



pet week
OMATA
SCHOOL
pg 17

Pictured: Charlie's dog
Maggie May visited
Kōtare classroom.

the Ōākura Post

NOVEMBER 2025

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Welcome back team to another season with the OBC!

It's been an unusual winter for the club, but don't worry – summer is on its way, and so is the OBC!

OBC has been all action this winter with our high-performance boys and girls continuing to shred under the guidance of local surf coaches Tommy B and Thandi.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Party Time!!! – Friday 7 November
It's time to celebrate the club's history and induct new life members. Book the babysitter, grab your dancing shoes, and get ready for a night of live music and a great crew.

Opening Night – Friday 14 November
BBQ sizzling, famous OBC burgers, and a coldie from the bar – it doesn't get better. Helpers are always needed on the bar and BBQ – please sign up to volunteer via www.oakuraboardriders.co.nz

MC Memorial Longboard Celebration – Friday 6 December.
Celebrate longboarding and honour a special part of our club's story.

CLUB MEMBERSHIPS
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We're stoked for the season ahead and can't wait to see you all down at the local.

Thanks, OBC



Girls Super Squad

Term four sees the recommencement of the Girls Super Squad, run by local shredder Thandi Tipene. The squad had a successful first season focusing on upskilling girls in the surf. "Super Squad is about bringing together young girls who are already confident in the water and helping them grow even further. We focus on challenging them in different conditions to build both their skills and their awareness. Each session we hone in on one or two key areas to work on — whether it's technique, wave selection, or mindset — while also building confidence and resilience in the water."

Thandi, who learnt to surf as a kid paddling out with her Dad, has a solid background in technical and competitive surfing, including taking out wins and titles at the NZ Nationals, NZ Māori Nationals, and Senior NZ Nationals.

She will be using these skills to foster the love of surfing and to equip the girls with the required skills for competitive surfing and to represent OBC at events. "The aim is to keep the girls in the water throughout the year, so by the time summer rolls around they've got more experience behind them and feel ready — whether it's for competition or just to keep progressing."

For further information regarding costs/times/location and to sign up for Term Four, contact Thandi:

021 511 424
thandijazmine.co.nz

The surf season is nearly here!

We're excited to welcome everyone back to the beach! Here's an update with all the key info to get you ready for a fantastic season ahead.

Coaching Update
We're thrilled to welcome Lee Lash as our Coach Co-ordinator this season. Lee will be working closely with our coaching team to build a full schedule of training times and sessions. Stay tuned for more details soon!

Committee Spotlight: Executive Committee
As we head into a busy season, we're shining a light on the people steering the ship! Meet our Executive Committee:

- Chairperson: Ralf Kleinsorge
- Treasurer: Karl Watson
- Committee Members: Matt Peacock, Andrew Sorenson, Zoe Honeyfield, Annabel Burley, Richie Matheson

We'll be sharing updates on the great work our committees are doing behind the scenes—stay tuned!

Want to Make a Difference? Join Our Volunteer Team!
We're always looking for passionate helpers to keep the club thriving. Right now, we especially need:

- Bar Boss – to oversee the bar and Sunday Sips
- Junior Surf Support – more hands always welcome
- Officials – we're critically short! We need one official per 10 athletes at every carnival. Training is available and you can learn on the job - experienced officials will handle the tricky bits.

If you're keen to get involved or want to know more, reach out—we'd love to have you on board!

Club Renovation Update
We're making exciting changes to improve access and functionality at the club, huge thanks to NZCT and Toi Foundation for their generous funding support—these upgrades wouldn't be possible without you:

- A new partition wall has been installed between Black Sand and the club.
- A separate entry door into the club will be added soon—no more entering Black Sand first.
- The wheelchair ramp is replaced with a wheelchair lifter
- The old ramp will become storage space for Black Sand, allowing access to restaurant ingredients without entering the club.

- Key Dates**
- Club Open Day – Saturday 1 November at 3PM
- Come down to the club, meet the team, and learn more about what's happening this season.
- Sunday Sips – Starting back Sunday 2 November
- Join us for a relaxed catch-up after patrols. Everyone welcome – the bar opens at 4:30PM.
- Junior Surf – Starting back Sunday 2 November

New members meet at 9:30AM for an intro and club tour. Returning members come down from 9:45AM for fun, learning, and surf skills.

Facebook Page Update
We're transitioning to our new Facebook page:

NPOB Surf Life Saving Club Ōakura
Make sure to follow us there for updates, photos, and announcements before the season starts!

- Stay Connected**
- Facebook NPOB Surf Life Saving Club Ōakura
 - Instagram @npobslsc

Thanks for being part of our club community. We can't wait to see you at the beach this summer!



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Kaitake Golf Club

It is fair to say September kept us on our toes – one of the wettest months we have had in a while. Thankfully, we are fortunate that our course drains quickly and have had many members and non-members turning up to play golf regardless of the rain.

We are pleased to have a few sponsors in the pipeline and would like to welcome Location Homes as a large sign sponsor at the entrance of the carpark and a sign on the bridge on the 16th.

Stumpy's trophy was played for on Saturday 27th September. Congratulations to Roger Cloke and Ian Johnson who won the trophy this year.

The Shootout final held on Saturday 18th October is always a fun and very entertaining event. This year it was won by Simon Spurdle.

Chippers will start again on 2nd November. This is 6 weeks of Introduction to Golf for 4 to 10 year olds, Sundays 3pm – 4pm.



Left to right: Raewyn Bishop, Sue Goble from Taranaki Womens Golf, Christine Alexander.

KAITAKE 9 HOLE GIRLS RISE AGAIN

Early October many Taranaki Foursomes Strokeplay duos headed to Fitzroy Golf Course to contest the prestigious women's provincial title. The 18 Hole memberships played 27 holes whilst the 9 Hole memberships played 18 holes. Since the inclusion of 9 Hole Ladies four years ago, a Kaitake pairing has been successful in taking the trophy home. This is a beautiful double greenstone koru mounted on rimu and presented by Karen Vandenburg of Kinderen Daycare.

2025 Taranaki 18 Hole Foursomes Strokeplay winners are Raewyn Bishop and Christine Alexander. Between Raewyn, Christine, Lorraine Parthemore and Jo Wilson-West – each have featured on two occasions.

Latest at club level – The 9 Hole girls recently completed their Annual Championships.

1st Division Champion Kaye Cavey with Runner Up Raewyn Bishop
2nd Division Champion Jan Holdt with Runner Up Barbara Crombie

Kaye will represent Kaitake at the 9 Hole Champion of Champions on November 3rd at Fairfield Hawera

The Ladies Strokeplay Championship and Nett Competitions were played on Saturday 12 October - they were lucky, the weather held off. The winner over 36 holes for Silver Division Gross was Debra Johnson, and the Nett was Bob Fleming. The winner for Bronze 1 Gross was Janice Farrant and the Nett was Nicola Avery. The winner of the Bronze 2 Gross, which is over 18 holes, was Joy Greenlees and the Nett Winner was Donna Sharpe. The Gross winners will now go on to represent the Club at the Champion of Champions next month.

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Thanks for your support



After serving on the Kaitake Community Board for the past three terms I consider it an honour and a privilege to have been entrusted to take my community representation to the next level. I must confess that I didn't think I stood a chance in this election - so the initial provisional result that indicated I was elected was a pleasant surprise.

To all who supported and voted for me, I don't have the words to express my level of

appreciation, and you can rest assured I will do my utmost over the next three years to be worthy of your support.

To those who didn't vote for me, you have my personal commitment that I will represent you with the same level of vigour and determination I will exert for those who did.

And to the more than half of the eligible voters across the New Plymouth District who did not vote, I am really keen to learn why not. My personal belief is that the local body election process is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be reviewed and reset. However, in order for advocacy to initiate that course of action, facts, data and evidence are required to support that there is a problem, and to drive any recommendation for change, so please forward your feedback via email, text or in person.

To say this local body election was a tumultuous event would be something of an understatement. While the call for an 'out with the old, and in with the new' demanded in many quarters across the district largely didn't eventuate with the final results, I'm certain that public calls for a need for change at the NPDC will resonate around the new Council table: change in rate setting and rating levels, change in Council attitude to debt, change to the transparency of Council processes and decision making, change in accountability of elected members and Council officers - to name but a few.

This messaging was heard loud and clear over recent months, and will be at the forefront of my mind during any discussions and decision making throughout this trimester.

To that end, elected members don't know what we don't know, so I encourage you to bring your issues or concerns to me, or to any other elected members, in order to have them addressed. While I can't guarantee you will always get what you 'want', I can commit to drilling into the Council bureaucracy to ensure you receive a well-reasoned and rational response to your approaches.

With the current political and economic climate, and looking at some of the mess that has been inherited, the path ahead will not be an easy one to navigate, but I believe I am up to the challenge.

Graham Chard
New Plymouth District Councillor -
Kaitake-Ngāmotu General Ward

graham.chard@npdc.govt.
027 220 4549



Kaitake Community Sports Hub LastXV.

Back Row: Jimmy Bevington, Lindsay Thomson, Phil Thomson, Phil Dickey, Bruce Moller. Front Row: Rob McGregor, Nick King, Garry Carnachan, Quackie Churchill (Captain), Alan Cook, Murray Winks. Absent: Mark Thomson, Stephen Jennings, John Dazley, Will Rowland, Dave Kurth, Paul Cunningham, Norton & Coral Moller (Coaches).

Kaitake Community Sports Hub

Phil Thompson celebrates 28 years as chairman of the Kaitake Rugby Football Club

After four decades of involvement with the Kaitake Rugby Football Club and wider sporting community, Phil Thompson has recently been celebrated for his 28 years as Chairman. It was a fitting recognition for a man who has quietly shaped the club's spirit, stability, and success.

Phil's involvement with Kaitake Rugby began in the early-1980s, and has covered player, coach, manager and chair of the Kaitake Rugby Football Club. Those who know him describe him as a steady hand behind the scenes — the kind of volunteer every grassroots club depends on, but few can replace.

"Phil's contribution has been enormous", said Garry Carnachan, Kaitake Community Sports Hub spokesperson. "He's been there through every challenge and change, making sure rugby stays strong in Kaitake and that our players, young and old, have a club to be proud of."

Beyond the white lines, Phil has also played a crucial role in the development and coordination of the Kaitake Community Sports Hub at Corbett Park — a shared facility that brings together rugby, football, cricket, and other local sports codes under one roof. His leadership in venue management and community coordination has helped ensure that Kaitake remains a vibrant hub for sport and connection.

As part of the Sports Hub team, Phil has been instrumental in organising field usage, maintaining facilities, and supporting the upgrades that have modernised the clubrooms and grounds in recent years. His practical approach, deep local knowledge, and willingness to "just get things done" have made him a cornerstone of the hub's success.

As Kaitake Rugby looks ahead to future seasons, the values Phil Thompson has embodied — teamwork, perseverance, and community spirit — remain at the heart of the club.

AMBROSE GOLF DAY: Friday 7th November. Teams of four (\$200). Only a few spots left! Email: admin@kcsh.co.nz

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Charlie Darling Robertson: Award Winning Watercolour Artist

Some of you will remember Charlie from her years as a librarian at our Ōākura branch library from 2008 - 2020. She is now Senior Collections and Digital Librarian at Puke Ariki and oversees the buying of books for all of the libraries.

Charlie says, "I wasn't allowed to study art when I was young, my parents said it would be a waste of time." It was during covid time while working at our library that Charlie realised she needed a hobby. When we were near the end of covid and able to go out again, she enrolled in a local art course that explored various mediums.

"That was the first time I did watercolour. I hated it because it was so hard." It was helpful having someone show her how to do it. Now she sees it "like a jigsaw puzzle", how you'll do it has to be worked out before you start "because it's very difficult to correct mistakes."

Several years ago she joined Watercolour New Zealand based in Wellington. They have 'Paintaways' where members go somewhere and all paint. They had one not long ago in Ōākura. "We all met and stayed at the campground."

Every year Watercolour New Zealand has a 'Splash Exhibition', usually held in Wellington. It costs a lot to ship your artwork so Charlie has never entered those exhibitions. This year they decided to do it in a different place and chose the Percy Thomson Art Gallery in Stratford. With encouragement from her son, Farrell, she entered some of her work, and Farrell made the frames to suit each piece.

She has three paintings in the exhibition, one of a kereru called "Hello" won her a merit award. The exhibit runs until 16 November 2025.

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Her favourite things to paint are portraits. "I like things with eyes. We tend to think of watercolours as pale but I really like to use bright colours" which she achieves with lots of layers of paint. Some of her work can be seen and purchased at the Crafty Fox Co-op. She's been asked to be part of the Arts Trail and says, "Maybe next year."

Elayne Kessler

Watercolour New Zealand 'splash' Stratford exhibition 10 October - 16 November 2025

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David Macleod
MP for New Plymouth

As we head rapidly towards summer and the holidays, the end of the school year is also drawing to a close. It's a great time to reflect on some big changes that happened in primary education this year.

Since Term 1, all primary schools have been using structured literacy approaches and the new English curriculum, with phonics checks for new entrants at 20 weeks.

Education is a core priority for this Government, and our reforms are delivering transformational results for students.

More children are becoming confident readers, with fewer needing extra support. Nationally, 58 per cent of new entrants are meeting or exceeding expectations, up from 36 per cent, while those exceeding expectations have more than doubled.

These results are especially encouraging for Māori students, Pacific students, and students in low-decile schools, with their achievement rates rising, and the number of students requiring extra support decreasing.

This is about giving every child the best start. By following the science and evidence to make structured literacy approaches mandatory, we are ensuring students build strong foundations that will help them succeed at school and beyond.

These early gains reflect the brilliant work of teachers and show that bold, evidence-based changes are making a real difference. Raising reading achievement from the very first year at school is crucial, and these results show our commitment to teaching the basics brilliantly is working.

david.macleodmp@parliament.govt.nz
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37 Gill Street, New Plymouth

Office hours:
Mon-Thu: 9am-3pm
Fri: By appointment

National NZ

Authorised by David MacLeod, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



The Val Deakin Dance School will be having their annual Recital at the Dance Centre (306 St Aubyn Street) on Saturday and Sunday, November 22 and 23 at 1 pm both days.

Dance genres on show will include tap, ballet, contemporary dance and character dance performed by dancers aged from 5 to 75! Dancers in the Recital come from Hawera, Opunake, Oakura, Okato as well as New Plymouth.

A huge range of music, beautiful and varied costumes and exciting lighting will add to the delights of the show. Tickets can be bought by contacting Jane Roseman .

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Gannet rescued by Dave Marshall.

Giant Petrel Rescue

Local resident Ange Lawn was walking along the beach with her mum when they both noticed a large bird struggling in the waves, trying to fly but failing in the rough seas. There were two local surfers at the spot who had also noticed the bird, which had flapped around for awhile beside them. After a discussion, one of the surfers went out and managed to wrestle the bird onto his board and bring it to shore. Much pecking ensued as they got it back to their house and donned gardening gloves (pecking defense!) while Ange went off in search of a box to transport said bird.

It was taken to the New Plymouth Vet Group, who identified it as a Giant Petrel. These large sea birds inhabit coastal waters and can be identified by their large bills. Pairs lay one egg and share incubation for two months whilst one goes in search of food. The chick fledges at 15 weeks.

The vet group cared for the Petrel until transport could be arranged to Massey University's Wildbase hospital which works with the Department of Conservation. Anyone who travels regularly to Whanganui or Palmerston North and would like to assist with transport in times such as these can contact Averil Osborne at the Vet Group 06 7584006.

A few weeks later Dave Marshall came across a gannet sheltering in the dunes overnight, tired and hungry, which he rescued and took into the Vet Group.

Thank you to these local heroes who took the necessary steps to save this Giant Petrel and the Gannet and help get them back where they belong - in our skies.



Southern Giant Petrel

Darts anyone?

The latest addition to Butlers Reef is a high-tech dart board developed in Hungary that offers not just the old fashioned darts game but 15 different games including fishing and mini golf (positioning of the dart directs the ball). The good news is that the board has camera sensors that do the adding up for you – yay! It can also take videos and photos of your game and can send a run through of these.

At the moment it's available free to use to anyone over the age of 18 (although a supervised younger person might be allowed to join in on request). Early next year it will be available for hire, and as it has its own room it's a great set up for a party or social evening for families or groups. So now is your chance to try before you buy!

Taranaki Food and Drink Awards

Speaking of Butlers Reef, it's been nominated for Best Regional Establishment in these awards alongside local café Dawn. Black Sand Pizzeria and Bistro has been nominated in the Best Restaurant category, and Mya Glennie of Surf'n Sip has been nominated for Best Barista. Victor Higgins from The Bach on Surf Highway is up for Best Front Of House Personality.

Voting was opened up to those in the industry and the general public. Winners will be announced at a function at the New Plymouth Club on the 3rd November. Well done all you amazing local people — thanks for being in our Village and providing such great experiences for us all.

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Empowering Independent Thinkers

"Middle School is a time to find your own voice," reflects Charlie Maddox, Head of Middle School. "We invite students to ask questions, explore ideas, collaborate, and trust their own thinking. It's about helping them discover the joy of learning for themselves."

These years are also a time of profound growth. "Students are crossing the bridge from childhood to adolescence," Charlie adds. "Supporting them socially and emotionally is as important as academic learning. This is when confidence, self-belief, and resilience take root."

Our Koru Wellbeing programme anchors this journey, fostering wellbeing, resilience, and a growth mindset. Through weekly Cocoon sessions and daily check-ins, students learn strategies to thrive both personally and academically, guided by experienced Anchor Teachers.

Strong Relationships at the Core

Relationships form the foundation of Middle School life. "As educators, we walk alongside learners," Charlie explains, "we purposefully create spaces and opportunities to navigate these pivotal years with confidence." Relationships are central to development at this stage. Opportunities to work together, collaborate, share, and actively listen are embedded in everyday

life, helping students grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

Learning by Doing. Growing in Knowledge

Middle School learning is alive. In Hikoi (outdoor education), students climb, navigate, and develop physical fitness while applying literacy and maths skills to meaningful, real-world challenges. Interdisciplinary studies connect learners to local and global environmental issues, giving context and purpose to learning. Through Tūhura (project-based learning), learners pursue projects that ignite curiosity and creativity. They research, design, and create in ways that are meaningful to them, developing critical thinking, collaboration, and self-expression —essential skills for a powerful Quest project in Year 9.

A strong focus on Proficiencies, Maths, and Literacy ensures that each student builds a solid foundation. Thanks to small class sizes, specialist teachers with deep subject knowledge, and a school-wide culture of trusting teacher-learner relationships, data shows us that students make excellent progress. Every lesson responds to individual needs, creating a personalised and empowering learning experience.

Year 9: The Year of Flourishing

Year 9 is the pinnacle of Middle School, when everything comes together and learners flourish. Their Quest projects are self-directed, passion-driven initiatives addressing real-world environmental or societal challenges, culminating in TED-style presentations to the community. "This is the year where learners truly come into themselves," says Charlie. "They leave Middle School confident, capable, and ready for high school."

At Green School, learners are encouraged to explore, take risks, and grow in an inclusive and inspiring environment. In this spirit, Middle School isn't just preparation; it's where students begin shaping the world with intention, care, and confidence.



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Brad Ellington - Medical Work in Mongolia



Brad Ellington



Donald Mckee

Brad trained as an emergency physician in America and now works as an emergency department doctor at Taranaki Base Hospital. He and his wife Jenny and their three kids, then ages 11, 8 and 5, moved here 15 years ago.

Before the move, Brad contacted another Base Hospital emergency doctor, Donald Mckee (who used to live in Ōākura), and Donald suggested they look at Ōākura as a place to live. The children were enrolled in that “nice little Ōākura School” right away. Now the children are all grown and have moved away. “We’re hopeful they may move back at some point.”

Brad and Jenny like to do outdoor stuff together. They take walks with their two dogs and go hiking regularly in the Kaitakes.

That part sounds fairly typical of Ōākura families. Something Brad does, however, sets him apart and has drawn my attention to writing this article about him. For the past 11 years Brad has been spending two weeks each year (except for three years during COVID) as a volunteer doctor in Mongolia working with their rural doctors. He uses his ‘Continuing Education’ time and funding he gets from Taranaki Base hospital and funds the rest himself.

Mongolia is a nation bordered by China and Russia and is known for its vast, rugged expanses and a nomadic culture. It has a population of 3.5 million, making it the world’s most sparsely populated sovereign state. There are 22 aimags (states), each with a small central city and lots of villages with dispersed nomadic populations. The official language is Mongolian.

Brad goes as part of a team of 4-5 emergency doctors, mostly from New Zealand and Australia, that delivers a course called Initial Emergency Care (IEC). They travel to rural

settings and teach basic trauma and medical resuscitation skills to the rural doctors. They go in June when the weather is brisk in the day time, cool at night and there’s not much rain. Winter months would be brutal.

“We fly to Ulaanbaatar, stay a day or two gathering our equipment which we have stored at the University Hospital, mannequins and material to practice skills such as intubations, chest drains and surgical airways. We set things up and drive up to 12 hours to one of the aimag centres where we provide a course for rural doctors who staff small hospital in their soums or villages. We usually ride in a van, and have also done it in an old Soviet style jeep. We have flown to several of the more remote aimags and on one occasion travelled by train.”

The IEC training is delivered over three days to about 25-30 doctors. The NZ-Aussie team is joined by a group of Mongolian doctors who can act as language interpreters. “Maybe five of the rural doctors will speak English and we rely on demonstrations and interpreters and lots of simulations that go along with the lectures.”

During those three days they train cardiac resuscitation and trauma resuscitation, “the treatments that will stabilise the person until they can be moved to the nearest centre, often six hours away. Even there, they are not equipped like here —no x-ray machines or capacity to do surgeries, and a limited supply of medicines.”

“The doctors are always keen to learn. They are hungry for the knowledge, so lovely and supportive of each other in their learning and so appreciate what we provide. When driving us across the country, the drivers don’t use GPS. They will on occasion stop at a nomad’s yurt to ask directions. Then they will invite us in and give us some yak tea and a meal that’s usually goat or mutton. My first meal in Mongolia was the internal organs of a goat.”

“80-90% of the doctors are women, men doing the physically hard work. The drivers are always men.”

“Mongolia is a combination of ancient and modern ways of life. They live in yurts on the steppes like has been done for thousands of years. It’s a hard life with cold and windy winters. They pack up and move into the valley in winter and the hill sides in summer, following the grass. Moving now is often in pickup trucks [instead of by horse]. They may pack up in a Toyota van and have a little generator and a satellite dish for tv. The Mongolian people are proud of what they have and are the kind of people who don’t have much but share everything. They are people in this world who expect nothing and appreciate everything.”

“Their horses are short, stocky and strong, important for herding goats and sheep and for travel. Buddhist monks bless the horses at special events.”

“Every place we go the people want to show us some area of their region that they are proud of. We often sit around with them with plenty of vodka and beer and a big jar of big dill pickles.”

Pickles? Pickles provide a crunchy, sour, and refreshing counterpoint to the rich, fatty meat and dairy products that are staples of their diet. Pickling allows Mongolians to enjoy vegetables long after the growing season has ended.

“They love to sing in their native tongue, none will speak english, we smile and laugh together.”

Each of the training trips is for two weeks and includes two or three different sites. Brad’s goal was to get to each of the 22 individual states with their training. “This past trip in June marked the time we finished the training in the last of the 22 states. Next year we will start doing it all over again.”

Elayne Kessler

JoJo our Community Legend

You might be wondering what’s so oddly familiar about this cat? He’s been around in the village a long time and he’s not exactly an ordinary cat. Many of you may recognise him from your comings and goings in Ōākura.

I first met JoJo when i had recently moved to the village not long ago. I saw a spindly cat weaving its way across to the middle island in front of the Four Square and narrowly missing being squashed by a car. I ran out half way and grabbed him before he could get killed on the other side. He seemed disorientated and elderly like a person with Alzheimers, so I took him into the Four Square and desperately asked if they knew where he lived. It was near closing time and of course they did indeed know - so I was pointed in the direction of his home and off I went. They maybe thought I was nuts that night, but I couldn’t just leave him on his own. He was purring so loudly and obviously needed a hand. So I walked through the dark past the graveyard and deposited him at his home where he was gratefully received by the man of the house. It wasn’t until later that I found out JoJo was a regular feature at the Four Square, had a usual place on the counter and a little cup of milk behind the coffee counter that the Barista filled for him whenever he showed up. That was how I knew I had landed in a truly good village - the local elderly cat was respected and cared for.

What many of you might not realise is that JoJo also frequented the school playground, and the playing fields. He got quite ill over the summer of 2024 when he went missing and I went out looking for him (along with a lot of others). I met a young girl named Violet on Hussey street who took me to the school fields and showed me the hollow where he liked to sleep most days. All the kids at Ōākura School knew about his daily habits. He was found



Isla with JoJo



and put on thyroid medication after which his very thin condition improved somewhat. I eventually met his owner Anna early this month when I carried him home from the Ōākura School Market after he had had a bit too much fun at the stalls. Anna told me he had been going to the school since she attended there, which must be about 15 years ago since Anna left in 2013!

It turns out Anna got JoJo and his brother Izzy as kittens in 2008. He has always been outrageously social with his deep gaze and

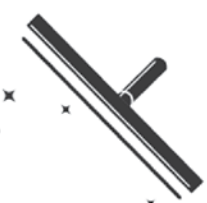
mesmerising purr. Apart from making friends at school, he has got about a bit. He regularly frequented Butlers, used to go to Festoon (now the Bach), and of course the fish shop. He had a place on the counter in the petrol station (and a stash of food from some kindly ladies) and even ended up at the Mews once. This month he was posted on Facebook at Dawn enjoying live music on his own royal cushion (see photo!). He really got about. Anna says he got even more social in the last couple of years when he realised that he could get food by smooching. He used to stand at the fridge in the Four Square and knew exactly who to rub up the right way.

Everyone loved him very much and he loved us all. We all get to choose what we make of our lives to some extent, and JoJo chose to wander and make friends. He was always a very loud purrer (a sure sign of a distinguished cat), and he got purrier as he got older. JoJo passed in mid October. He was a true local in his eating and socialising habits and a pillar of the community. We will miss him very much.

Mira Watson







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Ōākura Tennis Club

The Oakura Tennis Club Open Day served up a smashing start to the season, with lots of children and families turning out for a fun-filled afternoon on the courts. While the weather was only average, the atmosphere was lively and fun.

Monday Midweek ladies has started (two teams entered) and interclub kicked off after Labour weekend.

New players are always welcome, and coaching is available with Monika from Blitztennis.

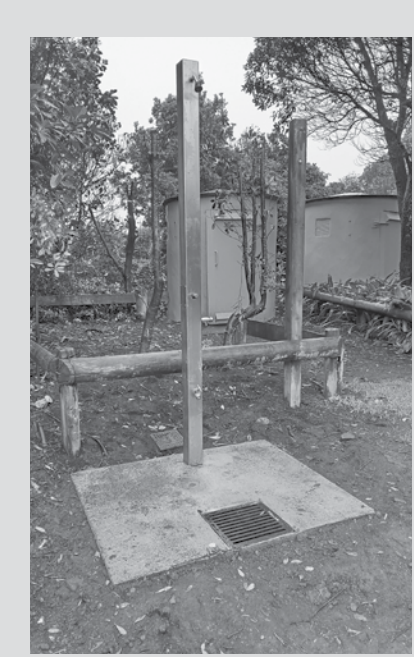
Check out our Facebook page for updates, competition results and club night details (Thursdays). Hopefully the weather will improve and we can all meet for a hit very soon.



Happy Windows at the Fire Station

You might have noticed that we have the happiest windows in the village at the moment, thanks to the kids at Ōākura school who have sent us a bazillion delightful thank you cards. It's a great reminder to us how much we are appreciated in the community and by the kids, as we deliver the firewise message to school every year.

The crew also recently had a blast de'colouring' kids at the recent colour run down at Corbett Park - no stain can hide from a firehose! We love being part of this community, especially when we get to share the fun moments with you.



Shower installed at Weld Road

As part of the walkway phase of works, a Council owned waterline which traversed the two Māori land blocks has been diverted to Council owned land.

The Kaitiaki forum group who have been involved in consultation suggested a shower be included for the surfing community who frequent this area. A shower has now been installed at Weld Road.





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Ōākura Bowling & Social Club

LegAsea Community Bowls

Inclement weather saw the cancellation of the 1st round of the Oakura Bowling and Social Club LegAsea community bowls tournament sponsored by Barry Watkins of MJ Marine Services (fishing charters). However, with the weather gods on our side there are two Saturday afternoons scheduled for LegAsea Bowls, the 8th and 15th of November. The tournament is open to all playing members, non-bowlers and members, friends and family and the wider community. The beauty of the competition is that there is no obligation or commitment to turn up each week. Just register by 1pm and drawn teams will be selected on the day.

Women's Bowls

Women's bowls is certainly gaining great traction in Ōākura. There are 11 signed up women members with five of those being 1st year bowlers. A big welcome to the world of bowls - Michelle Walbank, Meagan Breedveld, Janice Radich, Norma Nelio and Heather Lofthouse. It is a great time to sign up ladies, with all first-year bowlers being offered a package deal of \$50 membership fees for the initial year, two club shirts, free coaching sessions, and the use of club bowls. The women have also entered a team in the Egmont Shield competition which is played on Tuesday afternoons. The club would love to hear from any ladies interested in joining as playing members and we look forward to working with the women to create future bowls opportunities within the club's playing framework.

Club News

The Ōākura team of Steve Muller, Jim Priest, Barry Watkins, and Denise Heaven have started the season on a bright note, winning the Tiger Turf sponsored tournament played on the new artificial green at Waitara. The quartet was the only undefeated team on the day and played some great bowls to claim victory.

The club would like to welcome 1st year bowler Dave Yonder to the OBC bowling ranks. Dave saw the OBC 1st year membership offer in last month's TOP and is now keen and ready to begin his bowling career. Just a warning Dave, once bowls gets in the blood it hard to shake!

The club is running a bowls3five Melbourne Cup Day roll-up on Tuesday 4th November. Play will start at 1.30pm with two games lasting approximately 2 hrs total. The community is invited along to either enjoy a game of bowls or simply have a few drinks and view the running of the big race.

If you have any questions or require further information around memberships or the upcoming season, please do not hesitate to call Paul Coxhead 027 505 520 or Steve Muller 021 169 5863

Friday Afternoon Bowls

Friday afternoons from 2.30pm will be available throughout the season (weather permitting) for those bowlers wishing to have a social roll-up, coaching or for the more serious bowler, to hone their skills. Club bowls and club equipment will be available and the bar will be open from 4.30 pm.

The Underarm Bowler



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Ōākura School

AIMS Games Ōākura



Wow, what an experience! Recently, 41 students from our kura made the long journey to Tauranga to compete in a nation-wide tournament: AIMS Games. Although nation-wide might be a slightly restricting title because our small country's competition has extended its boundaries into that of the Pacific Islands. Not only that, this year Tauranga hosted a record breaking 431 schools, with over 14,000 athletes; that's 4,000 more competitors than the Paris Olympics!

Our students competed in a range of sports such as football, netball, surfing, swimming, golf, tennis and even yachting. After interviewing some fellow students, and having been there myself, this is what I can tell you: AIMS was an event for all.

The girls football team played 11 games, and with each one we grew as a team. Our highlights were a mix of winning games, playing our hardest, night-time spas and beachcombing at Mount Manganui. Overall, we placed 39th out of 44 teams, and we enjoyed every second of it right down to the last whistle when we won a penalty shoot-out in our final game. The tensions were high, but the spirits were higher.

Our netball team had a fantastic experience, growing closer as friends and making new ones as they went, no matter what school they were from. Each win was a well deserved one, and they ended up finishing 4th in the D Grade. We were fortunate enough to watch one of their games and witness their sharp shooting and excellent teamwork; they played like they had been in the same team for years.

The group of kids that went to AIMS for the surf performed brilliantly; perseverance was key. As I was told on multiple occasions, the waves were extremely small, making it difficult to do almost anything other than stand up. In particular, Clarence.F – though some know him

as 'Claza' – surfed remarkably. In his opinion, he caught his best wave in the quarter finals. It is possible that because of this wave Clarence experienced his highlight of the competition: the feeling of happiness and relief as he found out he made it to the semi finals was unparalleled. He continued to surf in the semis and finished 4th place out of 60 surfers. Our other surfers including Maxi.W, Levi.T, Luke.M and Jack.M all got top 15 placings and enjoyed going to AIMS with their mates. Although the waves were far smaller than any of us are used to on the west coast, they all performed regardless.

The swimmers representing our school swam like never before, especially the likes of Joe.V and Arya.P. These two sensational students both got Personal Bests (also known as PBs) in every race they entered. Joe had eight PBs overall, with one of them being beaten by 20 seconds! He describes the AIMS Games competition as 'immensely enjoyable and a huge event to attend.' His highlight was by far the flag bearing ceremony, due to the fact that they got to run across the stage and be showered with cheers. Arya achieved a PB that beat her previous one by seven seconds! To add to that success, she also came second in her heat for the 200m Individual Medley and got 28th in the 200m freestyle! Talk about competing with the elite! The swimmers weren't given overall placings, but Joe's best placing from all the races he participated in was 23rd out of 72 people.

A number of other individual sports were also entered by our pupils, including golf, yachting and tennis. Leo.H and Ellie.K, who both competed in golf, had a great time taking part in the tournament because they were sharing the AIMS experience with each other. Noah.S travelled to Tauranga to play tennis against the country's best, and finished the competition

with the impressive rank of 64 out of 120! Although the conditions were far from ideal, Kathrine.L continued to sail with manawanui. She enjoyed participating in and completing her final races and her best result was 16th out of 23 sailors.

Of course, we can't forget to acknowledge the people that represented our kura off the field, outside the court and by the pool; a special mention and huge thank you is required for the coaches, the teachers and the parents. The teachers deserve an immense amount of additional gratitude for organising behind the scenes and driving all that way to support us and lift our morale.

Along with everyone else we have thanked, a large sum of appreciation is due to be shown to all of the amazing sponsors of our AIMS teams and solitary athletes. Without their

contributions and generosity, attending AIMS Games would not have been possible. Also, an honourable mention goes to Tsunami, because those hoodies were so cosy!

AIMS 2025 was full of adventure: New friendships, new memories and new experiences were all present at AIMS, as well as fun times, ups and downs and inside jokes (such as jump-scaring the coaches on the girls football team). Altogether, AIMS Games was the tournament of a lifetime. Even if you aren't the 'best' at the sport you play, I most definitely encourage you to try anyway. After my time at AIMS, it has become clear that it isn't necessarily about being the best sports team, it's about working together and being the best team you can be.

Ava Ingram

MENS & BOYS BARBERING

Meihana is available to come to clients homes around Ōākura for mens and boys barbering. He studied and completed a WITT barbering course.

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Animal Encounters at Ōmata School

By Charlotte Connolly
and Charlot Fisher (Year 8)

This term, Ōmata School has hosted our biennial Pet Week. Rather than having just one pet day, we want animals to feel at ease, so we book them appointments in class. This way, they can meet the students without being overwhelmed by all the other pets. We welcomed a wide range of animals, starting with the classics: cats and dogs. But there have also been some more unusual visitors. These included frogs, lizards, a fish, a rat, and a few chickens. One year, we even had a pony come inside the classroom!

Classes have been focusing on learning about pets and how to care for their welfare. Students have explored how to look after animals

properly and how pets support our mental health and wellbeing. Animals can improve mental health by reducing stress, offering companionship and a sense of purpose, and encouraging physical activity through walks or play. Pets can also help lower blood pressure, boost mood, and reduce feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and even depression.

For the first time in a long while, Ōmata also hosted a Lamb and Calf competition. There were 12 calves and 12 lambs. A huge amount of preparation went into getting the animals ready and ensuring they trusted their humans.

With such interesting pet choices, we did a little investigating into their benefits.

Frogs vs Dogs – What's the difference? Frogs can benefit people's wellbeing with their quiet nature, which helps calm those around them. They spark a healthy fascination with their unique features. Frogs are amphibians which means they are vertebrates that spend part of their life in water and part on land. Dogs, on the other hand, are not only wonderful pets but also serve important roles as guide dogs, hearing dogs, and mobility assistance dogs. They support people who are blind, deaf, or living with disabilities. The key difference is that dogs are mammals, while frogs are amphibians that typically begin life as aquatic tadpoles and lay eggs.

Rats vs Cats – What's the difference? Rats might not be the first animal that comes to mind when you think of pets, but they're clean, intelligent, and extremely social. They're almost like small, affordable dogs! With time



At calf and lamb day - Noah with her calf.

and care, rats can form strong bonds with their owners, learn tricks, respond to their names, and enjoy being held. They're loyal, friendly, and full of love. Perfect for anyone wanting a small pet with a big heart. Cats, however, are more independent. They tend to do their own thing and will call for you when they need something like food or help getting outside. While they may not be as social as rats, cats do learn to love their humans once they feel comfortable. They can be excellent snugglers.

We've been lucky to have so many different animals visit us this term.

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Stories of the Past

As shared by Len Jury

ROBERT (BOB) WELLS: From Kirihaui to Ōākura

A colossal 225,000 photos.

Bob Wells, born 1905, grew up in Patea. His father Ernest was a keen photographer with a photography and chemist business there. At 14 Bob was given his first camera, a Kodak Brownie box camera. I am sure many of our older readers or their parents had one.

He was not a keen “snapper” of people or buildings. He liked to capture interesting things, places and scenes. As a perfectionist, he would take great pain to capture the best possible picture. “I used to ride from Hawera to take photos of the snow-covered paddocks. Riding back my hands on the handlebars were absolutely frozen.”

In Wellington he spotted in the window of a pawn-broker's shop an old Thornton Picard field camera, in its time the Rolls Royce of all cameras. In the window £5, when he walked in the door £7. Robert, not deterred, scraped up the rest. He was in teachers training college and was paid £9 a week with £6 immediately taken for board. Unfortunately, with an all-consuming passion, his excellence with photography did not transfer to the marks required to teach in the better primary schools.

The result was a sole charge-position over 26 km up the Mokau river. He was paid £20 extra as a remote living allowance, double the usual, to teach at the Mangatōi School. The school could only be reached by boat! The next in 1932 was Kirihaui, but tragedy followed and his father died four months later. Robert was given three days off to travel to Hawera, arrange the funeral and return. The Kirihaui school pupils were of the families of workers at the New Plymouth Sash and Door sawmill.

But family tragedy turned to delight when five years later in Whanganui, he met Zeila, his childhood sweetheart from Patea. They married soon after. Then tragedy struck again. His family home in Hawera was sold and having nowhere to store his hundreds of negatives on glass, with a heavy heart he buried them. However, a photo from each was saved. These are now in Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington and in Puke Ariki, a rare study of NZ in the 1930s.

His teaching led to schools in Northland. Ill health brought him back to his Taranaki. Robert's outstanding photography skills came to the fore. Cadbury Fry Hudson held a competition for the best photograph featuring a large block of Cadbury's chocolate. His son climbed to the top of a trig station on an island

out on a rock. The angle of the photograph of the Mill, although listed as photographer unknown, to me is typical of the expertise Bob used for each photograph. It must be remembered this photo was taken in the 1930s depression period.

As time went by, his beloved Zeila developed Alzheimer's. He would take her on daily drives to Ōākura Beach to watch the beauty and moods of the sea. Zeila died at 91.

In 1977, Wendy Pye requested his photographs for her Beautiful New Zealand Calendars and publications. “Why?” he asked. Her reply, “Because you are a perfectionist.”

His photos have been used an estimated 2,250,000 or more times. They have been posted to the far reaches of world. Six New Zealand stamps featuring scenes and town icons from Bob's photographs have been issued.

Robert died at 101. His photos will live on as an enduring memory of a special time, a special man of Aotearoa. New Zealand.

Acknowledgement: Puke Ariki – Virginia Winter "A Lifetime Legacy in Pictures" has been used as the base for this article. Also photograph Kirihaui Sawmill. Photo Kirihaui School - Ōākura, Koru and Kirihaui Schools Jubilee. Rob Green – (Taranaki Heritage Society) Memories of Bob Wells as a teacher.

in Lake Rotoiti near Rotorua holding aloft a block of Cadbury Dairy Milk. His photo was one of the winners. The prize, a large carton of all their products. The carton was so big it was sent, not by post but by ship! When Robert unpacked “There were miles of biscuits and chocolate blocks. Absolutely marvellous,” Robert exclaimed.

Bob, until he retired from teaching, was a true amateur who never charged for his time, expertise, accommodation or materials. A top New Zealand journalist, a primary school pupil of his at Fitzroy comments, “Quite frankly from the 1960s to 80s he was among the leading landscape photographers in New Zealand.” Rob Green, a pupil of his at Fitzroy School, comments “Bob was such a wonderful and lovely man.”

In 1974 Newman's Bus Tour company commissioned him to take photos to promote their tours in their brochures. Every two years, for several years, Bob and Zeila would take an eight-week tour capturing the magnificent scenes of the South Island. “I took at least 500 photos in each of those two months,” he said. The best photos were sent to Photobank, the resource for many of the best photos of New Zealand. Photobank paid a commission for each photo sold. For each photo he spent 15 minutes or more checking for the best angle to get the most effective or spectacular image, be this up a tree, flat on the ground or



Kirihaui School - Oakura, Koru and Kirihaui Schools Jubilee Booklet – 1957



PHO2012-0383 Kirihaui Mill, off Koru Road, collection of Puke Ariki, New Plymouth.

TOP Activities

Ōākura

Ōākura Hall Bookings
Vicky Jury 027 215 2465

Art Classes - 1-12 yrs

Messy + sensory playgroups, after-school art classes, workshops. Process over product, always. Booking essential. Contact Franzl at imagineplayinspire@gmail.com

Bowling and Social Club

Bowling tournaments September through to April. Both mid-week and weekend games. Steve Muller 021 169 5863

Oakura Bowling Club Mahjong Group

We meet each Monday from 1pm at the club. All welcome including beginners. For more information contact Heather 021617894

Dancing in the Dark

Glenys Farrant 027 753 0120

Golf - Practice net

Non members welcome. Clubs and balls can be supplied. \$5.00 WEDNESDAYS. Casual competition for non-members. 8am to 1pm open to everyone. Denise 752 7665

Indoor Bowls

Enquiries to Marvin Clough 752 7531

JKA Karate - Jim Hoskin 752 7337

Justice of the Peace - Lynn, Anne, John, Krys. Ōākura Library Thurs 10am-12.30pm.

Kaitake Ranges Conservation Trust

Pete Morgan 027 372 5182
morgpt@xtra.co.nz

Kaitake Social Netball - Sundays 3pm during Term 2 & 3 Oakura School Netball Courts Contact Jenna 027 489 4929.

Morning Talk - coffee group

Thursdays 10-11am at NPOB Surf Club. Free tea/coffee. Tracey Lusk 752 7875

'Move it or Lose it' - Strength and

Balance Fitness Classe - Ōākura Hall, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30am. Contact Gloria Zimmerman 027 284 9111

Mini Groovers - Music Group

All parents welcome with babies/under 5's. Every Tues during term time 10-11am at the Ōākura Hall. Visit their Facebook page: Mini Groovers - Ōākura.

Ōākura Maimoa Club - after school care

Monday to Thursday 3pm to 5.30pm Bookings essential through Facebook @oakuramaimoaclub or by text to 022 323 7210

Ōākura Crop Swap - 3rd Saturday 3-4pm

Ōākura Village Hall. Contact Adam Harris adam@frankandfearless.com

Ōākura Walking Talking Group

Every Monday 10am. Meet in the carpark next to the skatepark on Messenger Tce. Phone Mae 027 314 2995 or just turn up.

Pickleball Ōākura - Ōākura Hall - Tues

9.15am, Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 9.15am, Sat 9.15am. All skill levels welcome and equipment is provided. Elayne 027 937 7173 or Vincenza 027 739 6574

Playcentre

14 Donnelly St. Sessions run Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9am - noon during school terms. oakura@playcentre.org.nz

Pony Club Tracey Mackenzie 027 319 0238 traceymackkyle@gmail.com

Pool Club - Meets every Wednesday night

7pm over winter commencing April at Butlers Reef. All welcome. For more info call Margaret 027 232 1899

Probus Club - Meets once a month at

Ōākura Bowling club rooms on the 3rd Friday of every month 10-11.30am. Contact Brenda Ryan 757 3537 or 027 748 9698

Running for Kids - TempoFit Kids breakfast

run club every Friday 8am before school at Ōākura Hall, 8-13yrs. Hayden Shearman 027 483 5942 tempofit.org

St James Church - Sunday Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, 10am

Strength & Balance - Ōākura Hall, in the supper room (school term only). Monday 10:30. Jane 06 752 7743

Sunday School - St James Church

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday 10am. stjamesoakura@gmail.com

Surf Lessons - Deken Waves Surf

Coaching. Group & Private sessions available. Contact Simon: 021 122 9525 dekenwaves@gmail.com

Te Reo Māori Lessons

Toni 021 661 912 thowison@hotmail.com

Tennis Club - Coaching for all ages and levels. Enquiries - Jackie 027 673 2900

The Coastal Dippers - Mon-Fri 7.00am, Sat & Sun 8.00am. Turn up in front of the Surf Club for a quick sea dip. Facebook or Kama 027 769 1101

Tai Chi Classes

Every Monday 9-10am at Ōākura Hall. Judi 027 268 2601. Just come along or contact: taranakitaichichuan@gmail.com

Val Deakin Dance School - Ōākura Hall

Adult ballet class on a Friday morning at 9:15am, ask us about adult Tap classes. val@valdeakindance.org.nz 752 7743 or text 027 694 0933

Tataraimaka Hall

5 Elements Fitness Bootcamps and Kickboxing Fitness classes

Monday to Thursday 5-6 pm, Barney 027 752 7076 barney@5efitness.com or visit www.5efitness.com

Gymnastics Group for children - 5-7 yrs

Tuesdays after school at the Tataraimaka Hall for basic level gymnastics sessions. Rose at rosem@realfoodnutrition.co.nz

Okato

Okato Community Church meeting

At Hempton Hall on Sunday mornings 10.30am - all welcome. Contact Nicky 027 497 3764

Okato and District Historical Society

Meg Cardiff 752 4566

Okato Lions Club - Contact Colin Tyler 027

5421853 - Meet at Hempton Hall first Wed of the month.

Okato Squash Club - Monday nights from 6.30pm. All welcome. Ladies morning begins Term 2 - Wednesdays 10.00 - 11am. Rachel 020 4092 5243

St. Patrick's Catholic Church - Saturday Vigil Mass @ 6pm. 36 Cumming Street.

Okato St. Paul's - Sunday Service every 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, 10.00am

Mid-week open church - Pew for You, every 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4.30pm-6.00pm, okatocp@gmail.com

Te Ruru Market - Okato Community Market - Crafters, Growers, Makers. Every Wed. Hempton Hall Okato 4-5:30pm.

Ōkato Tennis Club okatotennis@gmail.com

TOP Information

The Ōākura Post

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www.theoakurapost.co.nz | editor@theoakurapost.co.nz

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◀ Fay Looney – photographer

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Ricks Terstappen – Sculptor Napier ▶

