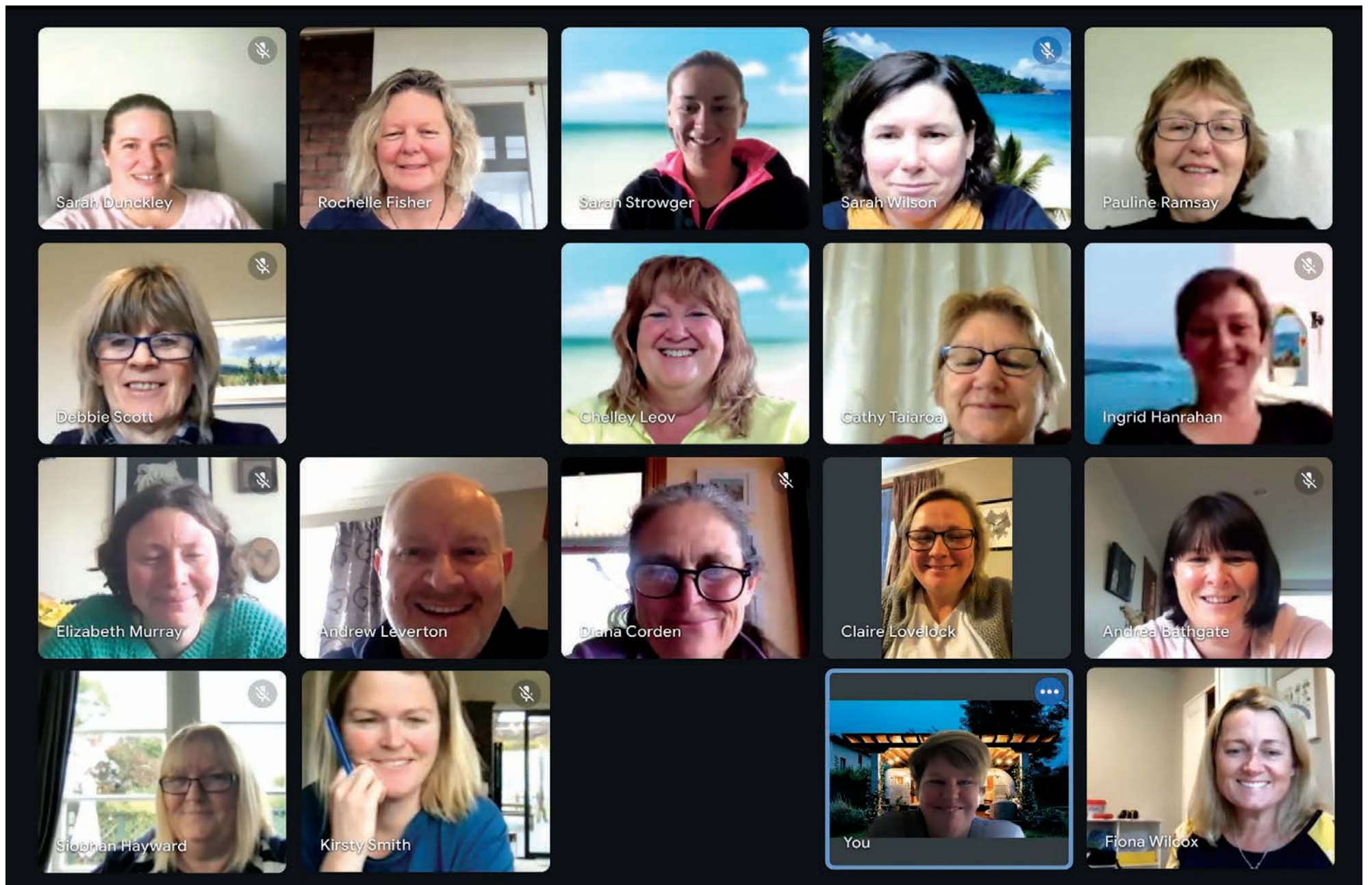


THE geraldine news

NGĀ PŪKŌRERO O TE WIKI KI RAUKĀPUKA

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Geraldine Primary School teacher Jo Drake (bottom row, second from right) grabbed this screenshot of the team's Zoom meeting. BELOW: Principal Andrew Leverton has been reading books to children online, reminding them that "keeping up with reading is important while we are in lockdown". PHOTOS: Facebook/Geraldine Primary School

Online learning for students continues during level three

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Level-four lockdown returned schools to online learning, again. Geraldine Primary School principal Andrew Leverton says, "Since COVID level-four lockdown, all learning is currently being done at distance, as has been the case for the last two weeks.

"Learning teams or syndicates have been keeping in regular touch with each other, as has the senior leadership team, via Zoom [and] Google Meet. The work of the staff has largely carried on as much as possible, albeit in our home environments."

Andrew says he has been connecting to students daily. "I have been reading some of my favourite picture books to the students via Facebook and teachers have posted these to Seesaw as well. ... This has been an enjoyable part of the level-four lockdown and it has been great to connect with the families in this way."

He says, "For the first few days of level-four, home learning was what teachers had already set in place for the week ... During this time, the teachers all worked to get distance-learning programmes up and running again; these have continued through level four and will run into

level three, when most children will continue to remain at home. We recognise that for some families, distance learning can be quite challenging, for a number of reasons - time, work commitments or access to reliable broadband."

For children who fit the criteria for returning to school under level three, "We will have

teachers and teacher aides working in bubbles with up to 10 students in each. There are some quite strict conditions about who can attend school and how schools can operate at level three ... We are working through these but will be all set for this level by Wednesday."

DEBBIE OLIVER



gnews ^f

EDITORIAL



Big Ted's class opened for reading and comprehension last week at the Andorra Motel. PHOTOS: Facebook/Andorra Motel

By the time you read this, we will be at COVID level three, which was described last time as level four with takeaways. For those of us who have the means, it will do us good to have a break from our own cooking. And who doesn't want to support our fantastic local eateries? It will be good to catch up with friends, even masked and at a distance, as we collect our takeaways.

Sadly, level three still means event cancellations, like the GHS Music Festival and the much-anticipated *Another Op'nin'*; *Another Show* 25 year reunion party. Pic's Peanut Butter truck will visit another day and the cinema will remain closed until we return to level two.

Geraldinians, however, have been very inventive when it comes to lockdown. Our churches find ways of being together but separate, schooling continues remotely and, with Bianca Sheed's online training, some people are going to emerge from the experience fitter than ever. Some families have found ingenious ways to amuse themselves and, through social media, others as well.

And yet we are aware that some people are doing it very tough indeed. For sole caregivers of children or of elderly or sick relatives this has been a very difficult few weeks. Some of the black humour we see on social media reflects underlying anxiety. Now, more than ever, we have to find ways to reach out.

We, Hugh and Fi, are not particularly chatty on the phone. Hugh is still conditioned by his UK upbringing where every phone call cost money: phones were for emergencies back then. Nevertheless, we are making the effort to pick up the phone if we feel prompted to call someone who might need a bit of company. As Bianca says, on page four, "How important it is to feel connected, especially during uncertain times."

Wash your hands, keep your distance and be kind.
HUGH & FI

As you wait for better days, don't forget to enjoy today, in case they've already started.

ROBERT BREAUULT, OPERATIC TENOR AND PROFESSOR OF MUSIC



DAFFODIL HONoured IN DRIVEWAYS Friday 27 August was Daffodil Day, the day the Cancer Society conducts its street appeal. While a street appeal was out of the question, Cascade Place went ahead and celebrated Daffodil Day anyway. ANZ bank is taking donations: "Cancer doesn't stop and ... we won't either." To donate, visit anz.co.nz.

A Gnomewood representative got in on the act too, saying, "... some of the humans we know have it and the cancer society needs help to take care of them." **HUGH MCCAFFERTY** PHOTOS: Hugh McCafferty; Facebook/Gnomewood

gnews NEWS IN BRIEF

Fundraising T-shirts go international

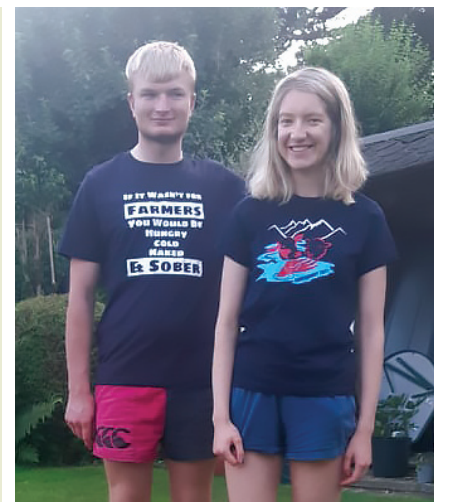
Saskia Ostermeier's fundraising T-shirts have reached the United Kingdom. Geraldine resident Andrea Lewis shared with GNews a photo of her niece and nephew Angharad and Alexander from Bath in Somerset "proudly sporting the T-shirts we'd bought in support of the relief appeal after the terrible floods ..."

"They visited Geraldine a couple of years ago, so are familiar with the area. This meant they had a good idea of the extent of the damage

when they saw footage of the floods on the TV in the UK. Because of the work he does [as a recently graduated agricultural engineer], Alexander is particularly aware of the impact that kind of event can have on the farming sector. ... [T]hey were both very happy to do their bit for the rural relief fund."

HUGH MCCAFFERTY

Alexander and Angharad model the fundraising T-shirts. PHOTO: Supplied



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2020 Adair Farm scholarship recipient Lucy Barnes is studying at Massey University to become a veterinarian. PHOTO: Supplied

Last year's Adair Farm \$5,000 scholarship well used

Last year's scholarship recipient is working hard and strategically to achieve her goal to be a veterinarian. Lucy Barnes (from Albury) is studying at Massey University to enable her to realise her dream of working with animals.

The Aoraki Community Education Trust Board's Adair Farm committee

offers the scholarship to people from the region studying tertiary qualifications.

Since 2000, the committee have given out 40 scholarships to those studying courses such as national certificates and diplomas in primary industries and university programmes at Massey and Lincoln universities (e.g., BAgComm,

BVetSc, et cetera).

Applications for this year are now open. Applicants can contact Alison Leadley on 03 684 6826 or email admin@aetb.co.nz.

INNES MCMILLAN
ADAIR FARM COMMITTEE CHAIR

gnews OPINION

Nitrate levels in rivers and wells

The report in last week's *Geraldine News* is only half of the story. Since 1980, farmers around New Zealand have been using six times the amount of synthetic nitrogen than previously.

Farmers prior to that date largely followed the precepts handed down from generation to generation over many hundreds of years. Basically, they employed practices of rotation, returning plant and wood material to the soil, fallow periods and using excrement and urine from stock or fowls to boost fertility. Initially when fertiliser became available, they drilled it as NPK into the soil when planting seed.

After about 1980, principally dairy farmers and market gardeners started to use nitrogen for topdressing, coupled with new irrigators. From that time,

nitrate levels have built up in groundwater and rivers. These actions mainly boosted quantity, but not profitability. The result is an increasing amount of nitrates, in our water and our food, which contribute to higher levels of diseases in younger generations and cancers in older people.

Ironically, the new methods for farming now recommend "regenerative farming", building on the principles handed down over generations with a few added principles. It has been found that adding deep-rooted legumes to pastures and crops increases fertility and draws moisture to deeper levels. In fact, using these principles is at the basis of building the great green wall across central Africa.

Regenerative farming has been trialled over many years, demonstrating that

without chemical fertiliser they are more profitable and furthermore, as prior to 1980 groundwater, rivers and ecosystems are much improved. When climate change and drought hit our farmers, as in Australia, it has been found that regenerative farmers survive while conventional farmers fail.

Books available in our library: *Growing a Revolution*, by David R. Montgomery and *Call of the Reed Warbler* by Charles Massy. **TERRY HUGGINS**

Retired local Terry Huggins is in his 80s and worked on a mixed sheep and cropping farm near Pleasant Point in the 1960s. Over the last 20 years, he has researched modern farming methods and has had four articles about farming and water printed in local papers.

Recordkeeping to be mandatory nationwide

The following information has been taken directly from the government Covid-19 website. Please check for updated information regularly.

Fast and effective contact tracing helps us to prevent any further spread of COVID-19 in New Zealand. Use the COVID tracer app if you can. The app keeps us one step ahead of the virus - the more we scan, the safer we will be.

Turn on Bluetooth tracing in your app. Bluetooth tracing keeps track of who you have been near, while maintaining everyone's privacy. Remember to keep scanning QR codes: both are important for contact tracing.

Learn more about the NZ COVID Tracer app and Bluetooth tracing at [covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/contact-tracing/nz-covid-tracer-app/](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/contact-tracing/nz-covid-tracer-app/) [or click the link on the GNews Facebook page].

If you do not use the app, use whatever method works for you, like the NZ COVID Tracer booklet. ...

Download or order the NZ COVID Tracer booklet at [covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/contact-tracing/nz-covid-tracer-booklet/](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/contact-tracing/nz-covid-tracer-booklet/) [or click the link on the GNews Facebook page].

We recommend you keep track of where you went, when you went there and who you met.

To stop any future spread of COVID-19, we need to trace the contacts of anyone who has had exposure to COVID-19 [to] break the chain of transmission. Recording people's movements helps us to do this quickly and efficiently.

The faster we can trace contacts, the faster we can prevent another outbreak of the virus.

Mandatory recordkeeping for busy places and events:

... People responsible for a place or gathering where recordkeeping is mandatory legally must take steps to ensure they keep a record of the people visiting their place or gathering and have systems and processes in place to help people record their details. ...

This requirement will come into effect seven days after the next alert level change. This will provide businesses and other locations time to put recordkeeping systems and processes in place.

For more information on contact tracing and how you can help stop the virus visit [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz).



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More businesses need to open

I believe we need to help businesses and services around us survive. The reality is that we will most likely be in and out of lockdowns for years to come.

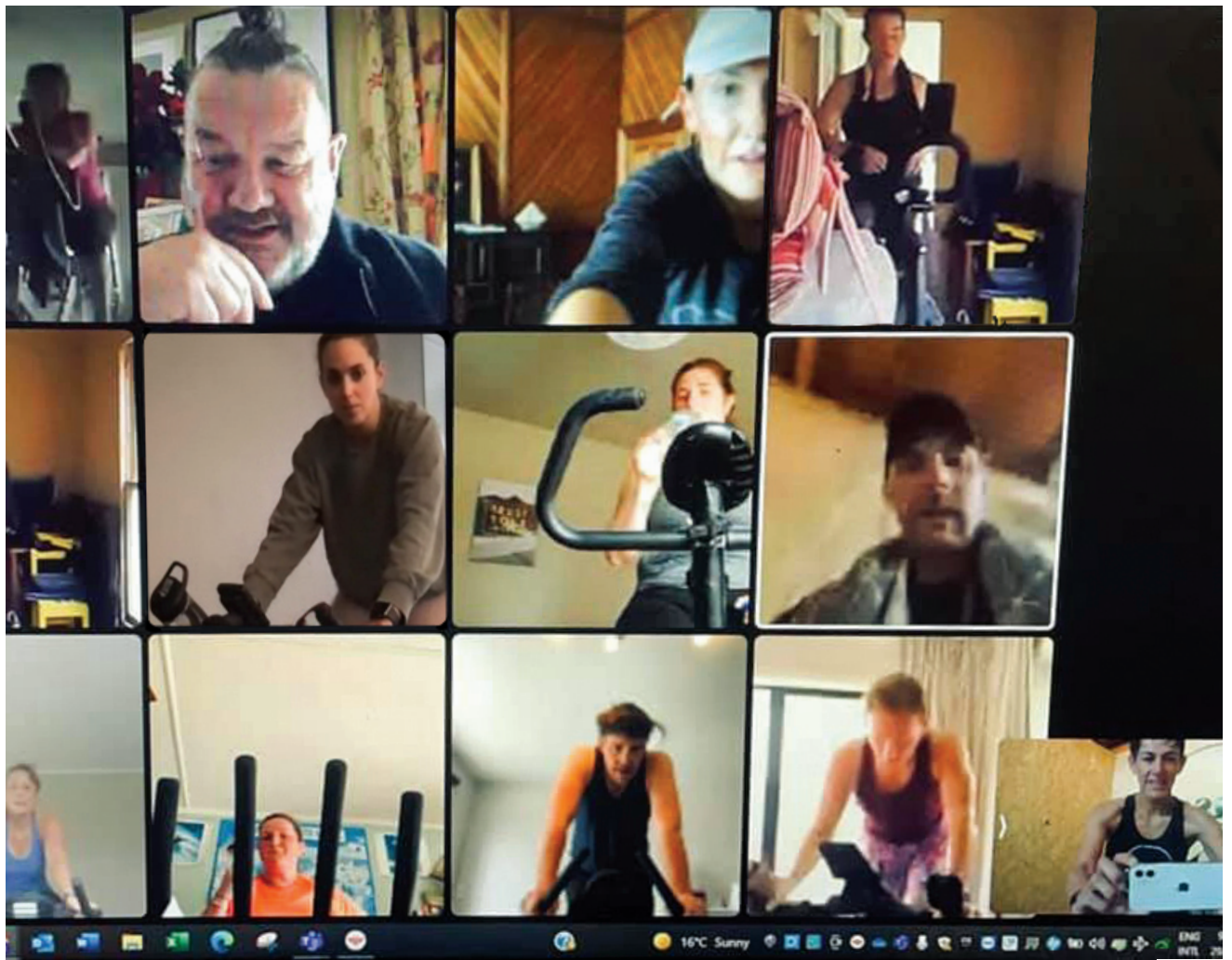
We need to lobby MBIE [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment] to have more workplaces safely open under the various levels. There is a huge inequity in what is allowed to open now.

After each lockdown, there will be another business closed, especially in smaller towns. Even businesses open during level four will have reduced turnover. If you want a variety of places to get your coffees after lockdown, be able to buy a stamp, shoes, service your car, et cetera, then support more businesses to open safely during this pandemic.

If you are being paid by your employer and unable to work for them during lockdown, please consider what you can do to help your employer when you get back to work. Stay healthy and fit, think of ideas that can help improve productivity and be ready to get stuck in when you return to work.

If you are an essential worker or able to work from home during lockdown, I salute you.

KARYN CLOSE, CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT



Hugh joins a bike ride, vicariously. PHOTO: Facebook/Base Fit Whānau.

Sunday spin class with Bianca

On Saturday morning, fitness trainer Bianca Sheed offered a free spin class on the Geraldine Facebook community noticeboard. The next morning, a dozen cyclists spent a gruelling 50 minutes in their separate houses under Bianca's tutelage.

GNews sought permission to sit in on the beginning and end of the class.

Bianca says, "[H]ow important it is to feel connected especially during uncertain times ... Fitness is a powerful medicine for your mind and body, but coming together and that sense of belonging or whanaungatanga is what matters most

to me. I actually don't care if they don't break a sweat, but if I can make someone smile and feel valued then I'm happy."

Break into a sweat they did, however, with one participant saying, "I literally couldn't get off my bike."

James Bowan commended Bianca's energy and motivation and adds it was a "cracking way to start a Sunday".

Danielle McDonald says she finds Bianca is "so good at motivating me". So good, in fact, that Danielle followed up the session by going "off biking with the kids ..."

Tracey Nelson says, "Bi gives so much

of herself - prioritising others' health and wellbeing. Bi truly cares about people's wellness, evident today in the community invite to the spin class. There are no barriers to success in Bi's eyes and she makes sure that you believe that anything is possible. So much fun connecting and incredibly motivating this morning. ..."

Overall, it seemed a great start to the morning and, as one participant said, there were "no magpies to contend with".

To follow Bianca, go to Facebook and join the Base Fit Whānau group.

HUGH MCCAFFERTY

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Beena, Jigs and daughter Siya with Tip Top Icecreams. Your vote could win you \$100 of Top Top icecream. PHOTO: DEBBIE OLIVER

Raukāpuka dairy legend in Geraldine

Tip Top is holding a nationwide Legendairy competition. Raukāpuka Store owners Jigs and Beena are excited to be in the competition. "We are the only Tip Top dairy in South Canterbury in the competition," says Beena. "We are really grateful for the support of our local customers."

Geraldine resident Kate Eddy posted on the local Facebook community page

suggesting this is "an opportunity to recognise the lovely people at the Raukāpuka dairy".

Sally Millar commented, "Jignesh Agaja [Jigs] and family are the best neighbours. ... I truly hope they win, they deserve it."

Robyn Codyre commented, "My fav dairy: absolutely wonderful people and love stopping in for a chit chat."

While the Tip Top dairy with the most votes will win the Legendairy status for 2021 and thousands of dollars' worth of public relations to spread the news, anyone who votes for their favourite Tip Top dairy goes in the draw to win \$100 of Tip Top icecream.

To vote, go to legendairy.tiptop.co.nz. The competition runs until midnight 13 October 2021. DEBBIE OLIVER



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Aoraki Mt Cook, the tallest mountain in New Zealand, helped Sir Edmund Hillary to develop his climbing skills in preparation for the conquest of Everest. ... Mountaineers regard the area to be the best climbing region in Australasia ... (newzealand.com)

The legend of Aoraki

Maunga - mountain

Legends such as that of Aoraki seem largely unbelievable to the modern eye and ear, but they contain echoes of Māori traditions and creation narratives that are central to the Māori worldview.

Often used as cautionary or informative tales, such stories were passed down orally from generation to generation and continue to be embedded in the **whakapapa** (genealogy) of the people.

As with all oral histories and legends, variations of this narrative exist. In Kāi Tahu tradition, Aoraki was the eldest son of Rakinui, the Sky Father. With his brothers, Aoraki travelled by waka down from the heavens to pay a visit to his stepmother, Papatūānuku. Legend has it that the brothers wished to reason with Papatūānuku, that she might relinquish her love for their father so that he would reconcile with their mother, Pokoharua-te-pō.

After an unsuccessful visit, the brothers turned their waka towards home. Aoraki began reciting the **karakia** (prayer or incantation) that would ensure a safe voyage, but, to their peril, he made a mistake when chanting the words. As a result, the waka became stranded on a rock, marooning the brothers who clung to the overturned waka. Time passed and the brothers turned to stone, each becoming the highest peaks of the Southern Alps.

Today, people search the jagged faces of the maunga, looking to spot the faces of the brothers who are acknowledged as ancestors of the Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Kāti Hawea, Rapuwai and Waitaha tribes.

JORDYN TE RAHUI-HOBBS



Locals with the right skills and fitness are able to climb Little Mt Peel/Huatekerekere, but Tristram Harper Memorial Shelter, just below the summit, remains closed until level two. PHOTO: Jan Finlayson

More recreation available under level three

The move to COVID level three means the reopening of more public conservation land for recreation. Geraldine district Department of Conservation senior ranger Chris Coulter says, "The front country, at level three, is open. If you're nearby, make use of what tracks are available."

To minimise the need for emergency services, there are restrictions. "Beyond your local area it remains closed, and the backcountry remains closed. We're trying

to reduce the risk level; fire and ambulance are called out if you injure yourself," she says.

"In Geraldine, we're lucky we have so many tracks on the doorstep. You could go to Peel Forest or Ōrari Gorge, or Pioneer Park or Kākahu, for example." People are asked to keep in their bubbles and "Huts remain closed until level two."

Acknowledging personal fitness and skills are part of the deal: "Undertake

activities that come within your competence range."

Chris says, "You can go hunting locally." However, overnight trips are not allowed and no helicopters or motorised vehicles can be used.

The rapid move to level four prevented placement of notices on facilities. Visit doc.govt.nz/news/issues/covid-19/ for more information.

JAN FINLAYSON

Lockdown learning familiar, but "still difficult"

When *GNews* asked assistant principal Richard Harvey how things were going at the high school, Richard set up an online meeting so the students could speak for themselves.

Head girl Hazel Fisher says they are familiar with working from home after last year's experience; however, "It is still difficult."

As year-13 students, they are preparing for external exams and working on internal assessments, as well as preparing university or polytechnic applications. Deputy head boy Conor Foley-Smith says some science subjects are difficult at home. "You miss the help you can get from teachers and class mates. ... [Although], there are other subjects with a lot of writing involved ... when it is good not to have too many distractions."

Head boy Robert Furrer says in some

cases, "I can get a lot more done." Both boys say they have missed some important sport opportunities.

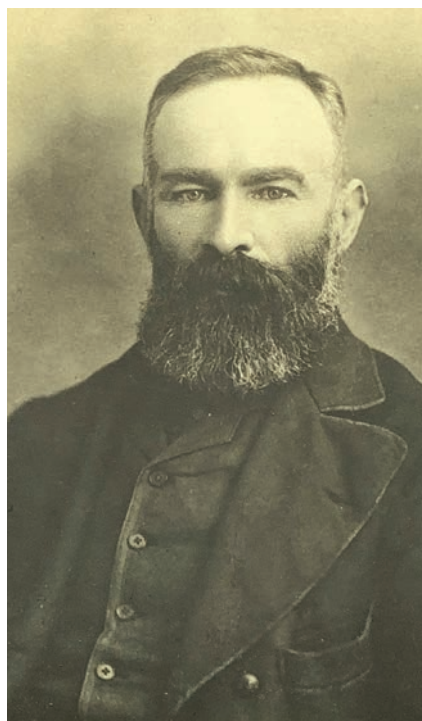
Hazel says it is not just about academic work: she and her friends catch up on Snapchat because they miss the social side of being at school. She says student leaders will be issuing challenges on Instagram to help people stay connected. One idea is for students to do some baking and post photos of the results. All agree that the return to school will add an important element of structure.

Richard Harvey says while he only teaches one class, "Most teachers are juggling getting out five lessons a day." He says he is grateful to the administration staff for making sure everybody has a device and is connected to the internet.

HUGH MCCAFFERTY



gnews BLAST FROM THE PAST



Thomas Hobson: generous benefactor

For well over 100 years, the Thomas Hobson Trust has been providing funds for the building and maintenance of community buildings throughout the Geraldine/Temuka district. The halls of Pleasant Valley, Hilton, Gapes Valley, Milford, Ōrari Bridge, Rangitātā, et cetera, all pay tribute to the generosity of Mr Hobson.

But, who was this generous benefactor?

Thomas Hobson arrived in New Zealand in August 1863 - a single man of 22 who was selected to emigrate from north-west England to Canterbury, New Zealand.

He worked first as a cowboy for Francis Jollie of Peel Forest, then as a milk boy for Upton Slack, at Slacks Valley, earning £1 per week. He had simple tastes and saved his money. Whenever he got together £50, he would buy some land.

He built a cottage on Factory Rd, outside Temuka, and his small herd of cows provided milk for the township that Thomas delivered by hand. At the time of his death in 1907, he owned land at Hilton, Slacks Valley and Temuka. He never married nor had he any relatives in New Zealand, so left his land in trust for the benefit of the people of Geraldine county.

In recognition of his long-time generosity, Timaru council has recently tidied his grave in Temuka Cemetery after hearing that it was looking rather neglected.

A more in-depth story of Thomas Hobson's life will be on display at the Pleasant Valley Hall Centenary, 26-27 March 2022 (see our Facebook page).

SUSANNE WEST
PLEASANT VALLEY HALL CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE



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Time once again for the Really, Really Short Story Competition

By now, families might be running out of things to keep themselves busy in lockdown. *GNews* can help with that.

Each year, we invite readers to enter our Really, Really Short Story Competition. How short you ask? Using just 60 words, no more, no less, your challenge is to write a complete and meaningful story.

But where does one begin? To help you get started, we asked some previous contestants for tips on how to go about writing such a short piece of prose.

"I just write a yarn in Word and then extract all the unnecessary words until I get to near 60, without losing the main plot, using the wordcount feature," says local off-time entrant Joanne Mitchell. "It's amazing how you soon learn to tell the story without all the padding."

"Choose a good topic," says Darwin Kruize, 2019's overall winner. "Don't just pick something random: pick something you think is right. Write a story that you would want to read."

"Remember to have a hook; get the reader's attention, reel them in with suspense and give them a surprising ending."

"Don't have too many characters - you won't have enough words to write about them all. Add some humor. A funny story is a good story, and don't forget that you only have 60 words. That's not a lot."

Jan Hill, winner of last year's open

category, says (in 60 words), "Think up some stories, quirky, true or imagined. Jot them down. Work on them, crossing out all unnecessary words. If I'd used eliminate in that last sentence I could have saved two words. Clever punctuation can help. Refine and revise. See how your story sounds out loud. And have fun. Lots of it. Only 53 words? Help. I need more."

So, now that you are ready to get writing a really, really short story, here are the official instructions:

- Choose your own subject matter, tone and approach.
- No need for a title, but it could have one (not included in the wordcount).
- Stories must contain *exactly* 60 words.
- Entry is free.
- Maximum three entries per person.
- The competition is broken up into four age categories:
 - JUNIOR: 8-10 years
 - INTERMEDIATE: 11-15 years
 - SENIOR: 16-18 years
 - OPEN: over 18 years
- Include author's full name, age, contact phone number and email address.
- Digital entries are preferred and can be emailed to fi@gnews.co.nz. Alternatively you can drop your entry into the letterbox at 24 Hislop Street.
- Entries must be received by 5pm, Thursday, 30 September.

The winners will be notified by email or text and the winning entries published in *GNews*.

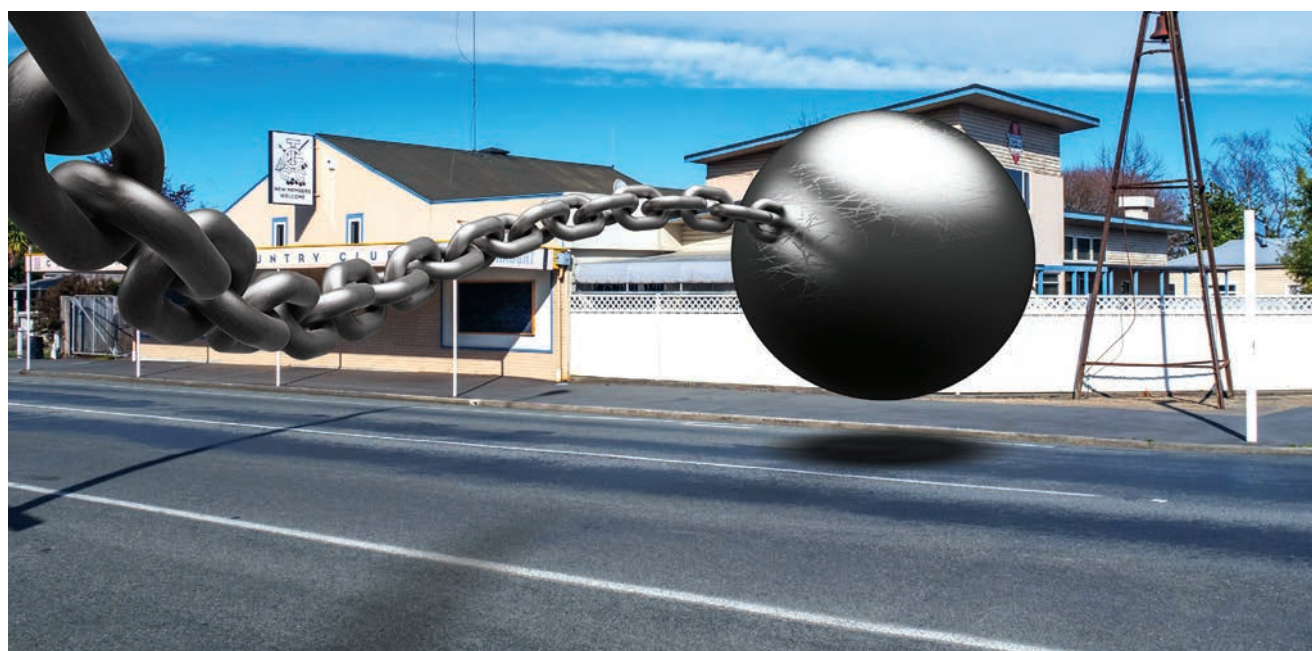
Judges Joe and Belinda Roberts, of The Page and Post Booksellers, will present each category winner with a \$20 voucher. The overall winner will also receive a \$50 Page and Post voucher from *GNews*. Prizes will be presented at the Page and Post Booksellers when alert levels allow.

FI MCCAFFERTY



Did you know that the average human attention span is now shorter than a goldfish's? Studies have shown that a goldfish has an attention span of nine seconds while for humans it is only eight. (digitalinformationworld.com)

GNews reckons that it only takes eight seconds to read 60 words so readers of these really, really short stories are unlikely to lose interest.



The GDF will demolish the existing building and erect a new fit-for-purpose premise. PHOTO: Artist's impression

New building to house Geraldine health centre

The trustees of the Geraldine District Foundation are delighted to announce a proposed partnership with the Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury. Subject to due diligence, the community trust will become an equal partner in the future health centre at 190 Talbot Street.

The Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury trustees were attracted by the community nature of the project and initiated discussions that resulted in a proposed joint venture between the two community-based organisations.

The involvement of the Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury will ensure the completion of the project that the foundation trustees have been working on for the past two years. Community trust chair Nathan Mills says, "The community trust is excited to join with

the Geraldine District Foundation to enable this worthy community project, which will have a considerable impact on the range and level of medical and wellness services available to the residents of Geraldine into the future."

The operating model of the health centre will see the foundation and trust act as property owners and landlords to tenants. Neither organisation will be directly involved in delivering health and wellness services to the community.

The project is a long-term investment, owned by and held on behalf of the Geraldine community by the Foundation and the Community Trust. ...

In another significant development, the project group has decided, based on professional advice, to demolish the existing building and erect a new fit-for-

purpose building to house the health centre. The new building will retain a similar layout to the previous proposal and the foundation is moving toward construction arrangements. Rapidly rising building costs have been a concern, with the overall cost of a figure approaching \$3m. It is anticipated that construction will commence in August 2022.

In addition to health-professionals, the new health centre will provide rooms and facilities for health and care services of all kinds and visiting health services aimed at serving the Geraldine community.

The foundation acknowledges the substantial backing it has received from the Geraldine Licensing Trust to bring this long-awaited facility to our district.

SUBMITTED



JACQUI DEAN

A routine we don't want to be familiar with

I don't know about you, but, when the recent level-four lockdown came into effect, there was a sense of slipping back into an oddly familiar routine.

Zoom meetings quickly filled the calendar, the kitchen table was soon covered in paperwork and my dog seemed genuinely puzzled to be going for so many walks.

There was a degree of inevitability about this lockdown. I think most of us knew that something like this would occur at some stage.

The decision to go into level-four lockdown was the right one. The Delta variant is dangerous. We've seen what it has done in other countries like India and Australia. We couldn't let that happen here.

When the announcement was made, I instantly thought of those in the hospitality sector. Cafés, bars and restaurants have had a hellish ride these past 18 months - they didn't need this.

There is also the agriculture sector, which was desperately waiting for workers to come in from COVID-free countries to ease the pressure. This is a major setback for them too.

I also thought of those living alone; isolation is tough and anxiety can quickly creep in.

At the start of this year, I said that the smooth and effective rollout of the COVID vaccine was essential. It hasn't been smooth - it's been slow and patchy. There are signs that it is now ramping up, but that needs to continue at pace.

The vaccine isn't the be all and end all, but it makes a massive difference to how we can manage these situations. Level-four lockdowns may be a mild inconvenience for some, but are an absolute nightmare for others.

The response from the New Zealand public has once again been excellent. While the routine may have been familiar, it's one we certainly don't want to keep repeating.



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gnews CONSERVATION WEEK 4-12 SEPTEMBER



The Conservation Week website features online activities including virtual walks and a digital treasure hunt. PHOTO: Laura Honey/DOC

Embrace nature this Conservation Week

The Department of Conservation (DOC) is encouraging people to take a moment for nature at home or online this 52nd annual Conservation Week, 4-12 September.

Lou Sanson, DOC director general, says, "This year's Conservation Week focus has had to change to reflect the changing alert levels. Our health and wellbeing are strengthened when we connect with nature, which is so important at the moment."

A recent survey on New Zealanders in the outdoors showed a clear link between mental and physical health and the outdoors. The survey asked respondents to describe the key benefits of spending time outdoors: 41 per cent referenced their mental health as a motivation, 35 per cent referenced physical health

and 34 per cent cited a desire for connection with nature. Getting away from everyday routine and reflecting were also considered important.

"Our team of rangers and fabulous community and iwi groups around the country had lots of great events planned, which we hope we will be able to hold at some point, but, nature is adaptable and so are we. Instead, we have come up with innovative ways to make Conversation Week happen online and at home with activities to connect people to nature - there is something for everyone."

The online activities range from taking a virtual walk to find penguins or kākāpō, or simply soak up the views on a virtual Great Walk. Join a citizen science project, listen to a Sounds of Science podcast,

download a new nature wallpaper for your phone lock screen or take part in a digital treasure hunt or daily quiz on the DOC website.

At-home activities include cooking with nature using things in your backyard and a huge range of Toyota Kiwi Guardians activities, which young people can earn medals for doing.

"It's great to see a huge range of non-traditional nature-connection activities for people to get their nature fix at the moment, and our thousands of walks, camps and huts will be ready for you when it's safe to return to the outdoors."

Visit conservationweek.org.nz for more information. **SUBMITTED**



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Outdoor landscaping and a new software package are some of the recent upgrades at McKenzie HealthCare. PHOTOS: Supplied

Upgrades at McKenzie HealthCare

While changes, upgrades and new systems have been put in place recently at McKenzie HealthCare, newly appointed general manager Annette Stringer says, "Our drive is our residents and communication is the big key: working together as a team for the greater good of our residents and staff."

Annette comes from a variety of health services in both New Zealand and Australia and replaces departing Kim Entwistle. "Kim's dedication and hard work has provided solid foundations to build and grow future opportunities within this beautiful aged-care complex," Annette says.

The software package Leecare was implemented during the last year and now has everything online. Receptionist and personal assistant Melanie Rusbridge says the benefit of this is "a complete healthcare package that can be accessed by all, including visiting doctors and other health consultants, who have their own logins". She adds, "The system has tablets on the walls all throughout our facility, so they are accessible to the staff for quick

and easy reporting of a resident's health or any incidents; easy access means things aren't missed or forgotten to report."

The Pines, McKenzie's dementia unit, has recently expanded to 18 beds and the outdoor area has had an upgrade. "My favourite is the bladeless lawn mower," says Annette. "It is marvellous that our residents can continue with some normality, as simple as mowing the lawn or raking up some leaves." New outdoor games and seating and raised garden beds are also part of the outdoor area upgrade.

An enrolled nurse team leader is now dedicated to the dementia unit Monday through Friday and specific activities are organised. Recently they held a high tea with residents and families. Melanie says, "The residents were all dressed up in their best outfits, the fine china was brought out of the cupboards and the residents had a ball."

An existing pager system has been upgraded so pagers now act like portable phones: staff can communicate more efficiently and do not have to leave residents to ask for assistance from other staff.

"This will streamline the process for everybody involved, both our residents and our staff," Annette says.

"We have an HR advisor who ... is available for McKenzie staff to access on site once a fortnight or via email. We also have a training educator, who supports staff with any training, orientation and the opportunity for healthcare assistants to work towards medication competency, which is supported on site by our educator and registered nurses. Annette says McKenzie is "developing a relationship between ARA to offer nursing students casual employment in weekends and holidays".

She says, "A community connection with our residents is very important; we love having members or groups from the community come into McKenzie. Even the simplicity of a resident's family bringing fish and chips in and having it together in our café area means a lot to the resident. McKenzie is their home; normality is very important. I am excited by the future here at McKenzie."

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