei*

***Jeannine Oliver***

*Goldfields WI, Thames-Hauraki Plains*

***Merle Lithgow***

*Durham WI, North Taranaki*

***Evelyn Webster***

*Tikorangi WI, North Taranaki*

## From the Editor

As you will be aware, this is the final edition of Home & Country in its traditional format. Long established as the national voice piece for all manner of WI-related news, stories, events and celebrations, Home & Country has shared a wide selection of memorable moments with its supportive member base for many years.

Unfortunately, the march of time has had a telling effect on printed publications and Home & Country is no exception. News and stories will never stop happening, it just means they need to be retold via a different medium and the NZFWI will ensure that continues. Communication, spreading the word and sharing what is happening in WIs around the country is at the heart of the organisation and its resourceful people. That won't change, it will just happen in a different format.

At this time, I would like to thank you all for sharing your stories and photos through the pages of Home & Country during my time. I have learnt much about the spirit and fine exploits WI women add to the wider community and the impressions you have left.

In what has been a challenging year for many through weather extremes and the rising cost of living, we all look forward to a brighter 2024. And while it is the end of a significant era for Home & Country, with that comes a new beginning which is exciting.

Many thanks for having me at your house and I send best wishes to you all for a happy and safe festive season, that goes well into the beyond.

**Jane Hunt**

### What now?:

With this being the final printed and posted copy of the Home & Country magazine, we know members will feel sad and perhaps a little lost without the news from members, WIs and federations.

However, the next communication to follow this magazine will be an electronic newsletter (E-Newsletter). That is a digital newsletter like the one sent out in October.

That E-Newsletter mainly had articles of national interest. What we are asking for in the future is for you to keep sending in your snippets of news and clear photos so these can be

shared in the E-Newsletter. We aim to have a gardening section, a social issues section, recipes and handcraft articles to name a few.

These E-Newsletters will be out every two months to email addresses on the NZFWI database as well as on the Home page of our website. The news will be more up to date and member focussed. The NEC will be asking a sub-committee of members to put the items received together into a format suited to the members.

So, it is not the end of a national communication to members – just the beginning of a new way.



# National Office News

Kia ora koutou or Gia sou (pronounced Yasas) ...Greek for hello

I hope you will all enjoy your international month of November.

In September, I was fortunate enough to be invited to Taupo WI's 90th celebrations where the theme was black and white. A well organised high tea at the Taupo Women's Club rooms was attended by a chatty group of members and visitors who enjoyed the guest speakers, a presentation on the history of the WI and a delicious afternoon tea of tiny cakes and savouries.

Following that, two days later, I attended the Rotorua Federation half-yearly meeting also in Taupo where this time the theme was the colour red. One of my favourite colours, the room was awash with women in red. The memorable part of that day, for me, was the entertainment from 'The Odd Notes' a local band made up of violin, banjo, guitar/ukulele and piano accordion. With song books dished out and sitting between two beautiful singers (Jude Vaughan and Sue Watson) I could not go wrong...as Sue pointed out at one stage!

On more mundane matters, I have been following up with members of closed WIs which have not finalised their finances. If your WI goes into recess, there is still the requirement to prepare a financial report to be entered online in the following January and the disbursement of funds from the bank accounts to charities before the account is closed. The final bank

statement showing a nil balance needs to be sent to the national office please.

Please do not hesitate to contact the national office if there are any difficulties in preparing the financial report for your WI or federation.

Donations after Cyclone Gabrielle have amounted to \$17,191. The fund is now closed, and payments made to Hawkes Bay (\$9447), Gisborne/ Tairāwhiti (\$3997 and BBM Social Kitchen in South Auckland (\$3747) as requested by the donors.

Finally, on the Members' page of our website, there are promotional materials advertising the WI in the community for members to download and print at their local print shop. Promotion lasts longer than just WI Awareness month – members are needed to keep the organisation relevant in today's world.

Until next time ka kite ano or antioas (pronounced andeeo) ...Greek for goodbye.

***Colleen Dryden, Executive Officer***

## Welcome Corner

A big welcome to these new Members

### **North Taranaki Federation**

**New Plymouth Central WI** - Julie Duff, Jan Spittal

### **Wairarapa Federation**

**Dalefield WI** - Ann Wilson

**Gladstone WI** - Sylvia Maunder

**Waimea WI** - Susan Newbould

### **Buller Federation**

**Waimangaroa WI** - Jayne Muir-James, Chanelle Perry, Kathy Perry, Sarah Shannon

### **Mid Canterbury Federation**

**Wakanui WI** - Jan Tombs

### **Eastern Otago Federation**

**Kia Ora Katoa WI** - Karen Milton

### **South Otago Federation**

**Balclutha WI** - Bev Barclay

**Kuriwao WI** - Toni Williamson

**Romahapa WI** - Bronwyn Leishman

## Reunion Dinner for Past NEC

### **Sunday 26th May 2024**

There will be an ex-NEC reunion dinner held on Sunday, 26th May, 2024 in Palmerston North.

Details to follow.

Please contact with an interest to either:

Elaine Dougherty: 027 224 1888

Ann Jackson: 06 370 1186 or 027 699 0555

Suzanne Bannister: 027 385 0263.

## WI Activities

### **60 Year Badge for loyal member**

Outstanding Chertsey Pendarves WI, Mid Canterbury Federation, member Pat Tarbotton recently received her 60 Year Badge.

She has held many positions at Chertsey Pendarves WI and was a very efficient Secretary at various times. Pat also opened her prize-winning garden to us all for many of our meetings.

She is seen here receiving her 60 Year Badge from President Janice Allen.



## Member Profile: Jean Lee

### *Waingawa WI, Wairarapa Federation*

Jean Lee has been a member of the Waingawa WI since 1971. “Recruited” by her friend and neighbour to “keep her company on the drive into town,” Jean was hooked.

WI provided an outlet for her talents as a knitter, cook, seamstress and passionate gardener, and she was soon a very keen competition entrant. The extra bonus has been the friendship and camaraderie both she and fellow members have shared over the years.

Jean has spent many years as a committee member both for Waingawa WI and for the Wairarapa Federation, although has not been an office holder, much preferring to contribute as a backroom helper. She was known as the tea lady at Federation events and is still more than happy to help in the kitchen at institute gatherings.

Apart from WI activities, Jean spent

many years delivering Meals on Wheels and as a hospital volunteer, only retiring from the latter position two or three years ago. She has thoroughly enjoyed these activities while loving meeting and helping people.

She was born in 1929, the 13th child of 14, in Dannevirke. She left home at the age of 21 to work at Kimberley Hospital for disabled adults in Levin, leaving when she married and moved to the Wairarapa.

At the age of 94, Jean still often walks into town (more than a kilometre from her home) and if a bus is not due, walks home again. She is also a very keen bowler. She still knits but doesn't like large projects anymore, finding them hard on her wrists. She is a prodigious knitter of coat hanger covers.

Women like Jean can only be admired and are institute stalwarts. She is a very valued member of Waingawa WI.

## WI Activities

### **PJs a welcome gift for Foster Hope**

Thirty pairs of pyjamas were handed over to Top of the South co-ordinator for Foster Hope in Blenheim during August.

The photo shows Leonie McLachlan and Colleen Carston with the spoils which were mostly gathered by Nelson Federation Executive members and other associated WI members.

We have more coming in as a roll call in October.



# 2023 Literature Trophy

## Runner-up entry

### *'The Challenge'*

*By Jane Forbes, Waimumu WI, Southern Southland Federation*

I love tramping, well, more exactly - I loved it when my body was in working order. Walking the bush with a carefree stride, twigs crackling underfoot and sun sneaking through the canopy. And after the rain, when the leaves are jewelled with drops and everything smells clean and fresh.

After they were about 10, the kids never walked with us, so silence reigned supreme and one could soak in the senses, drink in the pure glory of it all. We were safe in the knowledge that they would stop at the designated time and we'd catch up to find them lying in the sun, demolishing as much scroggin as they felt they could get away with...it was the perfect family pursuit.

Although I'm painting a picture of bliss, the "Devil's Staircase" was anything but - and I'd dreaded it for days....nay, weeks. We'd traversed "Cattle Flat" with not a bovine in sight and as for the "flat" appellation. Well, for that to be called "flat" - it was far more likely that I won "Miss World" five years in a row....post-menopause.

So, the "staircase" stretched out before us, no other route, it lay between us and the next hut. There was no way of knowing how bad it would be. Clothed in bush, it lay concealed. Like a giant beast, lying in wait for its prey, it lay there- waiting. Waiting, for its next victim.

Mind racing, I replayed last night's rescue of the group that hadn't made it. Half past 10, in the pitch blackness of night, the first men made it through to ask for help to find the rest. Under torchlight, they retrieved them, but they weren't in good shape...

Setting off in the early light, the bush was gloomy and vines ensnared us, slowing us down - already trapped in the belly of something sinister.

As the day lengthened, we passed long forgotten graves. Crumbling stone crosses bore the names of children, little children who had not seen their first birthday. They had died here in the arms of the bush, while their parents had fought to survive. Pioneers cruelly sold land that would never support an existence. Still, they had struggled, laboured in the wilderness, while one-by-one, their children died.

It was a truly beautiful resting place for little children, in that clearing, with the lake gently lapping, lulling them to sleep. My heart was aching for parents I'd never met, fighting back the tears that a mother feels for another mother who had been there 100 years before.

My heart lingered there, while my brain fought with the challenge ahead... the challenge waiting for us.

Leaving the clearing, we entered the darkness again, to climb the first spur. Like giant fingers, of incomprehensible



size, the spurs stretched down to the pristine lake beneath, clawing at its shore. Walking the shoreline wasn't possible because the massive talons had gashed and torn at it, so that sheer rock faces had been ripped back towards the beast.

Spur after spur rose up before us. Scaling one, descending...scaling another, descending...it seemed like it was trying to wear me out....waiting until I was so tired, that all the fight had gone.

I made my brain think of the kids, they were at secondary school now, it was Aidan's last tramp before leaving for uni. I had to keep going, slowly but surely, the beast would be confronted...the challenge overcome, but it was so hard.

There seemed no winning, it was just there, spur after spur, each one more barbarous than the one before. Rocks ripped at my legs, gnarled roots gripped my boots, my heart pounded so loud that I heard no cheerful birdsong. Warm blood dripped into my boot as a rock scrapped a newly formed clot from my knee...and still the spurs rose up before.

And just when I thought I could barely continue, the sun shone through. But what I mistook for a sign of reprieve, was not. It illuminated a wire bridge. Three wires crossed the cavern. My eyes searched for the stream beneath, but my brain only saw jagged rocks – bleeding. Bleeding with the blood of those who had fallen.

A small sign said that one could follow the stream 3km up the spur to a place where it was small enough to cross.

It sat there like a cruel joke, that wasn't remotely funny, and the kids looked at me.

We knew that there were nine swing bridges but this was not a "bridge". This was three wires, one for your feet and about a metre above, two more - one to the left and one to the right - for each hand. By no stretch of the imagination, could one call this a "bridge" and the rocks below wept more blood.

I sank into the grass, my eyes welled and the kids looked at me....and the rocks wept more and more blood.

I knew we couldn't climb the extra 'kms' up the spurs if we were to get to the hut in daylight. My brain knew this - but the rocks kept bleeding, the stream ran red with blood and the foam was tinted pink... there was just so much blood.

Each child made it across, until only my husband and I remained. My eyes welled, my heart pounded, my legs trembled as my feet searched for the wire. You had to look down, because you had to stay on the wire...and still the rocks ran red.

The bridge lurched, my pack had hit the side, snagged on a wire rope burr, my right foot slid off, and my knees buckled... I was younger then, much younger, and my arms were strong. My hands gripped the wire, my foot regained its rightful place...and the rocks ran a little less red.

Inch by inch, the stream became a stream and the rocks glistened in the sunlight and all the blood washed away....

# The successful reach of Circles

Ararimu WI, Northern Waikato Federation, has taken up the challenge from our National Conference in 2022 to instigate circles in the form of Craft Days.

We open these to anyone and everyone who would like to attend – not just WI members. In July we held our inaugural BYO Craft Retreat Weekend where we were not going away for a traditional or well known ‘Craft Retreat Weekend’ where accommodation is booked and you travel to your heavenly crafting destination (the community hall floor would have been a little hard and chilly I imagine ☹️).



Instead, time was set aside from Friday night to Sunday afternoon at our local community hall for crafters to register and bring their chosen craft/s, set-up and they could arrive and craft, leave and return when they chose with the same on repeat for the next day and so on – without the inconvenience and time-consuming obligatory packing away and re-assembling of work which happens when at home. The laying out and packing up is what takes so much time, never mind the distractions of the washing to just pop on and oh yes, the dishwasher needs unpacking and repacking... and then we only get a smaller window of opportunity to actually achieve anything crafty!

We were in our own crafting heaven with other like-minded ladies and enjoying chatting and learning about each other, as you do when you are relaxed and busy with things you love. And don't forget food too!

There was a wide variety of crafts brought from watercolour painting to knitting, embroidery, card making, scrapbooking, family history work and

one crafter brought her shells, drill, bits of drift wood and mobile-making supplies.

We had demonstrations of different crafts/tips during the day and a bingo sheet of fun activities to keep us entertained as well as a mystery gift activity.

As a result of this event, three ladies were invited and have been attending our WI monthly meetings and we hope will join as members - they are keen.

This first event was such a success we held another Craft Day (one day only due to hall availability) in September. This time we had demonstrations of flax weaving and macrame – we are sharpening our skills to hopefully enter next year's National competitions.

This time we have two interested ladies who would like to attend our next WI monthly meeting.

These activities appear successful and worth continuing.



## WI Activities

### Good Service Award



*Waimea WI's Liz Booth, centre, receiving a well-deserved Good Service Badge, from Dawn Christie and Raewyn Hill.*

## WI Activities

### 90th birthday celebrations for Hunua WI

Hunua WI, South Auckland, has enjoyed 90 years of continuous support in the community.

Our numbers may be small but we have a very dedicated group of women who make an incredible effort to support the children's hospital in Auckland with knitted beanies, fish & chip jumpers for newborns, fun knitted balls, and scrap books.

Twice a year we hold a stall at the local market where we sell flowers, cakes, handmade cards and bric a brac. We have been able to support local communities with donations that punch bigger than our weight. Such an incredible team effort.

So, it was with huge excitement that we set-up the Hunua Hall for our birthday celebration. We welcomed

the community to come and have a browse through the memorabilia and enjoy a cup of tea. The local "Hall Ladies" put on an amazing High Tea in the afternoon for invited guests. The hall looked amazing all dressed up with bunting and lovely table cloths and cloth napkins. The very pretty tea cups added to the nostalgia of the history of Women's Institute.

Our past President Nancy Christopher, 92 years old, and past member Nan Saxon, 100, jointly cut the birthday cake. We then all raised our glasses to celebrate the occasion. A big thank you to our very talented member Carole Leonard for making and icing the cake. I would also like to thank Christine Whitfield and Pat Smith for the beautiful flower arrangements.





Lots of memories and stories were shared by descendants of past members who joined us to celebrate. Lastly, a big thank you to our President Jo Taylor, for the huge effort she put in and making this such a memorable time. Thanks Jo, you are amazing.



Voluntary work acknowledged



West Coast President, Judy Wood recently received a Civic Award in recognition of her voluntary service to the community.

She has been involved with Blind Low Vision NZ for 25 years, 20 years with the West Coast Horticulture Society, many years with AFS, and 50 years with West Coast WI.

## Coreen Gray – a genuine inspiration

Coreen Gray, QSM, narrowly avoided being killed by a malfunctioning rocket, has awarded a raft of first prizes to a young Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, performed on the BBC and counts singing at London's Royal Albert Hall and being awarded a QSM amongst her life highlights.

In August, Gray, a Gate Pa-Kaimai WI (Tauranga District) stalwart sang and played piano at the first ever Bay of Plenty Villages Music Festival at Bayswater Metlifecare Retirement Village.

A week later, she celebrated her 99th birthday.

"I don't think much about my age, to be honest," she said. "I'm beginning to get arthritis, but it doesn't worry me when I'm playing. I've been lucky with my health through my singing.

"I feel rather thankful in a way that I've been taught to breathe properly. I think it's made a difference."

Gray was born in Yorkshire, and moved to Blackpool where she started playing piano around the age of five.

"I don't remember why my parents had a piano. But I started learning at a little private school. I was in Blackpool right through the war years. It was a busy place with around 95,000 Royal Air Force [personnel] billeted there. I did a lot of concert work for the forces."

Gray taught on the Channel Islands for 10 years, while on the side performing on the BBC. In 1961, enroute to New Zealand, the ship barely avoided disaster.

"I came on the Rangitane and we had an exciting trip out; one of the crew was knifed and thrown overboard and one evening we were watching a film on deck when we saw water suddenly coming over the side but ignored it," she said.

"We were told the next morning that we were lucky to be alive. A rocket from Cape Canaveral had fallen into the sea a couple of miles away. That was a real experience!"

Gray went on to teach music at St Cuthbert's College in Auckland and was an adjudicator at music competitions.



*Coreen Gray at the keyboard.  
Photo: Courtesy The Weekend Sun*

"I found myself at Te Awamutu and discovered a young lady named Kiri Te Kanawa," she said. "I think I awarded her three first prizes that week. I was quite taken with her – even before she started to sing. When she walked onto the platform, I remember thinking, 'this young lady knows what she's doing'."

Gray joined the Oriana Singers in 1985, leading them until 1996, and was a member for 29 years.

"I was a vocalist and accompanist with the Tauranga Civic Choir for 12 years and now, of course, I'm well and truly retired," she said. "I've thoroughly enjoyed my career in music and in 2020, I was awarded a QSM."

I thought it was a scam when they first told me I'd been nominated. I couldn't believe it."

Bayswater events coordinator Sam Martin said Gray was a genuine inspiration.

"Everybody hopes they're like Coreen when they reach that age," he said. "She's so vibrant and to be so switched on and so active in mind and body is incredible. She has a better social life than I do!"

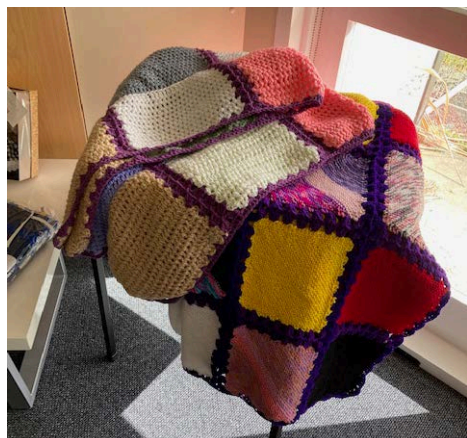
*Story courtesy of journalist Debbie Griffiths, The Weekend Sun and [sunlive.co.nz](http://sunlive.co.nz)*

## WI Activities

### All in a good cause

Waimea WI, in Waikanae, celebrated with winners of a special raffle where the proceeds helped raise \$1500 for Dementia NZ.

The blanket is an example of Peggy squares crocheted for donations with the proceeds going to various charities.





## WI Activities

### Busy birthday for Maraetai Beach WI

Maraetai Beach WI, Northern Waikato Federation, celebrated the 63rd birthday of the group in July.

We were determined to make it a fun occasion which hopefully, we did. At least the feedback from it has been positive. We were especially delighted that Judy Cathcart (NEC) made the effort to drive all the way up the country to be with us, especially as the weather has been so unreliable. So, many thanks Judy.

She gave us a real insight into what it is like to be on the NEC, what the various committees and trusts do, and how much the whole deal may take over one's life! Although we've all read reports and hear what is happening, to hear it from a personal point of view was special and new to many of the ladies present.

We were also thrilled that all but one of the neighbouring WIs were represented. Friendship and



communication are what we are all about, isn't it?

During Awareness Week last year Maraetai had made some cat beds for the local cat rescue and little flower posies for folk who had lost their beloved pet. As a result of that, both

the local vets and the cat rescue lady requested more, so with that in mind during the 'Circles' part of the day, 80-odd more beds were made and a whole stack of posies.

Ann Montier, representing the Takutai Trust, who very generously





donated money for us to purchase the materials, spoke for a few minutes on the work of the local Trust and the help they give and sponsor for the community.

As well as all this activity everyone enjoyed a delicious birthday lunch, followed by a cuppa and a piece of birthday cake. Roll on next year's birthday.



## Smile on Your Dial

This issue's jokes are a selection of quite bad, random one-liners, courtesy of Reader's Digest

- I invented a new word - Plagiarism!
- Did you hear about the mathematician who's afraid of negative numbers? He'll stop at nothing to avoid them.
- Why do we tell actors to break a leg? Because every play has a cast.
- Why can't you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.
- What kind of exercise do lazy people do? Diddly squats.
- What's orange and sounds like a parrot? A carrot.
- What did the pirate say when he turned 80? Aye matey.
- What's Forrest Gump's password? 1Forrest1.
- What do you call a rooster staring at a pile of lettuce? A chicken sees a salad.
- I tried to sue the airport for misplacing my luggage. I lost my case.
- One of the oddities of Wall Street is that it is the dealer and not the customer who is called broker.

And one last one to make up for the above ...

According to unofficial sources, a new simplified income tax form has been created which contains only four lines

1. What was your income for the year?
2. What were your expenses?
3. How much have you got left?
4. Send it in.

Not really a joke as these days it's a bit close to reality. 😊

# Recipes

## Chicken Thighs with Prunes and Bacon

For each serving allow 1-1½ skinned, boned, chicken thighs.

Place 2-3 orange flavoured prunes inside, roll in 1-2 strips thinly sliced back bacon and place seam side down on baking dish.

Bake for about 40 mins in mod oven. Serve hot or cold.

*Supplied by: Alma Blaikie, Janefield WI*

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## Kumara Bake

2kg kumara	500ml cream	1 packet Maggi soup
2 cups grated cheese		

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Peel and cube the kumara and cook until tender. Drain and place in suitable oven dish. Mix chicken soup and cream. Pour over kumara.

Cover with cheese and place in oven for 25 mins.

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## Peanut Butter Fudge

1 cup peanut butter	1 cup of butter	1 tsp vanilla essence
3 cups icing sugar		

Melt butter and peanut butter together in microwave. Stir.

Add icing sugar and vanilla essence.

Press into a sponge roll tin. Flatten and mark into squares.

Keep in refrigerator.

*Supplied by: Megan Simmonds, Te Puke*

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## Family Mince

800gm mince	2 tins chopped tomatoes	1 tsp salt
2 tbsp soya sauce	1 tsp sugar	1 cup cooked macaroni
elbows	1 tin of chunky pineapple	2 tbsp Worcestershire
sauce	2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce	

Fry mince until browned, stirring to separate. Add the rest of the ingredients. Simmer 15 – 20 minutes, adding water if necessary. Onions, leeks, garlic and capsicums can be added. This is an ideal pie filling.

*Supplied by: Megan Simmonds, Te Puke*

## Half-Hour Steamed Wholemeal Pudding

### Pudding:

1 cup of flour	2 tsp of baking powder	½ cup of wholemeal flour
Pinch of salt	½ cup of milk	

Currants or sultanas may be used.

Sift flour, baking powder and salt into the bowl to be used for steaming.  
Add wholemeal flour and currants or sultanas. Mix to a soft dough with the milk.  
Add more if required. Place in pot of boiling water and add sauce to pudding.

### Sauce:

2 tbsp golden syrup	2 tbsp brown sugar	2 tbsp butter
1 cup hot water		

Melt all together and pour over the dough.  
Place lid on pot and steam for 30-45 minutes.  
Serve with cream.

*Supplied by: Val Becker, Gate Pa-Kaimai WI*

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## Stretch a Dollar Biscuits

200gm butter	1 ¾ cups of sugar	1 egg
1 tbsp condensed milk	2 cups sifted flour	1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda	2 cups cornflakes	1 cup coconut
vanilla essence	Salt	

Mix softened butter and sugar, add egg, vanilla essence and condensed milk.  
Add dry ingredients and mix well. Lastly, add crushed cornflakes and coconut.

Roll into balls – size to suit. Flatten with fork.

Makes two trays which you can put in the oven together.

Bake for 25 minutes in fan bake oven at 150-160°C.

Can make about 60 the size of walnuts. If too soft to roll, add a little flour or if too dry, a little melted butter.

They keep well in a sealed container.

*Supplied by: E Holt, Norfolk WI, North Taranaki*

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## Zucchini Quiche

Beat 5 eggs

Add: 375gm grated zucchini	½ cup Oil	3-4 rashers chopped bacon
1 cup SR flour	1 cup grated cheese	1 chopped onion

Bake for 1 hour at 180°C.

*Supplied by: Alma Blaikie, Janefield WI*

# Up the Garden Path *with Poppy Bear*

## ***Here comes Summer***

As the temperature start to rise, it's time to prepare your gardens for summer.

## ***Flower Garden***

Sow your favourite seeds such as phlox, ageratum, cosmos, cyclamen, marigolds, zinnia, lobelia, and impatiens. Flowering annuals make wonderful Christmas and summer displays. Pick flowers and dead-head dying flowers to encourage new blooms. Lift spring bulbs once the bulbs have completely died down and store in a cool dry place. Dead-head roses to encourage new blooms. Mulch, fertilise and water roses well during the hot dry weather. Plant seedlings such as dianthus, salvia, gypsophila and portulaca. Pots and hanging baskets need to be well fed and watered daily. In extreme heat they may need watering early morning and again in the evening. To help potted plants survive infrequent watering while on holiday add water crystals to your containers.

## ***Lawns***

When the weather is dry, water lawns in the early morning or in the evening. To prevent your lawn drying out too quickly over summer, raise your mower up a level. Feed your lawn when rain is due or water the fertiliser in with a sprinkler This will help to keep your lawns fresh and green.

## ***Edible Garden***

Stake tomatoes, feed weekly and water regularly. Removing the side

lateral shoots allows the trusses of fruit to develop better and creates airflow. Remove old bottom leaves for the air to circulate and to prevent fungal diseases. Plant seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, beetroot, pumpkin, courgettes, melon, cucumber and gherkin. Plant new lettuce and herbs regularly to have a constant harvesting over summer. Pick vegetables every day to encourage continuous fruiting, especially peas, beans, cucumbers and courgettes.

## ***How to raise Monarch Butterflies***

New Zealand's largest butterfly, the Monarch has been in New Zealand since the late 1800s. Butterflies need to be raised inside or in a very sheltered spot in your garden out of the wind where you can watch their development. The main food source for monarchs are swan plant and milk weed. Swan plants can be raised from seed, or purchased from garden centres. The plants may already have eggs on them, but if not place the plants outside in a sunny spot so the female monarchs can lay their eggs on the underside of the plants. Remove any unwanted eggs at this stage as it is best to have two or three eggs on each plant.

Caterpillars are very cute to watch but they are also very hungry and will eat the whole plant if there are too many caterpillars on one plant. It takes 5 - 14 days for the egg to hatch. The caterpillars eat and grow, and will grow too big for their skins six times. This takes about three weeks so make



sure there is plenty of food and keep the plants well-watered. Fully grown caterpillars wander about before they hang and change into a pupa.

Now is a good time to contain them in a cage or container to make sure you don't lose any caterpillars. You can make a cage from a bucket or a carton and cover with netting. Fully grown caterpillars will hang from the roof of the cage and pupate. Keep the cage out of direct sunlight and wait and watch for the pupa to hatch. This will take 14 – 21 days. The most exciting part of raising butterflies is when the butterfly emerges. This can happen very quickly and be easily missed.

Butterflies usually emerge mid-morning and will hang in the empty pupa case to let its wings dry out and harden. Do not disturb the butterfly at this stage as handling the butterfly can cause permanent damage to its

wings. After two hours the butterfly will be ready to release outside. Place the butterfly on your finger and release outside. The butterfly will have the best chance of survival if the weather is good.



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## Joint birthday lunch

Uruwhenua WI, Nelson Federation, members recently enjoyed a joint lunch celebration of their combined birthdays, all on the one day at a new cafe at Pohara Beach.

It was a great social time with many stories shared while specially chosen cards were exchanged.



## Social Issues

Mental health can sometimes be a hard subject to talk about and has often been a taboo subject for many years. But thanks to organisations like Mike King and his team, I am Hope, they have been running a campaign called Gumboot Friday which took place on November 3.

The latest report in suicide numbers shows that they have dropped over the past few years and while it may be a positive thing compared to other countries, we are still relatively high which is alarming.

In the coroner's report between 2021/22, sadly, there were over 500 suspected self-inflicted deaths. It was also reported that Māori men are more likely to die of self-inflicted deaths than non-Māori, and when we look at the numbers it shows 23.9 per 100,000 Māori men took their lives during 21/22 which is 1.4 times higher than that of non-Māori males who had a rate of 17 per 100,000. For Māori females the rate was 9.2 which was twice as high as non-Māori females, the highest age group being between 20-24 years.

Four years ago, the government pledged \$1.9 billion into better health services, yet we have seen in news reports that mental health services are largely overworked and underfunded. Many people wait weeks, if not months, to be seen by a psychiatrist and have been told in some areas such as Wellington not to call the 24/7 hub at night as there is not enough people to take the calls.

Gumboot Friday, and other campaigns, are dedicated to raising funds to offer free counselling for young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand (25 years and under) to ensure they get the support needed to improve their mental health. It has been reported that almost a quarter of young Kiwis struggle with mental health issues such as anxiety, fatigue and depression.

So, let's help Mike and his team spread the awareness and raise the funds that are needed to reach this goal by putting on our boots and walk in their shoes for one day. Mental health needs a great deal of attention, it's the final taboo and it needs to be dealt with.

*If you or your family members are dealing with mental health, please know it is ok to not be ok and asking for help is just the first step.*

*I understand your pain. I've seen people go from the darkest moments in their lives to living a happy, fulfilling life, you can do it too. I believe in you. You are not a burden. You will never be a burden. – Sophie Turner*

### **#gumbootfriday**

If you need to contact someone, you can do so by ringing or texting any of these numbers:

Life-line: 0800 543 354

I am hope: text/call 1737

Youth line: 0800 376 633/Text 234

Sources:

Stuff

Tewatuara.govt

***Jess Hopkinson, Social Issues, NEC***

# Health

## The effects of Pollen

For the most part we love New Zealand's climate and natural environmental conditions but through spring and summer, the presence of pollen can present health challenges for many.

As we're now well into the season, the following is a timely in-depth analysis on the effects of pollen, how to take action to minimise its intrusion and how to get help.

Pollen is one of the most common triggers of Allergic Rhinitis, and is often referred to as hay fever or 'seasonal allergic rhinitis'.

Allergic rhinitis is caused by an allergic reaction to a substance in the environment around you. The most common allergens in New Zealand are:

- House dust made by dust-mites
- Pollen from grasses, weeds or trees
- Animal hair e.g. cats' hair.

It is also a common trigger of asthma.

### ***What is Pollen?***

Most plants (trees, shrubs, grasses, weeds and flowers) pollinate in spring and early summer, to fertilise the female flower to reproduce the plant species.

Pollen are fine grains that carries the reproductive material of the male part of seed plants. Some plants will self-pollinate, while others need insects (e.g. bees), birds, or the wind, to move the pollen from one plant to another.

### ***Are all pollens allergenic?***

Airborne pollen (which blow around in the wind) are the main problem for allergy sufferers. Plants, such as trees, grasses and weeds, which rely on wind to pollinate, produce fine powdery pollen which can easily get up your nose. As moisture in the nose goes into the dry pollen grains, pollen proteins flood out, causing the immune system to trigger an IgE-mediated allergic reaction.

- Plants fertilised by insects or birds, such as flowers and flowering trees e.g. cherry and pear trees, usually do not cause allergic rhinitis.
- New Zealand flora is a mix of native and introduced plant species. Airborne pollen from introduced (exotic) plant species seem to cause the most problems for allergy sufferers.
- People with allergy to one type of pollen are not necessarily allergic to others. The most common pollen causing allergic rhinitis in New Zealand is from grass.
- Airborne pollen from grass is particularly lightweight and can blow a long way. New Zealand's windy climate combined with large areas covered in grass, means even those living in urban areas can still be exposed to grass pollen.

### ***How do I know which pollen I am allergic to?***

In general, people with an allergy to pollen will only have symptoms of allergic rhinitis (or worse symptoms if

they are also allergic to a year-round airborne allergen such as to house dust mites) during the period the plant they are allergic to is pollinating.

### ***When the pollen season starts***

In New Zealand, pollination will start in the north of the North Island and gradually move down through the South Island up to a month later.

Trees are usually the first plants to pollinate, as the weather starts to warm up towards late winter/early spring (sometimes as early as July). However, this will vary from one year to the next, and is likely now being affected by climate change.

The yellow pollen from Pine trees is often the first sign of the pollen season. However:

- Their pollination period is usually short, lasting roughly two weeks,
- The peak pollinating period (time when there is the maximum concentration of pollen in the air) lasts only a few days
- People allergic to a tree pollen may only be exposed to it for a month or less.

Grass pollination, on the other hand, lasts for several months, from August/September through to March.

Pollen concentrations will vary depending on the region you are in, and, on a daily basis, in response to the various weather conditions:

- Pollen release is favourable on warm, dry, windy days whereas rain washes the air clean of pollen.
- Pollination usually occurs in the morning. Pollen concentrations increase to the peak at 12 noon and decrease through the

afternoon and evening.

- Wind strength and direction on any given day will also affect how much pollen people are exposed to.

Pollen forecasting for all 12 months of the year is available on the [MetserviceNZ](#) regional weather forecast pages.

### ***How do I avoid the pollen I am allergic to?***

In general, while complete avoidance may be impossible, there are still things you can do to avoid pollen allergens and make life easier for yourself.

- Stay indoors and keep windows closed as much as possible during the pollen season, particularly in the mornings and on windy days. If possible, use an air-conditioning or home ventilation system that filters pollens out.
- Having a pollen allergy to grass can be a good excuse not to mow the lawns! However, if you can't avoid this, wear a mask and sunglasses. Also take a non-drowsy antihistamine if recommended by a health professional.
- Stay away from high pollen areas, such as parks, golf courses, farms, and country roadsides, where grass and/or weeds are not regularly mown.
- When going out, if possible, travel in vehicles with the windows closed and a ventilation system that filters out pollen. Have tissues on hand at all times and wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Thunderstorms can also increase the amount of pollen in the air. Keep an eye on the weather forecast and plan your day accordingly.

- Remove allergenic plants from the garden – these are often imported species – and replace them with low-allergenic plants. New Zealand natives are usually okay, as are pretty, brightly coloured flowers.
- Take Spring/Summer holidays in coastal areas where the wind blows pollen inland.

### ***Understand the pollen you are allergic to:***

Keep a note of the timing of your symptoms, and the plants (including trees, weeds and grass) in the area, also if there is any variation in symptoms when you are away from home, at work and so on. This helps define your clinical history.

Make an appointment to discuss this with your GP - a review of symptoms, and consideration of the likely culprits, can take time, and is not something to add on at the end of a consultation for something else. The GP can then refer you for a skin prick test. It is important to note a positive test to something does not necessarily mean you are allergic to it; but, in conjunction with your clinical history, can help confirm whether a particular plant is the allergen.

Generally, if your symptoms only last a few weeks in early spring, the allergen is more likely to be a tree pollen. However, if they last for several months, then it is most likely to be a grass or weed pollen. Temperate grasses can pollinate from late winter right through summer, and plantain (a common weed) through the same period and even into autumn – 10 months of the year.

### ***Grass pollen allergy***

Aside from remaining indoors particularly on windy days, those with grass pollen allergy are advised to avoid activities in and around grass including sport – except where the grass is regularly mown and kept short. Walking in longer grass can also cause a rash on legs, hands and arms etc (known as contact dermatitis) in people with grass pollen allergy.

However, avoiding exposure to grass can be difficult. It is important you/your child keep allergic rhinitis (and asthma if this is an issue) under control with regular use of prescribed medications. You/they should also have an Allergic Rhinitis Action Plan provided by your doctor or nurse practitioner:

In addition, those with grass pollen allergy should be excused the task of mowing lawns, and are advised to shower after being outdoors, to wash off any pollen, particularly if levels are high. Bedding may also have to be dried inside so as not to attract pollen while on the clothesline. Wearing a hat and sunglasses outdoors can also reduce the potential for pollen getting into and inflaming eyes.

Unfortunately, grass pollen allergy is likely to persist for years, and particularly for those with severe symptoms, may have a significant ongoing effect on health and quality of life. It is also difficult to avoid the pollen because it is grown across New Zealand and is easily spread in our windy climate.

Particularly for children, it is worth considering allergen-specific immunotherapy (SIT), which is the only



treatment known to modify the disease both during treatment and for years following. It has also been found in some studies to prevent the progression in young children from allergic rhinitis to asthma and the development of other allergies.

### **Tree Pollen**

Tree pollen may be less of an issue compared with grass pollen, because of the short period in which the pollen

is airborne. However, some trees, such as the Silver Birch tree, can cause severe symptoms.

Some airborne tree allergens can cause a skin rash known as allergic contact dermatitis, including Pinus radiata, Wattle (Acacia), Manuka, and Cyprus. For more information, see: [Plants that cause skin problems | DermNet NZ](#)

Source: Allergy New Zealand

## **WI Activities**

### **Knitting up a treat**

The Taupo WI continues to knit a storm for Pregnancy Help in Taupo. Here's a sample of their beautiful results.



## November 2023 International Month: Greece

Several federations are celebrating international month – with Greek shared meals and court competitions representing this Mediterranean region made up of more than 2000 islands just off the coast of Turkey.

Ouzo, baklava, olives, Keftedes (meatballs), Souvlaki (grilled meat on a skewer), Moussaka, and delicious Loukoumades (Greek doughnuts) are just a selection of the food that this country is well known for. The news in Greece at the moment (Sept/Oct 2023) reports that Storm Elias has battered the country, resulting in damage estimated to be in the millions to the economy. (Another result of climate change that is becoming more relevant in our world today).

A Greek legend has it that God distributed soil through a sieve and used the stones that remained to build Greece. The country's barren landscape historically caused the people to migrate. Like New Zealand, Greece's islands and land are a result of volcanic activity. The Greeks, like the Jews and the Armenians, traditionally have been a people of diaspora, and several million people of Greek descent live in various parts of the world. Do you know anyone of Greek descent?

Greece is famous for its ancient philosophers, like Plato, Pythagoras, Socrates and Aristotle, to name a few, its traditional feasts with colourful costumes and dance and its beaches from the black sands of Santorini to the party resorts of Mykonos. You will find small beaches and long stretches of sandy ones, pebble beaches and



seashore caves hewn into steep rocks, beaches with white or pink sand, as well as black-coloured ones created by volcanic soils.

Greece received 15 million visitors in 2021 with the tourist season from Easter to October, with July and August being hottest – so best time to visit is May and September-October (harvest month) if you want to avoid maddening crowds and intense heat (up into the 40°C).

What will you do to celebrate this country – have a Greek-themed wedding and throw some plates (traditionally done in joy as well as to mourn as it was once believed that a celebration could draw the attention of some bad energy or evil influences – so plates were smashed to ward off these evil influences from affecting the newly-weds) or have an outing to the latest movie “My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3”?

Having a beach-themed meeting may be a little ‘chilly’ still, so whatever it is you do – enjoy celebrating another part of our diverse world.

# Adventure

## So Close Yet So Far

**By Jude Vaughan**

On October 2, I travelled to the Waimate half yearly meeting. Living by the maxim “Failure to prepare is preparing to fail” as well as once a Girl Guide – being prepared is just part of my psyche.

Using the Maps App on my phone, I had keyed in the address of the venue and was quite happy to find that there were several routes to the hall. I worked out that if I allowed myself a ‘good’ hour and 45 minutes I would be there in plenty of time to visit the ‘ladies’ and have a quick chat before the meeting would start.

I decided that I would follow the fastest route and duly set my alarm for an early departure in the morning. I also checked the weather forecast, as the conditions had been changeable from snow and sleet, torrential rain, gusty north westers’ and glorious sunshine – oh, and we had recently experienced a reasonable earthquake, which does put one on edge, at the best of times.

The alarm did its job and I was dressed and eating breakfast and on schedule. However, the mountains had that “look” about them and the black clouds gathered ominously. Still, I was not to be dissuaded from a little gathering gloom. I was a

member of the AA (*check*), I had a fully charged phone with credit (always a bonus) and I had a phone charger in the car (*check, check*). I had the spare tyre in the back of the Mini (*check – all good*). I was a woman on a mission and driving a small sportscar.

The first transgression on my carefully planned journey was at the end of the drive...yes, that soon. I looked up towards Mount Somers and the black grey, squally, misty weather grumbled at me so I turned left instead of right. I decided that I would not use the inland scenic route and left the mountains to their own devices complete with their own weather conditions. I drove south towards the sunshine and watched a rainbow stretch from the one side of the roadside to the other.



It wasn't my intention to stop for a takeaway coffee but old habits die hard and the caffeine call was paramount in my mind. I had made good time even though I was on a slightly slower route to the hall so the Mini nosed itself into a roadside café carpark. With a recycled cup perched precariously in the allocated holder, I continued on my journey with the Mini ticking along at the speed limit.

I drove through Temuka and onwards to Timaru. The traffic had increased. Trucks and cars jostled for positions on the passing lanes but I trundled on until the unexpected roadworks. What is this insane need to place hundreds of road cones on a bridge, that looks perfectly stable to me? A team of intense orange-clad workers and their hand clasped phones, walk up and down, kicking stones and conversing over a shovel, without any semblance of actual road repair work being undertaken. I glance at the time and realise that I am way behind schedule. I am almost 30 minutes away from the hall and the meeting would be about to start as soon as I arrived – that is if nothing else goes awry.

I turn off SH1. My iPhone starts to direct me through the suburbs of outer Timaru. I listen intently whilst keeping an eye out for the signposts. It is not until I am changing gear like Emma Gilmour (rally driver) to climb hillsides and edge around hairpin bends that doubt begins to enter my mind. I drove through dry fords. I drove past farm gates and contented cows. I drove onwards without passing anyone else either on the road or working in the paddocks. This sure was an adventure.

It was the metalled road that loomed in front of the Mini bonnet and the small significant road sign stating that the ford was unsuitable for light vehicles, that made me stop and let the dust settle around the car.

I checked the App and I was on the right route, with the hall five minutes away on the other side of the hill - just out of sight. But I have to traverse the gravelled-road that had half a mountainside of rocks and boulders strewn over it. I make an executive decision and reverse the Mini.

I decided to drive back towards St Andrews on SH1 and hope to pick up yet another route to the hall. I set off in a cloud of dust with the lady directing me on the App, insisting that I need to 'Proceed to the route!' but I haven't got time to turn her off. I suffer her until I can stop and work out where I am. Reception is patchy and I willed all the satellite gods to send enough coverage to at least give me hope.

It is when I am reacquainting myself with the contented cows and bone-dry fords that I think of Jerome Spencer and her recruitment campaign as she drove up and down the countryside 100 years ago. She must have had to negotiate unmade-up roads in her little car. Relying on sparse maps and pure fortitude and resolve to get from one settlement to another. She certainly was a woman of determination and willpower.

Suddenly through the dust encased windscreen I see a signpost heralding a new direction towards Bluecliffs Hall and "hallelujah" the road is sealed. Great stuff. The northwester' picks up the fallen twigs and leaves



and scatters across the road. I pick my way through the debris. It is a good 17 minutes to the hall, so of course, I am late.

I reverse into a carpark space with all the skill of a '40-footer tri-axle trailer' driver. The Mini looks as though it has competed in the Paris-Dakar rally. The other cars look shiny and contented. I wrestled to open the car door without it being wrenched off the hinges with the swirling gusty wind. I had arrived, albeit windswept, but in one piece.

Now where was the door to the hall? I could see that lights were on but the double doors close to the carpark were locked tight. I walk around the hall hoping that I had arrived at the right hall after all the adventures. Please, let me find an opening door to get me out of the wind, that was helping me around the hall. I turn a handle and fall into the kitchen. "Oh! thank goodness you're here!" "We've been so worried about you. "Where have you been?" "Do you want a coffee?" All these questions were whispered as we were in the kitchen because, of course, the meeting had started. I felt euphoric, elated and exhilarated. I told them vaguely my route, to which, of course, everyone

threw up their hands and asked why I had I not used the SH1 route!

"It's obvious now," I mutter to myself whilst chugging down a glass of water. But I would not have seen the secrets in the back country of Timaru and practiced various gear changes to negotiate the twisting roads. More is the point, I concluded that Bessie was a pretty remarkable woman when she drove in her little car to spread the word about the WI to women in their rural communities. And as I learnt very early on when I started driving here in this pretty wonderful country – "It's not the kilometres but the time it takes to travel through Aotearoa".

P.S. After dragging my fingers through my wind tussled hair, I crept into the meeting to welcoming smiles. The meeting was great with plenty of discussion and participation. And yes – I followed Sue to SH1 and then made my way home uneventfully.

P.P.S Apparently, I am not the only National President who lost her way to Bluecliffs Hall. Past National President Mrs April Kerr (1978/1982) was reported to have had trouble finding the hall. To which, I replied, I bet she looked beautiful when she eventually arrived, without a hair out of place.



## WI Activities

### Lunch out for Wellington WIs

The Wellington WIs of Kapiti, Newlands, Waimea and Whitby enjoying lunch while out and about.



## WI Activities

### Innovative West Coast project wins award

West Coast won the 2023 Avis Rishworth Innovation Award for their "Care Packages" project.

During the pandemic, packages of meals and baking were given to members or their families affected by Covid. This Project was initiated and managed by Judy Wood who also submitted the entry.



### Birthday celebrations

Cheryl Wood celebrated her 65th birthday, featuring a ladies high tea at the Coachman-Distinction Hotel, with fellow members of Tiritea WI, Manawatu Federation.



*Pictured from left, Pam Calton, Heather Thoreson, Cheryl Wood, Joyce Wenmoth, Judy Belk (all Tiritea WI).*



*Cheryl Wood baked her own 65th birthday cake which was decorated by Tiritea WI member Denise Hughes.*

# We Shall Remember Them



*Jan Brown, GSB, Taumarere-Opua WI, Whangarei Federation*

*Pansy Cuthbert, GSB, Whitby WI*

*Betty Dillon, GSB, ex-Te Mahanga WI, Northern & Hawkes Bay Federation*

*Margaret Ferguson, ex-Taradale WI, Northern & Hawkes Bay Federation*

*Norma French, ex-Hillsborough-Heathcote WI, Canterbury District Federation*

*Nancy Geer, QSM, Kokatahi- Kowhitirangi WI, West Coast Federation*

*Jacqui Gillam, GSB, Turakina WI, Oroua Federation*

*Margaret Hobson, GSB, Otawhao-Takapau WI, Central Hawkes Bay Federation*

*Anne James, GSB, Halcombe WI, Oroua Federation*

*Heather Kennard, GSB, Milson WI, Manawatu Federation*

*Esther Knight, GSB, Papatawa WI, Tararua Federation*

*Isla Lewis, Nelson Centre WI, Nelson Federation*

*Marie Murphy, Waianiwa WI, Southern Southland Federation*

*Myra Pranker, Rawhitiroa WI, South Taranaki Federation*

*Pat Rodgers, GSB, Taupo WI, Rotorua Federation*

*Frances Tobin, GSB, ex-Waikite Valley WI, Rotorua Federation*

*Anne Webb, Waianiwa WI, Southern Southland Federation*

*GSB: Good Service Badge*





# 2023 Literature Trophy

## Third place

*Nurse Jenny*

*By Jillian White, Mason's Flat / Hawarden W1, South Otago Federation*

When Jenny Dickman arrived at the Waikari Medical Centre she came with a car full of belongings, two small daughters and a wealth of nursing knowledge and experiences. It was the 9th of January 1972, and little did she know on that day she would live in the North Canterbury region for the rest of her long and illustrious life, serving the people of the community in many different ways.

Jennifer Edith Vinney was born in Dunedin in 1939 but grew up on dairy farms on the West Coast. The first farm was on an island in the Waitangitahuna River and the family lived in a two- storied house with a large walk-in fireplace. When she was 7½ years old Jenny started at Whataroa School but left four years later, when she was enrolled with the Correspondence School until she reached the leaving age of 15 years. Along with her lessons, Jenny learned a great deal at her mother's side whilst they hand milked Friesian cows (at times up to 100) and dealt with the everyday illnesses and accidents on those isolated farms.

Even today, when faced with a medical query, her first thought is inclined to be for herbal treatment.

Some of those natural remedies being used by Jenny [and others] well before she had done her nursing training in Dunedin included:

- covering a wound with a spider's web
- chewing on a koromiko leaf for diarrhoea
- packing a deep wound with sphagnum moss
- and then there was the plant called lambs ear [known as the women's herb] being used as a sanitary pad.

So, this quintessential West Coaster – blunt spoken, resilient, hardworking, kindly – was ideally suited to the position of charge nurse in a rural medical centre with a large farming hinterland.

The Waikari of 1972 was a thriving village on the railway branch line that ran from Waipara to Waiau. So, what did that village look like?

Well, there was a hospital, a medical centre, a chemist, a vet clinic, a three-roomed primary school and dental clinic, two hotels, a Post Office, county Council Chambers and yard, three garages, a butcher's shop, a police station, two churches, an apiarist, a lady's hairdresser, a transport yard, a flour mill, the Waikari Lime Co and a railway station and yard through which ran two trains every day – in fact everything a community could need.

After enrolling her elder daughter, Tania, at Waikari School, Jenny was ready to settle into her new job with Dr Meikheim. The Dr Meik/Nurse Jenny

combination worked well for all, where life at the Medical Centre was a mixture of regular medical needs highlighted by extraordinary events – in reality, no two days were ever the same.

Like the day they dealt with two coronaries and a chainsaw accident all after hours – and the Saturday when Jenny was in the office wrapping a gift for the girls to take to a birthday party when a man appeared at the door pointing a rifle at her and demanding drugs. Fortunately, the girls quickly made their way to the party and reported the incident. It all ended without injury when the gunman was apprehended. Jenny, who had worked and travelled through 20 European countries whilst on her Great OE of three years in the 1960s, and later spent time in the hurly burly of India, declared it to be the scariest moment of her life! And it occurred in the idyllic rural setting of Waikari.

Whilst going through his patient notes one day, Dr Meik noticed a pattern with one of his patients who seemed to present with diarrhoea every Monday, so he sent Jenny off for a visit to make discreet enquiries. It seemed that this person liked meat for breakfast so bought three saveloys every week, cut them in half, added a chopped onion and boiled them up to eat half a saveloy each day. Every following day the remainder was reheated in the same water until Sunday when all that was left for breakfast was saveloy soup. Dr Meik believed in making home visits and he would sometimes take one of Jenny's girls (Tania or Kiriana) with him for company supplying a small box of chocolates, a pillow and a blanket as

those trips could cover many miles over gravel roads – as far as Cheviot, Waiau, even Motunau Beach.

A people person, Jenny thrived on her busy lifestyle, so it was no surprise that she became involved in community activities too. After leaving school Jenny joined the Whataroa Country Women's Institute when she was 15 years old. These meetings were a highly anticipated monthly social highlight that lasted a full day. The ladies brought scones, cream [of course], blackberry jam and a jar of soup that was added to a large stock pot and shared. At CWI Jenny learned how to make bloomers out of flour bags – and how to make, line, and add fly buttons and buttonholes to boys' woollen shorts.

After some years in Waikari Jenny also joined the Waipara County Lions, eventually becoming the chairman – further continuing her community service.

Finally, after retirement from her 27 years of nursing, she began teaching massage therapy and working for a homeopathic GP. It was then that she had the time to re-join WI – this time the Masons Flat / Hawarden WI.

So, this is Nurse Jenny, who, it must be said, has had a life full of purpose and people. A life that began on an isolated farm in South Westland, New Zealand, stretched halfway around the world through London during the swinging '60s, and later the hubbub of India – to eventually settle in rural North Canterbury, New Zealand.

A whakatauki for Jenny -

“He tangata, he tangata, he tangata”

# Federation and Institute Highlights

## Wairarapa Federation

Wairarapa Federation is looking forward to a busy end to the year's activities. The culmination of our Monster Multi Raffle raising funds for Wander Search, hosting a bowls tournament and a discussion day for sister federations, and ending the year with a Christmas morning tea with all our institutes.

**Dalefield:** Members will finish off the year enjoying a Christmas outing and luncheon.

**Gladstone:** Members are looking forward to our biennial visit to the Curiosity/Collectable shops in northern Wairarapa, when we generally come home somewhat lighter in our pockets and our car boots somewhat fuller.

**Holdsworth:** Members are looking forward to continuing our social gatherings, with an important catering task, a member's 80th birthday.

**Martinborough:** We are looking forward to our Christmas card making and also a meal out with the Featherston Owls to celebrate our birthday. December will bring a Christmas luncheon for all to enjoy. A very early Merry Christmas.

**Mt Bruce:** As we only have a small membership, we all look forward to meetings as a chance to get together each month. We will have a Christmas luncheon out and enjoy celebrating several members 80th birthdays.

**Owls of Featherston:** We are looking forward to our continued involvement

with the South Wairarapa citizenship ceremonies where we provide catering services. They are super occasions where participants are happy to become New Zealanders and which we are proud to be a part of.

**Tinui:** We are looking forward to quieter times following the flood damage, during which time we shared our meeting venue with the children of Tinui School after the school was flooded by Cyclone Gabrielle. We replaced the knitted TV slippers which were lost in the flood with the support of Wairarapa members and other local organisations who knitted new slippers and warm beanies for the children.

**Waingawa:** We are looking forward to our Christmas meeting at the Gladstone Inn, which involves a trip out into the country.

**Wainuioru:** October was our birthday month and we celebrated our 74th at a restaurant, including a fabulous cake baked by one of our members. We're looking forward to our Christmas celebration this year with our institute family, which includes a glass of bubbly on welcome, a pot luck dinner and the exchange of gifts from the Christmas box that follows.

## Mid Canterbury Federation

Mid Canterbury welcomed three former Canterbury East WIs to join our Federation this year. We promoted WI at the recent Ashburton A&P show by having a Mid Canterbury display and

encouraging WIs to enter in the Bay Competition, Bold and Beautiful. We also had a display in the Ashburton Public Library during WI Awareness Week. Several WI's in Mid Canterbury lent a hand during Keep NZ Clean week.

Neighbouring sister federations, along with members from our Federation's institutes will be invited to our annual Christmas lunch and get to get together in early December. We are planning an outing for Founders Day 2024.

**Chertsey/Pendarvas:** Held a combined meeting with a neighbouring WI and attended Federation Half Yearly meeting. We are going out for lunch for our December meeting.

**Fairton:** We have been visiting local hospice rooms and will be going out for a Christmas lunch.

**Hinds:** Our monthly meetings see us support local charities, Meals on Wheels and Food for the Living Alone. Catering and hosting Federation Half Yearly meeting and our own Spring Flower Show made for a busy September. This is followed by A&P show exhibits and speakers at meetings including making Bon-Bon, Christmas decorations and a show and tell of antique items. Outings included a lunch get together for our 93rd birthday. We have regular correspondence with our UK link in Hampshire.

**Lincoln:** We have been taught how to make three different types of bee's wax wraps and told of their uses. We are looking forward to having speakers from Ghana and Brazil, an outing for our 91st birthday and will finish the

year with a Christmas high tea and presentation of certificates and trophies.

**Wakanui:** We had an entry in the WIs competition at the Ashburton A&P show and also in the Home Pavilion in the Tray section. During Clean up Week we gathered the Wakanui Beach and collected rubbish along the coast line combing with a picnic to finish. Each month we have had interesting speakers, been to movies and enjoyed several meals out. We created several cuddly rugs/blankets to give to two social service groups in Ashburton. Both services were absolutely thrilled to receive the goods as they said there was a great need for these in the community.





# West Coast Federation

For WI Awareness month, we promoted our organisation at the local Multicultural Fair, a display table offering relevant information to hand out, and for sale, biscuits and cookies from around the world. Yoyos made famous by the CWA in Australia, Scottish shortbread, Maple syrup cookies from Canada and of course New Zealand’s Anzac biscuits.

Earlier in the year we held a Macrame workshop and intend to repeat this hoping to increase our National competition entries. In December we will take part in the Community Christmas Festival, decorating our tree with handmade Christmas theme play dough decorations.

**Arorangi:** Our members have kept busy through the winter months finishing articles for the West coast federation annual ASRB competition. It was “tops down ladies” for the photographer to get the perfect photographs for our latest fundraiser - a risqué 2024 calendar! There was great support New Zealand-wide for this. Thank you everyone.

**Paroa:** We are looking forward to celebrating our birthday picnic, which is to be held at Waiuta, an old gold mining town near Reefton. Nowadays, Waiuta is managed as an historic site for tourists to visit as very few buildings remain. Our November speaker will be Jillian Hardie, recently retired owner of our local craft store “Pins and Needles” who has been most supportive of our organisation over the years.

**Kokatahi/Kowhitirangi:** We are a small group of seven members who for years belonged to the South Westland Federation. After the closure of several of our institutes we affiliated to the West Coast Federation where we hold our meetings in members’ homes in Hokitika. We are looking forward to visiting the museum at Dillmanstown, Kumara, built by Bev Loader, the original owner of Gethsemane in Clifton, Christchurch.

Back cover: A symbol of peace, white doves send the perfect Christmas message.  
Photo: Jess Hopkinson

## Maraetai WI cat beds

Following on from Maraetai WI's, Northern Waikato Federation, great initiative which featured in the August issue of Home & Country regarding posies they were making for the local Coastal Cat Rescue, there has been a terrific response.

This (below) is the email Maraetai WI has since received while also having further requests from both their local vets for more posies, of which they were more than happy to oblige.

*Hello Ladies of the WI,*

*I would like to express our gratitude for the wonderful, colourful cat beds you made for the rescue. They have been wonderful.*

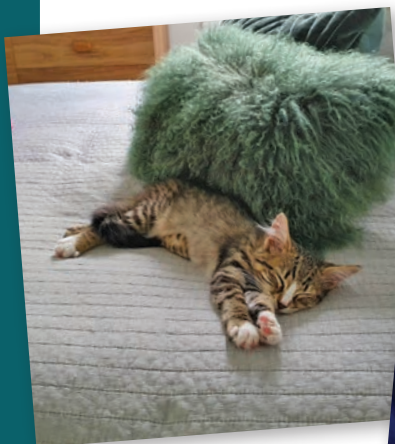
*Each of our rescue kittens have had their own little bed and have taken it home with them when adopted. They have been very well received,*

*and comforting for the kittens when leaving the nursery. We make sure they have been used prior to going away from the security they know at the rescue and often leaving their siblings.*

*We have also found them fantastic in the yard for our adult rescue cats. Easy to wash and add to the colour of the yard.*

*Needless, to say, we have now run out. If any of you wonderful ladies have time on your hands, we would be very appreciative of more beds. Thank you so much for your generosity and a few photos follow of the beds with some proud kitten owners.*

*Many thanks, Lyn,  
Coastal Cat Rescue*



*Wishing you all a peaceful  
and happy festive season*

