

Council

**Wednesday, 24 June 2009
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**This report is dedicated to Mary Dobbie,
Piha matriarch and friend of the city**

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY
ROAD, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE, ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2009,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

6 REPORT OF THE MAYOR

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

Receive the Report of the Mayor.

Making the most of Matariki

A new moon is in the sky, saluting the Matariki stars.

As we meet, thousands of New Zealanders from all walks of life will be starting to celebrate the stars' annual arrival, heading to concerts, planting days, weaving work shops and film nights. They are celebrating a new beginning - Matariki, the Maori New Year.

Matariki is an important date in the Maori, Japanese and Hawaiian calendars. In New Zealand it is marked on the first new moon after the arrival of the Pleiades star cluster in May or June. Maori referred to the stars' pre-dawn emergence as 'Te Tau Hou', the New Year. It was a time for connecting with the land, sea and stars. Many would share food, hospitality and entertainment. Celebrations dwindled after the arrival of Europeans to New Zealand and were left in obscurity for decades in the 20th century. But Matariki has experienced a rebirth in the new millennium. Festivals, concerts and events celebrate the Maori New Year. These days the Matariki stars glow brighter in our minds than ever before.

I have long been a supporter of the Matariki revival. This is an event that only New Zealand can celebrate. It's our very own. The Christian calendar has given us Christmas Day and Easter and of course the calendar year. This event has risen like the Pleiades star cluster, growing stronger as the years go by. It is a festival born of our unique heritage, our culture, our land. It is more "us" than our June public holiday, Queen's Birthday. That event does not reflect our nation's cultural mix or unique environment. It is my belief, and I'd like to try this concept on this council, that we try for a public holiday on the day the first new moon after the appearance of the Matariki stars.

Maybe moving Queen's Birthday to make room for a Matariki holiday makes sense. Our 11 public holidays compares poorly with many other countries. Italy has 16 and Spain has 14. The United States has 11 federal holidays, but dozens more state holidays, New Zealand could do with another. There is a four month gap between Matariki and Labour Day. Queen's Birthday could be moved to August or September.



If not, then maybe Matariki should be our winter public holiday. We care more about it. Outside of Wellington, there are few celebrations of that day. Matariki festivals have expanded exponentially. In Auckland there will be more than 70 Matariki themed events between June and July 24, including a sustainability symposium in Waitakere. Other festivals organised to celebrate Matariki have been just as successful. A Hastings event attracted 500 people in 2000 and 15,000 three years later. Its burgeoning popularity shows Matariki could become a New Zealand holiday to match the United States' Thanksgiving. Something that is inclusive of all of us, birthed from our traditions and rooted in our culture.

There will be critics of the move. Researcher and historian Paul Moon recently wrote in the New Zealand Herald that Matariki's origins are questionable and wound up in connotations of death. The emergence of the Matariki stars was not originally seen as a reason to take a day off or to celebrate.

I agree. But the origins of Christmas or Easter are born of pagan festivals. What matters are the meanings the days have attained. They are about the celebration of family or the birth and death of Jesus Christ. They matter deeply to millions, not because of their roots but because they mean something to people, now.

Matariki would mean something to us, now. It would mean something to New Zealand as a young nation and as a people still establishing our identity. Most of all it would mean something to Maori.

M1-M2

The Maori Language Commission have campaigned for nearly 10 years for a Matariki public holiday that is born of Maori culture, recognising Maori as the first settlers of this land. They want a day to celebrate their place in the birth of our nation. Te Papa board member Ngatata Love, Green Party leader Metiria Turei and the chair of Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Ngahiwi Tomoana are among their backers (attached at pages M1 to M2). I want to join them and say it should be a day we can all celebrate together.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council resolves to:

Agree that the Te Taumata Runanga Chairman urge the New Zealand Government to make Matariki a stand-alone public holiday.

In support of a New World Order

We need a global government. Those are the thoughts of London Mayor Boris Johnson, French president Nicolas Sarkozy and humby, me. They are also the thoughts of author and political activist George Monbiot - my new hero. A brilliant brain and a futurist. In his book *The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order*, George Monbiot says global problems should be addressed by a democratically elected global government. He contends that without global government there is no effective way to combat global injustice. Global problems need a global solution.

He's right.

Nuclear weapons are again becoming a global problem, as rogue regimes like the North Korean dictatorship brandish them and hold the world to ransom.

Trade is weighted heavily in favour of rich countries, leaving the poor to struggle under growing and insurmountable debt.



Bad management of the world's water resources is causing wide scale death and environmental destruction. About 4000 children die every day from water borne diseases and more than a billion people do not have access to safe water.

Climate change proceeds apace without coherent and cohesive international policy to combat it. Governments give lip service to targets for cutting carbon emissions and then fail to adhere to them.

Global co-operation could fix these global problems, but many of our global institutions simply shore up the systems responsible for inequity and injustice. Even our best hope at global justice, the United Nations, is deeply undemocratic. Its power rests primarily in the hands of a six nation Security Council that can veto the resolutions of other member states. If those states try to ban the Security Council veto, they can be vetoed.

Protestors can fling themselves at police lines or wave placards at politicians. I know. I've done it. But when the bulk of economic and governing power rests in the hands of unelected executives or autocratic leaders, even universal dissatisfaction can be ignored.

The answer, as Monbiot argues, is not to tinker with existing structures, but to replace them wholesale. He proposes a world government directly elected from 600 member states, with responsibility to oversee other international institutions and hold them to account.

Now that would be a government with the reach to champion the cause of sustainability, the power to reign in rogue states, the universality to put injustice to the sword. It would be able to set real targets for climate change. Principles of fairness and equality could be imposed on economic agencies. Efforts to bring clean water to the poorest nations could be co-ordinated on a global level.

We're already seeing a vision of it in the rise of Barack Obama. The 44th US president's near universal appeal is reminiscent of John F. Kennedy's in the 1960's, without a Cold War to deal with. His unifying efforts in the Middle East and South America, combined with widespread acclaim in Europe and the United Kingdom have shown us a future where countries can unite around politics and work together for peace. The first vision of a global government looks like a man born to a Kansas mother and a Kenyan father getting elected to the most powerful post in the world, then seeking to unify the world on an unprecedented scope and scale.

This last year has been a real crunch point. Financial structures we thought unbreakable are on the verge of meltdown. Once indestructible banks and companies are drowning in an ocean of bad debt. A way of life based on cheap energy and rampant consumption has been exposed as unsustainable. Our assumptions about the way the world works have been shattered.

Out of these times of catastrophe the world can undergo radical change. As Sigmund Freud said, every crisis is an opportunity to start afresh. Causes such as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, fair trade, economic equality and social justice can be advanced. Bad systems and institutions can be thrown out and replaced with good ones. We could get started on the road to a global government.



Though I don't expect that government to be established soon, I've put my own time frame at between 100 and 200 years. Now that's what I call a Long Term Council Community Plan to dream for. When you think of countries that have water giving it to countries without, growing food for others and demanding the end of terrorism and a stop to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it starts to make sense. It also echoes what I firmly believe are the thoughts of all families; we want a better world for our children and future generations. It's not beyond us to think beyond conflict and global war. Why should we live our lives in fear of annihilation, global pandemics and famine? All are on the agenda for the years ahead. Maybe this concept will not be accepted until a major catastrophe much worse than the global financial crisis hits the world. But it needs to happen.

It may seem impossible, but let me tell you what else I thought was impossible: Nelson Mandela out of prison, the Berlin Wall coming down, and a black president of America asking the world to review its thinking about nuclear weapons.

I've started to get used to seeing the impossible happen.

Reading

"The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order", George Monbiot.

Living the vision

It's hard to walk our environmental talk.

M3-M10

An article by Jon Gertens in the recent Green Issue of the New York Times Magazine shows our difficulties adopting a 'green mind' (attached at pages M3 to M10). It argues that though most of us believe climate change is a danger, few do anything about it. The risk seems too far off and apathy is our instinctual reaction. Climate change doesn't scare us, yet. Only when it poses an immediate threat to our personal wellbeing will we take action. The problem is that by the time it does it may be too late for many of us.

Anthony Giddens levels a similar argument in 'The Politics of Climate Change'. His question is 'why would anyone drive an SUV'. It's a metaphor he extends worldwide. In effect, we are all SUV drivers. We all disregard the long term harm we do to our environment, while getting caught up in the minutia of our every day lives. Because there is no clear and present danger we go on living unconscious of impending "climate chaos".

They paint a bleak picture.

But there is hope.

Both Gertens and Giddens argue that in bringing people together under a vision of sustainability we can achieve far greater feats than we otherwise could. Though Giddens focuses on politics and Gertner on behavioural science, an essential message remains constant - change is best achieved when communities are united behind a vision. Show people a utopia rather than the dystopia, and they will work together to achieve it.



For 17 years we've seen the power of a vision to move people in Waitakere. I could point to all the tangible benefits our eco city concept has brought to public transport, rubbish and litter, city planning and even road safety, but to me few things encapsulate the eco-city vision better than the life of Waitakere City's former deputy mayor Dorothy Wilson.

Dorothy's Green Bay home is a beacon of the ideology that for six years, she had a key hand in advancing. Solar panels supply most of its heating, keeping her monthly power bill as low as \$30. A grey water system supplies the loo and the veggie garden. She hasn't turned on an electric heater in 10 years, thanks to stored solar heat and in-wall wool insulation. Built-in compost and recycling mean only one bag of rubbish is filled every month. Her motto is "living lighter on the earth" and her aim is to practice what she preaches.

M11-M14 Efforts like hers show how people can be inspired to do simple, practical things that make a huge difference. United behind a vision, I see a future where individuals, communities and countries live sustainably to combat climate change. It's true; many people don't recognise the danger of climate change, figuring 'it's not affecting me now'. Dorothy is not one of those people. Just like a growing number of Waitakere eco-city residents, she is walking her talk. When people stop and ask me what the eco city vision looks like, I can say 'just take a look at Dorothy Wilson's home on the cliffs of Green Bay' (attached at pages M11 to M14).

Roots of Empathy

I've never been so glad to be shown up as I was in Room 6 of Glendene School. With Waitakere MP Paula Bennett and me looking on, the Year 5 and 6 students were asked "who is the most important guest in the room?" "Baby Olivia" they called out in unison. They got it right.

Baby Olivia Ware was there as a "teacher" in Canadian educator Mary Gordon's groundbreaking Roots of Empathy programme. In it, students are asked about the feelings and development of a baby brought into their class every three weeks. Key messages like "never shake a baby" are ingrained. Students are encouraged to stand up to bullying and say no to violence. Helen Clark once said: "*If every school had Roots of Empathy, maybe we'd have a brighter future in New Zealand.*" Her hope and mine is that its lessons of non aggression and empathy will leave a life long impression on students; that they will become the generation to put a stop to the scourge of family violence on our society.

The goals of Roots of Empathy are close to my heart. New Zealand has shocking child abuse and family violence statistics. Cases like that of Chris and Cru Kahui, brutally beaten and left to die at just three months old, make me sick. In 1993 our council passed the First Call for Children policy. It set Waitakere up as a city where young people are free from discrimination, disrespect, pollution and most importantly, violence. Since then, we've become one of the best areas around at slowing down violence in the community.

Programmes like Roots of Empathy are vital to that cause. For many children, its lessons are the first time they are taught to be gentle to the vulnerable, to respect the feelings of those smaller than themselves. The programme has been expanded to 60 schools nationwide this year under the leadership of the Peace Foundation. I believe it should go even further. To make our future city a place where children are cared for, we need to establish Roots of Empathy in every primary school.

For the sake of our children, we can't afford not to.



The village resists

Thanks to Ryan Young we have received a copy of *The Village Resists: The Forced Municipal Mergers of Quebec*. It is a brilliant documentary depicting Quebec moving toward a super city government. Young, who lived through the disastrous Toronto mergers, focuses on the loss of democracy suffered by Quebec. That same loss is now being suffered here in Waitakere. This documentary is a rallying call and I think it will be widely appreciated in New Zealand. With this council's support I plan to take it around the region for free public screenings in July.

Art and an ailing icon

You may have seen Kiwi music legend Chris Knox in the mayoral office a couple of weeks ago. I was talking to him about a great Waitakere art project - a sand mandala on Bethells Beach. He was co-ordinating and presenting a documentary on the creation of the massive sculpture designed by artist Rueben Paterson. The whole Bethell's community turned out to help complete the sand mandala before sunset. As the sun disappeared a helicopter with a TV crew filmed the mandala, minutes before it was engulfed by the roaring west coast surf.

Two days later, Chris Knox had a major stroke.

On behalf on the Bethell's community and the council I have sent a letter of support to Chris. We wish him well in his recovery. I am sure he will meet the challenge with the same tenacity and ability that has made him a Kiwi icon.

Milestones

Mary Dobbie

A great pillar of the Piha community has passed away.

Mary Dobbie died on 9 June 2009, age 95. She will be remembered for her decades of tireless work in Piha. There she established and edited the Piha News and helped grow the Piha Library from its origins in a small shed next to the town's camping ground into a community hub. Mary was an environmentalist and a firm believer in healthy living - growing her own vegetables and eating a salad every day. She was a political activist, once producing the newsletter for the New Zealand Communist Party. But most of all, she was passionate about people. Her true legacy is in the lives of the five daughters she brought up and the lifetime she spent improving the lives of women, children and families in her community. It was that passion that led her to help establish the Parenting Centre in New Zealand, do much needed work in Family Planning and to generously share her knowledge and experience with others, mentoring them to achieve highly. Her community service earned her a well deserved Queen's Service Medal.

She will be sorely missed by her many friends in Piha and beyond.



Obituary- Les Bury

One of the largest funerals seen out west for some time honoured the passing of Les Bury.

I didn't know Les well, but having lived in Glen Eden for over 40 years I couldn't help but have come across him on more than one occasion. He really was something of an institution in the local community.

Les started a long career at the Kelston School for the Deaf (later the Kelston Deaf Education Centre) in the 1950s. He was a role model and mentor for hundreds, if not thousands, of young deaf people over the years.

He was also a stalwart of the Glen Eden RSA and over the years was involved with many other community groups, including a number of school boards of trustees' and the Manukau Volunteer Coastguard.

Indeed just the day before he was suddenly rushed to hospital he was working alongside fellow volunteers at the Glen Eden Citizens Advice Bureau.

M15-M18 The Eulogy notes from Les funeral were prepared by his children Rod, Tony, Sonja (who used to work here at Council), Karl, and wife Kahn and are attached at pages M15 to M18.

I would also like to invite Councillor Clews, who knew Les well to say a few words at this meeting.

Councillor Derek Battersby honoured

Congratulations to Councillor Derek Battersby on becoming a Companion of the Queen's Service Order for long service to local government. On behalf of all your council colleagues, congratulations and best wishes.

Dr Lannes Johnson

It is with sadness I hear Dr Lannes Johnson is leaving our local Primary Healthcare Organisation Healthwest. Dr Johnson served our communities faithfully for 15 years. Of note are his tireless efforts spearheading men's health initiatives in our city and beyond. I wish him all the best in his new role as clinical director of Harbour Health.