

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 1995

Kia Ora from the Lake

There have been signs lately that the many pleas of 'Enough is Enough' have been heeded. We are referring of course to the inordinate amount of rainfall experienced throughout June and July. Statistical evidence reveals that it rained every day except one from the middle of June to the latter part of July. According to long standing resident weather watcher, John Wright, rainfall to the end of July had almost equalled the total for the whole of 1994. Lake levels are the highest seen in recent times. We have also had some extremely cold spells with an easily discernible blanket of snow on Mt Ngongotaha and surrounding hills several weeks back.

Notwithstanding this soggy saga, our vigil over matters of concern to local residents has continued to keep us busy. Appropriately, water is a central theme in most of the more prominent issues. In response to numerous requests, we are making renewed attempts to establish the level of support for a public water supply for West Rotoiti following the reticence of many to last years unsuccessful survey. Management of the Rotorua lakes both from an environmental and safety aspect has come under closer scrutiny this year with several Lakes Ratepayer Groups including our own calling for more expedient action to address obvious shortcomings. Rotorua District Council have now recognised the importance of the lakes to the extent of conceding to our calls to incorporate a stand alone chapter in the Proposed District Plan.

An important event this year is the October elections to select our District and Regional Council representatives for the ensuing three year term. At time of writing, there is still two weeks to go before nominations close. It should be noted that postal voting will be in force for this election. We believe that every resident who is eligible should take the opportunity to exercise their voting right at these elections. Only in this way will the candidates that you want be given the optimum chance of selection.

Finally, if you have any concerns regarding environmental or local issues, feel free to contact us. Better still, become a financial member if you are not one already. It only costs \$10 per family. Remember, we are a purely voluntary organisation formed to help protect the interests of local residents and ratepayers. We make every effort to represent your views to the relevant authorities but to operate effectively and successfully, WE NEED YOUR INPUT AND SUPPORT.

ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL PLAN

This years Annual Plan has placed continuing emphasis on the City Redevelopment as well as major upgrading of the Art and History Museum and Waikite Valley Hot Pools. Targets have been set to determine future sewage and wastewater disposal requirements and options for lakeside and rural settlements following which problem areas will be addressed in order of priority. An intention to secure land and prepare a prelimanary design for a Refuse Transfer Station for Rotoma/Hinehopu is also in the Plan. Progressive hearing of submissions and promulgation of the new District Plan will be the main focus of Environmental Services.

Chairman: Jim Stanton Tel: 362 4690 Secretary: Mary Stanton Tel: 362 4690 All Mail: PO Mourea C/- Happy Angler Store Rotorua Fax: 362 4876

Our submission identified several matters considered of prime concern to Rotoiti residents. During the Estimates debate, local media clearly reported a final resolution to increase rates by 2.5% which was within the current rate of inflation. Upon scrutiny of the Annual Plan, we along with other Associations, discovered that, in fact, the everall rate increase for the residential group would be in the region of 4% or more. Whilst relatively small in dollar terms, we argued the need for any increase to closely reflect the CPI movemement in recognition of the economic difficulties still being experienced by many. Council's explanation that the media had misinterpreted their intention for the 2.5% increase to apply to overall revenue is hardly acceptable. It is surely Council's responsibility to respond swiftly to any errors in media reporting. Regretfully, our calls for a reassessment of the rate increase went unheeded.

The continuing policy of providing two new boat ramps and jetties each year sees a proposal to site one of these facilities on Lake Rotorua at Mourea. As has been the case with much of the Community and Recreation planning in previous years, no prior consultation has taken place. We once again expressed our dissatisfaction and requested that we be provided with details of the proposal and the opportunity for comment and/or further debate. We reiterated our entitlement to be notified of any such proposals at an early stage to enable optimum community input.

Last year we undertook a comprehensive survey of Rotoiti localities to determine deficiencies in the provision of street lighting. The detailed survey was forwarded to the District Engineer who advised that an impending assessment of District requirements would be a forerunner to contracting out energy and maintenance aspects of street lighting. We pointed out that the Plan made no mention of this undertaking or any clear provision to specifically address areas of extreme inadequacy.

Having verbally presented our submission, we were to say the least most disappointed with Council's written reply which gave little indication that our concerns would be addressed. Similar sentiments were expressed by other Associations including the Combined Committee who sought a meeting with Mayor Hall and senior Council Officers to discuss the issue. This meeting was convened and resulted in useful debate and some acknowledgement of our discontent with an undertaking to look more closely at several of the matters raised.

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GEOTHERMAL ENERGY INVESTIGATIONS

Most residents will no doubt be aware of intentions by several Rotoiti Land Trust and Incorporations to investigate the potential of geothermal resources for future power generation. The Rotoma 1B Block was the first to seek and gain Resource Consent to carry out drilling investigations last year. More recently, an application was lodged by the Ruahine-Kuharua Incorporation in conjunction with Bay Energy (Trustpower Ltd) to carry out investigative drilling within the Taheke geothermal field about 1.5km north-west of Otaramarae. Resource Consent for this venture was granted by Environment BOP and Rotorua District Council in April following the hearing of several submissions opposing the application, including one from this Association prepared conjointly by Nick Miller and Ernie Cordwell, each of whom has relevant technical expertise in the fields of geochemistry and the geothermal extractive industry.

Our objection, which reflected concerns expressed by many residents who contacted us, related to the environmental risks and other detrimental effects associated with large scale geothermal operations, especially where they are situated in relative proximity to a major lake and its inhabitants. The main grounds of objection were:

- 1. Inadequate consulation with the wider Rotoiti community, many of whome were likely to be affected by such a proposal and its potential outcomes.
- 2. Uncertainties surrounding the number of construction sites and associated drilling waste ponds, source of water for drilling purposes, volumes of water to be discharged, volumes of geothermal fluid to be taken or discharged, and the presence or absence of silencers on the geothermal vapour discharges.
- 3. That the purpose of the investigation was to establish a power station and that the potential effects of this had not been considered.
- 4. That the assessment of effects in areas such as noise, atmospheric/gas discharge, discharge of geothermal fluid, marine life, ecosystems, and wastewater generation was inadequate.

Interestingly, objections were also raised by neighbouring Taheke 8C Incorporation and Paehinahina Mourea Trust (Tikitere) both of whom are pursuing proposals to establish a geothermal power source on their own land. Whilst we believe that most continue to have empathy and respect for the aspirations of local land owners who naturally wish to utilise their resources to best advantage, opposition to projects which are potentially harmful to the environment and which threaten existing quality of life is inevitable. The Consent has been granted with a number of stringent conditions being imposed which Environment BOP consider will minimise any significant adverse environmental effects. It should be noted that this consent is for investigation purposes only. Any consents for power station construction have to be re-applied for.

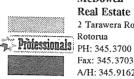
KAITUNA RIVER MANAGEMENT

There has been little progress on this matter since Rotorua District Council issued its Heritage Order proposal in November 1994. Hearing of submissions has been held in abeyance because of what Council say is continuing consultation with local iwi. We understand that the Rotoiti Scenic Reserves Board, which controls the Reserve land adjoining most of the river above the Trout Pools bridge, are in the process of formulating a Management Plan which is likely to accommodate both environmental and commercial interests to varying extent. It is to be hoped that some form of control is enacted prior to the fast approaching summer season to alleviate the entirely unsatisfactory situation which has been allowed to develop over the past five years.

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LAKE LEVELS

There has been a good deal of criticism in recent years over Environment BOP's control of lake levels, particularly with regard to Rotoiti. The Regional Authority has been accused of responding too slowly when the level has dropped markedly during prolonged dry spells and there have been suspicions that the Okere control gates have. at times, been manipulated to suit the commercial interests of rafting companies. In their defence, Environment BOP state that they have operated within the agreed levels which are monitored daily via a data recording system linked to their HQ in Whakatane. They deny giving concessions to rafting concerns. It has to be conceded that there are some difficulties in maintaining a happy medium as the Kaituna Catchment Scheme affects not only Lake Rotoiti, but also Lake Rotorua and areas further downstream on the Kaituna River. Even within Rotoiti itself, levels in the western arm can often be quite different to those at the eastern extremity. Lake level parameters are due to be notified for public discussion in the near future. This is the time to have your say. If you do not wish to make a personal submission, we suggest you contact the Association with any comments or concerns.

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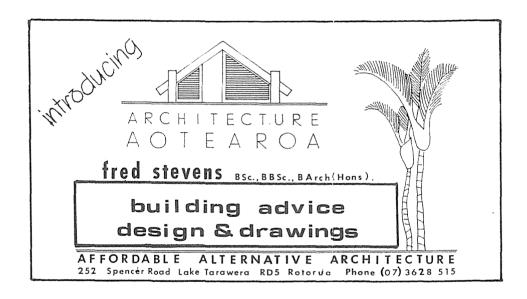
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TRANSIT NEW ZEALAND

This year has seen our campaign to have the roading, footpathing and drainage upgraded through central Mourea come to fruition. The project which began in May was drastically hindered by the abominable weather throughout June and July. Whilst it became evident during construction that some alterations to driveways were necessary, the overall result is very pleasing and we acknowledge the co-operation of the Overseers and Contractors in meeting most of our wishes. Regretfully, we were unable to persuade District Council to allocate additional funding to allow a footpath and kerbing to continue down Ngareta Street. As Council often reminds us, there are numerous residential streets within both the urban and rural limits which merit these facilities and we will have to await the final district assessment due later this financial period to determine priorities. We are advised that the highway through Mourea will be resealed during this coming summer.



OKERE FALLS RAINFALL

Long time resident John Wright has been maintaining rainfall records at Okere Falls since 1965 and submits a monthly return to the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) as well as the Environment BOP Hydrology Department. John says that he reads the gauge at 9.00am each day. A "rain day" is when a measurable amount of rain is recorded during the 24 hour period 9am to 9am.

One of the heaviest falls he has ever recorded in a short period was 138.3mm (5.4 inches) over $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 hours on 28 May this year. The rainfall to 20 July this year is the highest for that period, since John began recording. Recent comparisons are:-

1995	(to 20 July)	65.12 inches (16	654.2mm) 107	raindays
1994		70.60 inches (1)	778.2mm) 164	raindays
1993		52.56 inches (13	327.0mm) 138	raindays
1992		71.46 inches (18	815.1mm) 172	raindays
1991		68.39 inches (1)	737.1mm) 159	raindays
1990		80.77 inches (20	051.6mm) 170	raindays

1995 breakdown is January (11 raindays/173.1mm), February (16/129.9mm), March (14/220,5mm), April 19/390.0mm), May (12/258.5mm), June (17/192.0mm), July to 20th (18/290.3mm)

A MATTER OF CREDIBILITY

Our District Council, at present, has a popularity rating of about three out of ten. This figure, being bandied around ratepayer groups is a bit of a worry with local body elections only six weeks away.

As recently as six months ago the Council was really in the "Brownie Points" with the central city developments looking good, and the opening of the Convention Centre. These visual things last summer, lifted our spirits, even though the groundwork for some of these good things had been done years before. It was this council which accepted the backpatting.

So what's happened to cost the Council it's popularity rating? Depending on where your interests lie it could be any number of happenings but essentially, in the woes of a very rainy winter, three blunders by our worthy councillors have been picked up by an unusually large number of ratepayers.

The first goes back to the annual budget decision earlier this year when a jubilant council grandly announced a 2.5% rates increase (on revenue) would apply for 1995. This was fair enough because it about equalled inflation, but when the demands rate was sent out ordinary domestic ratepayers found increases of 3.7% to 4.5%. Did you check yours?? When challenged on this by lakes ratepayers, the clause "on revenue" was thrown up which basically means the total increase the Council needed — but which bore no relation to what each individual ratepayer pays. So, number one black mark — without question it was the Council's responsibility to get a simple, accurate message on this important issue to ratepayers without it being fudged by semi-technical terms.

Number two blunder was the controversial invitation to the Arawa Committee to take a full seat on the Council Finance Committee. Ratepayer's officers were told this was entirely a council initiative — Arawa did not seek any favours. Consequently the council must take full responsibility for the most unpleasant publicity and controversy the issue generated. They had simply not done their homework. It is to the everlasting credit of Arawa that they pulled away from the controversy and stated they would take their chances in the October elections. This is moderate Maoridom at it's best, but a very black mark on the Council for putting Arawa in this embarrassing position.

Number three blunder must be the Railway Land controversy. Whether you are for it or against it, it has still caused a great fuss because of the lack of consultation. Some say the Council has been courageous, others say they have been devious — but whichever way you look at it, the issue has created a big credibility problem. Statements like "being within their rights to give approval" (but only just), and a senior legal personality opining that a high court decision, if called for, might stop the whole thing have not helped. The end result cannot help being that ratepayers will wonder what other developments will be carried out without consultation as our district grows.

So, perhaps the Council is in somewhat a "siege mentality" at present but it looks like most of them will bounce up bright eyed and bushy tailed for the October elections. The question being discussed among ratepayers is whether some of our Councillors have been there too long? While certainly not suggesting our Council has become arrogant, many ratepayers feel that they would be greatly enriched by an influx of new blood, with new ideas, no axes to grind, no favours to be repaid.

The October elections could give us that.

LAKES CONTROL

Many ratepayers have been expressing concern over missing markers, buoys and beacons on all Rotorua lakes. Some say as many as 50% are not in place. In answer to an Annual Plan submission from the Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association the RDC has undertaken to have all missing markers in place by 1 October 1995 and are currently reviewing the overall lakes management. The Combined Association wants to see the appointment of a full time professional harbour master (rather than a single lakes inspector) who would be backed up by part-time (paid) resident inspectors on each lake. The Association says that the RDC has underfunded the lakes for too long and it is time some professional management procedures were put into place.

In view of these concerns a "performance target" of the RDC this year is:-

'To maintain all lake user information marks, buoys, beacon and signs in working order and to replace (weather permitting) any reported missing within this following timeframe.'

- 1. Between labour weekend and easter weekend within three working days of notification.
- 2. For the balance of the year within three weeks of notification.

MANUPIRUA HOT POOLS

Long time caretaker Peter Nunns departed in June and is now Bar Manager at the Old Lantern Tearooms at Atiamuri - call in and see him sometime. New caretaker Ron Fisher started mid August this year.

After ten years of no change, pool prices have had to go up. Casual adults are now \$4.00, children \$2.00, with annual subscriptions up to \$60.00.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Opinions on our table - Northward councillors (who are all standing again) Charles Sturt - satisfactory, Knocker Dean - satisfactory - Ross Aubertin - disappointing.

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BLUEPRINT

It's not too soon for cannabis growers to start moving into isolated areas to prepare their plots, so keep an eye out for anything suspicious and notify the Police immediately. Vehicles are often left in suspicious places at unusual times. Look out for some of their gear such as netting, fertilizer, portable electric fence units and plastic containers. Anonymous information can be left on the local crime line, Ph. No. 3469-888. Farmers, secure those 4 wheeler bikes.

Did you hear about a Te Awamutu Policeman who received some "hot" information about a cannabis cultivator. He was in so much of a hurry to pass the information that he mucked up the address and arranged for a search team to search his own address instead of the offenders. Ten-One

Two successful Assertive Discipline for Parents Courses were completed recently for parents having difficulties with their children. Because of their popularity another course is being planned for next October. If you need more info, contact Judy GARDNER on 3455-971.

Three children playing in the back of a car in Oregan, U.S.A. held up a sign saying, "Help, I've been kidnapped." A following motorist saw it and called the Police on the mobile phone. 20 minutes later 7 Police cars stopped the car. The driver of the car was not amused by her off-springs antics. Otago Daily Times

It still amazes me that some people can be so lucky with their property when they don't lock it away. Secure your property. Make it difficult to steal. Use commonsense. Develop an effective Neighbourhood Support Group in your area. Contact me for assistance if you want to organise a NSG on Ph. 3453-453. Learn and share ideas on crime prevention.

Two angry burglars rang Police in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, to complain after getting electric shocks while breaking into the home of a do-it-yourselfer. Fed up after 7 burglaries, the householder had installed a home-made protection system. The two burglars, who both suffered burns, told Police, "We want something done about this nut, we could have been killed." - BPA

You don't have to be reminded that the volume of heavy vehicles using the roads in your area is very high and that extra care is required. We often receive calls from motorists using mobile phones complaining about the behaviour of truck drivers travelling to and from Tauranga. We probably receive an equal number of calls from truckies about the antics of some motorists. Nevertheless, we do follow up these complaints, which include overtaking on blind corners, travelling too close behind and slow drivers not pulling over. All road users need to take care.

A man was charged with drunk driving in St Louis after he drove up to an intercom at a Police Station and ordered a hamburger. (Police Life)

G.W. ANARU Community Constable

Te Ngae

WEST ROTOITI VOLUNTEER FIRE UNIT

The big news of 1995 is that the unit now has a new(er) Ford Fire Engine, supplied by the NZ Fire Service. It has been fitted with a VHF radio donated by ECNZ Waikato. In April the new engine was commissioned by Mayor Grahame Hall and Theo DeLange and blessed by Reverend Tu Kingi.

A garage sale was held on the same day as the commissioning. There was an excellent turnout to both functions -thanks for your support.

The Rotorua District Council have serviced the engine and it has already been to several callouts, including traffic accidents, house fires and a few inevitable false alarms. One recent callout was to a timber truck and trailer unit, which rolled at the Okere Falls Store corner — the scene of many such accidents over the years. It took five hours to clear up afterwards.

Training in accident management and traffic control is essential for West Rotoiti Fire volunteers.

One of our volunteers, John O'Connor is leaving the district and we take this opportunity to wish John and Diane all the best in Auckland and thank them for their support.

The heavy rain over recent months has caused some problems. We had one callout to deal with a flooded basement followed by flood control in our fire shed.

Our new relationship with Rotorua District Council and the National Rural Fire Authority is working well and we hope that it continues in a similar vein.

If you have any queries about the fire unit please contact:-

Willie Shaw	3624546	Ted Boucher	3624815
Noel Ruebe	3624814	Okere Falls Store	3624854

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It began for us in 1981. We were living in Gisborne at the time and we bought a holiday bach at Gisborne Point. What wonderful memories were made (often shared with friends and family), fishing, water skiing, swimming, picnics, bush walks, golf, hot pools, the list goes on and on.

Then in 1984 the opportunity came up to shift to Rotorua to live on a permanent basis. The bach provided us with 'stepping stone' accommodation and shortly after we arrived we started looking for a more permanent home in the city. But it wasn't long before we came to the conclusion ... "why not have the best of both worlds - live here in this beautiful lakeside location and work in the city, a short 20-25 minute drive away!". So that is what we did!

We're still here and still love it. Our family love coming here to stay and we have grandchildren now too. In the mid term break we had 3 of them staying with us. The weather wasn't the best but we were able to snatch brief pleasurable times at the nearby recently upgraded playground at the Rotoiti Sports Grounds (within walking distance), the new playground at Hinehopu and the upgraded one at Lake Rotoma. The kids loved them. In the summer the children swim and play with their toys on the waters edge by the reserve.

There is an almost equal balance of permanent residents to holiday homes here at Gisborne Point with a choice of two public boat ramps and a jetty. The location enjoys the benefits of a sunny, north facing aspect and on average in winter, slightly warmer temperatures than in the city.

JOAN PIESSE





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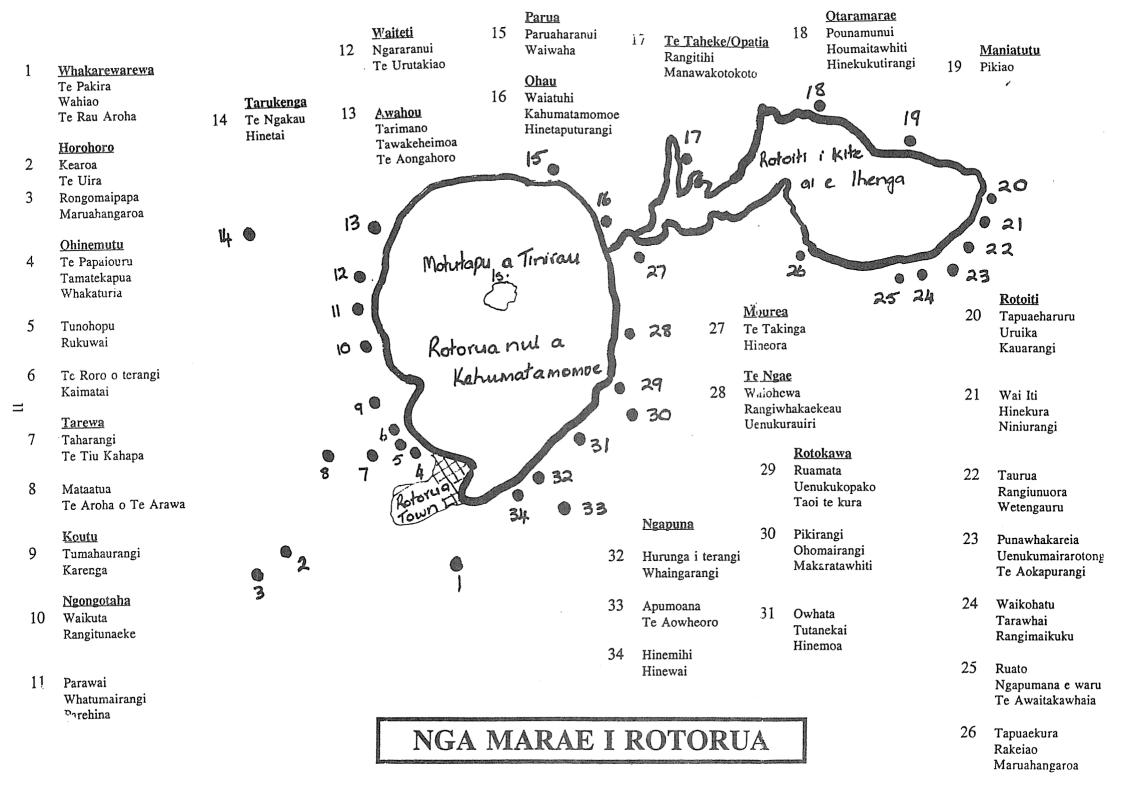
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- MARY STANTON, MOUREA, PH 3624690

- ERNIE CORDWELL, OKERE FALLS, PH 3624748 - THEO DE LANGE, OTARAMARAE, RD4, PH 3624342

- FRED WHATA, OKERE FALLS, PH 3624842

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DAN ARROWSMITH, OKERE FALLS, PH 3624477

- JOAN PIESSE, GISBOURNE POINT, ROTOITI, PH 3627755

- THEO TAIT, HINEHOPU, ROTOITI

CO-OPTED MEMBER - TED THORNE, KORORI, WELLINGTON, LOCAL PH 3624853

HONOURARY MEMBERS - TU KINGI, HIGHWAY 33 MOUREA/OKERE FALLS, PH 3624841

- LOVELACE LEARY, OTARAMARAE RD4, PH 3624635

