



The Newtown News

June 2018

Brought to you by The
Newtown Community and
Cultural Centre

Kia Ora Newtown

Kia Ora everyone!

Welcome to the June issue of the Newtown News. This week I found myself exploring the nooks and crannies of the Community Centre. Stashed deep in a cupboard I found reams and reams of stunning baby pink paper, two sheets of which you are now holding in your hot little hands. Amongst an assortment of art supplies and kids' toys I also found the most elusive treasure of all - a load of tupperware complete with matching lids! Can you believe it?

Alongside long-lost tupperware, this month we are celebrating the fantastic festival of Matariki. Matariki is the Māori name for the cluster of stars known as the Pleiades. It rises in mid-winter and, for many Māori, heralds the start of a new year. This year in Wellington, Matariki will be a major city celebration. Keep an eye out for free public events during June and July, with a spectacular fireworks display on July 7 at the waterfront.

Matariki has also got me thinking about the New Year's resolutions that I set at the start of the year. Yes, I have kicked sugar, much to my office mate Renee's dismay, although it does mean she gets extra chocolatey treats, so keep on bringing them in!

Since we're also at the halfway point in the calendar year, perhaps it's time for you to make a few extra goals, or if you didn't quite kick-start those New Year's resolutions, give them another crack. I'm thinking I might have a "winter clean" to see what other treasures I can find hidden in the depths of drawers and in the back of cupboards (hopefully more coloured paper...)

As our nod to Matariki and Te Ao Māori, turn to page 5 as regular contributor Deepa-Rose Sealy shares some inspiring thoughts on the festival. My good friend Zook also joins us this issue with a cool comic - if you dig what she does I encourage you to check out her website www.lennyzook.com. Mhairi McGregor is back on page 7 with a movie review, encouraging us all to make up our own minds about new Kiwi flick *The Breaker Upperers*.

Be sure to note our trigger warning on page 4 as we introduce some of Wellington's crucial support services. Finally, as always, Newtown proves itself an exciting place to live with loads happening all over. Check out "What's the Happs?" on the back page to see what we got goin' on!

Ngā mihi,

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Notorious NEWBowner

Eryn Gribble sits down for a chat with the notorious Riki Singleton where you can often find him: propped up on a stool, sharing chuckles and chatter with his mates behind the counter at Black Coffee on Riddiford Street...

Riki doesn't look too different today than when I first met him some four years ago. He's scraggly and casual as always, but this time he's not limping and blistered from a long hitchhike and a 50km barefoot walk to a festival site!

As we settle into the sun in the courtyard of Black Coffee, I'm excited to learn more about my friend. I was surprised to find out recently that Riki could drum. "Oh, but I can't! I try!" he laughs. I suspect he is being modest. He tells me that when a friend, singer and guitarist Abby, came around to help him move, she spied his drumkit stashed in the corner, which Riki would bash on when no one else was in earshot.

"Abby said she would take it, that she could use the drumkit that I didn't have room for. Then she said she needed a drummer!"

That was six months ago and their band WitchBlade has since recorded one low-fi lounge-room demo of three tracks and played a gig in Paekakariki. Many readers might not be familiar with the names of the genres that WitchBlade fit into their sound - a bit of doom, stoner, post-punk, but mostly a heavy groove that people seem to dig dancing to. The band has affectionately dubbed their unique blend of sounds as "Witch rock".

As if he wasn't busy enough, Riki also has two kids fast growing into teenagers, Rosie and Amber.

"They're really cool people! They're super independent. I feel like I'm okay, ya know? I did a good job. Before having kids I was a bit of a munter. I didn't really care about myself too much. In order to care about them, I had to start caring about me first".



Riki credits a freaky skate-boarding near-death experience on Rintoul Street and the connection he made with his community of like-minded friends as being turning points in his life that encouraged him to start caring more about himself.

"We started The Abundance Project at the Community Centre. It was all about sharing your thoughts and feelings. I realised you could be open without getting sh*t for it. It was awesome".

Something else Riki shares is his passion for pinball with his daughter Rosie. The duo have competed in more than twelve tournaments and travelled from Christchurch to Auckland to play on new machines. Riki often picks up odd jobs for the owners of the pinball machines, who give him tokens in return. The hobby can get expensive when some games last only 30 seconds!

With that, Riki's phone beeps at the same time the car outside the cafe waiting for him does. Always with something to do and someone to see, he jumps up to grab his ride out to art school - The Learning Connexion - where he is currently studying 3D design.

I'll be sure to see Riki and his infectious grin at WitchBlade's next gig at Caroline on June 23rd. Check out the band out at <https://witchblade.bandcamp.com/>

Introducing support services in Wellington

Trigger warning: this article contains information about sexual abuse.

Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP works with survivors of sexual abuse – of any age or gender. We provide a 24/7 support and call out line as well as social work and counselling services for anyone who has experienced rape or sexual abuse, or who is concerned about a friend or family member.

HELP is one of a small group of not-for-profit agencies in Wellington which provide specialist support for survivors of sexual abuse. We work closely with our partners in the sexual abuse and prevention community including Wellington Rape Crisis, The Sexual Abuse Prevention Network (SAPN), Wellstop, MOSAIC and our community partners working in family violence.

Research shows that up to 1 in 3 girls will be subject to an unwanted sexual experience by the age of 16 years, and a study carried out by national student group 'Thursdays in Black' showed that 39% of women had experienced sexual violence before they had even begun their tertiary education. Sexual violence also affects up to 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 2 trans/gender diverse people.

With the recent media attention around these figures of sexual abuse and the #METOO campaign bringing sexual violence into view, we are seeing more survivors coming forward to report their experience, both recent and historical. As awareness has heightened, a safer environment has been created for those who have experience of sexual harm to reach out and tell their story. This financial year we are on track to see 700 new clients - more than twice the number we are contracted to support. In fact, our counselling services have seen a 26% increase in the past year.

Some great work is already happening in this space. Wellington City Council has already partnered with Wellington District Police and students to launch the 'Don't Guess the Yes' sexual violence prevention campaign, encouraging safer behaviour among young people when they are out and about. There has been a recent launch of the 'Safe to Talk' national helpline and the government just launched an inquiry into institutional abuse of children in state care.

We want to see Wellington become a leader in this field. Just as we were the first Living Wage city in New Zealand, and just as we led on the nuclear-free issue, we believe now is the time for Wellington, as the nation's thriving capital, to lead on ending sexual violence in our schools, workplaces and communities.

Wellington HELP has recently launched a fundraising appeal, running from now until the street collection days on 22/23 June. If you would like to sign up to volunteer or for any more info visit www.wellingtonhelp.org.nz. For confidential support call HELP at 04 801 6655 and push '0' at the menu, or 'Safe to Talk' at 0800 044 334.

Fly

Deepa-Rose Sealy



Deepa-Rose Sealy

Ahakoā he iti whetū ki runga ki te rangi nui pōkēkēao ūhia kia ngaro, e kore e ngaro.

Even though the stars shining in the night sky might be obscured by a passing cloud, they will never be obliterated.

As you read this, Matariki (Pleiades) and perhaps Puanga (Rigel in Orion) will be rising high into our skies, showering us with autumn well-being and the coming glow of winter. This is a chance to borrow from our ancestors and take stock of ourselves and our supplies.

Is your *pātaka* (storehouse) full of food and good cheer?

For me the coming of winter heralds an envelope of hibernation, cozy and quiet. It's a time when I feel depleted of energy, and where a punctuation mark hangs over my life, a comma in the year's activities.

This Matariki I would like to make space for new beginnings in my garden and my community. My energy will be spent vicariously, surging forth in little seedlings and in thoughts linking to the ancient wisdom of our land and skies. This is also the time of the year to celebrate the fertility of the mind and soul, after all.

While I don't have a *tohunga kōkōrangi* (astronomical expert) to help align the best times for planting, I do have some traditional wisdom nourishing me and my *mahi* (work).

According to ancient Māori wisdom, Matariki can determine when to plant crops such as kumara. Bright, clear stars translate to a healthy season and harvest, while hazy, bunched stars mean a colder winter is forecast and planting should be postponed. If the skies are hazy, plants can die before they can establish themselves and their roots.

Like me, perhaps you feel your roots need to deepen too?

Given Matariki marks the beginning of the cold, there is no better time to share your *pātaka* of preserves with your family and friends. To sit around the sources of heat, the elder, or the fading glow in the afternoon sky. To reflect on the past and the future.

There is no better time to slow down, to revel being indoors with your people while the wet and cold pelts down outside. No better excuse to be all together and to chip away at your reserves of food and have yourself a *haukai* (feast) on communal food and thoughts.

And when that is done, go out and raise your *manu* (kite) of celebration and fly.

Fly high into the skies, amidst the gods and goddesses.

And the stars.

Me mātau ki te whetū, i mua i te kōkiri o te haere.
Before you set forth on a journey, be sure you know the stars.

Take up Te Reo

We've found a few choice words to add to your Te Reo vocab this month...

Aroha mai

(Sorry, I'm sorry, apologies)

Aroha mai is a great replacement for the casual "Sorry!" and "Excuse me!" that we find ourselves often saying. When you bump into someone, forget your train of thought or get something wrong, just say "Aroha mai". Aroha means love, and mai means 'to me, to myself'. Forgive yourself first as you ask for forgiveness from others.

Ihi

(essential force, excitement, thrill, power, charm, personal magnetism, psychic force as opposed to spiritual power)

Ihi is different from mana as it is all about the power that a person gains from their ability to influence – their charisma, talent or charm! Outside of an personal context, ihi can be used to describe a sun beam or a ray of light. In both cases, it's all about radiance.

Taonga

(treasure)

Taonga can describe anything that is valuable - it could be objects, words or even a treasured memory. It's often used when referring to artefacts or heirlooms as well as treasured natural resources like ancestral lands, rivers and mountains.

What's your favourite Te Reo word or phrase?



Zook



This movie might break you up... or not!

Mhairi McGregor

After hearing many mixed reactions from people I know, it was with trepidation that I booked my tickets to *The Breaker Upperers*. I had been warned that a few people were walking out! Was this really shaping up to be the cult Kiwi classic we were expecting from some of New Zealand's top comedic talent? Well...

The story follows Jen and Mel (Jackie van Beek and Madeleine Sami) who run a break up service for people wanting help to split from their partners. A hilarious opening montage showed all the quirky ways the two go about extinguishing love, using questionable ruses including fake pregnancies, the 'other woman' service and disappearances. My friend and I both found the opening particularly entertaining, with a rollercoaster of laughs in the first ten minutes.

Then 17-year-old Jordan, played by *Boy's* James Rolleston, visits the agency for help breaking up with his 'missus', Sepa. Things start to unravel when he gets romantically involved with Mel, who spends the rest of her time dressed up as a policewoman with Jen, telling people their spouses have gone missing. The performance from Aussie comedian Celia Pacquola as Anna, one of the falsely-widowed clients, was genuinely heart-breaking. My friend thought it was hilarious!

As the movie went on, the story became less about the break up service and more of a buddy film

about a fight and make-up between the two title characters, Jen and Mel. Alongside a sub-plot about a shared ex-boyfriend, there was an increasing reliance on R-rated jokes, and I was waiting to see if it would end with something like the excellent opening.

These are very witty, talented women and, with a cast list that reads like a who's who of New Zealand comedy, all the right ingredients were there. But the audience's reaction was telling. After the initial hilarity, the packed theatre was fairly quiet, with just a few hearty laughers, my friend included, but not me.

Redemption came at least partly in the fantastic final all-singing-and-dancing showdown at a rugby club prize-giving, where Jordan must choose between Mel, Sepa and a rugby contract. James Rolleston stole the show with his portrayal of the love-sick and slightly dim Jordan, and Ana Scotney showed terrifying talent as his childhood sweetheart Sepa.

While it didn't tick all the boxes for me, being a bit rough around the edges, it had some great moments. This is the kind of movie that's bound to polarise people - the contrasting reactions in the audience and between me and my friend tell it all. You're only going to find out which pole you're on if you go and see it. Take a friend and an open mind, but perhaps don't expect another *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*.

What's the Happs?

*At the Newtown Community
and Cultural Centre, 7 Colombo
Street, Newtown*

Immigration and Visas Talk

Wellington Community Law presents "Immigration and Visas". If you have refugee background & are wondering if you qualify to bring a family member to NZ, come and join us on Thurs 14 June. This lecture will also be helpful for NZ citizens with questions around gaining partnership visas. Turn up at 6pm for snacks and mingling before the lecture starts at 6.30pm.

Free entry.

Newtown Community Bulletin

We've re-branded the ever popular Facebook page "Newtown Flat Society" so people can post all kinds of Newtown-related things, not just rental listings. Got an abundance of feijoas you want to share? Wondering what house your cat gets his second dinner from? We'd love to see people listing their local events, lost & found items & odd jobs they might have around the place. We want the group to be a place of connection and conversation for local people about local issues.

Check it out at www.facebook.com/groups/newtowncommunitybulletin/.

NZ Sign Language Taster Class

Always wanted to learn NZ Sign Language but don't want to commit to a whole term of classes? Why not sign up for our taster class at 6.30-7.30pm on Tues 19 June. We've got room for 20 people, so get in quick. Koha appreciated.

Register by emailing eryn@newtowncommunity.org.nz or call us on 04 389 4786.

EP Dance NZ Classes

Mini & Me – Sundays in June, 10.30-11am. Mini & Me is a beginner dance class designed to help little ones aged 2-4 prepare for independent class. Caregivers, you'll get to help guide your child's first dance steps.

Beginner Adult Ballet Classes – Sundays in June, 11am-12noon. In this class for true beginners ages 18+, you'll begin to learn the basics of ballet.

Beginner Heels Dance Class - Fridays in June, 7-8pm. It's fun and flirty dancing done in high heels. Contact epdancenz@gmail.com to register.

*At the Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell
Street, Newtown - and beyond*

Timebank DIY Workshop Series

Learn something new this winter with the Wgtn Timebank's DIY Workshop Series. Saturdays in June at 3pm. Workshops include: Starting a Savings Pool, 2nd; Building a Garden Planter, 9th; Tamales & Salsa, 16th; Homemade Cleaning Products, 23rd; Homemade Cheese Making, 30th. Located at Newtown Hall on Daniell Street and the Mornington Bowls Club.

For more info visit Timebank Facebook page wellingtontimebank.org.nz. Spaces limited, please register on the website or email info@wellingtontimebank.org.nz.

Little Learner Phonics

Little Learner Phonics preschool classes are now running in Newtown. You and your preschooler will learn how letters and sounds work together to create words in a fun and interactive way. Tuesdays from 9.15–9.55am. \$20 per class or \$15 per class with a Community Services Card. At Newtown Hall on Daniell Street.

Enrol at www.littlelearnerphonics.com, or email lydia@littlelearnerphonics.com.