

Giant toy show & market for Christmas

A huge toy show, combined with a market, has been planned to take the place of the cancelled Helensville Christmas parade.

The Lions Club of Helensville is organising the event as a free, fun family 'day with a difference' aimed at attracting both young and old. It is expected to be the largest display of toys seen in Helensville, and will come mostly from the collection of Lions members Patsy Carlyle and Scott Osmond.

The show will be held in the Helensville War Memorial Hall on Saturday, December 5 from 9am to 2pm. There will be no entry fee, though gold coin donations to help cover costs will be welcomed.

The highlight of the toy show will undoubtedly be a display of hundreds of Barbie and Ken dolls, part of a gigantic collection belonging to Patsy.

Patsy started collecting the dolls "as a joke" in 1984 and now has 1400 boxed examples - the largest collection in New

Zealand - plus another "two or three hundred" loose Barbies. Stacked up to five-deep on shelves at her home, there are some she hasn't seen herself in years.

In 2006 she exhibited 600 in the Helensville hall from a collection that then numbered 'just' 800. Patsy expects a significantly larger number will be on show in December, including examples of petite and fuller figure Barbies and some dolls never before seen in this country.

There are Elvis and Frank Sinatra Ken dolls, Barbies from famous movies such as Hitchcock's *The Birds* and television shows like *Star Trek*, a National Geographic series of dolls, and even a whole range from the postponed 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which are likely to become collector items.

"We'll show as many as we can fit," she says.

There will also be displays of Beanie Babies, stacking Russian dolls (including, ironically, one depicting former US President Barack Obama), and a large teaspoon collection.

For those not into dolls there will be Scott's collections of matchbox toys, some dating back to the 1960s, along with John Deere toys, ambulances, fire engines, and police car models. There will be a collection of



• Patsy with a small selection of her Barbies



• Scott with some of the toys he will have on display

American model trucks, unavailable in New Zealand and purchased by Scott during trips to the US, and a large, fully detailed model of the infamous Titanic.

Scott quips he and Patsy are "letting the toys out to play for the day".

A centrepiece in the hall will be a large

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Colouring contest

The Lions Club is running a children's colouring competition in the lead up to the Christmas Festival (see main article).

It's being co-ordinated by local Lion Yvonne 'Hilty' Hilton, who will be providing entries to all local schools and early childhood centres. Entries will be completed and judged prior to the festival, and go on display in the hall during the event.

The colouring competition has regularly been a popular part of Helensville Christmas events and Lions are pleased to be holding it again this year. Prizes will be vouchers from Commercial Rd businesses Paper Plus Select and Dollar City.

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BUYING OR SELLING PROPERTY?



editorial

I can see why all the out-of-towners who come to Helensville each year for Arts in the Ville are so impressed. It's an event that in the six years since it started has really come of age, vastly bigger than its original iteration and showcasing what an incredibly diverse range of artists and artisans we have in our community. Photos are on pages 8-9.

It's a boon for the local arts community as well, providing them with access to a potential audience (and buyers!) they might not otherwise come across.

The three-day event continues to evolve, and a new addition this year, the A.B.C Show & Tell with local art and collectables expert John Perry discussing and valuing items brought in by the audience members, a-la television's Antiques Roadshow, was fascinating.

Talking of collectables, the huge toy show being put on by the Helensville Lions Club (see front page) looks like being a beauty. While it can't make up for the loss to Covid-19 of our beloved annual Christmas parade, it's something a bit different and sure to be a wonderful Christmas treat for locals, young and old alike.

Combined with the new giant Christmas tree and lighting for shop fronts, courtesy of Rodney Local Board (page 4), Christmas in Helensville won't be so glum after all!

Local book lovers who missed their fix with the Covid-cancelled May Lions Book Fair will be thrilled the annual Christmas Fair is going ahead later this month (page 3). It's a great chance to stock up on reading before the Christmas holidays.

Elsewhere in this issue we catch up with recently re-elected local MP Chris Penk (page 6), and we meet the owners of a couple of new businesses, SweetAz (page 10) and Pike Hair Boutique (page 11).

- Dave Addison, Editor

Giant toy show (cont...)

• From page 1

operating model railway, owned by Kenneth Carlyon of Mt Albert and frequently displayed throughout the North Island.

Scott says the Lions Club is working hard to ensure the show will be the "main event" in Helensville for Christmas this year, in light of the parade's cancellation.

To that end that perennial Christmas favourite - Santa Claus - will be in his grotto all day, inviting children who have been good to tell him what they would like for Christmas.

And if superheros, rather than Santas, are your thing, you are in luck - Batman will be at the show too, along with his Bat-Bike.

'Batman' is actually the owner of the Superhero Superette in Otara, which features its own Bat Cave. He runs a charitable organisation called Random Acts of Batman, providing happy memories for sick children.

In conjunction with the toy show will be a market where local craftspeople will be selling their goods - many of which are sure to make excellent Christmas gifts.

There will also be a raffle, with all prizes

specially for children, who will also be up for prizes if they come to the show in fancy dress.

To keep hunger pangs at bay, the RSA will be holding a sausage sizzle fundraiser.

Gibbs sculpture farm visit

Tickets are still available for the Helensville A&P Show's visit to the Gibbs sculpture farm on December 4.

The spectacular Gibbs Farm contains numerous large-scale outdoor artworks by some of the world's most significant contemporary artists, along with exotic animals such as giraffe.

Tickets are \$45 per person, with all money raised going directly to help fund the 2020 Helensville Show. The visit is from 10am to 2pm on Friday, December 4.

Bookings are essential. Email: info@helensvilleshow.co.nz, or phone 09 420 7572. Tickets are also available online at Eventfinda: <http://tiny.cc/66qzsz>.

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No bananas - but heaps of books

"Yes, we have no bananas" went the old song, and that's true also for the Lions Club of Helensville.

But what the club does have is hundreds of banana boxes, stacked to the brim with thousands of books ready to go on sale at its Christmas Book Fair, scheduled to be held on the last weekend of November.

The club had to cancel its autumn book fair in May because of Covid-19 restrictions, which means "we will have twice the number of books for sale" at the Christmas Fair, says organiser Chris Clark.



• Packed, stacked and ready to go - literally thousands of books have been stored, sorted and are now ready to sell since the May fair cancellation

The twice-yearly book fairs usually raise around \$8000 to \$10,000 each for the club, so the loss of the May fair was a major hit to the club's annual fundraising.

And the excess of books now on hand is threatening to completely over-run Chris's woolshed, where they are stored between sales.

"A tsunami of donations arrived as soon as we went into Level 1", says Chris. "Many people obviously used the lockdown period to have a clean out."

He jokes that if the Christmas fair is cancelled for any reason, he'll need a new shed to store all the books in.

The Christmas Book Fair will be held in

the Helensville War Memorial Hall on Saturday, November 28 from 9am to 4pm, and from 10am to 3pm on the Sunday.

As he does every year, Chris has categorised all the books ready for the event, but says with the huge number on hand it simply won't be possible to put all the books on the tables.

"There will be many boxes on the floor, but the books will all have been sorted - just not laid out in an orderly manner as at previous book fairs," explains Chris.

Non-fiction will be split into 20 categories, including one dedicated to New Zealand subjects, and there will be a large general non-fiction book section as well.

Fiction will be arranged alphabetically by author, with six special interest groups, the largest of which will be fantasy/science fiction.

"We also have a tremendous number of children's books for all ages," says Chris.

Paperbacks will be on sale for \$1, hardbacks at \$2, and all children's books just 50c each.

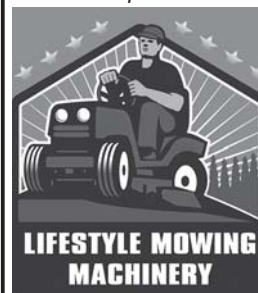
As with previous book fairs, there will be a wide selection of jigsaw puzzles, board games, DVDs, CDs, and quality magazines available as well.

All funds raised through the book fairs go into The Lions Club of Helensville Charitable Trust and are used for the benefit of the local community.

Small donations of books can be left at Burmester Realty in Commercial Road, Helensville. For larger quantities phone Chris on 09 420 8527. The last date books can be accepted is Friday, November 20.

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Lighting up for Christmas

A giant Christmas tree and Christmas lights for businesses are set to brighten up Helensville and other local towns this festive season.

The North West Country business association is bringing some Christmas cheer to the end of the year to help alleviate the disappointment caused by the cancellations of the Helensville and Kumeu Christmas parades due to Covid-19.

A huge decorated tree has been purchased for Helensville, which will be displayed outside the library. Kumeu will get one too, which will be lit as its site has available power. The trees will be able to be reused for many years, and

the association will look to purchase more in the coming years so other townships have one.

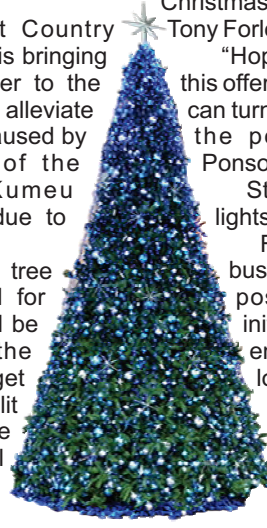
"We are also encouraging businesses to 'Light Up the North West' with starter packs of Christmas lights," says North West Country chair Tony Forlong.

"Hopefully if enough businesses take up this offer and get into the spirit of Christmas we can turn this into an annual event that will rival the popular Franklin Road lights in Ponsonby."

Street trees will also be decorated with lights "where appropriate".

Following a challenging year for businesses and a string of cancelled or postponed events, Tony hopes the initiative will give businesses a brighter end to the year and bring people into local townships to see the lights.

He wants businesses to get in touch with the association so the LED lights can go up in early November. For more information email: manager@northwestcountry.co.nz.



Mayoral conservation awards

Nominations for this year's Mayoral Conservation Awards close at 5pm on Wednesday, November 4.

The awards recognise the outstanding contribution made by mana whenua, communities, landowners, youth and schools across Auckland to care for and restore the region's environment.

"Volunteers and community groups play a critical conservation role across the region - restoring streams, trapping pests, planting trees and more," says Auckland Mayor Phil Goff.

"The Mayoral Conservation Awards are an opportunity to recognise and celebrate these unsung heroes who are working hard to protect and improve our environment."

There are three award categories to enter:

- Collaboration: Recognising a project that has actively involved or mentored others in their neighbourhood, landscape or network to achieve significant conservation outcomes.
- Schools/youth: Recognising schools (including kura kaupapa and early

childhood facilities) who use an authentic learning approach to enable and empower students to take conservation action in their community, or outstanding leadership and achievement by a young individual or group of individuals (under 25 years old) to achieve positive conservation outcomes.

- Triumph against adversity: Recognising projects which had to make significant changes due to Covid-19 and successfully navigated them for positive outcomes.

Category winners will receive a 2020 Mayoral Conservation Award framed certificate signed by Mayor Phil Goff.

The winner of the Penny Hulse Supreme Environmental Award will receive a bespoke framed certificate signed by the Mayor, and \$2000 towards their project.

An online nomination form is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y3zz2ee3>.

For more information, email: pestfree@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.



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Tennis courts to open to all

All locals will soon be able to use the astroturf tennis courts at Rautawhiri Park without having to join the Helensville Tennis Club.

That's thanks to a change in the club's membership management system, which once fully set up will allow non-member casual players to book and pay online for a court for a set period of time.

The new system will be promoted through the club's Facebook page and website once it becomes available, hopefully by the end of November.

Tennis Club activities have been full-on recently.

An open day, held in conjunction with Helensville Athletics and the Lions Club of Helensville, was held in October, while the club's annual Business House Mixed Doubles Tournament started mid-month with 16 teams entered for the 18 week competition.

The annual Lou Keefe Tournament was held on Sunday, October 18 and was won by David Sipa and 12-year-old Alexis Tilson.

The club organised coaching for years two to four pupils at Helensville Primary, with a total of 169 students receiving five half-hour lessons over three weeks. The coaching was done by Kiwi Tennis and the club arranged funding through KiwiSport.



• Lou Keefe Tournament mixed doubles winners David Sipa and Alexis Tilson (12)

The club itself has 55 junior members, with coaching and a junior club night included in the junior memberships for terms one and four. Junior coaching packages have been funded this year through KiwiSport and cost \$95 for 4 to 8 years, \$120 for 9 to 12 years and \$175 for 13 to 18 years. There are eight coaching sessions every week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with the junior club night on Fridays.

Meanwhile senior club night has moved to Fridays from 6.30pm after the juniors, and is included with a full senior membership.

Locals wanting to get back into tennis or who are just starting out can attend a first night for free, and pay just \$10 per week for the next two weeks, after which they are expected to join. Every level of player is welcome.



• Tennis coaching at Helensville Primary School

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Re-elected MP hopes working with opposite number will see some action

Newly re-elected local MP Chris Penk hopes working alongside the Labour list MP based in Kaipara ki Mahurangi will help get some "action" for our area.

"I have worked hard to be a good advocate for the area, but I can only ask questions. I can't provide the answers," Chris explains.

"I don't have funding that I can direct to this area. It's the dilemma for a local MP whose party is in opposition. You push as hard as you can - and I have pushed in a way I think would maximise the chances that good things would happen for the area - but at the same time they haven't always happened.

"I'm a little bit hopeful that if I work constructively with the Labour list MP based in the area (Marja Lubeck) - and I will - that between us we'll get some more action for the area. And I'll give credit where it's due if that proves to be the case."

In what appears to be a potentially fruitful relationship, Marja Lubeck adds: "As the Labour list MP based in the Rodney region I will continue lobbying hard for the region and taking the issues important to voters to Parliament."

Chris says a highlight of his first term as our local MP was taking every opportunity to raise with government ministers the things this area needs.

He sees issues such as upgrading State Highway 16, and repairing and sealing rural roads, as issues that still urgently need addressing, and points to suggestions that some of the tens of billions of dollars the

government is spending on infrastructure projects to boost the economy in the wake of Covid-19 could be diverted to 'shovel-ready' local body issues such as those.

"We could go out and seal roads right now. I think genuinely part of the problem is that governments always want projects that are a lot more sexy than road sealing. You can't cut the ribbon on a resealed road, but goodness knows that's more direct and relevant to [locals] than something that may or may not be built in 10 to 15 years.

"We just need a fraction of what's being spent elsewhere [spent] within Auckland. None of these themes have gone away in three years and I have to say I don't think they are going to go away in the next three either," he says.

"I hope I'm wrong in that, in the sense that I hope the new government pays some serious attention to these things I've been banging on about."

Chris's result in the recent election was a reflection of what happened in much of the rest of New Zealand. While

he was returned to office, his majority was slashed by almost 70 percent, and the electorate was narrowly won by Labour on the party vote, reversing years of dominance here by National.

"I am grateful to still be able to have a role as local MP," he says.

"I feel as though having been returned in that role is something of a reflection of the fact that I've tried to work hard to represent



• Chris with a congratulatory cake from a happy supporter, in the form of his often-seen mobile office

• To page 7

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New contraception service at local medical centre

The Kaipara Medical Centre is hoping a new service will offer peace of mind for many local women around their contraception.

The service is aimed at improving access to long-acting reversible contraception, some times referred to as LARCs. These include copper coils, IUDs, Mirena and subdermal implants like Jadelle.

Dr Kathryn Elcock is the Kaipara Medical Centre's specialist provider of this LARC service and has fitted hundreds of devices over her career.

"I understand women may be anxious about the procedure, but it's fairly routine and while there's a little discomfort, it offers such great peace of mind as the contraceptive can last between five to 10 years. And it's completely reversible, so when the time is right to start a family, the device is taken out with no long-lasting effect to your ability to get pregnant," says Dr Elcock.

Julie is a Kaipara Medical Centre patient

who had a Jadelle inserted as part of the LARC service and she says she'd happily recommend it: "My periods were all over the place and I was shocking at remembering to take tablets and the three monthly appointments for a Depo Provera injection was annoying, so the Jadelle is awesome because it'll last four to five years, and it's free."

Melissa also used the service and has recommended it to her friends. "The process was perfect, I was put at ease and the Jadelle is now my preferred

contraception, but the cost would have been a major issue for me getting it so I'm pleased it was free."

The centre is working alongside the Helensville Birthing Centre, Te Ha Oranga, and Kindred Family Services (formerly the Helensville Women and Family Centre) and the local mental health team to let as many people know about the service as possible - but women are also able to self-refer.

Any woman deemed at risk of an unplanned pregnancy is eligible for a free consultation about getting a LARC fitted. It's also free to Māori and Pacific Island women and those with a Community Services Card, and as long as you're in the Auckland or Waitemātā District Health Boards area it doesn't matter if you are enrolled with Kaipara Medical Centre or not.

Dr Elcock says an initial consultation will be done over the phone or in-person for free, "with absolutely no pressure to have a LARC fitted - it's more about letting women know their options". If the woman chooses to go ahead another appointment will be set up to have the device inserted and it'll cost only \$5 for a prescription fee to get the device from the pharmacy.

Dr Elcock intends to set up a dedicated contraception clinic on Wednesday afternoon and early evening to ensure regular, easy access for local women.

To book into the clinic, phone Kaipara Medical Centre on 09 420 8400.



Chris Penk (cont...)

• From page 6

the people over the last three years.

"At the same time the general movement of the tide was in the direction of red and away from blue, and I wasn't completely immune to that. I think it does show that people are sophisticated in that they will happily vote for their preferred local candidate, at the same time as expressing a preference on the party vote.

With National's greatly reduced caucus, Chris says "mathematically at least" he should be in line for a greater number of portfolios.

"I think for those who remain on the National side of the fence there will be more opportunities, and at the same time more work to do."

But he adds: "It's not on my radar to be anything other than the best possible local MP I can."



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Arts in the Ville 2020 in pictures



• Above: Tracey and Nick Roberts (left) relax playing music with friends in their Whimsical Garden

• Left: Auckland silversmith and sculptor Frances Battersby with her sculpture 'Field'



• Laura Schiessel & nephew James Knightsbridge in 'Te Shed'



• Labour list MP Marja Lubeck 'tastes' a Helensville Floral Art Club 'cupcake'



• Dean & Wilma Masters with their wood crafts

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Arts in the Ville 2020 in pictures



• Stand still too long, and you may end up like this bike outside Helensville Library! Yarn bombing has been a feature of each Arts in the Ville, and was particularly prevalent this year



• Artists - and art lovers - packed the Helensville hall

• Right: Sharon Dooney (left) & spinners from Creative Fibre in the Helensville Library



• Julie Nash and Tora McKenzie at The Rock Dock in Mill Road



• Sculptor Joanne Sullivan with the wax mold for sculpture 'Papatuanuku'



• Waimauku flax weaver Toni Tanner with her wares




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New business makes for funny sort-of 'honeymoon'

They say opening a new business is no honeymoon, but for a local couple that's pretty much what it has amounted to - complete with a pink heart as part of their business logo.

Local couple Kieth and Tea Larsen-Lelisi got married on March 14, just days before New Zealand went into its first Covid-19 lockdown. They believe they were one of the last big weddings able to take place.

But what couldn't take place was their honeymoon.

Instead, they purchased a business from a local couple who moved to Matamata - a bright green mobile candyfloss trailer named Sweet Az Candy Floss, which they have re-branded 'SweetAz'.

The trailer was locally built specifically with events in mind - but with Covid lockdowns putting an end to most of those, Kieth and Tea decided to branch out into coffee as well.

They are currently trial operating from the Gull fuel station in Mill Road, giving local coffee lovers their morning fix from 5am to midday weekdays.

As honeymoons go, it's lots of early starts and cramped quarters!

"We want to keep it local," says Kieth. "We're trying Helensville first, and if we do well we'll stay. We're hoping the community will embrace our business and support us."

With lockdowns eased, they will be ramping up the candyfloss side of the business, and have booked to be at the Helensville Show on February 27.

Tea has an entrepreneurial background, and runs a home-based branded promotional products and branded uniform company called ASAP Promo.

She originally moved to Helensville in 1998, moving back here two years ago after 15 years at West Harbour.

Kieth hails from Niue Island, but grew up in Auckland before spending the past 34



• Tea and Kieth inside their little green Sweet Az trailer

years in Australia, moving there to take up a semi-professional league and then rugby career and more recently coaching rugby in Melbourne.

He jokes he has already made the adjustment from spending his days running around a footy field to working in about three square metres of trailer floor space.

Sweet Az uses only fair trade organic coffee from boutique coffee roaster Bethells Beans - another example of Kieth and Tea keeping things local.

When *Helensville News* called in, there was gluten-free brownie on offer, along with cookies, plus beautiful cakepops and cakesicles from G.J.'s Cake Pops in Massey



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@ marja.lubeck@parliament.govt.nz

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Authorised by Marja Lubeck, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

Environmental sustainability at salon

A new name, a new owner, and a new way of doing things are set to change things up at a Parakai hair salon.

The business in Parkhurst Road previously known as Celtic Rose has been purchased by South Head local Jess Pike, and re-named Pike Hair Boutique.

She officially took over on Sunday, November 1

Jess had actually been renting a chair at the salon from former owner Jayne Morris since May - and on her first day there, Jayne asked if she was interested in buying the business.

Now Jess is aiming to add a luxury edge to the salon. That'll start with simple touches like coffee and home baking for clients, but plans for the future include a repaint over the Christmas break, an eventual full revamp of the premises, and maybe even computer tablets with magazine subscriptions on them for customers to read.

She is also planning to make her boutique an environmentally sustainable business.

Products on sale will be from the Kevin Murphy range, which uses packaging entirely made from reclaimed ocean waste plastic. And she has organised a recycling system that recycles everything - right down to the hair clippings off the floor.

With 15 years in the trade, Jess says she has a loyal client following and a reputation as a specialist in blonde colouring - "I've got a knack for that".

Her real passion is weddings, working with bridal parties and alongside other local people like photographers and bands. To keep her time free for that, Pike Hair Boutique won't be open on Saturdays.

Originally from Kumeu, Jess went to Waimauku School and Kaipara College, and

now lives at South Head with husband Vaughn and children Tineka (9), Jack (5) and Olive (4).

She started her training as a hair dresser in Kumeu aged just 15, finishing her apprenticeship at Protege Hair Design in Glendene and becoming fully qualified at 18 - literally just one week before the birth of her first baby.



• Jess Pike

Since then she has managed a salon at Blockhouse Bay, a shipping container salon, a home-based business at Kumeu, and a mobile wedding hair stylist business.

Pike Hair Boutique is the first business Jess has owned, and she is "really excited" by the challenges that will bring.

"I've built up a pretty decent reputation over the years," she says, "and have a pretty substantial existing clientele."

"I was trained by people so high up in the New Zealand industry. Every haircut is unique - so much personalisation goes into it."

RSA membership concerns

The Kaipara Memorial RSA is concerned at the number of veterans, and both former and current serving personnel, who are not members.

Vice president Rex Keane says while it is common knowledge you don't need to have served in the military to join your local RSA, it is concerning how many former or serving military people have not joined.

"We know there are thousands of veterans with operational service in places like Timor-Leste, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam to name a few," he says.

"The Kaipara RSA is located close to RNZAF Base Whenuapai and the NZ Naval Base at Devonport, and we would welcome more service and ex-service members."

The Kaipara RSA sends out a weekly newsletter to members covering army, navy and air force news, veterans affairs, Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association news, health and well-being videos, and news of forthcoming dedications and commemorations.

For more information email: kaipararsa@xtra.co.nz.

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Sculptures, photos at library

Kaukapakapa Library will feature a collection of contemporary photography by Colin Lunt along with works by sculptor Jill Guillemain on Sunday, November 15 from 9am to 1pm.

Titled 'This is Who We Are', the photo exhibition curated by freelance photographer Colin Lunt references the historical Alan Jordan collection, and portrays Kaukapakapa and its surrounds as they are today. The images of people, places and events provide a snapshot in time of Kaukapakapa as a record for future generations.

showing a selection of some of her earlier ceramic pieces depicting iconic Kaukapakapa buildings. Having worked in a variety of media from clay, porcelain, and fabrics to wire and mesh, Jill has recently returned to her ceramic roots. She has shown her work at many exhibitions and has also taught ceramic classes, and has ties to Kaukapakapa as part of the extended Jordan family.



• A Jill Guillemain ceramic sculpture of Kaukapakapa's 'Edenvale'



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Talented Snells Beach sculptor and artist Jill Guillemain will be

Both Colin and Jill will be at the library to talk with visitors. The library will be open in conjunction with the Kaukapakapa Village Market. For more

information email Megan at: threehorses@xtra.co.nz or phone 021 959 017.

Parakai expansion plans on hold

A major local employer has had to put on hold plans to move its entire operation to Parakai because of the effects of Covid-19 - but the news isn't all bad.

Superb Herb employs 57 full-time staff plus another 23 contractors.

It grows 95 percent of all its plants in greenhouses in Fordyce Road, Parakai, but still operates one greenhouse at its original site in Henderson Valley, where all the company's herbs are packed and dispatched from. All the growing is started at the Parakai site.

With no room left for expansion at Henderson, plans had been made to shift the entire operation to Parakai, hopefully starting in the latter part of this year says sales and marketing manager Brigitte Hannett.

Those plans have now been delayed, but are still on the horizon.

"Moving our entire production to one location where we can keep expanding the business has been the plan for a while. We have already build a new 2ha glasshouse [at Parakai], and the plan is to keep expanding. We are confident our 10 year plan can happen there," says Brigitte.

"We have had to re-prioritise and delay a few projects including the building and the move of our new packhouse and dispatch operation.

"Our priorities shifted from future expansion plans and new product development to maintaining business continuity, looking after our staff, and making sure our customers (supermarkets) were fully supplied," she says.

The good news is that post-lockdown the company has had to hire more staff.

"We had to move to shift work and to do so, we needed more people," says Brigitte. "Our staff have been amazing and thanks to their dedication and hard work Superb Herb has managed to pull through this tough time.

"Being part of the food industry meant that we kept trading, and as people were cooking from home we have seen a huge comeback to 'cooking from scratch' which has lifted demand of fresh produce."

Lockdown also saw the business start an online store.

Superb Herb distributes nationwide, as well as exporting to Hong Kong where it services two supermarket chains and one fresh market. The company grows 23 different herb varieties and moves more than three tonnes weekly, and is looking to expand further into the Asian market.

It operates a fully-automated glasshouse at Parakai, the first of its kind in Australasia, which also uses the latest technology in terms of the glass and shades to control the environment. That makes it extremely efficient to run, with minimal heating needed in winter and a much better summer work environment.

"The automation has revolutionised the way we work," says Brigitte. "Germination is now all done under one roof and robots are busy spacing every individual pot from their first cycle of growth, where they don't need much light, to their second cycle where pots are spaced so each plant can get the optimum level of air and light to grow to maturity.

"As the business grows, our objective is to upgrade or build all our glasshouses to that model - a much better system for the plants but also for our staff as it reduces some of the hard labour involved."

Brigitte hopes many of the existing Henderson staff will make the move when the company does eventually shift its entire operation to Parakai, but adds: "we would also hope that we create opportunities for the local community as well, as we are constantly looking at new markets and have a lot of ideas to expand our business further. We are currently recruiting in Parakai and would love for locals to join us."

The company offers Level 1 and 2 horticultural training to staff, so locals interested should email their CV to: hr@superbherb.co.nz

The company was started by Jim and Valerie Pike, who emigrated from England 50 years ago and began growing capsicums and aubergines in Henderson Valley. Two of their children are pivotal to the business: Charles as Technical Director and Alexandra is the HR Manager.



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Library 'Book Tasting' evening proves a hit

Around 40 local book fans took part in Helensville Library's first 'Book Tasting' evening, mingling and chatting over books, nibbles, soups, and snacks.

The idea for the event came to library assistant Anya Kay during the first Covid-19 lockdown, but that evening, scheduled for August, had to be postponed due to the second lockdown and was eventually held on Thursday, October 15.

Each attendee was given a 'Menu and Tasting Notes' brochure, a Doggie Bag receipt, and a bookmark. Handing in the Doggie Bag receipt got them a wrapped Mystery Book.



• Checking out the themed tables at the Book Tasting

There were nine colour-themed tables to explore, with a mixture of genres and books for all ages - encouraging people to explore and discover new topics and genres. The tables had music-related names, such as the Purple Rain table, I Guess That's Why They Call it the Blues, It's Not Easy Being Green, Bring Me Sunshine, and I See Red.

Senior librarian Anne Coppell says it was a "a really fun and novel" evening - pun intended - and a "perfect community event", and there is a good chance another Book Tasting event will be held in future.

Feedback from the evening was very positive:

- "Fantastic! Well thought out and a lot of effort obviously went in to make for a very enjoyable evening."
- "Excellent "production". Great ambiance; and food. Brilliant idea. Well done!"
- "Your efforts for Book Tasting were truly appreciated. Supper was totally unexpected and delicious. Thank you also for opening my reading eyes to whole new worlds of possibility. Hope we will be able to do it again."

Dags raise cash



Making money from poo might not be on everyone's radar, but the Helensville Sheep Dog Trial Club held a successful Dagging Day fundraising event (above) on Saturday, October 10.

Fifteen club members penned up the sheep, roused and dagged around 1530 hoggets in about three and half hours, along with shearing 25 training sheep, all thanks to the Otakanini Topu farm at South Head, which supplied the sheep and shearing shed. The event raised more than \$1200 for the club.

Anyone interested in joining the club should contact secretary Arlene Pengelly, email: arlene@vetsnorth.co.nz.

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from our local MP

Last weekend a couple of significant events took place. One was the All Blacks test in which Caleb Clarke played a blinder in the no. 11 jersey. The other was a general election. In both cases, it was a good weekend for "left wing" types!

On that note, I start by congratulating my political opponents for winning a mandate from Kiwis. The government of the past three years now has a mandate to govern for a further three, minus New Zealand First.



I would also like to record my thanks to the good people of Helensville - meaning the township itself and surrounding areas as well as the electorate formerly of that name - for returning me as local MP. My role does not change in that I'll keep advocating to government ministers to make decisions that make living life in this part of the world easier, not harder.

You may be interested to know that following the election I reached out to the Labour list MP now based in this area, Marja Lubeck. To her credit, she called me on the night of the election to congratulate me for holding this seat, now named Kaipara ki Mahurangi. She and I have a good working relationship that we'll maintain in the best interests of those we serve.

I am fully committed to working alongside anyone who wants to contribute positively to Auckland's rural north. This includes politicians of 'the other side of the House' as well as local government representatives, community groups and people from all walks of life.

Naturally I'll be advocating for Helensville and surrounding areas in a way that reflects the reality of me sitting on the opposition benches. The constitutional role that my party colleagues and I must play is holding the government to account in a manner that is respectful but nonetheless robust.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my electorate office team to discuss any issues that are important to you, whether of a national or local nature. Funding allows us to maintain just a single office, which will remain in the same Huapai location, but I will continue getting out and about. The area I represent now includes significant additional land to the north (for example, Warkworth, Wellsford and Snells Beach) and I intend to be strongly visible there as well.

For now, thanks again for taking part in the wonderful democratic exercise that we call elections, whoever you voted for. Take care and I hope to see you all again soon.

- Chris Penk, MP for Kaipara ki Mahurangi
chris.penkmp@parliament.govt.nz | Ph: 09 412 2496.

making the difference

Is there someone special who has done something that's made a difference for you, your family or our town? To nominate someone, write to: Nicky Horsbrough, Harcourts Helensville, 92 Commercial Road, Helensville 0800 or fill out the form online at: <http://nickyhorsbrough.harcourts.co.nz>. The lucky recipient will receive a \$100 voucher for a local business of their choice.

November's recipient is Glennis Sainty, who chose a \$100 voucher for use at Countdown Helensville.

Glennis was nominated by Kristalle Tayler, who says: "Glennis has been running a diabetes and arthritis support group for 12 years in Helensville. Each month, she organises a guest speaker for the group. She also organises Christmas parties and small birthday parties for members. Each year, she does fundraising with raffles. Glennis does all of this while suffering from emphysema."



• Glennis (right) with Nicky.

local board matters

■ Healthy Harbours and Waterway Funding Available

The gradual ecological degradation of our rivers and harbours has been an issue of concern for many in the community.

Silt and nutrient runoff from a range of sources has seen bellwether events like the scallop fishery closure on the Kaipara Harbour. If measures are not taken to drastically change our impact on our waterways and harbours, we can expect more of these events.

The Rodney Local Board has heard our community's concerns and in 2017 launched a Healthy Harbours Fund.

Our approach was to work constructively with farmers and landowners to encourage riparian planting and fencing. In conjunction with industry bodies such as Fonterra, and iwi, we have dollar-matched landowner's efforts to fence and replant river margins to limit nutrient and silt runoff with hundreds of kilometres of fencing and thousands of trees in the ground.

This year the government announced a \$100m fund to address water quality in the

Kaipara Harbour.

As one of the Auckland Council representatives on the Kaipara Moana Remediation Governance Partnership group I'm looking forward to being involved in ensuring this significant investment starts to make a tangible difference.



The estimated costs of sorting out the Kaipara long-term is estimated to be over \$500m, but this is an excellent start. And it is heartening to see that our efforts locally will now be replicated on a larger scale for the whole harbour.

This fund has allowed the Rodney Local Board to open the fund to a wider range of applicants from outside the Kaipara catchment. There is no shortage of waterways in the area that are nutrient and silt-laden. Some rivers are in a poor state but are being used for swimming, so assisting landowners upstream to improve them has an excellent environment and public health outcome.

If you're interested in applying for a Rodney Local Board's Healthy Harbours Fund grant you have until Monday, November 30 to do this. You can find out more by Googling 'Rodney Local Board Healthy Harbours' or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y65aodyl>.

- Phelan Pirrie
Chair, Rodney Local Board

Need help with Council issues? Your four Local Board representatives are available to help with questions or issues relating to Auckland Council. If you want to get in touch we are available to talk or meet with you.

- Phelan Pirrie: Ph 021 837 167, phelan.pirrie@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
- Brent Bailey: Ph 021 730 892, brent.bailey@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
- Danielle Hancock: Ph 021 195 9826, danielle.hancock@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
- Vicki Kenny: Ph 027 670 9968, vicki.kenny@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Poker Run to benefit Kaukapakapa station

Locals who like the sight and sound of powerful motorcycles are in for a treat this month, with the annual 5 Station Poker Run to be held on Sunday, November 22.

Kaukapakapa Volunteer Rural Fire Force is the host station for this year's ride, which has been held since 2006 and is shared between the Helensville, Kaukapakapa, Kumeu, Muriwai and Shelly Beach fire stations.

Each year the host station rotates - last year it was Helensville - and that station is the base where the bikes start and finish and prizes are awarded. The event regularly attracts 150 to 200 motorcyclists, and can raise up to \$6000 for the host station.

Motorcyclists wanting to take part can enter on the day, or purchase tickets online up until Wednesday, November 18 at: www.5stationpokerrun.co.nz.



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■ ARMISTICE DAY PARADE

The Kaipara Memorial RSA will hold an Armistice Day Parade on Wednesday, November 11 at 11am to commemorate the end of World War One, 102 years ago.

The parade will take place outside the RSA clubrooms, 49 Commercial Road.

Medals should be worn; if wearing a relative's medals they should be worn on your right side. Wreaths will be laid following a short ceremony. Light refreshments will be served in the clubrooms afterwards.

For more information, phone Rex Keane on 027 293 2768.

■ REAL ESTATE CAREER EVENING

Harcourts in Commercial Road is holding a career evening for locals interested in a career in real estate on Thursday, November 12 from 6pm.

The evening will detail the process to become a qualified real estate salesperson, including different ways to get started for those who don't want to jump straight in, the investment required to launch a real estate business, and what to look for when choosing an office to join. Register online at: <https://helensville.harcourts.co.nz/Home/careers>.

■ KAUKAPAKAPA MARKET

Live music from duo Take 2 will feature at the next Kaukapakapa market, to be held on Sunday, November 15 from 8.30am to 1pm. There will be a range of stalls selling fresh locally grown produce, artisan food, handmade crafts, Christmas gifts, plants, books, and secondhand goods and collectibles. There will be plenty of tasty treats to enjoy including freshly made coffee,

and as usual free face painting for children.

For more information phone Sarah on 0274 831 542 or email her at: sarah1@maxnet.co.nz.

■ TARRA AGM

Te Awaroa Residents & Ratepayers Association Inc. (TARRA) will hold its annual general meeting on Saturday, November 21 starting 4.30pm at 44 Commercial Road, Helensville. All welcome.

■ FARM HORSE TREK

The Helensville A&P Association's annual farm horse trek is on Sunday, November 22, starting at 10.30am with a briefing half an hour before.

This year the ride has been named in recognition of Edwina Francis, who played an important role in previous treks, and will be called the 'Helensville Show Edwina Francis Memorial Horse Trek'. It will cover trails over the Brady and Kidd farms, starting and finishing in Bradly Road.

Tickets are \$30 per rider which includes a sausage sizzle after the ride. To register contact the show office, phone 420 7572 or email: info@helensvilleshow.co.nz.

AYO concert

The Auckland Youth Orchestra held an afternoon performance of its latest show, Flamboyance, in the Helensville War Memorial Hall on Sunday, October 11.

Conducted by Antun Poljanich, the orchestra performed Bernstein's lively Candide Overture, Malcolm Arnold's jazzy Clarinet Concerto No.2 (with soloist Kiara Kong), and Tchaikovsky's flamboyant Symphony No. 5.

The orchestra is made up of 75 talented young musicians aged from 16 to 26 years, and performs at Helensville most years.

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Letters to the Editor: Should be kept to around 250 words and may be edited as space dictates.



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