



September 2022

RUAWAI RAMBLER

This Issue of the Ruawai Rambler Sponsored by

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From the Editor

Here we are back to the regular size Rambler. End of March I had an accident which left me with several health issues. I did not have the energy for a full-sized Newsletter. I am now recovered; so we are back to a regular Newsletter. Although I have always known that all things have to come to an end, this episode of illness has forcefully been brought to my attention that we must prepare for a time where I will be unable to edit the Rambler. And the necessity to find someone else willing to continue. And, yes, we have found someone. Colleen Glass is going to take it on whenever I feel the time has come to hand it over. Colleen is very computer savvy and has experience with newsletter editing. I will let you know when this is happening. Local body elections are taking place and you can vote from 16 September to 8 October. It is important to know as much as possible about the candidates. To help with this, the RPDG is organising a **"Meet the Candidates Evening"**. Information is included further on in this Newsletter.

The following website will give some ideas what to look out for when voting:

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/local-government/election-transparency>

All our readers will be aware of the CCTV cameras that have been installed around the town. Money is needed for ongoing maintenance. To help with this, Malcolm Joynt is organising some **Quiz Nights**. Again, see further down for details. Well done Malcolm! Malcolm has also added story writing to his abilities.

Further details concerning this down below. Again thanks to our sponsor, advertisers and to those contributing stories and/or information. **For information about the Rambler or for advertising please contact J.H.Wessel; jhwessel@xtra.co.nz; Ph. 439 2507**

Ruawai Promotions and Development group

"Meet the Candidates" Meeting.

6:30 p.m. — 21 September 2022

Ruawai Hall

Ruawai's Future is at a Crossroad.

Global warming and the perception that Ruawai is flood-prone, possibly make these elections the most important ever. Building restrictions have been in place for more than 5 years and the right to subdivide has been withdrawn for Ruawai land owners.

It is vital that we elect representatives who will give high priority to our interests and promote them in any way possible.

There will be one set Question with a maximum speaking time set:

"If Elected: How will you promote the interests of the Ruawai community?"

At the conclusion, questions from the floor will be asked. The Questions must be in writing and presented to the Chair before the meeting commences.

Note:

There are potentially 17 candidates so questions may need to be limited to time available.

At the conclusion of Questions, members of the public will be free to speak in person with the Candidates.

Bruce Crompton; Chair

Disappointing Meeting with Council Staff.

On the 2nd August Elaine and I met with Council staff to discuss the garden and ground maintenance and get a better understanding of the needs of the community. Unfortunately, Covid still lingers in our community or there would have been other committee members present.

We were presented with an ultimatum to remove any involvement (from the RPDG) other than what the Council allows. Under these rules the planter boxes, intersection gardens and medium strip are all out of bounds. The reason given was that it is Council-owned land and the Council is responsible for Health and Safety of any one who worked or works on Council land.

We discussed the improvements that the Community have made to the village over the years — at no cost to Council. We related that the RPDG have funded the planter boxes, Gazebo, Face Board, seating around town, medium strip (with Memorial Plaques) and were in the process of purchasing and installing extra picnic tables on the Village Green; not to mention CCTV and the Ruawai Walkway.

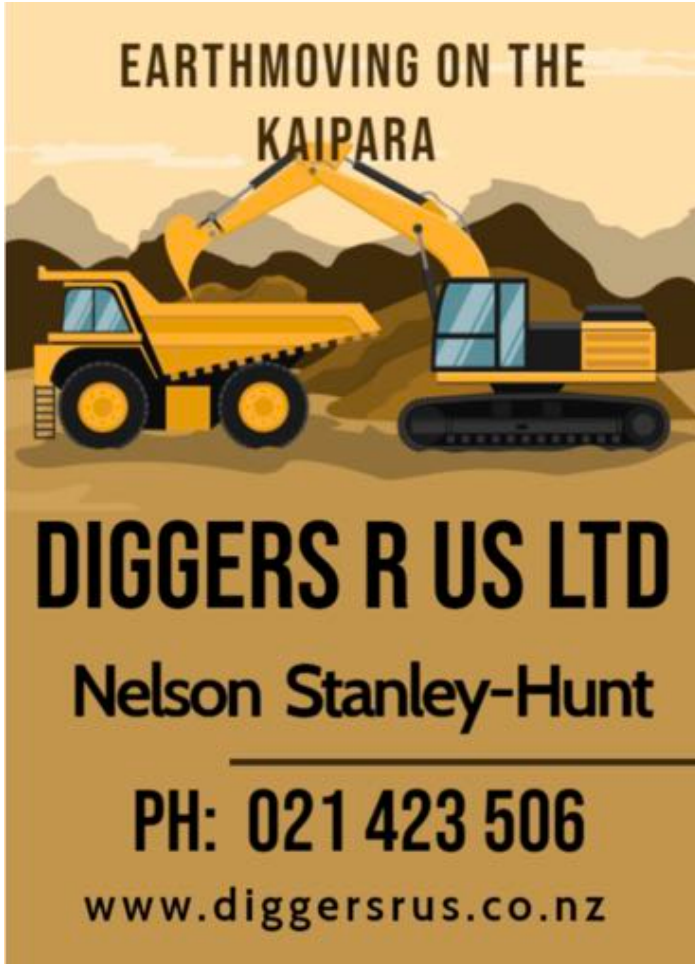
The response: If Council saw fit to remove, re-arrange, or in any way change or take ownership of property funded by us on Council land, they have the power to do this. There was no willingness to work through the H&S issues to find a solution.

The RPDG have put on hold plans for improvements to the Village green until a working relationship can be established with Council.

Please feel free to voice your concern at our "Meet the Candidates Meeting" on the 21st September.

Or email: lstott@kaipara.govt.nz; c/c to bcrompt@xtra.co.nz

Bruce Crompton, Chair Person of RPDG



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The following article is from your local 'Postie'. Read carefully, and as the saying goes: "If the shoe fits...."

A Relief Postie's Tale of Crystal Ball Gazing



The day starts early; into the Sorting Room to sort the day's mail. It should be pretty straight forward really and it is for the Postie who's been doing the run for years. They've seen all the comings and goings and know who lives where; even if the names don't match the Sorting Room slots. They know that a letter, addressed to Mrs X Dweller at 37 This Rd., should actually go to 82 That St. because she moved 3 years ago and a few notifications got forgotten. They know that a power bill addressed to Mr. I. Longtime - Resident, Reallylong Rd. is for Ian at number 1793. They know that something addressed to Mr. D. Youknow, RD2 is Dave at 854 Some Rd. They know that four houses on Short St (but not

all houses) share a mailbox, but it only has one number on it. They know that the box with a 6 on it is actually 16 but the 1 fell off, two years ago. They even know what number all the boxes are (sometimes in groups of 2, 3 or 4) with absolutely no numbers on them. And which neighbours will pop mistakes in the right box and which ones won't. *They just know.* But — then comes along a Relief Postie. They can remember some of the above. They learn it slowly - but in the meantime there's a lot of head scratching and swearing. They get out on the road, deliver letters, papers and parcels to beautiful shiny, numbered boxes. To the old microwave ovens in varying degrees of "holding it together" (and beware the ones where the door shuts but the hinges are gone). To the boxes hiding behind bushes, toitoi and gorse. To wasp nests and cockroach hotels — and no numbers. They stop, scratch their heads, swear, ring the Regular Postie and sometimes miss a box completely. It was probably just a bill anyway.

The parcels (lots of them) have been sorted into areas, then into the order they will be delivered - allowing for when side roads (and there's a lot) fit into the scheme of things. They are scanned and stacked into the van in order - and hopefully stay in place. Every corner is a potential disaster; with the possibility of a rogue parcel rolling into a gap and hiding there, waiting until the van is 20km past the address — when it will pop up and say "Hi! Remember me?"

So, if you think your mailbox could do with a little TLC, get out there! Fix the door, replace the number (both sides are better than one side); or just on the front. Bang another nail in if it's falling off its perch, pull out or cut back the weeds and bushes that make access difficult, fill in the muddy hole in front of it...

And if your parcel Track and Trace said: "Out for Delivery" but it didn't arrive (a pretty rare occurrence by the way) it's probably one of those naughty ones that saw a gap and took it.

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Ruawai Garden Club Notice

Get-Together for Cuppa' and Chat

Date:

Thursday 15th September

Time: 10 am

Place: Ruawai Bowling Club

All Welcome!

Merle Jackson

Publicity Officer

Fun Quiz Nights



Do you watch "The Chase" on TV and wish you could 'have a go'?

Here is your chance at the next best thing! Malcolm Joynt is organising a few quiz nights, with proceeds to go toward the 'Ruawai Security Camera Funds'. As with everything, money is needed for ongoing maintenance. No \$\$\$\$ to win but a lot of fun and find out how clever you are. There will be 1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes. Each night there will be 5 categories of 10 questions each. Each team will nominate one category that they think is their best before the evening begins. They will then double their points in that round. **Dates are 1st October, 29th October and, if there is enough interest, the 26th November. The event will be held at the Ruawai Bowling Club. Kickoff at 7:30pm. \$40 per table/team of four.** A cash bar is available. If you want to enter a team, please contact Malcolm at 027 443 6140.

Malcolm is also organising a **Market Day, starting the 2nd Sunday in October, 11am until 3pm at the Ruawai Primary School grounds. Stalls are \$10 each.** Again, contact Malcolm at 027 443 6140, or malcolmjoynt63@gmail.com for further info or to book a site.

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The Moosletter

Hi from us all at the Vet Centre. Hope everyone is enjoying the drought-free conditions at the moment! Most of us at the Clinic now have had Covid. Interestingly, we have all caught it from out of work so we have not caught it from each other or our clients. So that shows what we have been doing to prevent transmission in the Clinic has worked; which is pleasing. The Vet Centre has a new General Manager — Darren Rowbottom. His last job was overseeing the Hundertwasser building at the Whangarei town basin so he brings a broad skill set to the job. As always, one of Darren's and the Vet Centre's biggest challenges is getting and retaining Vets.

Vets are a bit of a scarce commodity at the moment. So keeping the service quality and quantity sufficient for Ruawai community is a challenge; but we are still here. We have a new Technician, Emma, to add to the team to help keep our farm jobs up to date. Despite the mud, the grass has kept growing well over winter and in general things are going well on our dairy farms this season. In the small animal department, spring is rapidly approaching. So now is a great time to make sure cats are desexed to avoid more kittens adding to our large local cat population. **Take care Janine**



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Lions Club of Ruawai



On 21st July the Lions Club of Ruawai held their annual Change of Officers night which was a wonderful evening. Many Lions, Friends of Lions and prospective new members were present. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a Lloyd Morgan Life Membership Award to Rosemary Webb our President. This is the highest honour in New Zealand awarded to people whose contribution to Lions deserves special recognition. Rosemary works tirelessly, both publicly and behind the scenes. On 30th July Ruawai College held a highly successful Open Day. Lions had a stall, to promote Lions and Leos and to continue to develop strong bonds with community groups and our community partnership with the College. On 7th September, 11 am to 1 pm, the Lions Club of Ruawai is holding a WIG WEDNESDAY stall outside the Ruawai Four Square. We are supporting Child Cancer Research; one of Lion's international causes. All proceeds will be donated to the Child Cancer Foundation.

So wear your wig or spray your hair and come and join us at a sausage sizzle and buy some raffle tickets to make this a fun event. On Saturday 21st a group of us planted 44 more native trees at the Te Kowhai Reserve. The working bee concluded with a very pleasant picnic lunch. If you would like to find out more about Lions, please contact President Rosemary: 09 4392029 or Club Administrator Dorothy: 094392557

Donna Rickwood; Marketing and Promotions



We are recruiting now

Have you ever wanted to be more involved in your community, learn new skills and help those in need? Well now is your time.

Ruawai Volunteer Fire Brigade is recruiting and we want you!

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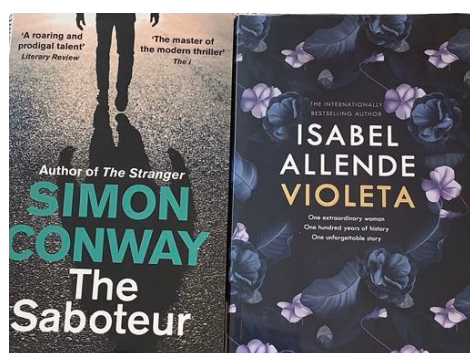
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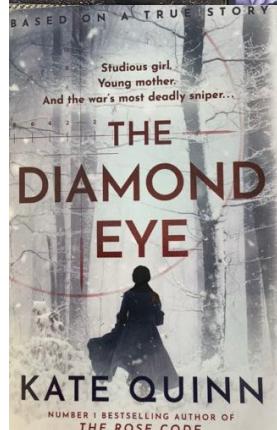


The Saboteur by Simon Conway

This is a sequel to his book "The Stranger". I hadn't read that and you don't need to; this is a great standalone read. It's packed with action, political intrigue and suspense; a spy thriller to keep you happy on a cold winter's night.

Violeta by Isabel Allende

Violeta Del Valle is born in Chile in 1920; she is now 100. Spanish Flu arrived in Chile the year she was born - and now there's Covid. The book is a series of letters to her Grandson, Camilo. She recalls the changes, disasters and upheavals; the births, marriages, deaths and love affairs that have occurred in her long life. This is an inspiring and emotional read. I really enjoyed it!



The Diamond Eye by Kate Quinn

Mila Pavlichenko was a loving single Mum, studying to improve the life of herself and her son as WWII broke out. Already an accomplished shot, she volunteered as a sniper; undergoing intensive training to improve her skills. All this would lead you to believe a stereotype of a cold-blooded, pitiless person. But, as her diaries show, this was far from the truth; she was funny, warm-hearted and caring. She was known as "Lady Death", had 309 confirmed kills to her name and was wounded at least 4 times. She was sent on a publicity tour to the USA to try to get more support for Russia, her reputation preceding her. She met the President and became friends with his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. The book is full of action, describes war as hardly any of us would know it. It's based on fact but the author has explained where and why she has changed some details. It's an incredible story well worth reading.



Emma Philips – Writing Success

Year 11 Ruawai College student Emma Philips competed in this year's National Flash Fiction Day.

Emma won runner-up for her story "He Didn't Really Care for Her" in the flash fiction category of 300 words or less, first place for "She Wanted to be an Author" in the micro category of 100 words or less, and first place in the flash fiction category for her story "A Starry Night in the Life of a Museum Guard" for the Tai Tokerau region. Another of Emma's short stories, "Return of Nyctophobia", (*Nyctophobia - Extreme or irrational fear of the night or of darkness*) was one of the top twenty entries submitted in the National Flash Fiction Day Youth Competition run by Fingers Comma Toes magazine.

Tasharna Keogh – Local Cheerleading Superstar

Talented cheerleader and Year 11 Ruawai College student Tasharna Keogh competed with her

cheerleading club Active Attitude at Cheer Fest in Auckland on Saturday 2 July 2022 where she placed 1st in her duo performance, 2nd in her individual routine and 1st in her student group category.

Tasharna then went on to compete in the Battle in the Bay competition in Tauranga on Saturday 6 August 2022 with her club, where she placed 1st in all three categories – individual, duo and stunt group.



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White Rock Gallery News September 2022



The gallery had another successful Exhibition Opening on 5th August. These occur every second month, after the art has all been removed and a fresh new lot of artwork put up. All of our visitors are offered free drinks and snacks and we find it to be a very social and enjoyable day for everyone. Our next Exhibition Opening day will be at the beginning of October so please come along if you're able to. Everyone is welcome. Keep an eye out for our advertising. Starting in September, the gallery will be open from Tuesday to Sunday. We decided to close on Mondays as this is normally the quietest day. We are always looking for

new members. If you enjoy creating art, crafts or both of these we'd love to have you join us. It's an amazing feeling when someone likes what you do and actually buys it! Don't be shy. If you don't paint or craft but would like to help us out by doing a rostered shift on the desk, we would love to hear from you. If you are interested in joining us you can email whiterockgallerynz@gmail.com or phone the Secretary on 021 250 8613 if you'd like more information, or just pop into the gallery. We have both a Facebook and an Instagram page, so follow us if you want to, by searching for White Rock Gallery NZ. A big thank you to all of the locals who pop in to buy from us. Your support is very much appreciated.





8th October 2022



The Kauri Museum

The Kauri Museum in Matakohē is holding a free open day in October to mark its 60th Birthday. The Museum holds images, records and objects from all over the northern Kaipara, including Ruawai. In this image from around 1918, a large crowd of local farmers and stock agents can be seen inspecting bullocks in the Ruawai stock yards.



A History of the Art Studio Ruawai

By 1913/14 there was a concern, to a lot of people in the area, that there was no place to worship. It was decided to build, what was called, a Mission Hall at the corner of Creamery Road (now Te Kowhai Rd.) and the State Highway. A Trust was formed by four denominations in the area — Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist. Rope Bros. were the contractors. The cost of the building amounted to almost 250 pounds and of a size that would be capable of seating 100 people. The Hall became known as 'The Trust Church' and an agreement (as to which denomination and which Sunday) was decided by drawing straws. Worshipping continued in this church from 1935 to 1963; at which time each denomination acquired their own buildings and The Trust Church became vacant.

It was handed to the Scouts Association and was removed to School Road where it was used by Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies. The Scouts Association in Ruawai was disbanded in approximately 1997 and the Hall again became vacant. In its vacancy the Hall was neglected and had become in a bad state of repair. It was now inhabited by nesting birds (whose access had been gained through several broken windows). It was decided to keep the Hall so a major cleanup and restoration was begun. In 2009 it became the home of several keen artists as the Ruawai Night School Art classes had been cancelled. Art Studio Ruawai, as it is now called, is well-established. Members meet every Wednesday (during school terms) from 10am until 2:30pm. If anyone is interested in joining us, or even to pay a visit, you will certainly be very welcome. The Studio may also be open to visitors or groups by appointment. For any enquiries please phone: Frances (09) 4392554.

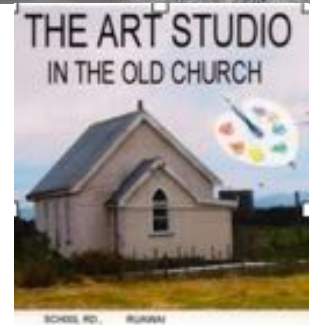
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Arapohue Retreat throws down the jandal Help and healing off the beaten track

The Wild Side Charitable Trust is responding to the urgent need in our community for a residential healing and recovery centre. Arapohue Retreat is being established after the old Arapohue Bush Camp was purchased in August 2020. The buildings were very run down and required major work to be carried out before adequate accommodation is available to fully commence the residential programme.

In the last year, restoration work has been completed on three main accommodation buildings (The Farmhouse, Dargaville House and The Cottage) which are now occupied by volunteer staff, a paid staff member and a couple of respite guests. Although not officially open, Arapohue Retreat has already helped over 8 people get their lives back on track.

Okahu House has been partially restored (new roof, some building repairs, electrical work and downstairs floor restored). It still requires plumbing, toilet and hand basin, kitchenette, window and door repairs, ceiling repair and insulation, and interior and exterior paint. Bunks and bedroom furniture have been purchased but rugs, curtains and light fittings are still required.

Arapohue Retreat are looking for partnership from businesses or organisations in the Kaipara and Northland who understand the social responsibility of helping people in our community get free from addictions and healing for trauma. They need donations, grants and practical help to continue the restoration work. The next project is Stage 1 of Crawshaw Lodge kitchen restoration so that more people can be fed from a well-equipped kitchen facility. The estimated cost is \$27,000 to repair and outfit half of the kitchen area. A huge thanks to Bruce Crompton of Crompton Engineering for tackling the mammoth job of cutting the old diesel stove in half for removal.

We could also do with some gardening help, if there are any ladies who would like to help with flower gardens and orchard care for our young trees, you'd be most welcome. For more info or to make contact, call Ray on 439 5717 or email ray@thewildside.net | www.wildsidetrust.org



A Dog Story

Malcolm Joynt told me that he had a conversation with his grandson about growing up in the '50's and decided to write a short story for him. It is called "Useless" and features a boy and his dog. Malcolm says the story is part fact, part fiction. I liked the story and hope you do too. It is fairly long, so I have added a few pages to the Rambler and can publish the story over two or three issues.

Useless by Malcolm Joynt

"Our boy needs a dog" Marie said to her husband, Kevin, as they lay in bed one winter's evening.

The Wilson's had a small dairy farm on the Ruawai flats. 29 hectares was small for an economic dairy unit in this modern era so, in order to make ends meet, Kevin would frequently take on off-farm work on a contract basis. All of this meant that Marie was often left in charge of the home farm as well as the 63-hectare hill farm they also had. This hill farm was mainly used for wintering stock on when the "Flats" (as the locals referred to the Ruawai area) became too wet to carry large animals. However, through the later part of spring and autumn it was also a valuable resource for running non-milking stock on and, therefore, freeing up good grass for the milkers or hay.



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The last thing we need on this farm is another bloody useless dog! You can't even get the one we have to work for you." was Kevin's reply. "Anyway I have a big couple of days ahead of me so I don't want to discuss it now. Good night."

At least he didn't say no, thought Marie as she slowly drifted off to sleep with a smile on her face. That's a step in the right direction.

"Our boy" was Eric Wilson, just coming up to his 9th birthday and was Marie's right hand man on the property when Kevin was working off-farm. He seemed to have a natural feel for the farm and its machinery. He was totally at one with every animal on the farm, including the farm dog that totally ignored anything Marie said to it. Eric was also only too happy to be involved in the farm chores. In fact it was not unknown for Marie to be so totally engrossed in getting the family dinner organised that she would not even notice Eric walk into his sleepout room, after getting off the bus from school, change into his farm clothes and head on up to the cowshed to start the afternoon milking. Marie's first inkling that time was slipping past would be when, upon hearing the cowshed machinery start up, she would glance out the kitchen window and see all 70 dairy cows in the yard waiting their turn to go through the shed.

Marie thought that life was pretty good in the Wilson household. Sure, they struggled from time to time to find extra money for luxuries, particularly if there was not a lot of contracting work coming Kevin's way. But when he was working off-farm, they had as much spare cash as those that Kevin referred to as the "big boys" did.

Finally, a day came when it seemed to Marie that she had all of her ducks in a row. Kevin had a very rare day off, all the farm chores and jobs that needed to be done had been done, the cows were dried off for their winter rest, Eric was on school holidays and the sun was shining (on what Maria thought) had the makings of a great day.

Breakfast was mince on toast with a fried egg on top, out on the deck; a breakfast that was certain to put Kevin in an agreeable mood - and this was step one of Marie's plan. Over the second cup of tea, Marie began the next step of her plan to get the family to Whangarei. She opened up with "There are a few things I would like to do in Whangarei today so why don't we make it a family outing?"

"I thought I was probably being buttered up over something with a breakfast like that. What are you scheming about now? Besides, I still have to make sure the hay racks are full before we can go anywhere so we would be a little later leaving."

"Eric, would you go and check the hay racks for dad and just tow them about 5 metres with the quad so the animals aren't losing what they drop in the mud?"

"Yeah, no problem. It should only take a little while. I could be ready to go in about an hour if we are going out for the day."

"Excellent, see you soon my love."

As Eric disappeared out the door to do as he was asked, Kevin looked at his wife across the outdoor table with raised eyebrows and said, "I am thinking there is quite a bit more to this 'few things in Whangarei' with that little move you pulled. Come on, what's the go, organising Eric out of the house like that?"

"You know that with your contracting work becoming close to full time, I am relying more and more heavily on Eric to keep the farm and house running. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining, I enjoy the extra money that you are bringing in and I know you enjoy the variety of work, not knowing from one day to the next what you will be doing."

"But?"

"But I believe it's time we rewarded Eric for all the things he willingly does for me. I don't know if you realise it but Eric starts most afternoon milkings without me while I'm organising dinner. I haven't said anything in the past because I didn't want you to feel guilty."

"Well, you'll get no argument from me about rewarding him. What were you thinking of for this reward?"

"Do you remember the other night, as we were going to sleep, I mentioned that our boy needs a dog? Well, the article in the Advocate yesterday said the Whangarei SPCA is full to overflowing with dogs." "Like I said the other night," Kevin replied, "I don't need another useless dog on the property - but after a breakfast like that I suppose it won't hurt to go and have a look. Go on, go and get your flash gear on. I'm not going to be seen in some restaurant having lunch with someone who looks like they just walked off the farm!"

Eric came back through the door having kicked his boots off outside. "Are we going anywhere?" he inquired of his mother.

"Yep, sure are, the shower's free so get yourself tidied up and we are out of here!"

"Right, everybody in, check; seat belts on, check. I'm in charge of air conditioning. Eric, is there anything you would like to do today?"

"Not specially. Any chance of KFC for lunch? I'm just happy to be going out as a family."

"Has your mother been coaching you on all the right answers to give, young man?" Kevin said in a stern voice but with a huge grin on his face as he gazed at his son in the rear vision mirror.

"Mum tells me that with me working away from home so much," Kevin continued, "that you have really been stepping up to the plate and I am really proud to hear it. Soooo, we have a little surprise in store for you today and, no, we won't be having KFC for lunch; we are going somewhere flash. But we could bring a bucket home for dinner and maybe lunch tomorrow. "What's the surprise?"

"Well, if we told you it wouldn't be a surprise anymore, would it? So you'll just have to wait. It's only an hour to Whangarei."

"Arhhh," was Eric's reply.

Marie's heart was just about bursting with the love she felt for these two people in the car with her. She knew that they would be getting a dog today, provided there was one suitable. She reached over and gave Kevin's knee a squeeze and mouthed the words, "I love you!"

Dog number WH4572 had not been long at the Whangarei SPCA and because of this he was in a cage by himself. It was fair to say that 4572 didn't have a lot of faith in human beings. He had been found wandering the streets in Thames at about 6 months of age. His parentage was definitely mixed because, although he had a long black body he also had short legs, floppy ears and a long hairy nose and mouth. Finally, he also had ginger eyebrows and a smattering of ginger hairs on his chest, thanks to the Huntaway that had featured in his family tree some generations before. Plus he had a deep loud bark reminiscent of the same dog.

Once he had stopped being a cute floppy puppy back in Thames, life had become an exercise in staying out of every human's way because they either swore at him, kicked him or, when he started roaming, threw stones and sticks at him. So, realising he wasn't welcome at home or at anyone else's home, he took to scavenging for food, eating anything he could find and scoffing it down before some human saw him or a bigger dog stole it off him. It wasn't long before he was totally lost and homeless. Life led him down to where the fishing boats were moored because there was usually something to eat lying around and there were plenty of places to hide. He would often curl up on the back of a boat for the night out of the wind and rain. Unfortunately, fishermen didn't worry too much about wind and rain and he would often be surprised, while in a deep sleep, by them coming aboard to start the day's or night's work which generally resulted in a kicking by heavy sea boots and shouted abuse as he was chased ashore. As a result, if a human smelled of fish, they were to be avoided at all cost.

Eventually he was rounded up by the pound officer and, after spending several months in the Thames SPCA, he was moved to Auckland where they hoped he would have a better chance of adoption. So TH3765 became AKD 3765. It wasn't all bad being in the SPCA; the food was regular - but the exercise was always with other dogs. And because he didn't trust any other dog (having had many bad experiences with both dogs and cats as a stray) he was never happy exercising, avoiding it as much as possible. And so boredom became one of his biggest problems.

Finally the day came when this man stopped outside his cage and said I'll take that one he looks like he could do with a home and he's not too big. Although 3765 was totally unaware of the fact, his new owner, Brent, did spend a reasonable amount of money going through the adoption process; money he had gotten gambling on one of the very few occasions he had not walked away with empty pockets. However, he did lie to the SPCA staff and told them that his brother was a vet in south Auckland and so he would take care of the castration; which greatly reduced the amount of money he had to pay.

Brent was employed as a green keeper at one of the city's golf courses and soon began taking 3765 (whom he had now called Rex) with him to work. Rex knew when he was onto a good thing and as Brent had never abused or struck him, he was enjoying his life with Brent both at home and at work. However, his memory was long and, although comfortable with Brent, he stayed pretty close trotting along beside him as he moved from task to task or following whatever machine he was operating. But none of Brent's co-workers could get anywhere near him, such was his fear of strangers.

One day, Brent's supervisor, Gary, came to him and told him he was leaving at the end of the following week to take up a contract with the Whangarei City Council. He'd be looking after parks and reserves and asked if Brent would like to move north and work with him. It seemed like a good idea at the time; he was getting a bit bored doing the same thing over and over. So telling himself that a change was as good as a rest, he agreed and handed in his notice as well.

Taking a further two weeks off to get himself set up in Whangarei, Brent slipped into the habit of going into one of the numerous bars for a beer and a bit of a gamble most afternoons. He had managed to find a reasonably priced unit to rent that had a fully fenced back yard for Rex and was within handy walking distance to most things in town.

A little too handy it turned out for, after a couple of months of park and reserve work, one of his supervising Council bosses became suspicious of Brent's all too common afternoon appointments and followed him into town. Having watched him walk into what had become Brent's favourite bar, he had positioned himself in his car across the road so he could see when Brent left the bar. This was with several of his new friends in tow and this was happening at around eight in the evening. They'd walk to Brent's home and continue drinking the contents of the box they had bought on the way into, what the supervisor (assumed), would be the small hours of the morning.

The next day, the Council Supervisor went to Brent's landlord and told him the Council was withdrawing their guarantee of Brent's rent and good conduct as it was unlikely he would be working for them much longer. He then called Gary on his cell phone and asked how many hours he had booked in for Brent's work on the previous day. When told it was a full 9-hour day, he told Gary to either get rid of his worker or lose the contract as Brent had started drinking his first beer at pretty close to 1.45 p.m yesterday. And it was anyone's guess how many other days he'd booked him in a full day's pay when he'd left and been on the turps. My gut tells me that you have, up until now, been unaware of his actions and there's no way to know how often it has happened. However, once is once too many.

Gary had driven to where Brent was supposed to be mowing one of the park areas they looked after and found him arriving at just before 10 in the morning. As Brent got out of the van he saw Gary and hurriedly apologised for his late arrival at work saying he had had a couple of little jobs to take care of in town. Gary took the van's keys out of Brent's hand and laid everything on the line regarding what he knew about yesterday afternoon. He then told Brent he would pay him to the end of the week, 8 hours a day, and never wanted to see him again.

He then drove Brent back to his unit only to find the landlord coming out the front door and the landlord was not amused.

"You have had a dog in this flat and our agreement is NO PETS! Pack up your gear and get out, I am evicting you. I have talked to your neighbours and they tell me the noise is constant when you are here - music, arguments and swearing; so go!"

Brent did just that, he packed a hurried bag and walked out the door giving no thought to Rex at all. In Brent's gambler's mind, Rex (although having been good company when he was in Auckland) had become a drain on his funds; funds that Brent could better use on his afternoon visits to the bars.

As a result of this Rex now found himself a stray again only this time it was even more serious, he was outside with little water and no food and he was trapped inside the fence that contained him. All of this took place on a Wednesday afternoon and, due to the party the night before, Rex had not been fed (it had not crossed Brent's mind that he should feed the animal in the morning). The dog knew that with strangers in the house he was safer outside.