

Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Association

Kia Ora from Lake Rotoiti

January 1993

Summer has taken a long time to come, but judging by the number of holiday makers around the lake, it seems everyone is determined to enjoy it, dicey weather or not. It's been a busy year for the Ratepayers Assoc. All the usual things like drainage problems, weed spraying and rubbish collections have been attended to, and generally things are looking pretty good.

The condition of the lake recently is the best it has been for many years. Opinions as to why differ from spraying at the right time to a cooler, rainy Summer so far, but we wonder if taking the sewage out of the lakes last year is having a much quicker effect than anticipated.

Council Elections: Rotorua District Council - As a result of a submission by the Combined Lakes Ratepayers Assoc. of which Lake Rotoiti is a member, the decision was made in Wellington to reduce the council from 16 to 12. With incumbent mayor John Keaney standing aside, Grahame Hall, a long-time friend of this association was elected with a good majority. Councillors Sturt and Aubertin were returned and the new councillor is Knocker Dean, who is the Community Constable at Ngongotaha. Further comments on the council are in the Chairman's report.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council - Thankfully the double-dipping days have gone where councillors were able to flit from one seat to another, and we are expecting great things from our new Regional councillors, John Keaney, Wendy Lynch and Merepika Sims. We were very pleased to nominate John Keaney for the Regional Council and see him elected with a vast majority. After his decision to give up the Rotorua mayoralty it would have been a great shame to see all his experience lost to the district.

Weed Spraying: After a much earlier start than usual in the chase for funding for spraying, the programme with costs shared equally between the Government and Rotorua District Council, got underway in September and will continue until late February. In spite of a comprehensive submission from the Combined Lakes Assoc., the Regional Council did not contribute to the cost of the spraying. We acknowledge that they are not a funding body but it would seem they should at least co-ordinate the funding each year so that groups such as ours do not have to go through the wearisome annual process.

Otaramarae Roading Development: This programme is now completed with much improved sealing and parking facilities. The real object was to improve the storm water drainage which had been a problem for years.

Lake Markers: Our newly appointed Lakes Inspector, Brent Calder, got a brand new council workboat as a Christmas present so council presence on Rotoiti has been much more obvious. There are still a number of buoys to be replaced. If you have a buoy washed up on your property, either drop it in to the council or give Brent a ring. They are expensive and, as ratepayers, we pay for them.

In the meantime, please roll up to the A.G.M. as per the attached notice, and enjoy the rest of 1993.

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It's not all hard work being in a Ratepayers Assoc. Our last few meetings have been held in the delightful setting of Lovelace Leary's lounge looking out on that beautiful bay and down our magnificent lake. Surely the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the Northern lakes. Can any other Ratepayer Assoc. match that? - particularly with a John Leary supper to follow. Many thanks to John and Lovelace for this privilege.

Courtesy of ex-Secretary, Pamela Alcock who has moved to the U.K., we have a complete set of the West Rotoiti News which was a district paper voluntarily published for several years. Many of the articles on fishing (remember Len Hunter's 279 trout in one season), local knowledge gardening, cooking Rotoiti style and the Ngati Pikiao columns make fascinating reading. As we've said before, anyone who would like to restart this paper would get lots of help from the Ratepayers Assoc.

The variety of boats on the lake this Summer has been incredible - from the moonship like Scat Cat, hydrofoils, aerofoils, fine-looking vintage classic speedboats to some very odd looking yachts, but still no sign of the steam boats we know are being built. Definitely more launches around, so the saying 'It's not how soon you get there, it's the trip that matters', must be having an effect.

The Rotorua Lakes Combined Committee, which at present is an amalgamation of the Ratepayer associations of Tarawera, Okareka and Rotoiti has had it's new constitution approved and an A.G.M. will be held next month. This association is essentially in place to ensure that the lake people of Rotorua have a very strong voice when necessary.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
January 1993

It is with pleasure that I offer this report on the 1992 activities of the Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Assoc. This will be my last report as, after 3 years, it is time a new Chairman took over.

While the association may not have been particularly visible, many issues have been dealt with this year. It seems more than ever these days we must look out for our own interests, and the association has acted as an effective community caretaker for our lovely surroundings.

The year was dominated by the Council elections at which the ratepayers of Rotorua, who are the 'owners' of the Rotorua District Council, were asked to appoint a new 'Board of Directors' to manage their \$45 million a year business for the next 3 years. Put in this context it is an important affair isn't it? Perhaps we would have liked a few more new faces, but the election results showed that anyone aspiring to be a councillor has to start their run at least 2 years ahead, unless they already have a high profile in the community. These days it is no use deciding 6 weeks before the election to have a go.

The only point of concern ratepayers should have about the council in these early days is the holding, already, of at least 2 meetings 'in committee' - in other words ratepayers and the media were excluded. The council should appreciate that this is a mechanism which is not really in tune in this age of accountability, particularly when, still fresh in our memory is the notorious series of workshops held by the previous council to dream up the disastrous rating schemes we battled 2 years ago. In my opinion no council meeting should deliberately exclude either ratepayers or media. If the practice continues ratepayers would be quite within their rights to demand the minutes of any such meeting under the Official Information Act.

Dog Control is a world-wide problem and we have certainly had difficulties around Rotoiti. Good community involvement in Okere has fixed the roaming dog problem in the meantime, and generally the District Council rangers do a good job, but their hands are tied by some council indecision and the weak national laws. A parliamentary select committee has been studying this issue for no less than 2 years, which is disgraceful when considering just in our area alone, one Okere farmer estimates the loss of over 200 lambs in recent years. The most constructive action we have seen recently has been the SPCA opening a low cost speying and neutering clinic as a practical means of reducing the stray animal population. This wonderful voluntary effort by the SPCA was unfortunately not supported by the previous council by way of funding. We hope the new council will take a more realistic approach. In the meantime, your committee has written a note of thanks to the SPCA with a \$100 donation. Councillors please note.

A major issue facing Rotorua ratepayers this year is the establishment of rural skip refuse sites to replace the familiar old bins we know so well. We have been asked to comment on possible sites and construction.

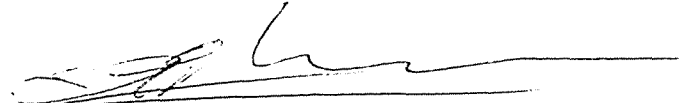
Along with everywhere else in the country the Electricity issue was battled out last year. Your committee came down on the side of Rotorua District Council control, and an excellent submission was prepared by Ernie Caldwell. However it looks as though a 49% share giveaway will occur with 51% in a community trust which at least means the control of our power should stay in local hands.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, January 1993, cont.

The committee faced a dilemma early last year on the issue of the commercial rafting operation at the Okere Falls. Without wishing to oppose a worthwhile tourist venture, we found it necessary to point out to the council that at the assembly point opposite the Okere Falls store there are no facilities; the area is particularly sensitive from a Maori cultural aspect and the traffic hazard on this lethal corner could become extreme if some form of control was not put in place. This rafting trip is a world-class attraction and will consequently attract much larger numbers in the future. The council has finally agreed that some form of control is necessary and the matter is under discussion with all interested parties.

It is great to see the mood of optimism at last sweeping through Rotorua. After being in the doldrums for 4 or 5 years, the city is really getting going again. Tourism is increasing rapidly; some very impressive industrial investment is under way, particularly in timber processing - (Don't we all hate to see those raw logs being exported), farming is again the business to be in and perhaps we may even have better weather in 1993. Personally, I believe that Rotorua will be the land of opportunity over the next 10 years.

In closing, could I say that I have enjoyed working with a good committee, but we do need new faces, so roll up to the AGM and get involved. The Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers Assoc. is acknowledged throughout Rotorua as an excellent example of how Maori and Pakeha can work together looking after the welfare of one of New Zealand's treasured assets. My thanks to Mary Stanton our invaluable Secretary and to our capable treasurer Ernie Caldwell for their help throughout the year and I wish the incoming committee and officers all the best for the future.



Lindsay Brighthouse