

Council

**Wednesday, 26 August 2009
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**This report is dedicated to Hariata Arapo Ewe
(Aunty Sally)**

**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, 26 AUGUST 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.

MOURNING A MATRIARCH

A great Kauri of Waitakere has fallen.

Te Kawerau a Maki matriarch Hariata Arapo Ewe died on 13 August, age 90.

Hariata let us affectionately call her Aunty Sally. The truth was she was from a lineage of chieftainship. Her grandfather Te Rongonui was the leading chief of Te Wai o Hua at Pukaki. Her grandmother was Kameta Te Utika of Te Kawerau and Ngati Whatua. Their marriage cemented peace between the tribes of Tamaki Makaurau.

Aunty Sally was forged from that legacy of peace. Her leadership was humble and supportive, using intuition and empathy before argument and confrontation. In her long life she was responsible for some of the great changes in Maoridom. She was a pivotal point of tribal transformation. But most of all she was a mother, a grandmother, a great grandmother and a great-great grandmother. Caring for her family and her community were at the heart of who she was. She has been a dear friend of mine since I became the Mayor in 1992, adopting me into her family as she did with many before me.

I felt honoured to know her and to hold her with great affection. Hariata was part of the blessing of my Karekare house and the land which I bought five years ago on Watchman Rd. It linked my life with the place, my family and their relationship to the Karekare landscape. She understood all of the richness of ritual and the relationship of people to the land. Her historical knowledge of tribal issues was astounding and very clear. She knew the families of Karekare and Bethells and she remembered going out to those places as a very young girl.

Not since the death of the Maori Queen have we lost someone of this mana. This is a sad farewell to one of New Zealand's great women. As her grandson Herbert Terrence Tumamao Alexander says: A light on the horizon has gone dark.

The obituary for his beloved grandmother below:

E Nga iwi, e nga mana, e nga karanga tana maha. Tena Koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

I stand here today before my beloved grandmother Hariata Ewe and Uncle Jack Ewe. I stand to represent all of my grandmother's mokopuna in giving this solemn address.



Hariata was born on the 26 May, 1920 at Pukaki. She was a mother, grandmother, great grandmother and great-great grandmother.

Oldest of all her siblings, she was also a mother to them as well. As time unfolded, she bore the brunt of the tragedies that befell a young family who were bereft of any assistance that we seem to take for granted these days.

In those early days of her young life, while Nanny Kura and Grandpa Moke Taua worked, she was at home looking after her younger brothers and sisters. Any assistance from any department was non-existent and healthcare for all families being in a situation like theirs was very poor to say the least. Therefore it came down to the children in her care to suffer. What could she do? The passing away of her siblings in her arms, literally, must have been excruciatingly painful to the point where we today in this day and age could not even partially comprehend.

I know she carried this pain, this loss, all her life and supposedly so in her inner self, she vowed as long as she was breathing, nothing would be like that in her life again, and she became the life-force for all of her whānau with an inner strength and indomitable spirit. She persevered to become an exemplar of the indomitable spirit, of inner strength, of mana.

Blessed with an astute mind, she pressed on, being also of chiefly stock, she was recognised at an early age and held office of secretary to her Aunt Kahupake Rongonui, who in turn assisted Kingi Te Rata and Princess Te Puea in deliberations with the Crown regarding the Waikato land confiscations, with their office based in Pukaki which was in my understanding, a sprawling estate with an array of wildlife on the spacious grounds which would have been a spectacle to behold, no doubt, with a huge villa that would have held all the appropriate offices to officiate with the government officials and dignitaries that came there to officiate regarding their business at that time, a very important designation for very serious matters and concerns, so many feathers in a hat that only she could wear.

As time went on she became a foundation member of the Wahine Maori Toko ite ora or the Maori Women's Welfare League, which laid the platform for a society that is esteemed and held in high regard even today.

Closer to home, and always involved in regular fundraising for the marae in Ihumatao, Hariata was a fine example of the teachings of her ancestors and with her Whakapapa links that she is affiliated to, she was very active in keeping those connections to all her tribes alive and very much to the forefront.

During the Kaipara hearings, she gave an account of her travelling to Te Henga in Waitakere, from Pukaki on horseback.

Another story goes she travelled down to Port Waikato, to Pakau, to her nanny Mata's, from Pukaki, on horseback, arriving late in the evening. Waking in the morning she discovered her horse was missing, blaming her Waikato whanaunga for usurping her transport, she eventually arrived back at Pukaki to find the horse had made its own way back, probably a distance of a hundred miles or so. This happened when she was very young, maybe the age of eight.

Her life as a teenager, in happier times, would be going to the local dance, while in Port Waikato, her and her cousins would cross the river, *au naturel*, carrying their shoes and clothes above their heads, getting to the other side they would change into their flash frocks and carry on to the dance.



Nan was also blessed with beauty and in 1938 she became Miss Onehunga and later became Miss Auckland in that pageant, such are the stories that now have come to light.

During her life she was many things to many people. Advisor, confidante, teacher, mother and skilled at many things that even scholars would be envious of, her purpose was always to start the ball rolling and many times without her instigation there would be a tonne of moss lying around.

To me she was a light that could never be extinguished, and I can say that in all surety for all my whānau.

Any person could not count the times that we would go to her for guidance, assurance and aroha.

Many would say that they would not exist had it not been for her, I personally would vouch for that.

Providing for her family was at the core of her inner self, from erecting the family home at Ihumatao, coming by way of the villa, that was split up from the estate of Kahupake, erecting and planning her own house in the 1950s and having a hand in her children's housing and helping her grandchildren when it came time for them to set up houses for themselves.

She was the foundation for many who have built their own lives and the pillar that kept everything standing.

She could and would move heaven and earth and with her behind you anything was possible.

Nan tried to live life to the full, she was a fantastic athlete, she loved sport, she loved to run, she loved to play golf, she loved to dance, she loved to laugh, so much so, times I laughed with her so much I would cry.

It was so joyous to be in that situation with her, Nan was the ultimate comedian and the funniest clown. Her la deed ah de dah, was sung to every baby.

Nan married Papa at the Auckland Maori Mission, Airedale Street in Auckland, 1942. They had four girls, and in 1973. The only boy, Kevin, was added to the whānau. Their daughters are aunty Miriam who is the oldest, had Big Boy (Arama), Haki, Missy (Denise Retia), Eileen. Jacky is the baby, Eileen (or Tiny Momo) the second eldest, had Herb Tumamao, John Ngamanu, Leanne Arapo, Aunty Wai had Peggy Lou, Papi, Shirley had Andrew, Tristan, Alex. And Kevin, he had Raukawa, Waiwera, Roberta, Te Utika and Phillipa.

The partners of their children are Manuhiri, Herbert Snr, Mack, Peter and Shona, respectively.

And many great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren were witnessed by her in life, I would count that as being extremely lucky to be on this earth while she was still here, it is a reward that would be hard pressed to beat.



My name is Herbert Terrence Tumamao Alexander, I am the oldest grandchild of Hariata and Tumamao Ewe. I am the oldest great-grandchild of Te Ipu Kura a Maki and Moke Taua, I am completely humbled and privileged to be in this position.

My earliest memories are of my grandmother at her home in Ihumatao.

I find myself lamenting now, like the light on the horizon has gone dark, because the rays of the sun which were my Nan was passed now beyond the vale, but I must also rejoice in the knowledge of the teachings and the love that she had in her for me, knowing that I am truly thankful that she was my Nan, I know of no-one luckier than me and all of her mokopuna, without her now I can't say how life will be, sadness will be prevalent for a long time to come, I take heart though that one day as it was in life, I will see her again, as those who have gone before her have received her at this time.

My Nan, you will be remembered every second of my life remaining, it is impossible not to, I love you with every fibre of my being and will do until my spirit flies to be with you on that day and all your Mokpuna will one day be at your side, that will be a great moment.

You cannot write enough of the virtue that you have bestowed on all of us, you are the benchmark, you are that unattainable standard, you are the love, the life, the breath, now extinguished but not forgotten, forever in all our hearts, my Nan, Hariata, your body is resting in the eternal sleep, but your spirit lives on in us all, god speed, my Nan, simply, I love you, we love you, haere, haere, haere.

Standing up to family violence

It started with a violent outburst.

Nai Yin Xue threw a mobile phone at his wife An An Liu during an argument over finances.

The phone bounced off his wife and into their two-year-old daughter Qian Xun's head.

Then Nai Yin Xue advanced on An An Liu, punching her two or three times in the face.

He held a kitchen knife to her chest as she clutched her injured child in her arms and said:

"I treat you good and you don't treat me very well. I love you but you don't love me. I am going to kill you."

Those facts were laid before Waitakere Family Violence Court in June 2007.

They couldn't stop a tragic series of events unfolding.

Nai Yin Xue was paroled with notice he would be jailed if he offended again within a year.

Three months later he strangled An An Liu with a neck tie and left her body in the boot of his car.

He fled the country, abandoning Qian Xun in a Melbourne train station.



My first reaction upon hearing this train of events was one of anger and dismay. I had questions.

How did Nai Yin Xue get near his already battered wife?

How could this happen in Waitakere where we've done all we can to stamp out family violence?

Could a tougher sentence have stopped this terrible crime?

On 15 July, I went to the Waitakere Family Violence Court to meet the judges there. What I found impressed me greatly. In court session after court session, judges grappled with the complexities of violent relationships.

They looked both at acts of violence and the background to those acts - addiction to P or alcohol, mental health issues or the fact that a violent offender was also a victim of violence. Through all of this they were able to come to solutions that were positive for the perpetrator, the victim and more often than not, young children.

I do not envy them. In every case these judges had to put themselves at the heart of a dysfunctional family and try to forge a better future for them. Faced with harrowing circumstances, their judgements were made with wisdom for each family context.

The task before them is immense. In 2007/2008 family violence accounted for about 39 percent of New Zealand's homicides, 42 percent of kidnappings and abductions, 44 percent of grievous assaults and 64 percent of serious assaults. On average 14 Kiwi women, six men and 10 children are killed by a member of their family each year (see www.legislation.govt.nz).

M1-M4

Under my leadership, Waitakere City Council has tried to fight family violence in our communities (attached at pages M1 to M4). I established a mayoral taskforce to address the problem in 2007. It is empowering our social agencies to make Waitakere a world leader in reducing and reporting family violence. On massive billboards around town, in bold lettering on every rubbish bag, we are saying "It's not OK". We want our city to be violence free and we're doing all we can to make that happen. But we know we cannot succeed unless our efforts are made in tandem with our courts and judges. Without their wisdom we simply cannot make a lasting difference. We are part of the fence at the top of the cliff - the judiciary are the ambulance at the bottom for broken families.

I'd like to say that is simply a matter of administering tougher sentences and harsher justice for offenders. I'd like to think there was an easy way to stop this epidemic taking its dreadful toll on our communities. But my visit to the Waitakere Family Violence Court told me there simply is not. There are too many cases where scared victims refuse to help put their husband, wife, mother or father in prison; too many times where prison doesn't stop dysfunctional relationships reconciling. The court's lesson was that the path away from violence is different for each family. There is no one size fits all solution.

There are eight Family Violence Courts in New Zealand. There should be one in every major town and city. These are places where victims are treated as human beings, not as a bit part player in an adversarial court system. They are places where offenders who take responsibility for their crimes are given help to turn their lives around. Their very presence is testament to the fact family violence is not just another crime, but a deeply personal attack.



I am still filled with anger and dismay every time I think about Nai Yin Xue. But I am relieved there is a court doing all it can to stop the horrific chain of events that unfolded in the Xue house happening again. It may not succeed every time, but wherever it can the Waitakere Family Violence Court takes people in despair and puts them on a better path.

Time is running out

We are at a turning point in the history of our planet. Our climate is changing faster than predicted by scientists the world over. Ice caps are melting, oceans are becoming more acidic, sea levels are rising and coral reefs are dying. Never before has so much depended on us as individuals, as communities and as nations. Our choice is stark - continuation or obliteration. We must cut carbon emissions or face growing and unstoppable climate chaos.

M5-M8

In June, I joined the Sign On campaign by Greenpeace (attached at pages M5 to M8). As I write this report, 70,000 others have taken the same step. Joining the campaign is about saying we have to act now to stop climate change. My campaign slogan is "time is running out". It truly is. The science is saying we cannot wait any longer before we arrive at tipping points after which climate change becomes unstoppable. Global emissions must peak by 2015 or low lying islands will start sinking beneath the waves, marine life will die and cataclysmic weather events will be commonplace. It's time to act.

In December, New Zealand is sending a high level delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Some are calling the event "Kyoto 2", as it will have an even bigger impact than the Kyoto Protocol signed by 183 countries that calls for a global emissions reduction of 5.2 percent from 1990 levels by 2012. This conference at Copenhagen could be the world's last chance to find a unified stance on how to combat climate chaos. Greenpeace - and I too - believe New Zealand should be demanding a 40 percent reduction from our 1990 level greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. That is seen by many climate scientists as the minimum reduction for a developed country.

It may seem an ambitious target, but it is a necessary and achievable one. We could start by implementing some of the principles of our Waitakere eco-city throughout New Zealand. Building smart cities around public transport nodes must become the norm. Houses should be insulated, clean and sustainable industry should be encouraged and native trees should be planted in the places where urban sprawl may have taken over. Central Government should be fostering more renewable electricity supply and energy production as well as encouraging smart farming practices. These are all possible. We just need political will.

The consequences of not making a brave stand are dire. If New Zealand does not make a real commitment to stopping climate change it will lose its internationally known 'clean green' brand. It will send a bad signal to countries like India and China, who will be reluctant to reduce their carbon emissions if supposedly clean countries like ours are not willing to take the same step. Most importantly it will be a willing contributor to the greatest crisis of our time.

To quote the recent words of US President Barack Obama: *"Now is the time to confront this challenge once and for all. Delay is no longer an option. Denial is no longer an acceptable response. The stakes are too high. The consequences too serious."*



Pacific diary

M9-M65

I was very pleased to receive an invitation by Prime Minister John Key to join a high profile delegation to the Pacific Islands from July 7 to 10. A whirlwind tour, but his first official visit to our Pacific neighbours Tonga, Samoa Niue and the Cook Islands (attached at pages M9 to M65). The goal was to look at tourism, environmental issues and government initiatives. As 15 percent of Waitakere's population is from the Pacific, it seemed right that I and Manukau Mayor Len Brown would both be representing our cities on the trip. At the briefing held a week before our trip, I suggested that I take a closer look at the environment, waste management and tourism and marketing.

The day before I left I was also briefed by council's Pacific Advisory Board chairman Taha Fasi at my request. It was centred on Niue and its attitude toward residents returning from New Zealand.

We flew on the Royal New Zealand Air Force's new refurbished Boeing 757 (affectionately known as Air Force 1), leaving Wellington before dawn on Tuesday and arriving in Tonga on Monday. I have visited Tonga four times, but I found this trip to be the most depressing. The country has not recovered from the 2007 riots which ripped apart much of the Central Business District in Nukualofa. Buildings are peeling, signage is rotting away and many of the shops along the sea shore are in very bad condition. The Dateline Hotel - their best hotel - is probably one of the worst in the South Pacific. There is a major wharf project going on which to the eye does not look like its going to add anything to the downtown development.

Although there are no burnt out shops, there are large vacant sections where they were. The fire took its toll on lives and infrastructure. The only good that has come out of it is that Tonga is embarking on reform to establish democracy that was not in place during the last monarch's long reign.

I inspected the waste treatment plant six kilometres from the town centre. It is woefully under funded and under resourced. Although the director and staff know what can be achieved, they are struggling. The landfill is massive and unsorted. The nation does not have recycling services for glass, paper or plastic. All rubbish is simply taken to the dump. I was accompanied by Len Brown and Porirua Mayor Jenny Brash, as all of us have knowledge of recycling. The plant workers had a huge desire to improve and they believe assistance from local government in New Zealand could very well help. We spent an hour there offering advice on sorting, recycling and the need to not allow the landfill to swell in size.

Our return to Nukualofa was via the Police College, where we were joined by a large contingent of New Zealand police. I was able to talk to them about domestic violence - an ongoing problem in Tonga. The Prime Minister joined us and made an extraordinarily good speech on the history of the relationship between Tonga and New Zealand.

We then went straight to a full briefing and workshop on tourism marketing in the Tongan group. Tonga has an amazing tourism advantage over other Pacific nations with its brilliant whale watching opportunities in the Vava'u Island group. Right now they are looking for a brand manager. Branding is important for these islands and there is massive potential for development. It would be one of the great jobs in the world.



That evening we were invited to a dinner with the New Zealand High Commissioner Ms Christine Bogle. There I met Peter Salmon QC. He told me he had offered his services to the select committee on Auckland Governance to answer any questions that may arise. There had been little response. A great pity.

We were up by six the next morning to catch the plane for Samoa. It is the opposite of Tonga. Its town centre is vibrant and economically viable.

Our day was spent in briefings. Some went to the Chamber of Commerce briefing on the perfume industry and then on to a remote village to look at sustainable businesses - coconut, oil and cream processing and the marketing of fragrances by Tongan women's groups.

That evening I was honoured to be asked to meet again the Samoan Head of State, his highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese. He visited Waitakere as part of the Mau forum on April 28 this year at the Corban Estate. He wanted to discuss global warming and a number of other issues pertaining to the Pacific. To have a one on one meeting with such a high profile philosopher king is quite an honour. We share grave concerns about global warming. Its consequences in the islands and in New Zealand would be catastrophic. A new report says a 1m rise in sea level will sink most of the Pacific Islands and displace 60 million people that live within 1m of the mean sea level. New Zealand would be left to host a flood of displaced migrants.

We then came to the subject of Fiji. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese feels we cannot ignore this troubled group of islands. New Zealand must show leadership. And we must do it soon. Our conversation continued with officials and the delegation as a secondary agenda throughout the visit. It was, as they say, the elephant in the room.

Though Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese's conversation with the Prime Minister of New Zealand on the issue was thought to have been held in confidence it clearly had been leaked to the Observer and on Monday the palace issued the following communiqué:

"Some of the issues regarding Fiji raised by His Highness with the Prime Minister of New Zealand include:

- 1. What is the morality of the current measures designed to impact adversely on the economy of Fiji, bearing in mind that the poor and the innocent will bear the brunt of the consequential hardship?*
- 2. How will the hardship assist to create and nurture an environment which will counter the coup mentality and culture?*
- 3. Will the question which grapples the conscience of the world in the aftermath of Iraq bedevil the conscience of the region in the aftermath of what is happening in Fiji? The question is: How much evil do you need to do in order to do good?"*

That night the High Commissioner held a function attended by Samoan and New Zealand dignitaries and community leaders. Sir Paul Reeves and Lady Reeves were present celebrating their 50 years of marriage. We quickly fell into conversation about the worsening situation in Fiji.

M66-69

For mayors, our evening had not finished. We were taken to hear lobbying from the Tokelau Group for a reliable boat service to the Tokelau Islands. They wanted to present their request for a new vessel. We were swayed by their desperate situation. The atolls are small, isolated and the sea is dangerous. Beset by rising sea levels, disease and ill health they need a reliable boat to the islands (attached at pages M66 to M69).



“Westie” and Minister of Maori Affairs Pita Sharples revealed he had spent a year in the Tokelau group with his family working on his doctorate and studying the island language and its relationship to Maori. He said it was one of the most fascinating years he had spent in his life. He originally intended to be there three months but the boat didn’t come. So he waited another three months. The boat didn’t come. Yet another three months passed and again the boat failed to come. They lived on the island’s resources and the sea. After 12 months the boat finally came and he returned to build a house in Te Atatu and create Hone Waititi Marae.

M70-M85 Travelling with me was Barry Coates of Oxfam. Barry and I are long time friends and he, like me, is greatly concerned about the economic future of the islands and how to build a sustainable future in the region. He has written a paper that sets out a roadmap for that future. His strategic thinking is centred on how a small economic base can be developed around new and significant projects. The paper points to new ways where Polynesian countries can lift their agenda without resorting to mining, logging or fishing. Indeed they have to. He also makes it clear human health is a priority. No-one can work while they are ill. We talked at length about the threats to implementing this agenda. The political threat is clear: If New Zealand and Australia fail to act with assistance and support the Chinese government will fill that gap. At a time where both Australia and New Zealand governments have suspended financial assistance to the Fijian government, China increased its aid from \$23 million to \$180 million in 2007/08. They, for reasons that are a little murky, certainly see their future in the Pacific. Their assistance helped Samoa build a state-of-the-art new courthouse. Their magnificent embassy on the waterfront in Tonga is probably the best building in town. All this means they are serious about capturing the minds of the politicians and people of the Pacific. Barry’s excellent paper is called *“Getting serious about achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Strengthening economic development.”* (attached at pages M70 to M85)

The next morning we were headed into the dawn again, this time to Niue, known as The Rock. Their situation is somewhat different from the other islands we visited. They need assistance to manage the high cost of goods from New Zealand. They certainly need to see a return of sons and daughters to assist with their future and they need to put out the welcome mat more than they do. This issue was raised to me by Taha Fasi. The country’s prevailing attitude is disrespectful to those that have left Niue and come to New Zealand for a better life. I addressed these issues with the large business group and found that Taha’s briefing to me was extremely accurate. We then talked on business relationships with New Zealand, shipping costs for oil, the possibilities of solar power and even tidal generation. Michael Jones, who is a director of Reef Shipping, did an excellent presentation on restarting the nation’s deserted fish factory. It failed because of problems with resources and transportation of fish from the island to the market. By five we were on the plane taking off for the Cook Islands - our final destination.

We arrived in time for a major welcome by the Cook Island government and were in bed by 11:30 pm. By now we were showing much wear and tear. The idea of going to the islands and having back to back meetings and evening functions till midnight was taking its toll. Following a quick breakfast we attended three meetings on tourism and the impact of pollution. This was where I felt I gathered the most information. I also felt that I could make a contribution. The rapid deterioration of the Takitumu Lagoon, which I consider one of the world’s great treasures, needs to be dealt with immediately. I think the Cook Islands needs international support to resolve this failure. The lagoon, which surrounds Main Island, has had a great deal of work put into it but it seems a losing battle. Old and dysfunctional septic tanks, high tourist use, inappropriate farming practices and six nearby pig farms means human and animal waste are being carried daily into the lagoon. Many areas of the lagoon failed to meet environmental standards.



M86-M87 Although the water was safe for swimming there are many early warning signals that the environment is being seriously degraded (attached at pages M86 to M87).

At the heart of the problem is a lack of stringent local environmental regulation. I would love to send a team of Waitakere inspectors to deal with this frightening situation that exists on our doorstep. We are not owners, but guardians of these precious environmental treasures. They do not belong to us, but our grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Honouring the West

It is said you should walk backwards into the future so the past is always before you. Waitakere has taken note.

In *West: The History of Waitakere* we have set the past before us. Launched on 3 July, the book is a chronicle of the unique place we have built here and a legacy for future generations. Our character, culture, ideas and achievements are written in its pages. Together they are a firm foundation on which our sons and daughters can build a better world and an anchoring message as they look towards an uncertain future.

Edited by former Listener editor Finlay MacDonald and seasoned journalist Ruth Kerr, *West* devotes its 480 pages to the things that give this place its identity. Each of its 25 chapters and 24 writers explores a defining feature of the city and its history. They show how we have become world leaders in environmentalism, the arts, politics, sports, business, education and race relations. Waitakere is New Zealand's first eco-city, a learning city, a launching pad for All Black greats, a wine making capital and the muse for prominent writers, artists and film directors.

The stories of triumph are tempered with tributes to those who worked to achieve them. Western Leader editor Matthew Gray's excerpt on "*Auckland's necropolis*" Waikumete Cemetery is particularly moving. His is a reminder that our city is built upon the accomplishments of our ancestors. Every tombstone in the cemetery has a story behind it. Some are of triumph and achievement, like those of racing pioneer Bruce McLaren and gold winning weightlifter Don Oliver. Others are controversial, like those of the flamboyant Freda Stark, her murdered lesbian lover Thelma Mareo and atheist Syd Ashton, whose 1948 epitaph reads "*do good for good is good to do, spurn bribe of heaven and threat of hell*". A few are tragic, like those of talented twins Bernice and Doreen Lumley, who died in a 1939 road crash, age 18, and constable Percy Tulloch, one of seven shot dead by Stanley Graham in 1941. All contributed to the making of the West.

Only the landscape remains constant in the book's tale of constant progress. Each story is set against the Wild West Coast. The thundering surf and black sands of Karekare Beach, the jagged Lion Rock, the dunes of Te Henga, the treacherous mouth of the Manukau Harbour or the rolling Waitakere Ranges. The broad boughs of the Kauri, the guardian cliffs overlooking the sea, the deep waters of the Nihotupu Reservoir. Far from being in the background, the harsh but beautiful landscape of the West has shaped the culture and character of its people.



Those people are the true heart of *West: A History of Waitakere*. From the Te Kawerau a Maki iwi to the first Croatian immigrants to the classic “Westie”, the characters of the West run through every page. Musicians and politicians, businessmen and surfies, dreamers and thinkers, Maori and European, all find their place. It is the people of the West that define it. They are rugged, but generous. Hard, but giving. Together, but diverse. Stubborn, but not unmovable. This is a book about the stuff this city is made of. Not mortar and clay, but life and breath.

“He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.”

“It is people, it is people, it is people.”

In memory of Mr Huia

The heart of Huia has stopped beating.

Town figurehead Norm Laing died on 30 May, age 85. He was an author, a historian, a teacher, a father and a friend. But to many he will be remembered simply as Mr Huia. His life left a legacy of tireless service to the small seaside town where he spent his childhood and retirement.

Everyone in Huia knew Norm. He was involved in everything from the town’s residents and ratepayers group to its badminton and bowls clubs. But his crowning achievement was the establishment of the Huia Settlers Museum in 1984. He was a driving force behind the museum, acting as its original curator and long serving board member. Under his leadership it became one of the best stores of artefacts and memorabilia from the wreck of the Orpheus on the Manukau Bar - New Zealand’s worst maritime disaster.

M88-M90

A mutual interest in the devastating wreck that claimed 189 lives brought Norm and I together. We worked closely researching it for a book by mutual friend Thayer Fairburn. Norm provided vital help in my efforts to track down a painting of the disaster by Admiral Richard Beechey, Royal Navy, which we used for the book’s cover (attached at pages M88 to M90). I have held an unbending respect for Norm’s passion, tenaciousness, humility and ability ever since.

Those qualities were a hallmark of all Norm’s dealings. Adversity never scared him. He got a teachers degree in engineering and technical drawing even though he never finished high school. He participated in long distance running and car rallies. He used his free time in Samoa and Sabah climbing to remote villages. But his most passionate, tenacious, humble and able efforts were performed in Huia. Ask any of its residents; Norm’s life was a gift to the township, a treasure, and an inspiration for the future.

Norm Laing was simply, Mr Huia.



A tribute to Gwen Nash

I'd like to pay tribute to Gwen Nash - a friend of the city, of Council and our community boards. Gwen was a real people person, an enthusiastic advocate of change and a tireless campaigner for her beloved Massey community. She chaired the Massey Community Board and served six years on Waitakere City Council. Her election followed a long career in community housing. Working with women, Maori and Pacific people to give them a voice in our community was her passion. She was a life member of Massey Citizens Advice Bureau, which she had a key role in establishing. Her service to the community was acknowledged with a Queen's Service Medal in 2004.

Gwen was also a fantastic embroider, making the magnificent and opulent mayoral robes which I wear on many occasions. Beautifully designed native plants and birds grace the sleeves. Her style and ability to create designer elegance were remarkable.

As Mayor, I had a great relationship with Gwen and her late husband. She was a gentle woman but there was always a touch of steel in her character. She was an advocate for justice and democracy in her community. If she thought something was right and needed to be done she could not be talked out of it. Gwen gave much of their life to the people of the West. I would like to extend on behalf of the council our gratitude for the time she spent with us and the many friendships she made while serving Waitakere City. Her family has our heartfelt sympathy.

Below is a tribute to Gwen Nash by her daughter Deb Nash.

Goodbye to Gwen - a eulogy by her daughter Debs Nash

It can be funny the thought processes you have when someone close to you is dying. I knew I would want to share some of my memories of Gwen with you when this day came and the organiser in me had often thought of jotting some of these down ahead of time.

But somehow it felt almost disrespectful to acknowledge the inevitability of Gwen's death when she was still so positive about the life she had left. We have all witnessed the strength of character she could display in beating the odds. She was not one to let a couple of life threatening illnesses take control of her. It was one of the qualities that made her such a remarkable role model for me.

So, here I am now, uncharacteristically ill-prepared and able to speak only from the heart. I have chosen to share just 5 of the most important things Gwen has taught me.

Gwen was the ultimate feminist role model

Gender equality was undoubtedly the single most important value that Gwen imparted to me from a very early age. She led by example and made it look easy, in times when it must have been far from it.

This was such a fundamental part of her belief system that it really laid the foundation of everything she did in life, however, two very key practical things she impressed on me as a young woman were:

- to take responsibility for my own financial security; and
- that having children should be by choice and not out of obligation to anyone else.



Despite the knowledge that I shared her views, Gwen would still keep me honest to the 'n'th degree. I remember her reprimanding me only a few years ago for referring to a friend of mine 'a big girl's blouse'. I had intended this as an endearment but she firmly pointed out that this was derogatory to women and not appreciated by her.

Gwen had the courage to be different & take risks

The world would be so dull without people like Gwen - it is so easy to conform to society's 'norms'. It is so easy to dress like everyone else, drive a sensible sedan, be afraid of change.....I'm thankful Gwen did not take the easy path for the sake of it. She set a great example for me, she was a leader, not a conformist.

In fact, if Gwen had taken the recommended path I would not be here - After the death of my sister from spina bifida she was advised against having further children.....but she followed her heart. Thanks for that Mum.

I remember well the period when Gwen decided she wanted a career, back in the 60s. She just didn't find the endless hours of cooking, sewing, cleaning, fundraising for the school, relief teaching and being President of the Women's Division of the Federated Farmers enough for her.

It was absolutely not the 'done thing' in the dairy farming community we lived in for women to work outside of the home and my father was none too impressed with this development, but that was not about to stop our Gwen! She bought herself a Honda 50 scooter and got a job in an office 7 miles away in Te Awamutu.

I bet a few net curtains twitched as she rode past each day with her flamboyant outfits flying behind her. She knew she raised eyebrows and was the topic of much hushed gossip but she had the strength of character to rise above it and follow her calling.

This never changed. It never does for those of us who have the courage to take risks and follow our convictions. Others' criticism and judgements are just part of the package - after all, it really says more about them and their own fears than it does about us.

Gwen had incredible altruistic values

For many of you I imagine this is something you also admire. Regardless of anything else you remember about Gwen, you would have to agree that whatever she did she did with the best intent.

Gwen had the conviction to stand up for what she believed in, to support those who did not have the strength or skill to stand up for themselves. She was a great voice for the underprivileged and a relentless worker to make right many of the disparities in the way life is dealt to different people.

This is such an obvious quality I am not even going to expand with examples - I'm sure we all have many. She simply had a very strong belief in fairness for all and the passion to do what she could to level the playing field in society.

Gwen was possibly the most pragmatic person I have ever known

While Gwen was ultimately guided by her heart and passion to make a difference, she got results by applying practicality to situations. She was such a great person to have on your team when you wanted things done.



Sometimes she could come across as cold or unemotional, but this was just her way of not allowing emotional matters get in the way of the desired result. Let's not forget that she had chosen to enter the male dominated business world back when there was little place for emotion if you were to be heard.

The time I remember questioning this was when my father was admitted to hospital in the middle of the night with a heart attack. Gwen called me about 7.30 am to tell me and it turned out she had sent him off in the ambulance and she was now getting ready to go to a council meeting. I was shocked but this was a classic Gwen thing to do - there was nothing she could do to help Dad - he was in good hands and she had her duty to perform. It was not that she did not care, she simply had very important things that needed to be done - and Dad fully understood this. When I spoke with him, he was not at all fazed by it either. Turns out it was just me being emotional.

Gwen was also one of the most tenacious people I have ever known

Do I hear a snigger here? Come on, who hasn't had the occasion to disagree with Gwen over something? Boy, what a stubborn opponent she could be - you'd get to a point where the conversation was just shut down, all over, end of story. When her mind was made up there was no point wasting your energy trying to budge her. Talk about a dog with a bone.

Of course this really helped her to stand her ground in fighting for what she believed in as well, she would not just be bullied by anyone. She stood firm and never betrayed her beliefs.

On the positive side this was shown in the way she could stay motivated and positive against all odds - she was not easily defeated. She could take the biggest obstacles and somehow turn them into a challenge and make them seem a whole lot more manageable, possibly even fun.

There is an example that makes me smile. It probably comes as no surprise that Gwen tried to pass on her enthusiasm for sewing to me. I was 'OK' at the basics but never had the patience to really excell in this, but she was very supportive in my attempts and never gave up on me. Gwen's mantra, adopted when I was throwing the garment across the room in frustration, was 'don't see it as a mistake, turn it into a feature'. I laugh thinking about some of these 'features' we created and do wonder whether the recent trend of sewing zips onto the outside of dresses may have been in part inspired by one of these.

Many of you have had the fortune to witness the way in which Gwen rose to the challenges with her health over the past couple of years, particularly with her decreasing mobility. She would not be defeated. She maintained her independence but also her service to the community, only resigning from her JP role and working up at the CAB when it became physically impossible for her to do so. That just sums up how she was, one of the strongest, most giving people I have had the fortune to know. How lucky I was to have her as my mother.

Gwen, thank you for being such a wonderful role model to me and I will try my very best to live up to your example.

Your devoted daughter, Debs.



In memory of a great leader

Te Papa Chief Executive Seddon Bennington's body was found in the Tararua Ranges on July 15. He and his companion Marcella Jackson had become stranded in stormy, freezing conditions on a weekend tramp and perished just one kilometre short of their planned destination, Kime Hut.

The tragedy was a momentous blow to our nation and our national museum. I have had the privilege of working with Dr Bennington since 2006 as a board member at Te Papa. At the time of his death, he and I were working to bring the successful Whales (Tohora) exhibition to the Auckland Region for the 2011 Rugby World Cup. His tragic loss comes as our iconic national museum is about to announce one of its most successful years ever. Much of that success is down to the remarkable leadership displayed by Dr Bennington. His astute sense of what would be successful in his complex and difficult field was the backbone of the museum. It helped make Te Papa a world leader and a showcase for New Zealand's history and culture. He will be sorely missed by all board members, past and present, and the staff of the museum.

An excerpt from the Houston Chronicle

By Jack Riemer

On November 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Centre in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches.

To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly is a sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play.

By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to this chair. They remain reverently silent while he undoes the clasps on his legs. They wait until he is ready to play. But this time something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap - it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant. There was no mistaking what he had to do.

People who were there that night thought to themselves: "We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage - to either find another violin or else find another string for this one". But he didn't. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signalled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before. Of course anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing and recomposing the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was de-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before.

When he finished there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of



the auditorium. We were all on our feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything we could to show how much we appreciated what he had done.

He smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said, not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, "You know, sometimes it is the artists task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left". What a powerful line that is. It has stayed in my mind ever since I heard it. And who knows? Perhaps it is the way of life - not just for artists but for all of us.

Here is a man who prepared all his life to make music on a violin of four strings, who, all of a sudden, in the middle of a concert, finds himself with only three strings. So he makes music with three strings and the music he made that night with just three strings was more beautiful, more sacred, more memorable, than any that he had ever made before, when he had four strings.

So perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live is to make music, at first with all that we have and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left.

Another excerpt from closer to home

On a recent flight to Wellington I picked up the excellent Air New Zealand in flight magazine, Kia Ora.

M91-93

Attached at pages M91 to M93 is an excellent article on Waitakere, and the West Coast in particular. It's a great plug and the Council rates a mention too.

