

Council

**Wednesday, 27 August 2003
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

PART B

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN,
WAITAKERE CITY, ON WEDNESDAY, 27 AUGUST 2003,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

AFGHAN HORDES INVADE HOLLYWOOD

Firstly I have a confession. I grew up in Avondale (moving from Auckland City when I was around 10 years old), in a small house in Great North Road which still stands today, neat and trim. I do not know how we all fitted in but somehow we all did. The traffic was much calmer in those days and seemed to stop altogether by 10.00 pm.

I remember a lot of fog around the Avondale racecourse, and the Saturday matinee movies at the Avondale movie house then called The Grosvenor. Prior to that it was the Avondale Town Hall, complete with Mayoral office. It's a grand old palace, and still pretty elaborate - with a high and ornate ceiling, lots of columns, and coloured lights.

The entrance is impressive - marble stairs and soaring arches, sandblasted designed glass doors, ticket box to the right, and it stayed clear of a flea-pit tag. In those days Avondale had not fallen foul of the sprawl of Auckland - it was middle class, an older community born and raised in the border of Auckland City. It was never considered the "west". It owed its allegiance to Queen Street and it was unmistakably white.

The movies at the matinees were all action with westerns predominating - John Wayne, Randolph Scott, and of course that old trusted and true Lone Ranger - all battling the villainous renegade Indians, Apaches and Cheyenne to deliver them the death they deserved.

Occasionally there would be the British version - of the Imperial army putting down the turbaned rebel hordes. The most famous was *Gunga Din*. Here, the tribesmen got their comeuppance, with Errol Flynn and his mates being saved and saving in the nick of time. *Kim* was a similar tale of treachery - this time in the Afghan hills, again starring Errol Flynn.

The Afghan rebel tribesmen were all portrayed as ruthless killers - they took no prisoners and nor did "our" side. They were all based of course on books that were nothing less than the propaganda of the victors. Whether it be the Sudan or South Dakota, the locals needed to be put down and trashed before the hero could ride into whatever sunset they painted in for him.

Thrilling stuff for generations unthinking and manipulated. They don't make movies like that these days thank God - there's a bit of balance, and those same indigenous races are actually making their own movies too. And they're not bad - moving, deeply touching, realistic, often tragic, revealing cultures and histories we never dreamed of understanding. From my Avondale house in Great North Road never in our wildest dreams did we think we would have met a real Afghanistani or Somali in our lifetimes.

But on Afghanistan Independence Day last week, I was invited along with other more famous dignitaries like the Hon. Phil Goff, MP Ashraf Choudhary and the Hon. David Cunliffe, to enjoy a night of speeches and food, and to watch dancing and musical items in, of all places, my old haunt the Hollywood Cinema.

Well, when I arrived the place was jam-packed with gloriously dressed men and women. The screen no longer shows the pulp fiction of the 1940s. Instead, the high stage and the proscenium arch radiated in fluorescent colours, with the front ten rows cleared of seats and wondrous carpets rolled out for the traditional Afghanistani dances. A group of small children in traditional costume held proudly the flags of New Zealand and Afghanistan, and the audience clapped and cheered wildly.



It became a truly amazing occasion. The Afghani community have turned out - the boys from the *Tampa*, from the refugee camps, from migrant halfway houses. Old men in traditional woollen clothes and caps, women in headscarves and wonderful jewellery and ornaments, and young teenage men in white suits wearing mirrored and bejewelled jackets that I haven't seen since the seventies. The music is amazing - high pitched exotic and captivating - it speaks of dusty plains and villages, of Kabul and Khandahar, and the dances such as the *Atan* are a riotous whirl, poetry in native *Pashtu* is recited - the aromas of the food at intermission are extraordinary - sweet honey flavoured dishes, chicken and baklava-like layered things, making the tables groan, feeding a lot of people tonight - and the combination of the whole is simply rapturous. People greet each other with a cheek-to-cheek hug - delighted at the welcome and acknowledgement they are getting for their independence and their arrival in New Zealand. Many talk of the distance between their new country and their homeland - the older men never thinking in their wildest dreams to find themselves so far away, but quite at home in the Hollywood theatre with its very Afghanistan feel.

The theatre that for 50 years or so portrayed indigenous people as cruel foes, is tonight captured and enraptured by them. Gone are Warner Brothers, MGM and Fox, replaced by the Afghan community, who dance, play, and eat. Isn't life amazing, when everyone has their day?

Even in Hollywood.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

M1-M28

It started with a Mexican wave, and ended with a promise of great prizes in the balloon decorating competition. This, the Local Government New Zealand Annual Conference in Queenstown, saw roughly 600 local body politicians and staff tread around issues ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. For many the sublime on the first day was hearing Paul Keating gently trashing American politics, followed by Jim Anderton giving a predictable but rousing speech on investment and the potential of regional industry growth, as attached at pages M1 to M28.

Then came the ridiculous - Mexican waves to warm people up in an overcrowded ballroom. With no one Maori, Polynesian, Asian, or under thirty, there were few there with any spark, and a little callisthenics was in order for a warm up. There was parking outside the ballroom for Zimmer frames and perhaps too many had stayed too long at the trough, with many appearing bored by excellent speeches.

One very useful address was by the outgoing Local Government Chief Executive Peter Winder, now entering the Gates of Hell via the back entrance as the Auckland Regional Council's new Director of Transport. Peter, who I regard as an extraordinarily good administrator, outlined the rationale behind the Local Government Act. Peter said that the Act challenged local authorities to become more autonomous, while at the same time acting more like agents of the Crown. My test of the room temperature was that 60% of delegates felt that the new Local Government Act was an appalling waste of time, energy and money.

One could only wonder in discussions with regional mayors and delegates how Labour could ever get elected in New Zealand, or how Labour could continue to be so ahead in the polls. Local government mayors and chairs would not be what you might call liberal visionaries. The "fart tax" galvanised the rural mayors into a fury, while the city ones appeared to long for the days of Bolger and Ruth. The complexities of the new legislation will spell the end of the single-issue Councillor, heralding a new era of professional politicians running local authorities.



Demographic expert Ian Pool, who I have invited to come and address us at a forum later in the year, was a dazzling speaker and added the thought that central and local government need to start planning in earnest for the ageing and slowly increasing population in the next ten to twenty years. That population mix will test Council policies, forcing a redirection of energies into the competing needs of a "bulge" in the 15-25 age group. In Waitakere City, a new City, we will still notice our older population. But we will also be one of the Cities that will have a brown population - young and focussed on the next twenty years.

Government MP Tim Barnett used the Conference to gauge support for the new legislation around prostitution law reform. I was impressed by his approach. Most of the delegates, surprisingly, supported the Bill (subsequently passed into law), but were unhappy about Councils having to take on yet more responsibility. Barnett's talk to the conference was on understanding and strengthening community resolve on the issue, once local authorities understood that they would be responsible for only two of the proposed Act's twelve provisions, and could pass compliance costs to the sector and not ratepayers.

For Waitakere citizens worried about a local warehouse taking over every empty shop in downtown Henderson or New Lynn I draw your attention to the three back pages of the *New Zealand Truth*. There you will soon work out that up to 80% of massage relaxation and the full works is done from a neat suburban home near you. As an aside, I understand from my plumbing mates that blocked drains reveal much about condom usage. It is often quite a confronting thing for husbands and partners who have not otherwise used them to have evidence of other activities presented to them on the end of a shovel. I understand from the Police that there is now a secondary market for the used article, as that they are used to plant false DNA trails at crime scenes. But I digress.

The conference was the biggest in the history of Local Government New Zealand, and next year in Auckland it promises to be even larger. This conference was the last to be held in a resort, where lunches and accommodation cannot hold all the delegates. We will now site the conferences in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Off the shopping list will come Dunedin, Taupo, and Rotorua. My own appearance on TV3's send-up of fat cat mayors and spouses did not enhance my appreciation of Queenstown.

Remits are an always are an important part of these major conferences, and Waitakere dominated the proceedings on the floor. I would like to thank Councillors who supported me at the conference; Deputy Mayor Carolynne Stone, Cr Janet Clews, and Cr Gary Russell, the Chief Executive Harry O'Rourke and other key staff. From our successful methamphetamine remit it was recommended that the Local Government New Zealand National Council:

- (i) Note that strategies to address the problems caused by methamphetamine production and use requires a multi-sectoral approach.
- (ii) Agree that Local Government New Zealand convene a meeting of all agencies involved in addressing the effects of methamphetamine production and use to discuss the formation of a national taskforce.

Two weeks after the conference I met with the Auckland region's three Police District Commanders, Roger Carson, Ted Cox and Howard Broad, and let them know that they are on notice with regard to police resources, both regarding methamphetamine and its associated rise of violent crime in the region, and about a lack of police numbers generally in the Waitakere and North Shore District. It became apparent in the course of the conversation that there is no government organisation that takes care of the impact of drug use on society.

Twenty years ago, there was no social stigma or shame attached to people drinking and driving, and getting injured and injuring others. Now, with the Land Transport Safety Authority and consistent saturation-messaging on television and print media, it is now socially unacceptable to drink and drive.



What I am signalling is that it will take more than enforcement to stop this growing problem. Dr Pita Sharples was right when he talked at the methamphetamine hui of “embracing” p. The market for this drug - the sum total of all who are tempted by it, supply it, make it, find the ingredients - must be educated down, in just the same way as the drink-driving campaign. In the absence of national-level leadership about this issue, we will continue to take the lead, with other local authorities and with the Police.

However we also need to involve the Accident Compensation Commission, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and all the relevant community groups. We cannot do this by ourselves.

Back to the conference. We lost the remit concerning the enforcement of a 40km vehicle speed restriction around schools. This was lost for several reasons. Firstly because the Zone One meeting changed our wording of the remit, which made it unworkable. Secondly because we couldn't get our original working on the conference table because there was no formal mechanism to do so, which meant on the morning for the debate I had to approach the Chair to table it, who refused, and so then had to approach the Zone 1 representative Richard Northey. Having finally got our wording on the floor for debate, it became quickly clear that the rural authorities were having none of it. Not less than six different remits of the wording were proposed, to universal groans from the full delegation of 600, even after a watered down version from Mayor Sukhi Turner of Dunedin.

We did get universal support for our remits on biosecurity breaches and their health effects, and clearly there was no problem with the methamphetamine concerns from anyone.

Perhaps the speaker who impressed simply by turning up was the Prime Minister Helen Clark. She came straight off the plane from Korea. She said to the delegates, “If I slur my words, it's because I arrived at Whenuapai at 5.00 am this morning, from Seoul, via Manila, Via Cairns.” It was a matter of sheer endurance. Her caution was for calm over the seabed talks, and on Auckland issues Clark played the diplomat, talking about balancing the City's infrastructure needs with those of the rest of the country. On dog control, one of the big issues at last year's conference, the Prime Minister clearly felt that the issue had been addressed, adding that “the new bill has very sharp teeth indeed”, which seemed a strange pun at the time. She was clear that people have a right to walk on the streets without being mauled. One of the major challenges for central and local government together was ensuring that the energy sector would remain strong. “It is now unacceptable for a dry year to slow down the economy,” she said.

At all of these conferences the rural communities take a spotlight. While the media commentators expected the Auckland Regional Council's massive rate hikes to spark the mother of all bun fights, it was in fact the rural sector that provided the liveliest debates.

RECLAIMING OUR HERITAGE - THE NEW ZEALAND LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE

This was an excellent two-day event - if extremely cold. I don't think I have been to a conference other than Iceland that was so unbelievably uncomfortable with the air conditioning so low. I am pleased to say that it was an extremely important event for anyone that is interested in the New Zealand landscape, its preservation and heritage. Congratulations to Gary Taylor's Environmental Defence Society and the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects who brought together a wide range of excellent speakers, and who had both excellent presentation skills and papers.

John Edgar, with his paper *A Landscape With Too Few Lovers*, was an extraordinarily fine presenter. Professor Peter Simpson, a Director of the Colin McCahon House and annual performer at the Going West Literary Festival, gave a wonderful paper entitled *A Landscape of Splendour*. Professor Simpson understands the New Zealand icon landscapes, and their importance in our national psyche.



M29-M51 I would like to praise the Commissioner for the Environment Dr Morgan Williams for his presence. It was interesting to see the respect that Waitakere City Council and its officers get at these major forums. Enclosed are abstracts from all the presented papers to give you some idea of their quality and range, as attached at pages M29 to M51.

MARAE HUI

The second hui concerning the marae on Te Atatu was held in the Council chambers on 15 August, and it was a triumph of civility and good sense. There are still some in the community and the media who wish this project nothing but failure, but at least there is a far more open dialogue.

I know that this process of three hui was not one that would naturally fit with staff or management. But I believed it was the only method that would make progress, and the hui series has focussed the thought and energy that goes around the development of marae. The development of new marae is never easy, often fraught with conflict and interpersonal challenges. I was pleased to join with Te Warena Taua, the Chair of the Taumata Runanga to partner my Chairmanship. Together I believe we made the hui work - Maori and pakeha side by side with mutual respect and a willingness to deliver a way forward. I was pleased that the Associate Minister of Maori Affairs Hon. John Tamihere who had felt somewhat miffed by Council returned with his team and presentation.

A GOOD IDEA FOR WAIATARUA

Over the last few years Warwick Roger the former Editor of Metro and now writer at large for North and South and the late John Davies - athlete, coach and administrator - had been talking about a way of acknowledging the great athletes of New Zealand's golden age who would start their Sunday runs at Arthur Lydiard's Mount Roskill house and run a marathon-scale route to New Lynn, and the Waitakere Ranges via the West Coast Road. At Waiatarua, they would all pause for a drink of clear Waitakere nectar by the small grotto where the stream comes down a rock face.

This became almost like a runner's shrine. All the greats that won gold at Tokyo and Rome, coached by Lydiard, and champions all, would stop there. The three of us over many beers and lunches would talk about something that would honour them at the site. I believe this should now take place before too long. I am suggesting that with the help of our friends in the funding agencies and with a good sculptor, we could bring together a magnificent piece of outdoor sculpture in the falls itself and the surrounding small concrete ledge could have a legend of who they were and what they did. I have spoken to Peter Snell, Murray Halberg and Barry Magee on the concept and John Davies was a great supporter of the idea. Although I am not asking Council at this stage for anything other than approval, I will talk with the Waiatarua Residents and Ratepayers when I bring together a design and I am simply appraising Councillors of what I think is a wonderful tribute to a great age and a group of athletes second to none. I would just like to acknowledge John Davies and my friendship with him - the last time we ran together was at Easter, when we did a run with Warwick and group of our family and friends down the Black Rock track from the Anawhata Road to Piha. Just 14 weeks later, John Davies, one of the great runners of this country, was dead.

WESTIE CHIC

M52-M60 The enclosed article in the upcoming September edition of Cuisine shows the image of the deep-bogan westie has faded into that of sprawling cafes and restaurants, weekend leisure activities, and tastes that please all from the weekend brunchers to the multimillionaires. Clearly our tastes have changed in more ways than one, and this trend will only get stronger, as attached at pages M52 to M60.



RATES REBELLION

M61-M67 Attached at pages M61 to M67 in case anyone missed it (and all of the television news for the last month) is the "Rates Rebellion" article from the *New Zealand Listener*.

OBSCURE PRAISE

M68 If New Zealand Herald columnist and curmudgeon Garth George can praise Waitakere City in the midst of the Auckland Regional Council's rates furore, then clearly anyone can make the reasonable distinctions as they write out their cheques, getting one set of services from us, and another from the other, and making the measurements of quality between the two, as attached at page M68.

FLAGS, AN EXHIBITION BY JOHN EDGAR, ARTIS GALLERY PARNELL

John Edgar of Karekare presents a most extraordinary range of small multiple art pieces, beautifully connected, layered and joined. They are beautiful in the extreme; precise and stylish. They are yet another example of this local artist, whose eye for stone pieces is unsurpassed in this country. That he is busy fighting to save the Waitakere Ranges and indeed the new Zealand environment (see above), and yet he is able in his Karekare studio to bring together Flags, as a major work, is an achievement beyond human endeavour, but certainly possible.

The work is in granite and other materials, obviously produced by precise cutting, grinding and polishing. The apt title "Flags" gives the impression that the stone could fly in the wind. On opening night John and Ann Robinson his partner greeted friends and other artists to celebrate the opening of this exhibition. As Peter Simpson says in the catalogue essay *Intelligent Elements*, "The surfaces are flat, so flat that at a finger run across their surfaces cannot detect a juncture, so precise is their joinery". Although they appear two dimensional they are pieced together from great slabs of stone - white marble laced by green serpentine, red granite flush against black, usually around 30mm thick with little variation, they give off almost an iridescent kick, particularly if Edgar adds sandstone and glass to the works.

I urge anyone who loves art in its full creative pieces - go look, and enjoy. At the same time you will note that he sources his white marble from the same quarries in Italy that Michelangelo got his raw materials from. It might be a leap of faith, but I have a feeling that John Edgar just might be the closest thing to New Zealand's answer to the great Italian master. The show continues until 3 September.

MILESTONES

Congratulations to Dr Cindy Kiro, Commissioner For Children

I am sure all Councillors will join me in congratulating long term Te Atatu resident and great supporter of this City's agenda of First Call for Children Cindy Kiro. Cindy worked with us in the setting up of the eco city and has been a marvellous sounding board for the philosophy and vision of Waitakere.

Dr Kiro, at present Director of the Wairoa Centre for Public Health Research at Massey University on the North Shore, comes to the role of Commissioner for Children via Executive Director of Greenpeace, and as a Senior Manger at the Auckland District Health Board. She is also at present the Chairperson of the Public Health Advisory Committee.

Last year in Johannesburg Cindy was part of the delegation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and was present for Waitakere City's presentation, and joined in the waiata for me, one of the highlights of my Mayoral career.

She has been a tireless worker for Maori, for human rights and dignity. Astute, and wise, she will bring a sense of purpose to this often-difficult commission. We wish her every success.



Sadly Missed; Boze “Bob” Vela

This Council acknowledges with great sadness the passing of Bob Vela of Oratia, who is one of the stalwarts of the Oratia Bowling Club and one of this community’s great patriarchs. The name Vela in Oratia is synonymous with the orchards and the development of the extraordinary part of this City that is held in such high regard. The Yugoslav influence has been of great importance in that community, and the Vela name, and family home on the West Coast Road dates from the early part of the last century. This Council sends our sincerely sympathy to his widow Nelly and his large an extended family.

A Toast to a Colleague

M69-M71 Attached at pages M69 to M71 is letter from Toast Masters International congratulating Cr Fenton as an Advanced Leader in the Toast Masters Communication and Leadership Programme. I have been aware for some time of this initiative, held as an early breakfast meeting in the Council, and wish to congratulate her for this community initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY