

# RAKIURA RAMBLES

A STEWART ISLAND NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 2

\$1,00

April 1999

## RIGHTS TO SALVAGE

According to the Legal Services Centre in Christchurch the following rights apply when a wreck of a vessel is found at sea or on shore:

- 1) A Receiver should be told about any wreck - that is any vessel, aircraft, equipment or cargo which is abandoned, stranded in distress at sea or on any river or lake. These Receivers are Maritime Safety Inspectors and are based at Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru, Lyttleton and Nelson for the South Island.
- 2) If possible, the wreck should be delivered to the Receiver who then has to try and find the owner who is then entitled to reclaim the wreck once payment of all salvage fees and costs has been made. If the owner is not found within a year, the Receiver can then sell the wreck.
- 3) Ownership of the wreck stays with the original owner until this stage, and the idea of "finders keepers" is NOT applicable. The Receiver is, however, likely to give the finder first option to buy - sometimes possibly merely for the cost of salvage fees incurred.

NOTE: The Receiver is unlikely to be concerned about items of low value or items such as damaged fishing nets, etc.

## 90 YEARS OF DISTRICT NURSING ON STEWART ISLAND

by Margaret Hopkins

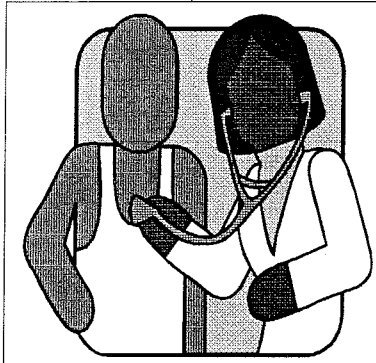
The 8th April marks 90 years since the first District Nurse was appointed in Southland by the Southland Hospital Board. Stewart Island was

thought to be a good place to give the District Nursing scheme a fair trial. By 1913 there were still only nine district nurses employed in rural districts of Southland. On Stewart Island, the first nurse, Sister Sarah Sommerville, received a salary of 150 pounds per annum, contributed to equally by the residents of the Island, the Southland Hospital Board and the Health Department.

Early district nurses on Stewart Island worked under extremely difficult conditions, often having

to walk or be rowed to remote houses.

Communication problems with no telephone, and isolation from expert medical advice meant that these



early nurses had to be adaptable and efficient at a number of important tasks. It wasn't until the

1930s that the district nurse, Gladys Peters, got a telephone, but even this improvement had its limitations with the telephone exchange closing at 5 p.m. Real emergencies involving the need for hospitalisation required a long and often rough crossing of Foveaux Strait by fishing boat for both patient and nurse, followed by a 17 mile ambulance journey from Bluff to Invercargill over a road

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## A STOAT ON STEWART ISLAND?

by Jessyca Bernard

"... it was sort of long bodied, and ran on all fours. Every so often it would stand up on its hind quarters, flick its head left and right in an inquisitive manner and then drop back to all fours. It was about 20cm tall. When it moved it looked like... a ferret... I know ferrets... It wasn't a ferret but it moved like a ferret. I think it was a dark brown or dark grey colour on its back, with a much lighter strip on its belly length. It had beady little eyes and little round ears. That's about all I could see... it was about 12m away, and my torch is not that great..."

My throat tightened and my stomach knotted. It sounded like a stoat sighting to me. Wasn't Stewart Island supposed to be stoat free? I had only been here a couple of weeks as Field Centre Supervisor but I was fairly sure that was the

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## A STOAT ON STEWART ISLAND?

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case. Other DoC staff immediately advised me that, indeed, Stewart Island was free of stoats. There had, however, been about 3 similar reports in the last 7 years.

I questioned the gentleman who came into the Field Centre with this particular report more closely and at length. Actually, 'questioned' is the mild version. 'Grilled' is probably a fairer description. I had him repeat his story 3 or 4 times. This to establish fact from fiction and to take accurate notes on what seemed to be a genuine stoat sighting.

I guess I should explain my trepidation at this man's report. You know how they use the phrase to 'put the cat amongst the pigeons' to indicate the causing of havoc or the disruption and destruction of an idyllic state?

Well, when considering the environmental state and idyllic nature of Stewart Island, it would be far more appropriate to say 'put the stoat amongst the native birds'. When talking of the disruption and destruction of New Zealand's Mainland native bird life; arguably, the most effective force so far, has been the

introduction of the stoat.

You may need a little background. Stoats (part of the mustelid family, which includes ferrets), were first released on the New Zealand mainland in 1884 as natural enemies of rabbits (the prolific farm pest of the 1870s). This was officially endorsed by the government and some acclimatisation societies at the time. Within six years, there were reports of stoats spreading from the farms, to forest areas where there were, at that stage, no rabbits. So if they were not eating rabbits, what did they eat?

Today, we know that the stoat's most frequently eaten prey includes birds and bird eggs. In fact, native birds are high, if not first, on the list; and the devastation of native bird populations mainland-wide can, at least in part, be attributed to predation by stoats. They are active hunters, scaling trees and wriggling into likely ground burrows in search of prey. These animals are now so widespread on the mainland, that other than 'localised' eradication or control, there is no hope of ever having a 'stoat free' New Zealand.

Predation of our native bird species continues, and stoats threaten the actual existence of some.

So, at last assessment, Stewart Island was stoat free. They were never liberated on offshore islands, but they have managed to swim to the closer ones. With a swimming range of about 1.1 kilometres in sea water, our Stewart Island birds are safe for now. Well, that

was the assumption of course until each of the previous, and now the more recent sighting.

What did we do about it? Well, in all of the cases, the sightings were around the Port William area. Immediate action was taken. Thorough

searches were made of the beach and track areas for stoat sign. Traps were put out and monitored. Other visitors were questioned to try to confirm sightings. In all cases, including this most recent sighting, and after extended periods of trapping

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### DID YOU KNOW?

*Young female stoats are often impregnated by the territorial male before they are weaned from their mother!*

## Rowing Success

Emma Hopkins returns home these holidays fresh from the National Secondary School's rowing championships with two more medals. To add to last year's silver medal won in the under 15 eights at Lake Ruataniwha, the St Margaret's College under 15 eight this year repeated the performance to win silver at Lake Karapiro.

Emma was also successful in the under 16 eight, winning a

bronze medal and made it into the finals for the under 15 fours.

The Secondary School National Championships competing for the prestigious Maadi Cup is held every year, alternating between Lake Ruataniwha in the south and Lake Karapiro in the North Island.

The young people involved in secondary school rowing train intensively from

September through to the national finals in March. Christ's College retained the coveted Maadi Cup with Rangiruru winning the girls Under 19 Levin Jubilee Cup for the 8th year in succession. Southland featured with a win in the boys under 19 single scull - Michael Stuart of Southland Boys High and Mark Ronald, also S.B.H.S was 3rd in the under 17 single sculls.

## Lions Club 30th Anniversary

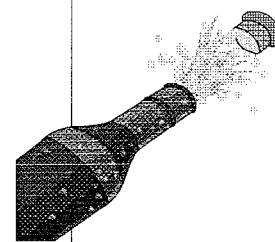


### Players

by Nikki Davis

35 Lions, ex-Lions and partners boarded the Southern Express on 6th March headed for Millar's Beach to celebrate 30 years since the Stewart Island Lions club was chartered.

Although the day started off grey, everyone warmed-up with a complimentary 'Black Velvet' cocktail



to get things going. It was good to see some of our old friends back for the occasion including Noel and Sharon Pasco, Pauline and Roger Knowles, Ron and June Cushen and Ian Johnson.

In welcoming the guests, Lions President Sue Munro, mentioned the many projects and activities the club has undertaken in its 30 years.

Among these were George Crack's bike ride in 1972 which went from Cape Reinga to Stewart Island to raise the profile of the Island and raise enough money to

build the school pool in Halfmoon Bay. The novel Stewart Island passports which were sold along the way and which continued to be a fundraiser for the club for many years, proved very popular.

The New Year Fishing contests and the New Year's Dance were also major fundraisers for the club which helped provide valuable equipment for the Nurse's clinic.

They also sponsored local children on Spirit of Adventure and Outward Bound trips; helped with extensions to Rakiura Museum; funded playground equipment in the Bay, a skateboard ramp and a computer and equipment for the Halfmoon Bay school. Firewood and Xmas cakes for the elderly have long been an annual feature.

The building of the new Pavilion at the Bowling Green has been the club's biggest project.

Chevrons for long service were presented to charter members Reuben Morris and Ian Johnson.

With the imminent completion of the community hall, the "World-famous-on-Stewart-Island" repertory group, Stewart Island Players will be discussing their winter show. Loads of fun is guaranteed for all who participate, so if you are keen to express yourself on stage or behind the scenes, keep your eye on the noticeboard for further information.

### Flea Market

by Nikki Davis

The Rakiura Flea Market is still going strong with several community groups and individuals offering a great range of foods, plants and other products. With the items that have been donated to the market, over \$200 has been raised so far. These monies have been distributed to the School's Winter Sports Club, the Community Hall committee, and the Senior Citizens Group. Any other items will be gratefully received. Feel free to pop in on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

## SOUTHLAND SPIRIT ON FILM

by Nikki Davis

On St Patrick's Day, locals may have been forgiven for looking twice at the Southern Air passengers. Tuxedos, dark glasses, feathers and cigars? No, not American movie stars on holiday, but the makers of the Stewart Island film in the "Southland Spirit on Film" competition. Twelve people including the editor Mark Donald, cameraman Pete Davis and performer Nikki, went across to Invercargill for the first an-

nual Film Awards night. The group were met off their flight by exuberant fans and Mercury TV paparazzi. Needless to say the boys enjoyed the adoration.

The evening, organized by "Strategies Ltd" celebrated filmmakers from all over Southland.

The 12 minute movies showed various aspects of the province's spirit. The Stewart Island film, *Aurora's Legend*, depicted a mythical ex-

planation for the Aurora Australis seen over the island. Original music for the film was written by Nathan Pasco, and the team were thrilled to win the "True Southlander" award for the film that best illustrates Southland's uniqueness.

The filmmakers would like to thank all those who participated in the film and its promotion, especially Southern Air and chauffeur services for all their support.

## DISTRICT NURSING ON STEWART ISLAND

much less smooth than it is today.

The first District Nurses' clinic built on Stewart Island incorporated the nurses' living quarters. Another milestone and great advantage for the care of Islanders was the purchase of the first nurse's car in 1953. Links with the mainland improved in 1960 with the establishment of the amphibian air service between Stewart Island and Invercargill which allowed for much quicker evacuation of critically ill or injured patients.

Stewart Island has enjoyed the dedicated services of many fine district nurses who are still remembered today with affection - among them Sister Gladys Swain (1933-48); Sister D. Sinclair (1954-63) and Sister Dorothy Perkins (1966-74). Professional isolation and 24 hour on-call duties 7 days a week were two of the drawbacks

mentioned by Sister Perkins in an interview about her Stewart Island nursing days.

While some of the factors creating difficulties for nurses in isolated rural communities remain today, there is no doubt that our first nurse, Sister Sommerville, would never in her wildest dreams have imagined the clinic and equipment now available for nurses.

"The scope of our practice is now far more comprehensive," said District Nurse Martin Pepers. "We probably have around 3000 patients per annum visiting the clinic for anything from blood tests, wart removal, antenatal checks to dressings. We currently only have 6 or 7 actual district nursing patients to visit and our call out to rescues has gone up to 17 over this busy summer holiday period. We have had 40 emergency flights off the Island these past 12 months."

Both nurses, Martin Pepers and Sharron Armstrong, are currently studying post graduate papers in rural nursing. This course is a fairly new initiative for district nurses, perhaps brought about by the closure of small town hospitals and the difficulties the more rural communities have in attracting doctors to rural practices.

District Nurses in isolated areas are called on to treat patients in critical emergency situations which are often a long time or distance from hospital facilities and they need the training and confidence to do this. Stewart Island is lucky to be well served by our current District Nurses and we are glad that, ninety years on, that 'trial run' proved successful.

*The true test of civilization is not the census nor the size of cities or crops, - no, but the kind of man the country turns out.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## A STOAT ON STEWART ISLAND?

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and monitoring, there were no further immediate reports, and nothing caught in the traps.

All, in all, no confirmation that there indeed ever was a stoat on Stewart Island.

Strange really. The reports were, as in the above case, quite precise. There are of course two distinct possibilities. Either the reports are accurate and we now have an 'undetected' stoat population on the island going about their business killing birds; or the reports are a case of mistaken identity (although 'with what?', you may rightly ask), and our birds get a reprieve. In the case of the former, the

implications are horrific, but without a direction by way of proof, little can be done. In the case of the latter, DoC continues to take these reports seriously, acting on them as they occur.

That's the point we are at this day. Having read this far, you probably have a lot of questions. So do we.

One of the most obvious ones is the question of how, (if indeed there was a stoat sighted on Stewart Island) did it/they get here? Unlike rats, their habits indicate that they are not likely to make their own way on to boats and off again at the other end. Stewart Island has always been seen as something apart

from, and rather more special than the mainland. This is due, in a large part, to its natural beauty, accentuated by its widely varied and very prolific bird life.

If there are stoats here, how long before we will be seeing the effect of this killer on our natural heritage?

So, keep your wits about you for the sighting of stoats (they are amazingly fast and cunning little critters); keep your fingers crossed for the birds, that all is well; and keep your visitors well informed so that they too are aware of Stewart Island's precarious ecological position when it comes to putting the stoat amongst the birds!

## HEALTH NEWS

From Sharron and Marty

Lots of things have been happening over the past few months to keep the clinic busy, both here in the Bay and around the Island. A big thanks to all those people for helping out on rescues, evacuations, etc. The list is endless. A particular thanks for the caring and support for Rose, Arkwright and family. We're expecting a new vehicle

any day now and will be required to test out its manoeuvrability, cornering, braking, etc. Marty will take care of that. We'll carry out a survey of body damage on completion of that exercise as a baseline for future bumps and

knocks - ha ha!

We've begun with Southern Health Promotions, who have the contract for providing Health Promotion on Stewart Island. We will be meeting with Jan Thomson, Lee Wadds and the Stewart

Island Health Committee to establish a strategy for the next few years. If you have any areas that you would like addressed, please contact the clinic.

### Flu Vaccinations

Flu vaccinations are available for a cost of \$20 at the clinic. People over 65 years - free.

### Doctor's Day

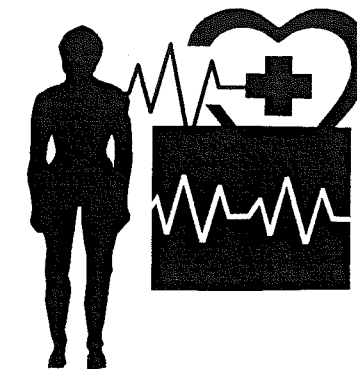
Dr De Croos will visit on 10th April. Please phone the clinic for appointments.

### Immunisation Information Measles, Mumps, and Rubella

A recent newsletter from Southland's immunisation co-ordinator highlighted recommendations for children born before 1990.

The present Ministry of Health recommendation is for all children to receive two MMR vaccinations after the age of 1.

Children born before 1990 would have been given a single measles vaccination as a



toddler in NZ (MMR was introduced in 1990). If the child then had an MMR in 1997 it now has had 2 doses of measles vaccine but only one of mumps and rubella vaccines. To receive the recommended two doses of vaccine against all 3 viruses, the Ministry of Health recommends a second dose of MMR. (3rd dose of measles)

Options for parents of these children born before 1990.

a) Another MMR vaccination  
b) A single rubella vaccination

c) A blood test to check whether the child already has protection (immunity)

### \$\$\$

We have recently had to write off outstanding money owed to Stewart's Arcade Pharmacy and Dr De Croos. Consequently there is to be no further credit at the clinic. Please bring some form of payment with you.

## HMBS PUPILS REVIEW ANZAC HISTORY

Halfmoon Bay School senior pupils are in the middle of a Social Studies unit "The Anzac's". Last year the R.S.A. donated a unit put together by the Waiouru Army Museum entitled "Kiwis and Diggers - A Year to Remember" produced by Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum Ed. Service in association with the Kippenberger Military Archive and Research Li-

brary. The class intends researching the history of the A.N.Z.A.C.'s - who they were, what they did and where. Several people on the island have agreed to be interviewed about personal experiences or the experiences of family members. The children's knowledge and skills of communicating this knowledge will be assessed through a two minute speech

entitled "The A.Z.A.C.'s. Who were they and should we remember them?" These speeches will be presented at a school assembly. We are hoping that the R.S.A. will be suitably impressed by the winner's speeches at their next meeting. It is the school's hope that the class will have a greater appreciation of Anzac Day when they attend the Dawn Parade 25th April.

## BERNIE'S BANTER

Since my return from leave I have been very disappointed in having to record a number of thefts and acts of stupidity.

A house in Miro Street had the complete contents of the freezer taken while the owner was away. Theft is always sickening, but when people are deprived of their food, I think the offence slips into another category - which of course reflects very poorly on the offender. I am still hoping for some information about this offence. If anyone knows who would steal food from another resident on the island, please let me know so that we can put a stop to this behaviour.

I recently attended a single vehicle car crash at Mill Creek. Luckily for the driver, the forms that I had for taking a blood specimen were out of date. New regulations had recently come into effect requiring a new set of forms which I had not received. Please be assured that I now have these forms and I will be taking a blood specimen from the driver at any future crashes.

I am not a great enforcer of

traffic matters, but along with the new blood alcohol papers, I also received a ticket book. This is the one for instant fines for defective vehicles, driving, parking and driver licence offences, etc. Just like the one the cops on the Mainland have. If vehicles are driven which look as if they have just graduated from the Braggs Bay dump, or if you drive (or should I say AIM?) the vehicle with a lack of consideration for other road users, please say "Thank You!" when I give out a ticket. The government could use your money. I hate writing out tickets. However, if road users use their brains, I will have no cause to write any. Simple, wouldn't you say?

As far as the new driver's licence regulations, the feeling is that a licence will be harder to get, cost more and will not last as long as at present. We all know that a photograph will be required on new licences (other than the cost involved, I don't think it's a bad idea). Sorry, kids, but it seems as if you are going to have to wait at least

another year or two before you get your licence. Over 60's: we are still waiting for a release from the "powers that be" as to whether I can do your test or not.

That's all from me for now. Remember to use your brain in all traffic matters and you'll have nothing to fear from me.

Catch ya later  
Bernie

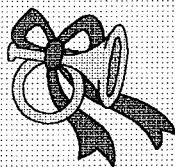
## New Ferry Launching

All things going according to plan, the new Stewart Island ferry will be officially christened at Halfmoon

Bay on Saturday 17th April.

All locals will be welcome to come down to the wharf at 5 p.m to celebrate the launching of this vessel, inspect the new boat and have a celebration drink.

### CELEBRATIONS!



## OBITUARIES

### PETER STANFORD LEASK 27.12.41 - 10.3.99

In a heart felt eulogy to his cousin, Roger Hicks described Peter Leask as a true blue Stewart Islander.

Peter had a unique upbringing that cannot be repeated by today's children. Along with his brothers Ian and Cyril, and sister Joan, his early years were spent between Leask Bay, where his parents, Dolly and Stanford, had their home, and the Masons Bay pastoral run at Island Hill. Theirs was a childhood of fishing, possum trapping, hunting, helping with farm chores and exploring an island they all knew and loved.

Peter was educated at Halfmoon Bay School then boarded in Invercargill with the Keast and Hunter families while he attended Southland Tech., where in spite of the fact he

was made most welcome, his aspirations for higher education lasted approximately 10 months. Coming home he spent the next 3 years between Island Hill and Leask Bay helping his parents shearing, possuming, fencing and maintaining the road through to Island Hill which was a County Road in those days. Peter then went away with friend Joe Carstensen, deer culling in the North and South Islands.

On his return home he went possuming with his father Stanford and brother Cyril. Peter then fished with Freddie Edwards on the *Enterprise*. Peter and brother Ian went into partnership with the *Joan* enjoying several successful seasons together.

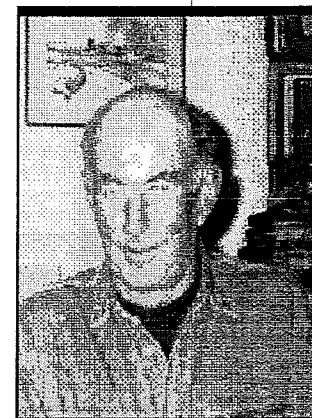
He married Joye in 1965 and shifted to Bluff where they lived for some years before moving back to the Bay with their children, Peter Jnr, Rhonda and Aaron.

Whilst in Bluff, Peter bought the *Enterprise* off Ken Poole

and enjoyed many good seasons fishing, mostly at the Cape and the Snares.

Peter was known to most people as 'Mort'. He was a very modest and private person. His family always came first. He would never complain about his lot or tell anybody about his successes whether it be in the deer culling field or crayfishing. I managed to get it out of him one day that he had shot 41 deer for the day. He said: "... but, ahhh... I made a bit of a balls-up of it. Some of them got away!"

His modesty extended to his weather forecasts. They were famous. When asked his opinion, he might say: "It's ahhh about 20 - 25 knots, a bit of a slop coming down: good enough working day though". To anyone else it was quite shitty. His modesty, along with his sense of humour endeared him to family, friends and everyone else he met. That was the way he was and that is the way we should remember him.



### ROSALIE LOUISE CONNOR 20.5.46 - 14.2.99

Friends and family sadly farewelled Rose at her funeral in Invercargill on 18th February after she lost her battle with cancer and passed away at home.

Born in Waimate, the eldest of Eileen and Taane Joyce's 8 children, Rose attended Waimate, Eifflerton and Ashburton High Schools. She trained as a nurse but changed direction and worked for the Post Office in Christchurch then Invercargill.

Rose met Neil on a blind date and they were married in 1968. They moved to Stewart

Island in 1976 with their two young sons Aaron and Roy, when they purchased the general store *T. Bragg and Co.* For 18 years Rose worked in their business and became known to locals and visitors. Her even tempered calm and subtle dry humour were her trademarks.

Children flocked to her in the shop and every day Rose picked up, admired and entertained the babies while mothers did their shopping. Sweets were often given, especially chocolate fish for those dressed neatly in white or carried in backpacks.

Her 'doctoring' of the late Wally Fisher's newspapers will be well remembered. Wally, the canny little Scotsman living on the hill beside Ferndale, would walk to the shop each morning with his noticeable limp, swinging his walking stick to engage in humorous conversations with Rose before tucking his paper under his arm and heading off to enjoy a quiet read. Rose devised many treats for the unsuspecting Wally, including sewing all the inside pages together, cutting out all the photos from one paper;

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## OOPS!

### Address omitted

The internet site for checking out how lone yachtsman Jesse Martin is doing was inadvertently left out in the last issue! If you wish to visit the site, check it out at:

[www.venturebeyond.com.au](http://www.venturebeyond.com.au)

Happy surfing!

## HELICOPTER CRASH IN TUATAPERE AREA

Stewart Islanders will have been saddened to hear of the death of well known helicopter pilot Trevor Green on Friday 2 April along with four hunters in the Tuatapere area.

Trevor had flown many hours around Stewart Island ferrying muttonbirders to and from their islands and carrying crayfish out for local fish-

ermen. He was also used extensively by DoC taking workers into the field, and just recently, had helped bring the big steel girders onto the Community Centre site.

Trevor was a friendly, obliging man, liked by many and a very skilled helicopter pilot. His expertise and friendly nature will be missed.

## LETTER FROM AMERICA

by Annabel Frew

Modern technology - isn't it great. It makes the world seem like a much smaller place. Here I am in America, half a world away from good old Stewart Island and still I can read about idiots who like to wrestle with sharks...

Moving right along, I am adjusting to life as an American quite nicely. I live off pizza and watch MTV on a regular basis! One thing I struggle to understand though, is the American preoccupation with plumbing. It seems that all everyone wants to know is: "Does the toilet flush in the opposite direction in New Zealand?" Prepared for questions regarding the Kiwi culture and way of life rather than those about gravity, I must admit much time was spent in the bathroom testing this theory. And yes, I believe the water does go down the plug the other way.

My host family have been really great to me although I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Mum and Dad for not having a son - I never fully appreciated what those with brothers went through until I wound up with Blaine (12) and Derek (8)!

My host father, Blaine, is not particularly helpful when it comes to introducing me to American culture. Whilst discussing Thanksgiving he asked me if I had ever killed a turkey before. My mind was flooded with images of all the American sitcoms I had watched where the turkey escapes and is running loose in the kitchen! As I came out of shock I realised that everyone was laughing at my shocked reaction.

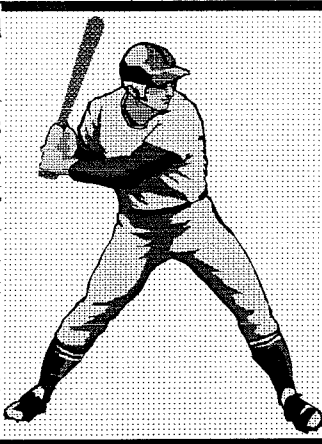
I now know to take any questions I have elsewhere. My 'mum' Lori and sister Jess have been much nicer to me and are the only ones who don't entertain themselves hassling my accent.

They are a very close family and we are always doing things with the aunts and cousins. Last weekend we went to Grandma's farm to go sled riding. It was quite an experience. There were times when I feared for my life - those trees were awfully close and we were travelling at speed! I was banned from steering after I led us way off course and up to our hips in rather a large snow drift. Bowling is the other great

American pastime to which I have been introduced. I believe the aim of the game is to get the ball to hit the pins...

Try-outs for Little League baseball began today. With the president of the league, two coaches and two players in the family, baseball season is a big event. I have already been informed that I am selling peanuts in the concession stand during games! One thing I am having problems adjusting to is the climate. Walking to school through snow drifts in a balmy -17c is not my idea of fun. However, it is starting to get warmer - fingers crossed.

I must bid you farewell but I would like to leave you with one final thought. Are you standing upside in New Zealand? Well, it puzzled me for days but that doesn't mean anything! You know what they say about small things amusing small minds...



## OBITUARIES continued

(Continued from page 7)

putting last Saturday's news inside the cover of this Saturday's paper; censoring articles and stapling attachments. Rose was an avid reader, enjoyed gardening, knitting, Coronation Street, jigsaws and travelling. Her travels took her to Tasmania, King Island, Rarotonga, Borneo, Bali and most recently even

though she was very ill she enjoyed a special holiday on Norfolk Island with Neil. Rose was a great supporter of the Oban Fire Brigade, helping with fundraising, Wajax trips, babysitting Beryl Wilcox's children so she could go to fire practice and turning up to mind the children when the fire siren went off in the night.

One of Rose's great pleasures in recent years was watching her little grandsons Tyron and Kadin grow. Rose - wife, mother, grandma and friend of - will be missed by many.



## The Empress Pearl shop

M. Hopkins

Shops come and go on Stewart Island as people try their hand at retailing, looking for that something special that will appeal to visitors and locals. The most recent commercial venture is Joanne Leask's Empress Pearl shop, selling jewellery crafted around Stewart Island-grown paua pearls. These beautiful, multi-hued pearls are quite unlike any other gem and are proving popular.

The shop situated alongside the theatre has seen a chequered history as part of a bakery; cafe; handcraft shop and now a jewellery shop. Joanne has been decorating the shop to show the pearls to their best advantage. She is also hoping to stock other pieces of interest and products not currently found on the island.

It's good to see someone completely enamoured with their product, and Joanne's excellent salesmanship in no small way enhances the quality of her product.



Enthralled patrons watch the inaugural screening of the comedy "Carry on Building" on 1 April at Island Transport's new drive-in movie complex in Ayr Street, Halfmoon Bay.

### Invercargill Caravan Park & Camping Ground

20 Victoria Avenue  
Phone 03 218 8787

Cabins sleep 2 - 6  
Dormitory sleeps 8  
Caravans sleep 2  
Power point sites  
Tent Sites  
'Indoor Tenting'  
(available during wet weather)  
GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY  
Competitive rates

### VEHICLE STORAGE

#### STORAGE

Car, Caravan & Boats  
Anything on wheels  
Secure inside storage from \$1 a day also outside storage available. Open 7 days at the Invercargill Caravan Park, 20 Victoria Avenue, phone 218-8787.  
Southland Owned & Operated  
Support Southland Businesses  
03424

## The Whisperer

### \* Poetry in Motion:

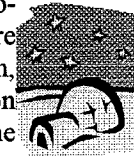
Oh dear, what can the matter be?  
She took a minute to go to the lavat'ry,  
While he was digging the roots of a great tree...  
And she and the loo soon learnt how to fall free!  
\* *Dirty dancing?* A very thick and thirsty gent decided to grab his dance partner one night in the pub. Watch out, she bites - a broken juke box and plenty of stitches were the end result. But hey, how come the replacement juke box now costs more to use? Let's hope the extra profits are going to our local

health clinic!

\* *High hopes:* A very proper firefighter may be hoping that he'd taken more notice during ladder practise. If we do install parking meters one day - let's hope they're not too high off the ground!  
\* *Arty babe:* Congratulations to the new parents. We're looking forward to seeing your latest Rakiura Artwork growing. Also waiting with baited breath for the arrival of the hellfire child. Perhaps we'll be seeing another new babe in the not too distant future - has anyone lost their contraceptive pill?

It can be claimed from the pub notice board.

\* *A-huntin' or a-fishin'?*  
Down on the wharf the lads were seen loading up the Halcyon with all the latest high-tech fishing equipment. Home-built, so bound to be good pots. How many rabbits did you get, guys?  
\* *(Lost and) Found:* Cold hard cash! A woman with a Lion's share misplaced her Kit and caboodle somewhere in the lair. Ah, there it is - on ice! (in the freezer)



## Looking Back Through the Years

Here are some excerpts from the Southland times about happening on and about Stewart Island:

### 28 March 1977

On her 4th attempt, 22 year old Paula Greenem became the first person to make a solo canoe crossing of Foveaux Strait. Averaging 4 - 6 knots in her 14ft fibreglass canoe, Paula landed on Halfmoon Bay Beach after 7 hours and 20 minutes.

### 20 March 1978

A delegation of Stewart Islanders including County chairman Ian Johnson; Mr A. MacDonald, J.P.; Jerry Field and Gwen Neave, accompanied M.P.s Rex Austin and Norman Jones to Wellington to meet with the Minister of Transport to discuss interruptions in the ferry service and the government's assertion that the Island would cope while the *Wairua* was off its run during July for its annual survey and supply trips to Campbell Island. Minister of Transport Mr McLachlan declined to give the deputation direct assurances regarding the future of the service.

### 21 March 1979

Meda McKensie, the 16 year old Wellington marathon swimmer, overcame 14 hours of tension and

drama to beat all that the unpredictable Foveaux Strait had to offer in her epic swim yesterday. Meda became the first woman to swim the Strait. John van Leuwen swam it in 1963 in a time of 13 hours and 36 minutes.

### 11th March 1981

Two Stewart Island fishermen were rescued by helicopter after their boat sank near Codfish Island. The 36ft *Spray* sank only 3 minutes after the two men aboard, Ross Clelland and Dave Dunkley noticed she was taking water. Because of sea conditions, two fishing vessels close by were unable to go to the rescue. An Alpine Helicopter piloted by Alan Bond was called in to uplift the men from West Ruggedy beach where they had landed after swimming from their capsized dinghy.

### 19th March 1983

The placing of Southern Air into receivership was symptomatic of the often marginal economics of small airline operations, the acting Minister of Transport, Mr Malcom said. Mr Malcom was glad to read that the receiver hopes that Southern Air Services can be maintained. The *Wairua* will of course continue to pro-

vide an alternative means of transport to Stewart Island.

### 26 March 1984

22 year old Auckland hairdresser Belinda Shields faced pain, fatigue, boredom, hunger and great cold during her 9 hour 53 minute swim. She averaged between 80 and 84 strokes a minute - a total of 50,000 strokes to become the fastest swimmer to cross Foveaux Strait.

### 13th March 1985

The Stewart Island Salmon Co. will be able to set up a 3rd salmon farm in Big Glory Bay, in spite of a temporary ban on the issue of new salmon farming licences imposed last month. MAF imposed the ban after divers discovered a build-up of fish faeces and uneaten fishmeal pellets under the Southland Salmon Co.'s cages. The dive took place shortly after Southland Salmon lost several thousand fish. The company has since changed its husbandry methods slightly to avoid similar problems.

**RAKIURA RAMBLES**  
IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY  
UNDER THE AUSPICES  
OF THE  
**STEWART ISLAND  
TOURISM STRATEGY  
GROUP**  
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## WAJAX 1999

by Nikki Davis

The annual WAJAX competition (held between Southland and Otago Volunteer Fire Brigades) was held this year on Saturday 27 March at Middlemarch. The Oban Volunteer Fire Brigade sent a women's team and a men's team. The women's team of four, competing in a field of eight teams, completed their three runs with two outright wins and a 2nd place, giving them the overall trophy. The men's team encountered a few hiccups during three of four of their runs, but following a superbly executed last run, their efforts were rewarded with the overall ag-

gregate trophy. Once again the input and dedication of the coaches and the members showed the Oban teams to be polished and cohesive. And that was just on Saturday!! As usual the trip up on the Friday and the cabaret/prize-giving allowed the teams and supporters to demonstrate their enviable ability to enjoy themselves. Many many thanks to South Seas Hotel, Stewart Island Fishermen's Co-op, firefighters and fish-gatherers and the supporters who all contributed to a fun-filled, spirited and successful competition.

The Men's Team consisted of

Gary Lewis, Steve Hall, Callum Buckingham and Arron Connor

The Women's Team consisted of: Joanne Leask, Shana Bailey, Susan Graham and Nikki Davis

The very competent coaches were Mark Donald and Charlie Davis.

