

Council

**Wednesday, 28 April 2004
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

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, 28 APRIL 2004,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

BEING A WESTIE

As many of you know, for the past year I have been writing a book simply called "Westies".

It is an idea originally planned as part of a Te Papa exhibition and so out of the concept of a massive project came a book that would capture, through interviews and photographs, the passion of the West.

Through all of those interviews (well over 60) there is a common thread, the essence of what it is to be a "Westie"; someone who lives to the West of the Whau, and would never live anywhere else.

Much of that is captured by Warwick Roger in his excellent Metro article "In the West". Written in the mid 1980's, when the West had particularly bad press.

In my upcoming book, I want to build on the progress that has been made since then by society, the community and yes, the Council. I was also coming from a point of view that unless you know your history you don't know where you are going.

So the more we understand about what makes people in our community "tick"- what binds them together - the more we will be able to achieve with the whole community. Many people that I interviewed were able to relocate to the areas and their lives. Still, it's hard to define the West. It has had so many transformations. It was once called Waitemata and stretched all the way to Orewa in the North. It was a vast and complex community, moving from farmland to pocket settlements, each with their own distinct identity but all seemingly tolerant and industrious.

What has always been apparent is that different aspects of the West have agreed to work together without tension or conflict. This indeed has been at its core - the will and the need to achieve for the next generation.

In the early days the Waitakeres and the West of the Auckland Isthmus were something of a mysterious land. It offered always a sense of place and sanctuary. In Swanson was the infamous Don Buck's camp. A refuge for the homeless, a place where the destitute were given a spade and a sack to collect gum. They were also given the chance of a new life. Whether Don Buck was a Portuguese nobleman or a refugee from the law is debatable, but he started a trend to go West and start again.

One thing is certain, he started the beginnings of a Westie culture. That culture offered a welcome to anyone and everyone with the courage and the will to work hard, change their life.

It still exists today.



When I first moved west to Glen Eden in 1968 (from Waiatarua), I was surrounded by Dutch neighbours. The Dutch immigrants of the 60s took to the West like ducks to water, joining local clubs and volunteer fire brigades. They ran local cafes and tea rooms, introducing coffee and home made bread. They gave the West a new and unique cultural grounding. Weaving, spinning, painting, drawing all had a Dutch influence. The local phone book was more Dutch than any other city in New Zealand and in the 1980's one third of the region's Dutch population lived in the West.

In the 1950's the new Dutch settlements sprang up around Henderson with kit-set houses built in Rotterdam. They were shipped to New Zealand with their hopeful occupants who rebuilt them in this new land. They still stand today, modified and hardly recognisable but a part of the West's unique heritage.

In the 1960's and 70's the second great Maori migration - from rural areas to the cities - took place. Many had just two choices in which to set up home, the burgeoning suburbs of south or West Auckland. More specifically state house applicants were offered a choice of homes in two "posh" new suburbs - Otara or Kelston.

The West was also the first choice for many Pakeha and Pacific brothers and sisters. Thanks to Neil Housing who helped home buyers capitalise on their family benefit (and offered finance over 25 years at 2.5% interest rate) families could have a home in Green Bay, Glen Eden or Massey. Neil's built 700 houses in Green Bay in two years and on the Te Atatu Peninsula there are still 4000 Neil Homes - none of which leak. Today their aging occupants have paid off the mortgage and their homes are some of the most expensive in the Auckland Region.

Out in Ranui and West Harbour (which was once such a worry for the Government that they had a commission set up to assist the young struggling families there) the property boom continues. But it wasn't always that way. The West struggled, as did the families, to cope with poor infrastructure and lack of schools and community facilities such as halls and meeting areas. Women with young children went steadily crazy, alone in the suburbs for years, while husbands drove across the region for work in the family's only car. Transportation was never great and isolation and despair produced ghetto communities.

Then remarkable individuals began to emerge (some of whom feature in my book). On the Te Atatu Peninsula, Maori pride grew under the tutelage of the remarkable June Mariu. John Tamihere led Te Whānau O Waipareira Trust to develop new ways of dealing with law, labour, health and mediation. The Henderson District Court was blessed by the wise and wonderful Judge Mick Brown, whose innovative approach to dispensing justice was a breakthrough, modelling how first offenders could be reformed and re-introduced into society.

By the mid 1970's the West had become a young community with its own raw culture. This was a culture that overflowed into music, cars and lifestyle. There was a baby boom like no other. And these kids were growing up-fast. Families generally had four or five children and the impact on the local community was enormous.

The media developed a Westie tag and if you read the Sunday News or Truth you would have thought the West was lawless.

Earlier this year University of Auckland Sociologist Steve Matthewman wrote a paper examining the "the fabled Westie identity" and I was able to compare his commentary with that of Warwick Roger back in the 1980's, and my own first hand experience of buying a house for \$9000 (the most expensive in the street), getting married and raising a family of five kids, one car and a mortgage for life.



And while we have become more prosperous, safer, cleaner and much, much better, what was obvious was that there is still an underlying culture here that is quite unique; people and communities working together and understanding each other, resulting in a feeling of respect and progress.

We also kept certain sub-cultures, such as our passion for car repairs and panel beating workshops that still fill the Yellow Pages. We seem to have a hunger for alcohol, burgers, shopping, and, dare I say it, drugs.

The car culture also manifests itself in our doctor's surgeries and A&E Clinics - our road toll and accident records are still high-too high, and the courts still see too many battered partners and kids. I digress slightly, but I ask what has happened to the last drink survey? Are the police and the courts hard enough on cafes and bars that serve alcohol to intoxicated drivers? This behaviour is what gave the West a bad name and I don't want it to return - who would?

But back to the discussion on what it means to be a "Westie". The term "Westie" is Australian, imported in the 1970s from Sydney, where it referred, and refers still, to people from the poorer western suburbs of that city: "unsophisticated and macho", "downright threatening to the inner city, trendy types".

Matthewman traces what he calls Henderson's "Iarrikinism" to its origins as a mostly-male timber mill.

History tells us that Henderson's first pub opened in 1856. A race course opened two years later, but was closed down after a riot. Seventeen years after the pub started up they got round to opening a school. And sixty-eight years later Henderson finally got its own policeman.

It is this, argues Matthewman, that was the ancestry of the modern image of the Westie: working class Pakeha with black jeans, mullets, and V8s blaring heavy metal.

Matthewman has only part of the story. Maybe. But I would give it another spin. I would say we are the West of plumbers and printers. Sure. But we are also the West of potters and painters, poets and film makers. We are both the roar of a revving V8, and the roar of breakers at Karekare Beach.

What we all have in common, plumbers and poets, is not a "timeline of hoondom", but a history of the frontier. We come from outsiders determined to make a new life "where the soil turns to clay, fields turn to bush and even the beaches are rough".

We are still like the pioneers of the mid 1800s too rough for Auckland, the Croatian gum diggers and orchadists too European for the British, the rough working-class kids too wild and noisy for the Eastern suburbs or the North Shore, the artists and Greenies, life-stylers and dreamers too expansive and idealistic for the confined materialism of the inner suburbs.

Our city was not born, as were Christchurch, Wellington, Nelson and Dunedin, in Edward Gibbon Wakefield's dreams of gentile, polite little Englands. Nor are we the product of the conservative business establishment that ran Auckland.

We were outsiders from the start. Our ancestors, and many of us in our own life times, came to this place to get away from confinement, or war, or poverty ... for a new start, for the space, for the freedom to remake our lives.



Ours is a not a history of Eastern suburbs privilege. Ours is a history of pioneers, often without financial means, struggling to make a place for themselves. Wave after wave of pioneers. The Maori first, then the British kauri millers, the Croatians who dug the gum, then the Vela's, Yelash's and Babich's who planted orchards and vineyards.

Few were from privilege. All came to build a new life on Auckland's last frontier. In Auckland's "wild west". For a life where hard work would mean a modest home of your own, a better education for your children and a secure retirement - you hoped.

What we still have in common today, most of us, is our "otherness".

We all belong here. As surely as the brooding green Waitakeres at our heart. We are the West Auckland of fast cars and fast food. We are the Waitakere of Hoani Waititi Marae and Te Kawerau a Maki. We are the Waitakere City of art galleries, film making and new business investment.

Auckland's California. And that is how I see our future. There is more space out here than the cramped, fussy inner suburbs. Here we don't care what our neighbours do. We are not limited.

When I finished the Westies book at Easter I went out to Bethells to complete the final photograph. Here on the grand veranda is the Bethell Family gathered for their official portrait. In many ways they personified the West.

It had been a struggle against bueracrats and politicians and the harsh elements. I am not saying that they didn't enjoy the challenge and the chase over nearly two centuries but they endured and they fought to keep what was theirs and they battled for their family and their rights.

Like the Bethells', the West and Westies will never lose their identity, their culture, their guts and their sense of place.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A NEW ZEALANDER

Following on from these thoughts of mine, you might like to see how our colleague John Tamihere feels about being a New Zealander. This taken from a recent speech:

To me, a New Zealander is:

A person born in New Zealand. A person who came to New Zealand tens of generations ago in an ocean-going waka. A person who came to New Zealand a year ago in a jumbo jet.

Someone who came here in a canoe, even though other people told them not to go over the horizon because taniwha would eat them. A person who came here in a sailing ship even though other people told them not to go over the horizon because cannibals would eat them. Someone whose forebears signed the Treaty of Waitangi. Someone whose ancestors were there, but declined to sign.

A Maori. A Pakeha. A Maori-Pakeha. A Pacific Islander. An Asian. Someone from Britain. An Irishwoman. A Scotsman. Any combination of the aforementioned. Plus a whole bunch of other ethnicities and countries of origin. Tangata Whenua. A kiwi. A sheepshagger.



Someone who feels a lump in their throat when they fly back into New Zealand, after travelling overseas. Someone who has never had the wherewithal to afford international air travel, but just knows there is no place they would rather be. Someone who calls New Zealand home. Someone who has been away for years earning better money offshore, but knows New Zealand is the place they will come back to to raise their kids.

Someone who feels a cultural connection with a stretch of foreshore that does to their ancestors' arrival in this land. Someone who has surfed this beach every summer since they were a kid. A Rotarian. A Maori "activist". A Labour voter. A National voter. Even an ACT voter. A warrior. Someone who fought for this country in a world war. A conscientious objector. A member of Grey Power. A member of Black Power. Helen Clark. Don Brash. Mickey Savage. Rob Muldoon.

Someone who claims that there is no food that cannot be improved by liberal application of Watties' tomato sauce. Someone who has experienced the indescribable pleasure of rolling jaffas down the aisle in the movies. A Good Keen Man. Man Alone. A hard case Sheila. An All back. A silver fern. Mark Todd. David Tua. Kiri Te Kanawa. Rachel Hunter. Ed Hillary. Janet Frame. Billy T James. James K Baxter. Hone Tuwhare. Jake the Muss. Possum Borne. Dave Dobbyn. Colin McCahon. Selwyn Toogood. Prince Tui Teke.

A school kid who wears a bone carving. Their classmate wears a cross. Another classmate wearing a headscarf. Someone wearing a tan mark on their feet from wearing jandals. Someone who wears Zambesi and Karen Walker. Someone who wears Ugg boots. Someone who drinks Tui. Someone who drinks Martinborough pinot noir.

Someone who thinks of Christmas and immediately thinks of Pohutuawa trees, hot summers and Christmas dinner off the barbeque. Someone who feels a lump in their throat when they watch that grainy old footage of Jack Lovelock. Someone who thinks of David, not James T, when you say "Captain Kirk". Someone who knows that Phar Lap was a New Zealand horse. And that pavlova is a New Zealand dessert. Someone who knew that Keisha Castle Hughs and Peter Jackson were the biggest stars at Hollywood.

Someone who sings Pokarekare ana, pissed at 3.00 am in a London pub. A member of a school kapa haka group in West Auckland. A kid who goes to Christ's College. A kid who goes to a kura kaupapa in South Auckland. A boy. A grandmother. A Chief Executive. A solo mum. A millionaire. A beneficiary. My mother and father. Your Mum and Dad. My children. Your children. Their children's children. You. Me.

Someone who thinks everyone deserves a fair go. Someone who will give anything a go. Someone who doesn't have a bit of whinge, but at the end of the day knows that being a Kiwi is the best thing in the world.

I believe that the last paragraph in this excellent speech pretty much sums up all of us.

MILESTONES

A Loss to the City - Michael King

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of Michael King who with his wife Maria Jungowska was killed in a car crash south of Auckland.

Michael had a long association with the Going West Literary Festival and has made appearances reading his work at six of our festivals. A Coromandel resident, Michael always came up to the opening of our festival and was on the welcoming committee for the Friday night event. He stayed for the festival, joining in as not only a mentor, but a guiding light for the Waitakere Literary Weekend.



Murray Grey, the organiser of our festival, pays this tribute

*"The death of author and historian Michael King is a particular loss to Waitakere City. Michael was a key speaker and contributor at every Going West Books and Writers Festival since 1998. His generosity towards other writers and to the reading public was remarkable. Each year he would settle into the Rangiwai Lodge in Titirangi and spend the days at the festival and the evenings writing in the peace and quiet of his favourite 'room with a view.' Possibly the most moving contribution he made over these years was his keynote address just two days after 9/11. In the light of that tragedy, he completely re-wrote his speech in 24 hours and delivered an extraordinary dissertation on tolerance focussing on a personal story which he later went on to enshrine in the memoir **At the Edge of Memory**. Taken from his keynote address at Going West 2001 "wounds to the spirit can only be healed by those things which address the spirit. And nothing more directly addresses the spirit, individual and corporate, than song, poetry, storytelling, the very kinds of activities we are engaged in this weekend. And it's entirely appropriate that we should do so, while remembering the grief and suffering that the human family has experienced this particular week ..."*

Those who met Michael during his visits to the festival will remember his warmth, his humour and his huge grasp of the cultural issues facing this country. He will be sorely missed."

Passed on - Mere Reihana

On 4 April at Te Puke - Mere Reihana, beloved mother of Councils kuia Mihi Te Huia. It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Mere and the Council extends to Mihi and her Whanau at this time our sympathy and aroha.

Mihi has been a constant support to this Council and to Maori in Waitakere City. Her presence at civic functions, at blessings and her total involvement is appreciated. Her wisdom and kindness is acknowledged with the greatest respect. I am sure all Councillors will join me in extending to Mihi our sympathy at this time.

Launched - The Landscape of My Heart by Mary Woodward

Launched at Corban Winery Estate by Lynne Pillay. The Bethells family of Te Henga could be described as "the first family" of the west and this wonderful book written with great skill and love by Mary Woodward is a tribute this dynasty of the coast.

As I mentioned earlier in my report, the years have been tough farming this vast bush property and this new book is a celebration as Woodward interweaves the breaking in the land and the relationship with Maori in the early part of last century.

The family survived by farming, milling and later tourism, growing and acquiring land around the original property. This compelling family draws you into their lives and you become like a distant relative, experiencing their tragedies and their closeness. The book is beautifully crafted in design, drenched in atmosphere and enhanced by the historical maps, paintings, sketches and photographs.

In 1988 Woodward wrote a short family history for a Bethells family reunion. She has revisited the subject and expanded it, building the story from the arrival in New Zealand of Francis Bethell in 1858 - journeying to the outer edge of the Auckland region, working the bush mills, cutting roads, clearing the land and creating a family that today dominates this wonderful West Coast beach.



The coast is as much a player in this book as the Bethell family. It is a landscape and a backdrop. Dramatic, wild and still untamed. As the family grows through the generations they bring others into the fold. There are deaths and births a plenty and as the resourceful Bethells move from farming to tourism, they welcome new friends - photographers, painters and writers, that flow into this West Coast paradise and into the lives of the Bethell's family. They build an enclave of houses with wide verandas, surrounded by great trees. The walls are covered with memorabilia of ship wrecks and paintings.

Men and women of this family share an equal power base, unusual in this era as they struggle side by side simply to survive in this harsh landscape. They sure are a resourceful lot, willing to take on any challenge, and there has been a few - including almost a century of tension with bureaucrats, officialdom and Councils. Its nice to know that over recent years something of a truce has broken out and an acknowledgement of what has been achieved by the Bethells family is long overdue.

The Auckland area is not blessed by such history or by such passion and energy. It is usually reserved for South Island high country stations but this is every bit as romantic and intriguing as any of the great family sagas.

The West Coast over recent years has had a number of writers taking a beach as its subject and there have been some good publications. This one is a pure gem. It adds to the history of the West Coast and of Auckland. A tale of epic proportions over two centuries. An extraordinarily well written, heartfelt history of a great family.

Awa Hudson - Retiring After 30 Years

This remarkable, wonderful woman. A former Deputy Mayor of the City of Waitemata has added so much to this school and the Waitakere community. I have asked Awa Hudson to join Councillors for dinner at the May Council meeting when a presentation will be made on behalf of the City at the Council meeting.

Community Action on Youth and Drugs

Held in the Council Chamber. This is a big issue for us and this was a full day workshop to get the community totally involved. It bought together a large audience who are absolutely committed towards the reduction of drugs within our community.

There is huge concern that the situation is getting out of hand and at a dangerously high level. There is a disturbing level of drugs being distributed and manufactured in our community and this is disappointing considering the progress we are making with the creation of jobs and the social infrastructure in Waitakere.

I would like to think that this workshop was the first - not a one off - which will lift the awareness and more importantly develop plans for how we can tackle this problem.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the government's contribution towards funding this project and the work of staff members Mike Mills, Tony Mayow, Tina Meharry and Melanie Dunn who bought this day together.

M1-M6 Attached at pages M1 to M5 is a copy of my speech for the day, along with a letter from the local MP Lynne Pillay, as attached at pages M6.



Craig Borich - Waitakere Cricket Club

We are delighted to record the success of Craig Borich who has scored over 1100 runs playing in North Wales for the Mochdre Cricket Club. His outstanding season endeared him to the Welsh and he has returned to New Zealand to complete his Physical Education degree. Wanting to please his Welsh friends Craig has replaced himself with another local cricket ace Blayne Fraser. Fraser is the captain of the successful Waitakere first grade side and he will take Craig's place at the Welsh Club this season.

Flag of Inconvenience

M7-M8 Councillors will be aware of the (largely positive) media coverage and comments from the general public that was received after we flew Lloyd Morison's "alternative" New Zealand flag. Apart from local media, I was interviewed by a large Japanese daily newspaper and, as attached at pages M7 to M8, is an article which appeared in the Guardian in Britain.

Sorry I Forgot Something ...

M9-M12 The Meaning of Water by Veronica Strang is an excellent book launched in an event jointly sponsored by Watercare Services and Waitakere City. Mark Ford's speech arrived in the office too late for the last Mayoral Report but I thought you would enjoy its content and I would like to acknowledge Watercare and Mark Ford's enthusiasm for the book and the author. I think all Councillors will appreciate Mark Ford's comments and the large and important gathering that came to the launch certainly have commented on its style, as attached at pages M9 to M12.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY