

TOM is a monthly publication delivered on the second Wednesday of the month to all homes and post-boxes from City limits to Dover Rd. For enquires please email oakuramessenger@xtra.co.nz or phone Tracey Lusk 752 7875. For all advertising enquiries please contact Milly Carr on 752 8003.

Cruising with tom

A recent opportunity to attend *The Last Samurai*/Tom Cruise media conference was too good to turn down. Gathered at the TSB Showplace on a hot, summer Saturday morning, I joined an enthusiastic and eclectic group of media representatives from all over the globe. There was an air of anticipation as we patiently waited to meet the man who has starred in over 23 movies and grossed US \$2 Billion for the movie industry.

It's interesting to observe the different reactions of people when one is representing the smallest media outlet in the room. Ironically, the greatest interest in TOM was shown by the biggest international media players in the room! Comments like, "How exciting - you're right there in Oakura, right on the ground!" said Agence France-Presse, and "What do the locals think about Tom living in their midst?" said the beautiful writer from the LA Times and American Vogue. My standard reply was that I believed most residents were delighted that a Hollywood star had a chance to share and absorb the superb environment of Oakura, even if only for a short time, and the celebrity fan issue wasn't out of control, it just added a bit more spice and activity to the village.

Many of the out of town media had no idea where Oakura is located in relation to New Plymouth and because it was such a beautiful day I pointed them in the right direction, suggested they take a ride south and check it out for themselves and also to beg, borrow or buy some togs and have a swim at the beach!

Back to the press conference, local iwi representatives and kapa haka group set the scene with an admirable powhiri (welcome). It was obvious that Tom, director Edward Zwick and producer Marshall Herskovitz found this unique Maori greeting intriguing and enjoyable.

Question time was an open forum. Naturally most interest centred on Tom Cruise, who is articulate, friendly and good natured. He described *The Last Samurai* as "a four course meal of a movie". Despite the scruffy hair and beard, the man with the delicious rich voice and truly golden smile had all of the females around me agreeing he definitely would have to be the dessert!

Of most interest to me was the comment he made in relation to his part (Captain Algren) in the movie. It required him to study Bushido (Way of the Warrior), a

martial art based on moral code principals developed among the Samurai. He spoke about how learning Bushido caused him to reflect on the issue of moral responsibility seemingly lacking in the United States today. "People in America today are quick to blame others and not ask themselves what could I have done to make this different, can I take responsibility for what is happening."

(Bush or Bushido?) Tom elaborated by saying what impressed him greatly about the code of the Samurai was that simply making a decision to do something resulted in personal commitment and responsibility towards whatever action followed. This simple philosophy has become a hallmark of the foundation of ethical training in contemporary Japanese culture.

Based on the code of the Samurai, I have made a decision to personally commit to seeing Messrs Cruise, Zwick and Herskovitz receive a much prized and collectible TOM t-shirt as future proof of their presence in Oakura. The one question I did ask was answered without hesitation. We will definitely be seeing Tom in the village over the next few months!

Hilary Bennett



Marshall Herskovitz, Edward Zwick and Tom Cruise enjoy the special powhiri / welcome by Taranaki iwi

Health and Wellbeing

With Sarsha Hood.

I think most of us look forward to summer and enjoy the sun, but if we don't take the right precautions we can end up having no fun. We all know slip, slop, slap, which has proven to be a great general prevention programme for the general public, but what about the deeper issues?

Most of us are aware of the damage the sun can do to ourselves and our children, but is applying sun block, slapping on a hat and wearing loose fitting clothes enough? Did you know that a typical cotton T-shirt offers sun protection equal to only SPF7, so if you are planning a big day out in the sun it is a great idea to put sun block under the clothes, even better try to stay out of the sun between 10:00am - 2:00 pm. It was once recommended not putting sunscreen on infants under six months of age. This is no longer the case, because the danger from sunburn outweighs the risk of sensitivity to sunscreens. Look for a natural sunscreen that will be less likely to irritate a baby's sensitive skin; these can be purchased at any good health food shop.

Another overlooked aspect of summer fun, especially when it comes to children, is the humble pair of sunnies. In America retina disease is the **leading** cause of blindness; retina damage is caused by U.V. radiation. Unlike the lens, damage to the retina is irreparable and inoperable. The risk of retinal damage comes from the sun's rays and is greatest in children less than 10yrs old, yet the consequences do not become apparent until they are adults. The best precaution we can take as parents is to purchase our children sunglasses that block out UVA and UVB rays. Children tend to lose or break sunglasses often, so it will be a relief for you to know that expensive sunglasses are no guarantee of this protection, cheaper sunglasses can be just as good. Browning optometrists will check your sunglasses for free; they are in the yellow pages.

Well folks that's it for me this month; I hope you all can take a little knowledge from this, and utilize it. We can still have fun in the sun while at the same time feeling more secure that we are informed of the dangers.

New Years Eve Rave, Oakura Beach 2002-2003

Oakura's first promoted New Years Eve Dance Rave was a resounding success. After many months of planning and organization, approximately 2000 people danced their way into 2003 in the area of Shearers Reserve, Oakura Beach.

New Plymouth's Audiohire Kerry Houghton and DJ Mimi-Me and helpers pumped out sounds and lighting to a receptive crowd under clear skies. Drinks and snacks were for sale. The crowd had a great time!

The rave was such a success there will be plans to run the event annually with a more robust budget. The feedback at the moment is the possibility of dividing the night into two segments, providing a younger, family orientated evening and "midnight countdown" at 9pm, followed by a rave for 14 to over 18-year-olds from 9.30-1am. Any feedback, comments or thoughts welcome!

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the very many groups, sponsors and organisations for their generous assistance, including Catherine, Tracey and Michelle at T.O.M, the New Plymouth District Council, Taranaki Safer Community Council, Oakura Community Development Board, Tom Smithers Enterprises, Tom and Susanne Smithers (financial sponsors and safe storage), Mark Powell and Ross and Dale Kisby (New Plymouth Hirequip), Oakura Volunteer Firebrigade, Tu Tawhaio and team from Te Taura Tangata Security, New Plymouth Armourguard, Chris Lee and team, Vaughan Garrett (electrician), Ash Hayden (skip), Malcolm Oxley Okato Bus Lines, Jan and Al Rawlinson Oakura Beach Shop, Angela Harrison Oakura Fish Shop (advertising), Chris Connolly New Plymouth Parkscape (Shearer Reserve), Oakura Boardriders (headquarters), New Plymouth Police, Tip Top Ice Cream Limited (information booth), Kiwi Crusaders (security), Saint Johns Ambulance, all the volunteers on the night, and the residents in the immediate area for your tolerance on the night, and last, but by no means least, our local Councillor Pam Street, Dave Lee Manager Recreational Services New Plymouth District Council, 98.9 ZM and Classic Hits, and Taranaki Newspapers Limited for their enormous input. I sincerely hope I have thanked everyone involved. Thank you to you all!

Chris Gruys, Event Organiser

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Fancy a Blueberry?

New to Omata straights is a blueberry stall set up opposite the Omata church. The folk responsible for supplying us with this fruit sensation are Mr and Mrs Adamski from Kahui Road, Rahotu. Unfortunately when you get this issue the supply of blueberries will have reduced dramatically and will probably be finished by the end of February and then we can look out for them again around the middle of December. Speaking to Mr Adamski he explained the poor season they have had for blueberries this year and puts it down to many contributing factors, one being the warm winter. Blueberries need to have 700 hours below 7 degrees. Mr Adamski, said the honesty box set up works very well and to prove that fact he said in the beginning people would take the berries and then stop and pay when next passing; one person has left an IOU!

And more good news about these little blue things is not only do they taste great, but they are good for you! They are often referred to as 'brainberries' and several leading scientists suggest that eating half a cup of the berries a day protects and promotes brain function. They are also one of nature's antioxidant powerhouses and contain higher antioxidant levels than just about every other fruit and vegetable.

Well done local longboarders

The end of January saw the local longboarders showing their stuff at the National longboard competition in Taranaki. Results to hand are:

Over-50: Steve Teague 2nd; Over-40: Chris Davies 3rd, Greg Page 4th; Women: Lyndie Foster-Page 1st; Traditional Mal: Greg Page 4th.

Blueberry Streusel Cake

2 c blueberries	75g butter
¾ c orange juice or milk	1 ½ c self raising flour
½ c walnuts	¼ c sugar
3 tsp cinnamon	1 egg

Melt butter and reserve 1 tbsp for walnut. Add egg and beat. Sprinkle sugar and flour over egg. Mix sparingly. Mix together walnuts, butter, sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle 2/3 over cake and stir once to get a marble effect. Put in 23cm tin. Put blueberries on top and press down lightly. Put remaining walnut mix on top. Bake 180°C for 45 minutes.

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The Decorating Guru' Tip of the month

Exterior colours fade over time and as a general rule the darker the colours the more problems with cracking, flaking and surface movement of the paint and the base surface. Utilize the registered painting contractors expertise, they are usually whizzes with colours.



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A Bite of History ..

Omata Community Pool



Official opening of the Omata Community Pool 16 November 1950

The community pool was officially opened in November 1950 by Mr. W Sanger, Chairman of the School Committee. Mrs. M Johnson wrote, "What a thrill that first dip in the baths was." Almost all the children brought their swimming togs but entered the water very timidly. Water exercises followed, with floating and swimming. After several weeks, five children could swim and most could float.

It was, by today's standards, a very basic set up. There was no filter system, chlorination or changing rooms. The water was pumped in nice and icy over the weekend from the bore. This well had been dug specifically for the baths. The health department had to approve the use of the well. It goes down 114 feet. By Friday the water was a good temperature but the pool got emptied every Friday. This was the acceptable way of pool filtration. Over time a filter was installed and a filter shed built. Omata School could then-

boast of having the most modern and up-to-date filter plant, the first of its kind in the North Island. Pools were not fenced either in those days. This eventually happened also, as vandals sometimes visited the school and community families were known to hold questionable pool parties late at night.

Bill Donald was on the pool committee for about 20 years from 1972 to 1992 and has seen big changes in the pool area. He ruefully laughs about the automatic chlorination system being installed the day he left the committee. Bill was instrumental in building the present changing sheds. He demolished the old sheds with his tractor in the early 70s and then spent his spare time in the weekends building the new block structure, which he said was good practice for the building of his block house.

Past principal, Pat Anderson, had ducks and ducklings that liked to use the pool as their local lake! So much for sanitation.

Community working bees at the beginning of the season carried out pool maintenance and the pool got painted on a regular basis. The pool roster was started in the 70s as well, with the system that still runs along similar lines today. When you bought a key you took a turn for a week cleaning the pool. There were two rosters, one for vacuuming and one for chlorinating. An upgrade to the pool area occurred when new pool fence regulations came into force in 1996.

It was also felt the area could be enlarged to make the pool area more attractive for community families to use after school hours. Engineering work was carried out by Dave Moses to provide shade sails for teachers, students and parents. A new toilet block was added as well. The changing shed mural is in the process of being updated.

Kim Ferens

Editor 150th Jubilee Book



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Kaitake Community Board

A very happy New Year to everyone.

On behalf of Councillor Pam Street and the Kaitake Community Board I would like to welcome Tom Cruise, all those associated with the film and all holiday makers. A very big WELCOME to our district. Hope you get a chance to sample our lovely beach, scenery, many walks, gardens, and cafes and meet the friendly people while you are here.

New Years Eve "Soundz Like It" dance/rage: I would like to publicly thank Chris Gruys for the very successful evening that she organised single handedly. Everyone is still raving about the evening and hoping that there will be another one this year.

Everyone is well aware by now that we have two major areas of road works between Oakura and New Plymouth. There has been quite a bit of comment about traffic behaviour at these sites. Please take notice of the speed restrictions and traffic lights. Remember to leave home a few minutes earlier than usual and be prepared for a delay.

Children will be going back to school, so watch out for them as they walk or bike to school.

Enjoy the sun, sea, mountain and each other's company.

Until next month.

Sue Henchman

Points of view expressed in contributed articles are not necessarily the views of The Oakura Messenger.



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Coastal Beach Safety

Over the last six months there has been a huge build up of sand on the coastal beaches of Timaru, Petone, Kaihihi and Komene Rds. Because these Roads give easy beach access they are attracting more and more visitors and look great and inviting for swimming. This is OK on the low tide, but on half to full tide these beaches have a huge, strong undertow, which can be extremely dangerous to swimmers and particularly children.

A coastal resident rang me with his concerns after seeing two children, unsupervised on boogie boards, getting into trouble at Komene Rd.

Please be aware of these situations. Be Water Wise and Supervise.

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The summer holiday season is now well behind us but the village of Oakura is still enjoying many visitors from around the world.

The centre continues to provide an valuable service to members of our community and visitors alike and has become a contact point for information on our village. Recently, a Hawera newspaper called for information

about tourist attractions and accommodation in the village.

@
Oakura
Information
P L U S

Info Plus is entirely staffed by volunteers and, with many of them enjoying a well-earned break themselves, the centre has not been open every day throughout the holiday period.

This is regrettable but unavoidable. We have a number of dedicated volunteers doing a marvellous job and would love to hear from anyone who would like to join the team. We have recently changed the opening hours and re-structured the shifts. The new hours are 11am to 3pm every day and shifts are 11-1, 1-3 or 11-3 if you prefer.

Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time over the summer holidays and thank you to the many local businesses supporting Info Plus. A noticeboard is being prepared to hang your brochures in the window outside of opening hours.

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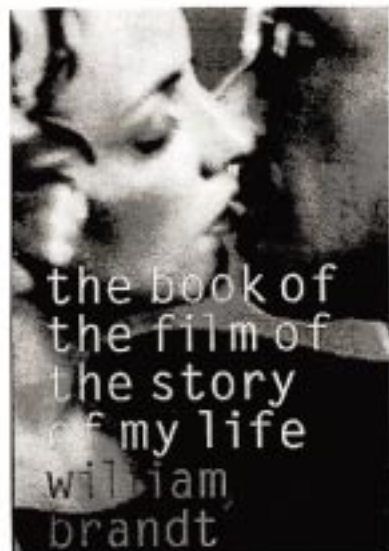
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Book Review

The Book of the Film of the Story of My Life

William Brandt

(Victoria University Press \$29.95)



The film, *'Jesus Montoya Must Die'*, put actor Matt's name on the movie star map. His taut, tight and terrific butt and bod and piercing come-to-bed eyes, prove to be the undoing of his new co-star, the svelt, sexy, Sophie. When Matt embarks on a full-scale affair with Sophie, her husband Frederick falls into a tail spin. Rugged featured, Frederick, the narrator and a Film Producer is discombobulated about his failing marriage, money and movie-making abilities. All three culminate in a crisis at a party on a Pacific Island in this well-scripted, evocative and laugh-out-loud, novel by the local author of *'Alpha Male'*. Frederick takes Melissa, a prostitute, who poses as his partner, to the party, in a bid to win back Sophie. But, the fit is about to hit the sham!

Pip Barrett

'Trees to go'



A number of fully grown lawsoniana trees from council land surrounding the Waireka Cemetery, will be featuring in the film "The Last Samurai". The trees (some measuring more than 10 metres), have been cut off at the base and craned on to a truck which has transported them to the Japanese village created at Uriti. On arrival at the village they have 'risen again' and been bolted on to purpose built stands. Should the trees begin to brown off before filming is completed, this is easily remedied with some green paint!

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Gardening with Rosemary Herb

February Checklist

Vegetables

- Continue planting lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts, carrots, parsnip and leeks.
- Spray at first sign of caterpillars or whitefly with 'Target', a general garden insecticide or 'Nature's Way Insect Spray' for organic gardeners.

Flowers

- To ensure maximum growth and flowering, dead-head to extend flowering, water regularly and feed with Thrive Soluble Fertiliser or Lush Liquid Fertiliser.
- February is a dry month. Water regularly to keep plants growing. Mulching will help conserve water.

Fruit Trees

- Summer pruning of stone fruit trees following harvesting of crops reduces risk of silver leaf disease later in the season.

Lawns

- Feed with lawn fertiliser to thicken grass sward and reduce weeds. Water regularly if weather is dry.

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Sex in Park Goes to Ngamotu

Cramped conditions at Pukeariki Landing have forced Taranaki's innovative FREE youth event "Sex in the Park" due to be held Saturday 15th February (10-4pm) to Ngamotu beach. Sex in the Park, which was first held in 1999, "is a combination rock concert, fair, and sexual health extravaganza", says Health Promoter Heather Came from Taranaki Health. The event is organised annually with the Most FM 92.3 and the New Plymouth Women's Centre. One of many staunch supporter of Sex in the Park is Dr Pat Boulton, Sexual Health Doctor. Dr Pat says, "People have their heads in the sands sometimes about sexual health issues, people need to start communicating about sex. Our chlamydia rates are going through the roof - more than doubled in the last three years. It's time people got involved in the issue".

Bands signed up to support the day include high profile Zuvuya and Cornerstone Roots. Also performing will be Agent, Channa Miriam, Gladeye, Rival State and Tumehe and Whakaangi Rongonui.

As well as music, there will be food and refreshments available and an opportunity to test your knowledge by going for a newly revamped sexual health warrant of fitness. A variety of health providers and community groups will be running information stalls and competitions throughout the day.

Thanks to the New Plymouth District Council and the New Zealand AIDS Foundation who have helped fund this youth event. The wet weather venue for this event is the Downtown carpark.

For more information contact Heather Came, Health Promotion Unit, 06 753 7777 ext 8525 or Sandy Penfold, Women's Centre 06 758 4957

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Councillor's comments

Its hard to believe the silly season has been and gone and it is now time to get the brain working in Council mode again. I must say it was nice to have a break to catch up with friends and family and to get into a few aquatic activities. My council year begins with the Kaitake Community Board meeting this Tuesday 21st Jan. As usual our little village has been extremely busy over the holiday period. In actual fact I guess there has been quite a buzz knowing that Tom has actually taken up residence in our community, causing lots of talk and people wondering if we will get a glimpse of him in our village.

Our beach has been busy with all sorts of activities. Two new signs were put at Corbett Park and Ahu Ahu Road advising there were to be no vehicles on the beach. Unfortunately there are always some people who ignore the bylaws in place, with regard to animals, horses and vehicles on the beach. This can make using the beach unpleasant for other users and for the residents who live on the beach front. If anyone would like a copy of these bylaws they are available from the Council and are Part nine Public Places. McFarlane Street has had a mystery rubbish dumper as well over the holiday period. Someone chooses to leave their rubbish outside someone else's house. This may relieve you of your rubbish, but then leaves the problem for someone else to sort out.

News Years eve went by very smoothly this year. The rave for the youth was extremely successful. Full marks to Chris Gruys for hanging in there and going ahead with the project. I know there were occasions when the project was nearly canned; however, despite all the sceptics and suggestions that the idea wouldn't work Chris chose to move on ahead with the project and was given a 9 out of 10 by the Police. It now looks likely this will be an annual event. I personally send a huge thankyou to all of those people who helped either as volunteers or as paid people to make this evening the success it was and a big thanks to Chris. Please remember to call the Council Customer Service on 7596060 should you have any queries or complaints. This way everything is on record and the council staff will follow things up. Greetings from OAKRUZA, until next month.

Pam Street, 752 7015



Get those running shoes dusted off

This weekend Saturday 15th February is the annual surf to surf fun run/walk.

Put on every year by the Oakura School as a fundraising event it always attracts a lot of interest. The start/finish line is at the NPOB Surf Club with competitors to be ready to pound the sand and surf by 4pm. There is a 4km and 9km distance to choose from so get together with your buddies and have some fun! And if that doesn't get you there the chance of winning a spot prize should. On offer is \$1200 travel, \$600 Mason Appliance vouchers plus lots of others – remember to win you have to enter and you have to be at the prizegiving at Butlers Bar & Café at 6.30pm. The garden bar will have food and drinks available from 5pm. For more information pick up an entry form from Oakura Four Square and Heydon Priest. The proceeds of this event will go towards the school purchase of three wireless headphone sets.

Oakura Plunket News

Oakura Plunket currently has a small number of committee members and as such will continue to have a presence in Oakura for the time-being. A Plunket nurse holds sessions in the clinic (which is at the library) every second and fourth Wednesday of each month, during the afternoon. For an appointment, please call the Plunket Area Office on 753 2300.

Regarding the Friday Coffee Mornings at the library; with attendance down to only one or two people a week the community does not appear to want these and so they will no longer be happening. We feel very sad about this as they have been running for many years now, and many people have benefitted from them. But all good things must come to an end, and there is no point in continuing with these at this time. Should anyone in the community wish to re-start these at any time, please get in touch with a committee member.



We have finally got some Snapper that have been weighed in; this is after 6 months of no one weighing one in. We also had a huge Spotty Shark weighed in by keen member Wayne Johnston tipping the scales at 11.755 Kg - this was a biggie. With the water much warmer now we have also had a good number of other species weighed in as well: Most of the keen members have been getting a few bites here and there, and we have heard that the Snapper are starting to sneak in close around the northern beaches. This is encouraging as the fishing can be awesome around Mokau at this time of year. So get out there and give it a go and try not to be put off by the wind (as it isn't windy under water).

Good tides coming up in February.

Debbie Edgecombe

Oakura Surfcasting Club Secretary



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Hon. Harry Duynhoven MP for New Plymouth

There has been intense media coverage over the last week following the release of Transit New Zealand's draft state highway programme. I welcome the opportunity to clarify a few issues that arise from the programme.

Transit has produced a programme each year since 1989 and sent it out for consultation. This year it has been extended over 10 years as wanted by Local Government New Zealand, which has ignited significant debate.

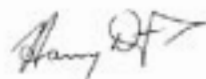
While the public focus had been on new capital projects the backbone work (and half the funds) of Transit is the operation and maintenance of the state highway network. Taranaki continues as usual, receiving \$40m. Safety improvements would continue as part of Transit's normal maintenance and minor capital works programme (which includes projects up to \$3million).

In respect to the claim that Auckland is receiving all the funding, the facts do not support this claim. Over the last three years, on average, Auckland region has received 25.43% of the total funding for state highways. Next year if the draft state highway programme is adopted, Auckland region would receive just over one-third of the funding. There has been a low level of funding in Auckland in the past for capital development coupled with considerable traffic growth over the last 10 years. Over that same period, Taranaki has fared well with tens of millions of dollars spent on the Awakino and Mokau bridges, the Stockman's Hill reconstruction and the Hawera Underpass.

It is important to remember that individual projects can't be determined by local MPs and / or the Minister of Transport. Local media often aren't aware of this.

However, Taranaki projects could still go ahead within the next 10 years should any of the huge Auckland projects be delayed within that time. I am confident that the sealing of State Highway 43 and the Bell Block Bypass will still proceed and have told Transit that I want these to be ready to begin as soon as funding is available. I will be doing my bit to ensure this happens.

The Draft Transit State Highway Programme is just that, a draft. Once Transit receives input from Local Authorities, Regional Land Transport Committees and road user groups, it will reconsider the programme before submitting it to Transfund for funding.



Hon. Harry Duynhoven
MP for NEW PLYMOUTH

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From a visitor's diary

This summer I had the first holiday in ages where I didn't frantically try to "make the most of my time off by doing things". Instead I just let it be. And Oakura made it easy.

My partner, daughter and I spent four precious days there with a group of friends over New Years. We spent our days drinking gin on a deck overlooking the sea and going for lazy walks on the beach. The people were friendly and everyone operated on a pleasant go-slow. The beach had everything—life guards, warm water, plenty of soft sand, but also rocky areas in which to watch starfish and crabs, a high-light for my 2-year-old.

As vegetarians we were pleased to discover an excellent takeaway with plenty of choice and delicious vege burgers—we're normally limited to potato fritters in small town chippies, usually cooked in animal fat.

We were a bit taken aback by the innovative but somewhat aggressive approach to fundraising by the Surf Life Saving Club at the beach festival on New Years Day. Perfectly happy to donate, we were bailed up in our car by a white-coated collector who, hands on hips, lectured us at length before demanding we hand over \$10. In reality the "donation" was really a toll.

At the end of our holiday we didn't want to leave. We couldn't resist one last dip in the sea before reluctantly hitting the highway and heading back to the city.

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1 tin tomatoes
1 small onion
1 lge clove garlic
Black pepper
1 bay leaf
1 sprig thyme
1/3 cup maple syrup
1 T light soy sauce
1 T sweet chilli (or tomato paste)

Cook all ingredients in saucepan until soft and well reduced.
Blend in food processor with syrup, soy sauce and chilli sauce.
Marinate 2-3 fillets of pork until ready to cook (does not need long).



Barbecue pork goes really nicely with
Asian style fresh coleslaw or salad.

Try combinations of these finely sliced or julienned ingredients with this dressing.

Carrot, Courgette, Capsicum, Cabbage, Cucumber, Mung bean sprouts, Fresh Green Beans, Sugar snap peas, Fruit, Spring onion, Basil, Mint, Coriander

Dressing

1T fish sauce
1T lime/lemon juice
1T rice vinegar
1T sugar (palm or brown)
1T juice concentrate if you have it ie. Fresh Up



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Omata School farewells its principal

An excerpt from the speech outgoing principal Mike Norris gave at the end of year BBQ.

"I've immensely enjoyed the eight years of huge job satisfaction and huge fun at Omata. It's been a big week and you can't help feeling while watching the production over this week, that teaching is an incredibly worthwhile job. The stars of the show have blossomed at this school, those who arrived as five year olds in 1997 and those who arrived more recently. Teachers gain incredible job satisfaction watching children growing in so many ways.

It can be a hard job to quantify sometimes in respect of work outcomes but teachers have known without any doubt that they make an enormous difference.

The Education Review Office Report of this year makes that very clear. Everyone associated with this school should be proud of that report, it is outstanding but it is well deserved.

Omata school – every day it's a place where friends get together, and children and parents want to be.

It's great to be part of this year six farewell tonight and express best wishes to those students who are leaving us. We know they will impress everyone at Devon, Highlands, Francis Douglas and Sacred Heart – their peers, their teachers and we will see their names in the Merit Award List at each school. It won't just be for academic success, it will be for positive role models and leaders – it will be because they are friends – friends worth having. One of the real pluses about being a teacher if you are doing your job is that you make lots of friends- best wishes tonight to all my 2002 Omata Year 6 friends.

An enormous part of this school is the parents. I have been privileged to work with superb Boards over the entire eight years. I'd have Nick (Barrett) running the country. For a teacher to know that we have got such capable people running our school is essential – all of these people have known the meaning of partnership – this school is unquestionably a partnership. The home and school make a huge difference as well. Another principal said to me once – why do you go to Home and School meetings? – the answer was easy, because it's fun. As at board meetings you have lots of laughs – more importantly than that you get to spend time with people that have great respect for people that give their time for everyone's kids.

This school is part of my family – it would be impossible for it to be any other way. I leave behind a family I got used to, kids calling me mum when I arrived. I started to feel maybe it was getting time for a new Omata leader when more and more they started calling me Nana. Thanks for a brilliant eight years."

Mike started his new position as Principal of Spotswood Primary this term. A new Principal will be appointed at Omata for Term Two.

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Readers' Remarks:

The recent community Christmas Parade in my view was shameful.

Local residents and the surrounding community recently received the Oakura Directory. Of a potential of more than 60 clubs, businesses and organisations, not to mention the ones not listed, only about 10 made an effort to be part of this community event. Our parade used to be a good one and the kids looked forward to the array of themes, music and displays.

What has happened to the community spirit?

We are still encouraged to support locals, and generally do so. Good on the people who made an effort, and to the others that couldn't be bothered, you may have "Cooked your Goose" for next time

Debbie Edgecombe

Hello to the Oakura Messenger!

I write for a publication in America called "Us Weekly" magazine - it's the second biggest entertainment magazine in the states and the reason for my contact is that I've been researching your region on the internet and came across your site.

It's my job to keep on top of Tom Cruise's visit to New Zealand. To find out what he does in every day life - places he shops / eats / drinks / hangs out etc. And since you're based right in the area where his house is, I wondered if you'd be able to help me out at all.

I'd of course fully credit you and your publication. I'm even curious to know what the property he's hired is like. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sophie Dudgeon

(The Messenger received this through its website.)

Kaitake Development Sub Committee

This committee will reconvene the meeting that was adjourned in November on Wed Feb 26th at 7.00 in the supper room of the Oakura Hall.

To make it clear, the process of this meeting is like any other Council meeting and is bound by the rules set out in the Council Standing Orders and the Local Government Official Meetings and Information Act. Feedback forms have been available in the community over the last two months, and the closing date for these was 31st January.

The public who have made comments on the feedback forms will be given the opportunity to speak in support of their feedback should they wish, at the beginning of the meeting. Once these comments have been heard, the Sub-committee will then debate the matter. This means once these people have made their comments only the subcommittee will be able to speak and the final decision will be made by the committee.

This committee is made up of Cr Pam Street (chairperson), Mike Anderson, Sue Henchman, Phil Hunt, Keith Plummer, Tony Barnes, John Sole, Clive Neeson, Ian McMillan, Brent Anderson, Keith Manukonga, Jane Hoskin, Jim Lim, Margaret Sullivan, Mark Niven. Mayor Peter Tennent is an ex-officio member of the sub-committee. This committee was made up from a group of interested people who attended the Public Meeting about the CBD upgrade in the Oakura Hall in November 2001. Should you have any queries please phone me on 7527015 or the Council Secretary Julie Straka on 7596060.

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From Mayor Pete

Right now, Oakura and elsewhere in New Plymouth District are under an international spotlight like never before.

More than 80 journalists, including some from overseas, attended a media conference in the TSB Showplace on January 11, all to have the chance to listen to one man: Hollywood heavyweight Tom Cruise.

In the days following the conference, the major media outlets in New Zealand ran stories about Tom Cruise, Oakura, New Plymouth and Taranaki, and gave our fair corner of the nation a level of publicity that could never be bought.

But we are getting so much more out of this than attention from reporters.

In *The Last Samurai* we have validation of the background work that has been put in by the New Plymouth District Council, and by those agencies we fund to broaden the economic base of our district – such as Venture Taranaki and Destination Taranaki.

We have local people gaining work. We have local companies providing products and services to the film's crew and cast.

And most of all, we have residents who feel great about living in New Plymouth District. After all, our home is where these influential movie-makers – who have seen more countries during their working lives than most locals will travel to for holidays – have come to get the best outdoor shots possible for their latest film. And what's more, they're raving about the beautiful landscape and the very friendly people here.

Sometimes we need the fresh eyes of visitors to remind us just how spectacular this part of New Zealand is that we call home. As Tom Cruise said at his media conference: "How could anyone not want to be here?"

*Peter Tennent,
Mayor*

Okato Pool & Swimming Club

Have you been to the Okato Pool lately? There have been many changes over the last few seasons. About five years ago the pool was fibre glassed and since then improvements have been made each year. The latest is the addition of a pool cover and winding mechanism. This has been hugely successful already with the pool temperature recorded on December 9 at 28°C!!

With the advent of the new swim safety regulations, the Okato Pool (under the management of the New Plymouth District Council) is only open with a life-guard present. This means our children are swimming in a safe environment. Please remember that children under eight years of age must be supervised by a person over 14.

Okato Pool Open Hours:

Early Morning Lane Swimming:

Mon/Wed/Fri 6.00-8.00am

School & Public Holidays / Weekends:

12.30 - 7.30pm

Normal Hours (outside holidays):

12.00-1.00pm

3.30-6.30pm

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Lawn Rangers is a non franchise locally owned business run by Ross and Cathy Buttimore.

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