

# COROMIND

Issue 5

## Are you Listening?

Dave Burton shares his tips for listening more effectively

## Finding Balance

Rock stacker Reuben Watson gives us his take on this unique art form

## PESTS OF NOSTALGIA

Becs Cox teaches us about pests introduced to our ecosystem and their impact on our lands

## UNEXPLAINABLE HAPPENINGS

Ross Liggins shares some mind bending experiences and how they have affected him

Audio   
Version



PLUS LOADS MORE  
CREATIVE INSIGHTS & ART  
FROM THE COMMUNITY

# Editorial

Kia ora

Welcome to the 5th issue of Coromind, a magazine that thrives on collaboration and community involvement. At Coromind, we believe in the power of individuals to make a significant impact in shaping our society and the world. Too often, we hear people say, "I can't do much about it; whatever I do won't change anything in the world". This simply isn't true.

Each one of us has the power to make a difference, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant our actions may seem. If every person who thought they were powerless took just one small step, the cumulative effect would be massive.

At Coromind, we believe in giving voice to our community. We are proud to collaborate with local artists, writers and creatives to bring our magazine to life. We know that each of us has a unique perspective and a story to tell, and we are committed to showcasing the diversity and richness of our people.

We also recognise the value of intergenerational collaboration, and we are inspired by the energy and proactivity of young students and the experience and knowledge of older people.

As we look forward to the future, we urge everyone to recognise their own power and take action, no matter how small, to create a better world. Let's continue collaborating and supporting one another as we work towards a brighter future for all

Coromind is a free magazine with a mighty website where you can find an online and audio version. Accessibility matters!

Scan the QR code on the cover of the mag to access our online content or go straight to [coromind.nz](http://coromind.nz) in your browser.

Now, sit back, relax and enjoy Coromind!

Peace,

The Coromind Team

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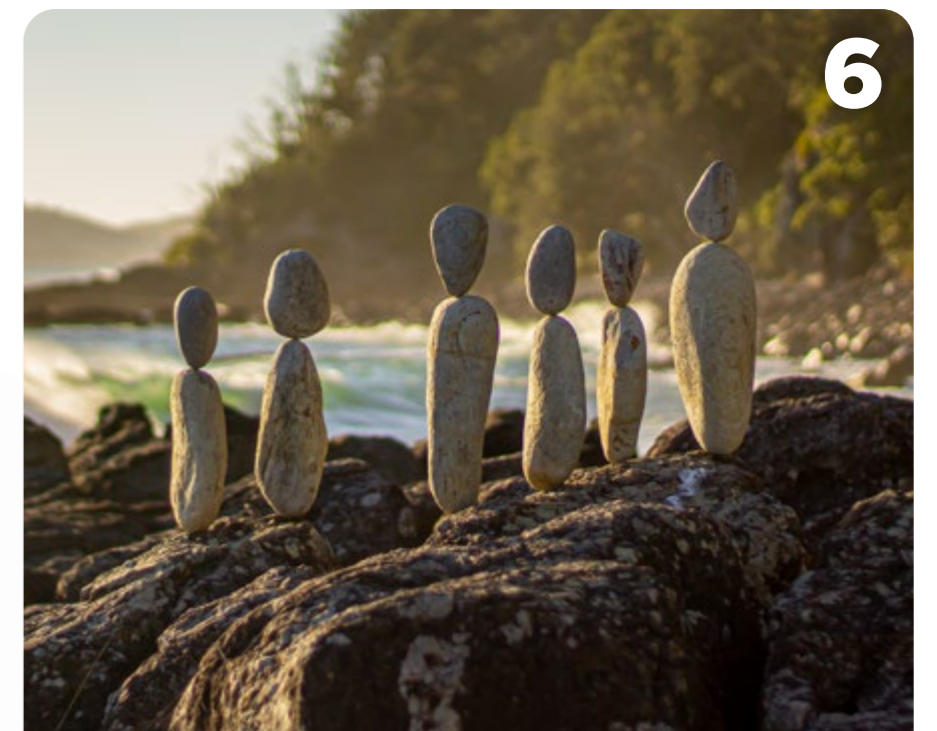
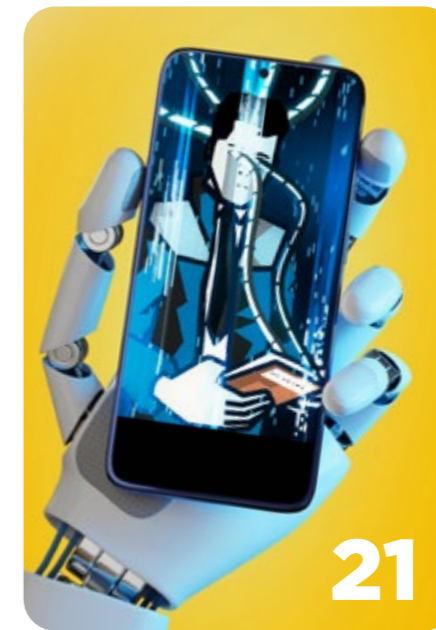
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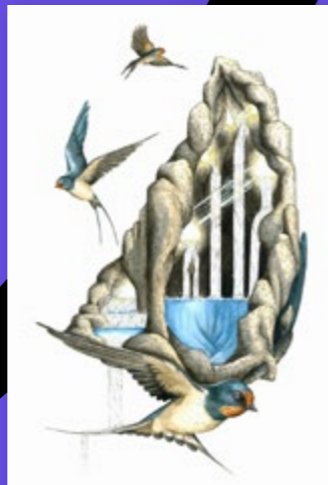
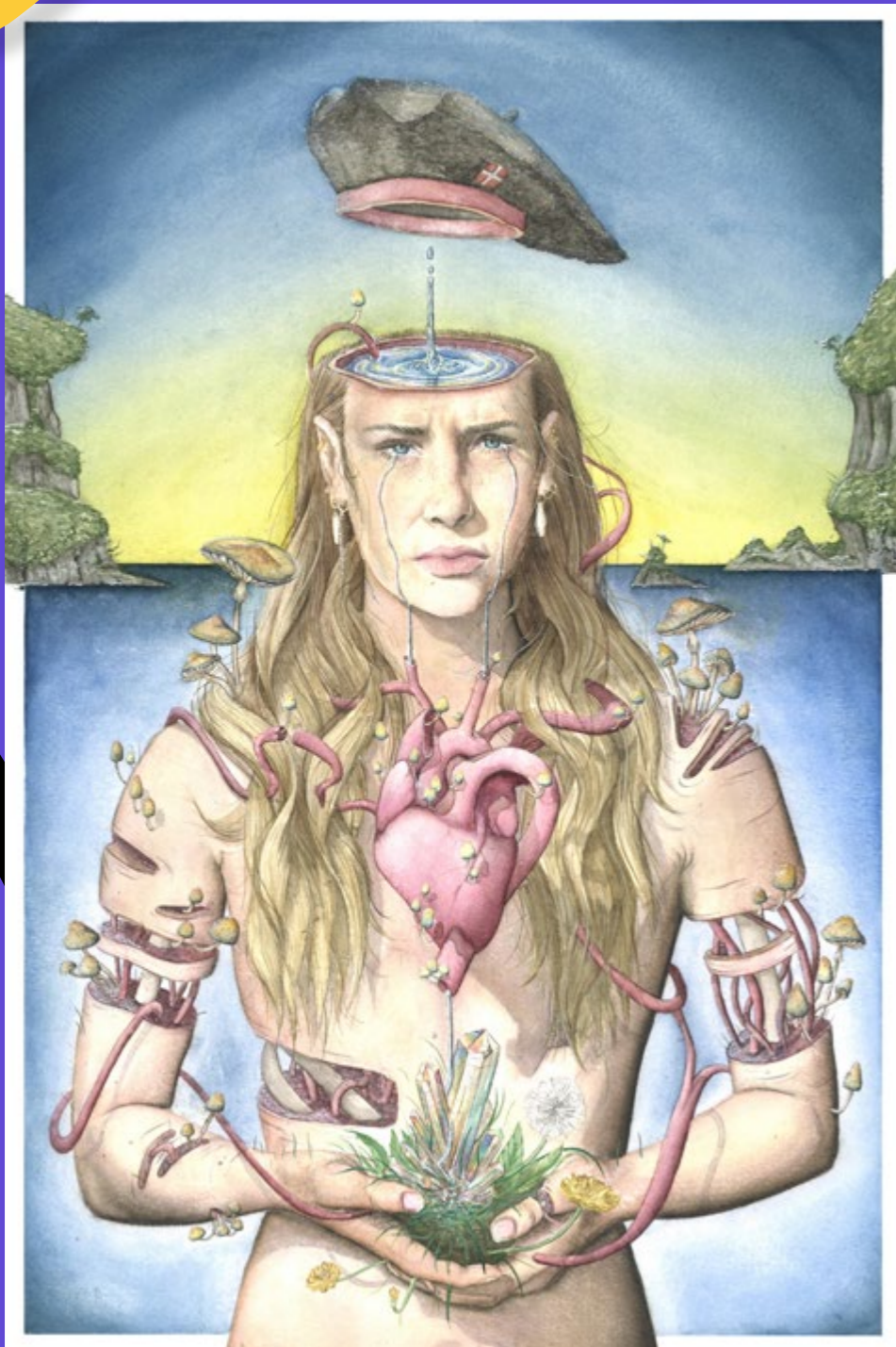
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# Lara Gay



“Fauna and flora are a big source of inspiration for me.”



I was born in Annecy in the French Alps in 1999, and I've always loved to draw, paint, and craft in general, for as long as I can remember

Since childhood, I've been deeply influenced by surrealist artists as both my parents had a big interest in them. As a kid, I remember going to Salvador Dali's museum in Figueres and having my mind blown by his work. I experimented with my interpretation of Dali's paranoiac-critical method to reach my inner mindscape. I think Dali's world will forever influence my creative expression. The surrealist art movement, in particular, helped me to express myself and share my inner thoughts with others, thoughts that can't be held by words.

Once I was 10 years old, I consistently went to evening art classes. I remember sneaking into the art school where my mother worked to participate in living model sessions every week of my teenagehood. I spent my last 5 years in France wandering through museums and art galleries in Paris and Lyon before making a move to Aotearoa. Indeed, I initially came to New Zealand for a beaux-art portfolio project in 2019, but I ended up settling here permanently.

New Zealand's fauna and flora are a big source of inspiration for me and I like to use them and their symbols to express metaphysical visual metaphors, personal vision, or dream states.

I use different mediums, each of them is like a tool with its unique properties: watercolours for complex projects, oil paint for intensity, ink for its unique flow, lino carving for a primitive intuitive approach, and I also occasionally use graphite and gouache. I rarely combine different mediums into one creation.

A major part of my work is to deconstruct the limits of anthropocentrism in surrealism and symbolism as we know it. I also try to question society's constructions such as the idea of gender.

I'm based in Whangamatā, where I'm happy to express my creativity in my art studio located in the beautiful Wentworth Valley.

Special acknowledgment to the Eggsentric Café in Cooks Beach, where most of my work is currently displayed alongside other talented artists.

I sell my art at markets and through my website: [www.laragay-art.com](http://www.laragay-art.com)

Words & Artwork by  
**Lara Gay**

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Holistic Health Whitianga is a new site to help our community and visitors find health options in our local areas. We offer an array of holistic practitioners and services from around the Coromandel to support your well being. Check out our practitioners so far. We look forward to building on this collective in the near future.

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# Finding Balance

**Be still. Stillness reveals the secrets of eternity.**

- Lao Tzu

From the moment I saw someone rock balancing on YouTube, I was hooked, like a double shot of espresso for the soul. It consumed every spare moment I had for the first couple years and has been a hobby that I've returned to time and time again over the past five years, exploring this art-form.

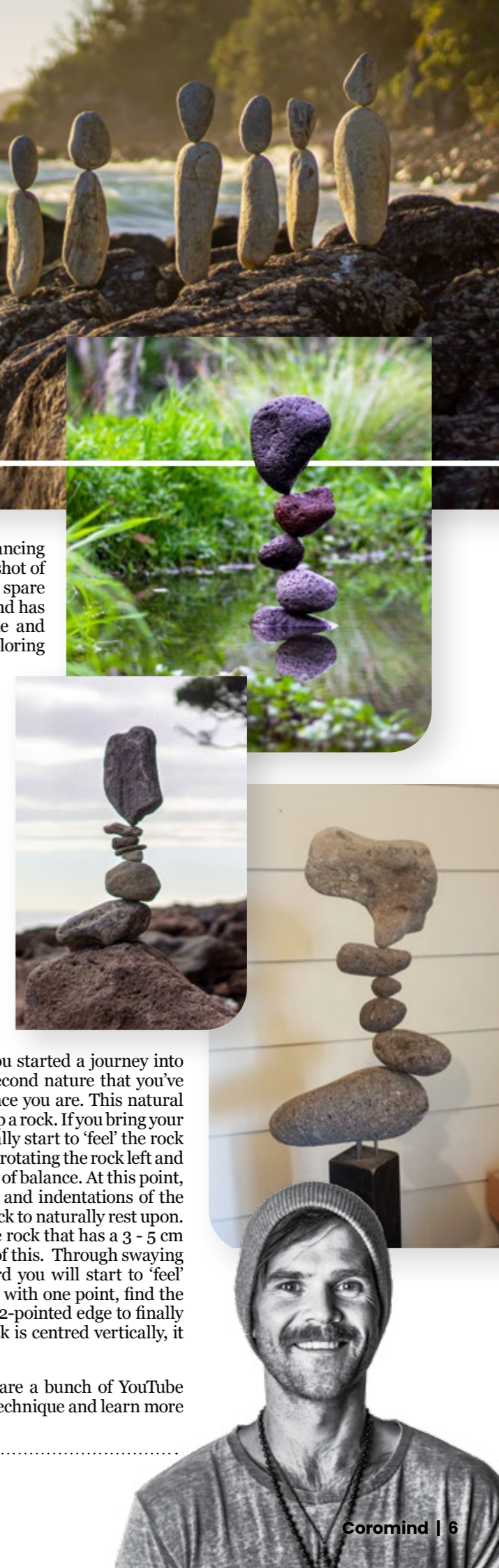
For me, it has been a unique way to connect with nature; it has taught me to surrender to the moment and, most importantly, let go. A sudden gust of wind and a stack that has taken anywhere from 15 minutes to 4 hours is gone. The ephemeral nature of the art form has trickled down into all aspects of my life as a creator.

Learning to create a work of art and walk away with no sense of attachment or neediness for this to be seen by anyone has been a powerful lesson that has helped me let go of attachments not just to the art I create with rocks but in all other aspects of my life as a designer, musician and human.

From the moment you learnt to walk, you started a journey into balance to the point it has become so second nature that you've forgotten how much of a master of balance you are. This natural mastery flows into the moment you pick up a rock. If you bring your awareness into your body you will naturally start to 'feel' the rock as an extension of you, and from there, by rotating the rock left and right it will guide you to its natural centre of balance. At this point, it's a matter of using the natural bumps and indentations of the rock to create a tripod of points for the rock to naturally rest upon. The simplest way to start is to find a base rock that has a 3 - 5 cm indentation and sit a second rock on top of this. Through swaying the top rock left, right, back and forward you will start to 'feel' the contact points 'click' into place. Start with one point, find the second point, now sway the rock on this 2-pointed edge to finally find the 3rd point, after which, if the rock is centred vertically, it should stay in place.

Start small and have fun with it, there are a bunch of YouTube tutorials that can help you develop your technique and learn more complex ways to balance.

Words & Photos by **Reuben Watson**



# FROM CORO WITH LOVE

## CHICAGO: ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE

From the words of my Architecture river tour guide, 'Architecture creates beauty, and beauty creates and shapes culture'. I have never claimed to be knowledgeable when it comes to architecture; however, after learning about the different types amongst some of the tallest buildings in Chicago alone, I couldn't agree more with what he said. Things like Urban and City Design and how they are critical to the influence on the culture that will grow in a city blew my mind.

The freedom between the buildings in the city is not only

aesthetically pleasing to the eye and skyline but also creates space below that allows people to flow. When I took a moment to stop and just watch the people around me on either side of the streets walking to wherever they needed to be, and how the riversides were bustling yet still not crowded food and shopping establishments, you could really see how peaceful these areas are even though you are literally right in the heart of the city!

I'm a little embarrassed to have never really taken much notice of how important urban design can be, but happy to

admit I do now! Chicago is a beautiful city, and I was more than lucky to be able to visit when the sun was out, and the wind was warm. The food (yes, deep dish pizza!), the people and the views are just a few of this city's wonderful gifts.

Till next time, the windy city, Chicago xx

Words & Photos by **Chloe Potae**



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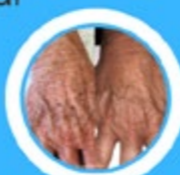


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# Kaias naturals



Where do the Earth's and our human needs intersect?

Living sustainably on Earth as humans is an idea that seems to have been somewhat greenwashed lately. While there are excellent initiatives out there addressing several issues that humankind has created on Earth, we need a more hands-on approach not only to deal with them but to live with them in the foreseeable future.

Can we prioritise human well-being over economic growth? Can we revitalise our communities so that people and the planet come first before profit? "What we do now echoes in eternity," said Marcus Aurelius almost 2,000 years ago, and we all see it played out in our own lives. Creating systems based on the principles of regenerative design means that we could set up businesses that are dynamic and emergent, restorative, and beneficial for humans and the planet. This new paradigm encourages designers and business owners to apply permaculture design principles, such as using and valuing renewable resources and services, producing no waste, and using small and slow solutions, to name a few of the 12 principles.

Looking at a local, Tairua-based organic body care business, KAIASnaturals, their *modus operandi* is based on such ethics and values:

- Working with NZ family-owned suppliers of the finest ethically sourced ingredients, bought directly from the growers where possible
- Creating highly effective chemical-free and environmentally safe body

care products that follow the 'less is more' principle: including high-potency ingredients for maximum effect and leaving out anything that's unnecessary

- Using recyclable packaging that can be refilled several times, thus elongating the life cycle of their tins, bottles and jars - they offer a 10% discount on your next order for returning the packaging!
- Offering DIY kits and workshops where they teach small groups how to make their own body care products because they believe in self-sufficiency
- Supporting people-powered change by a weekly donation to the independent crowdfunded community campaigning organisation, ActionStation NZ.

We can be the change we wish to see in our and future generations' world by taking one step at a time, so we don't get caught up in often paralysing climate anxiety, and by making the right choices for each other's and the planet's well-being, and taking responsibility for our actions. Whether it's on the level of our own and our families' personal hygiene and body care, whether it's how we run our businesses, and how we contribute to the well-being of our communities by giving back, we can create a paradigm shift!

**Kaia Kohout**  
Owner & Creator of KAIASnaturals  
www.kaiasnaturals.com

M M D H M Z X T M K S M A M M O T H Y E  
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| MACADAMIA | MANGO     | MISS MISTAKE | MUESLI    |
| MACARENA  | MARIGOLD  | MOCKINGBIRD  | MUG       |
| MACARONI  | MATARANGI | MODEM        | MUMBLING  |
| MAELSTROM | ME        | MOMENTARILY  | MUMMA     |
| MAGMA     | MEANTIME  | MONOGAMY     | MUNCHKIN  |
| MAGNUM    | MEME      | MONTH        | MUNICIPAL |
| MAMBO     | MESSRS    | MOO          | MUSIC     |
| MAMMOGRAM | MIMICRY   | MOON         |           |
| MAMMOTH   | MINGLING  | MRS          |           |

# Word Find

# Local Action

Hi! My name is Finn Molloy and I'm 12 years old.

I live in Auckland but spend lots of time at my family beach house in Matarangi. I have been kitesurfing for around 2 years now. My current highest jump is 7.5 metres and I performed this at Matarangi.

My favourite trick is called the woost, which can be learnt after mastering jumps over 4 metres. To do a woost, you must send the kite to 12 o'clock and sheet in the bar. Then once you have taken off, you flick the board up above your head until it is almost resting on the lines. Then you flick the board back down and spot your landing.

What inspired me to start kitesurfing was when I saw my friends Hugo and Toby doing it and they then taught me. Kitesurfing for me is one of my favourite sports as I love the adrenaline of going out in high winds and floating through the sky. Kitesurfing is a competitive sport and I hope to continue getting better and better.

Words by **Finn Molloy**  
 Photos by **Maddy & Will Molloy**



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# UNEXPLAINABLE HAPPENINGS

## Ross' Ramblings Part 2

My most memorable strange experience occurred in my early thirties. I had been attending parapsychology classes over the previous months, where we learned about auras, spirits and lots of other esoteric things. One of them was called 'transfiguration', when a person or thing changes its shape or form.

I was visiting a friend in Whangamatā who was interested in that kind of stuff. We got onto the subject of transfiguration. I explained what my teacher had told me, namely that if you looked at someone's face slightly out of focus, sometimes another face would appear. I had never practised this before but was willing to give it a go. So, I gazed at my friend's face and after a few moments it transformed into the face of a much older, dark-haired, desperately sad woman. Suddenly I felt a strong physical force pushing me downwards.

I started to feel very afraid, as this definitely didn't feel like a benevolent force. I remembered my parapsychology teacher telling us that if we ever got into trouble, to immediately ask god for help. Even though at that time I wasn't sure which god if any I believed in, I stammered out "Help me", to try and avoid crashing through the floorboards. The force immediately disappeared. I told my friend what had happened and described the face that hers had transformed into. She showed me a photo of her deceased mother who had died in tragic circumstances. It looked the same as the face I had seen. After that, I realised I had been playing with fire, and immediately stopped the classes I had been attending. It did however give me a small experience of another dimension that I had no idea existed before that day. That glimpse was enough for me. I don't feel a need to go there again.

There are so many teachings and beliefs about what happens when our earthly lives end. Despite the above experience, I have no idea what happens, and I have no beliefs about it. I will just try to enjoy each living day and deal with death when it comes, however strange it may turn out to be.

A while later I hitch-hiked to Sandy Bay's Moehau Community farm near the northern tip of the Coromandel Peninsula to visit my sister who was holidaying there. Before leaving a few days later, she mentioned that one of the community members had a small dwelling up in the bush at the foot of Mount Moehau, in which I was welcome to stay. I had some free time so I decided to do a bush retreat. Some years before, an elderly mentor, who periodically helped me with advice when life got a bit troublesome,

lent me a book written by well-known Kiwi sailor Adrian Hayter, in which he described a mysterious stranger appearing in the cockpit of his yacht during a long solo sailing voyage. The unknown stranger apparently told him to contemplate the Book of Acts for 14 days.

I don't remember the outcome for Adrian of this strange occurrence, nor its cause. Was it a real person, or the figment of an imagination heightened by many months alone at sea? Anyway, my mentor told me that one day I would also do the 14-day task. I thought she was nuts. Why would I ever want to do such a seemingly mundane thing? However, as I wandered up to the bush retreat on that day, this memory came back to me very strongly and when I arrived at the small dwelling there was a bible on the bookshelf, so, remembering my mentor's prediction, I thought, "Why not? No harm can come from it and she must have told me this for a reason." So, I started reading. When I finished, I started again and then again ... After a few days I had memorised the text and just kept reciting it for 14 days. I didn't call myself a Christian and I wasn't sure why I was doing it, but it just felt like the right thing to do.

Today I can't remember even one word of it. I had only taken a couple of days of food with me so, when that was gone, I decided to fast, and drank only tea made from the herb bushes around the dwelling. After a few days of no food, I didn't really feel hungry but was conscious of a sharpening of the senses. My mind was very clear and the trees of the forest seemed to stand out more sharply. But the thing that really struck me was the sounds I heard. The wind would sweep down from Moehau and then gradually blend into a sound like the chanting of a mediaeval choir. I had never heard anything like this before and couldn't explain it.

Perhaps the fasting and meditative concentration may have allowed me to see and hear things that I don't normally experience. Some people I spoke to told me of ancient spirits that inhabit the mountain. I couldn't exactly describe the benefit I received from this experience in the bush under Moehau, but I know that after it, life somehow became less of a struggle. It really was one of those unexplainable experiences.

Words by **Ross Liggins**

# BORN AND RAISED

## Huia Martin

### WHAT ARE YOUR FAMILY LINKS WITH MERCURY BAY?

*I was one of the founders of the Mercury Bay Rugby Club during my first year of teaching at the old primary school. I was a player and coach and mentor for schoolboy rugby throughout the Bay.*

### WHERE ARE YOU LIVING NOW? NUMBER OF YEARS?

*After brief career moves that included teaching in Paeroa (Hikutaia School) and Hamilton – where my good friend and mentor, the one and only Ron Morgan, introduced me to the role of Teacher Recruitment, with an emphasis on young Māori graduates – I married my sweetheart 'Yvonne the dental nurse'. Soon after our daughter Hayley was born, we 'upped stakes' and headed for Canada.*

*The decision to move so far from family was filled with emotion and it took some time to adjust. Canadians are 'nice people' as anyone who has toured here will tell you and once we completed our family with the addition of Bradley in 81 and Julia in 85 we became a nuclear family in our new home community of Oliver, British Columbia.*

*We still have whānau in Mercury Bay. My brother Johnboy is now Johnman, (proud matua of Dallas, owner of Peninsula Auto Electric & Marine). Jo is the matriarch of the clan that features Jake, Erin and Ryan.*

### WHEN WERE YOU LIVING IN MERCURY BAY? YEARS AT MERCURY BAY AREA SCHOOL?

*1972, 1973, 1974*

Brought to you by **Ron Morgan**



### WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE SCHOOL?

*Teaching in Canada. Now retired.*

### WHAT WOULD BE THE ACHIEVEMENT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

*Becoming a Life Member of Mercury Bay Rugby Club at age 22.*

### HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO WHITIANGA RECENTLY? WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS?

*I return to Whitianga frequently. The waterways were once prime farmland owned by Robin Smith, Jimmy Jackman and others. The small country village has gone big city, with a Warehouse even.*

### WHAT ARE YOUR FONDEST MEMORIES OF MERCURY BAY?

*My first three years of teaching, '72, '73 and '74 were foundational years for me. I also had the encouragement of Ron Morgan, whose dad Reg had already developed a reputation as a fisherman whose tales were longer than those of 'the ones that got away'.*

### WHO WERE SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS IN THOSE EARLY YEARS?

*Ron became our best man and Blink, Mike English, our groomsman. I make sure to touch base with these scoundrels and Merv George whenever I come home.*

### ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT MAY BE RELEVANT?

*Here are some names that may stir memories with some of my friends. Along with Blink and Zap there were Honk, Rats, Trev, Merv, Rusty, Big Mike, Wi Hemopo, Ross Davidson and who could forget Dougie???*

### FRIENDS YOU WOULD LIKE TO CATCH UP WITH?

*Bo and Barb Boyd.*

# THE 4-DAY WORKWEEK

As far back as the Roman slave revolts led by Spartacus, to the mediaeval peasant rebellions wanting protection from their kings, to the factory workers uniting in the Industrial Revolution to stop child labour and gain a 10-hour work day, to the union organisers of last century getting a 2-day weekend, the story of the worker has been one of trying to improve their workplace conditions and attain a more comfortable life. So what's the next step in this progression? And why would it help businesses just as much as their employees?

The way the work week works sucks. When we wake up on Monday, it is the beginning of five consecutive days of work. By Wednesday we're already worn out and dreaming of the weekend, still with over half our work week to go. And yet when the weekend arrives, we cannot enjoy it to the fullest. On Saturday we are too tired to truly do anything more than rest, and on Sunday we have the looming Monday on our horizon, impeding our enjoyment. Two is the wrong number of days off – you really need three just to feel like you've had two. Not to mention all the odd jobs and grocery shopping we have to get done!

So how do we fix this problem? A simple answer is a third day off, not on Friday or Monday though, but on Wednesday. That way when you get to work Monday you've only got two days before your break, when you can relax and recharge and get some odd jobs done, and then only two more days till the weekend. You're more rested, have more time to get your housework done, and more time to

spend with your family and friends. But wouldn't this impact our salaries and the performance of businesses?

Most proponents of the system propose maintaining the same take-home pay for a week's work you would have had otherwise. If you made \$754 per week on minimum wage working five days a week, instead you make that working four days a week. But how can businesses be expected to maintain themselves if their staff are working less for a higher hourly rate? Productivity gains. Employees working a four day work week are more productive than those working traditional 40-hour work weeks, they resign less, and one study showed a 35% increase in revenue when compared with the previous year. In that particular study only three companies from sixty-one did not continue the 4-day work week after the study ended. A New Zealand trial in a financial services company of 240 staff showed the total amount of work went up, and there was a 50% increase in work/life balance satisfaction. With these sorts of numbers it's hard to see why a company wouldn't go for it.

So what are the reasons companies aren't shifting to this latest development in working life? It's very simple – productivity is no longer a measure of an employee's worth in the same way it used to. People from all over the political spectrum assumed that as productivity increased so would our leisure time. This assumption has not just come from the communists and anarchists, but even conservatives like Richard Nixon who said one day we'd work 15-hour weeks in the “not too distant

future” with the rate of productivity. But with Thatcherism, Reaganomics and Rogernomics we instead had a separation of productivity and wages, and a culture of working overtime to prove your value. Despite an unreal explosion of productivity in the age of the internet, wages did not keep up. Productivity increased 400% that of wages between 1979 and 2020. Before that, they were matched almost one-to-one. In the same time period, corporate profits have increased by 600% once adjusted for inflation. In the 1950s, CEOs made 20 times the average salary in their company; now it's 400 times.

It is clear that the current work week has become a hindrance to employees, as it fails to provide them with sufficient time to relax, learn, and engage in social activities. Instead, overtime and exhaustion have become the norm, while the wealthy reap the benefits of increased productivity. The five-day work week leaves us distracted, tired and unable to fight for our rights as workers, look for new jobs or protest governmental overreach. By embracing the idea of a 4-day work week, we can improve our productivity, achieve a better work-life balance, and reclaim our value as employees. So go to your boss and ask for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. Show them the studies, ask for a trial, and if met with resistance consider unionising to secure better wages and working conditions.

Words by **Jackson Green**  
Artwork by **Tessa Zank**  
Facebook: *Zank Art Realm*

“**Productivity is no longer a measure of an employee's worth in the same way it used to.**”

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# HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF OUR NIGHT SKY

*Astronomy advice for beginners*

Whether you are 8 or 80, it's never too late to start astronomy and learn our place in the universe. Did you know you can see our own galaxy with your unaided eyes? Craters of the moon with binoculars? Countless wonders await you any clear night. When attempting to view the night sky, location is key but fortunately in the Coromandel Peninsula we are spoilt for choice for areas free from light pollution, like Opito Bay.

The first step for beginners is simply to look up and ask, "What's that?" Please allow your eyes to adjust to low light for around 15 mins, and nowadays it has never been easier to locate the Milky Way, constellations, planets and even nebulae on phone Apps like Sky Safari.

So that's the bare bones. Now you may want to take it a step further and buy some equipment. The next step would be some binoculars. They are very versatile and can offer up great views of the moon, planets and even some deep sky nebulae like the great Orion Nebula M42 (pictured). However, it will only appear as a small grey fuzzy patch. Magnification sizes like 7x50 or 10x50 are great for beginners. However, although binoculars are great and easy to use, you can't get close views and take images.

So lastly, I will offer some basic advice for equipment. Do your research and do not buy a scope with a cheap fork mount, it will wobble, and the views are far worse than a good set of binoculars. For a beginner who wants the best views on a budget, you can't really beat a Dobsonian 6 inch.

Astrophotography can be as cheap or expensive as you like; you can simply take good moon pictures using a phone mount and a telescope. If you're

already into photography, you can do widefield Milky Way shots with a DSLR camera and a tripod. Deep sky pictures like my Carina Nebula (pictured) take hours of exposure time to pick up the faint light coming from these distant gas clouds.

My Instagram is "astro\_brew\_". I post my space images here with information on the equipment used and the editing programs I use to edit the images too.

#### **My current equipment, used in the pictures:**

Skywatcher ED80 black diamond refractor telescope. Sky watcher EQ3 goto mount.

QHY268c 26mp camera.

#### **Image 1: The Moon**

Half-lit casts shadows across the craters  
Average distance from earth: 384,400 km.

#### **Image 2: Orion Nebula M42**


Estimated to be 24 light-years across  
and 1400 light years away.

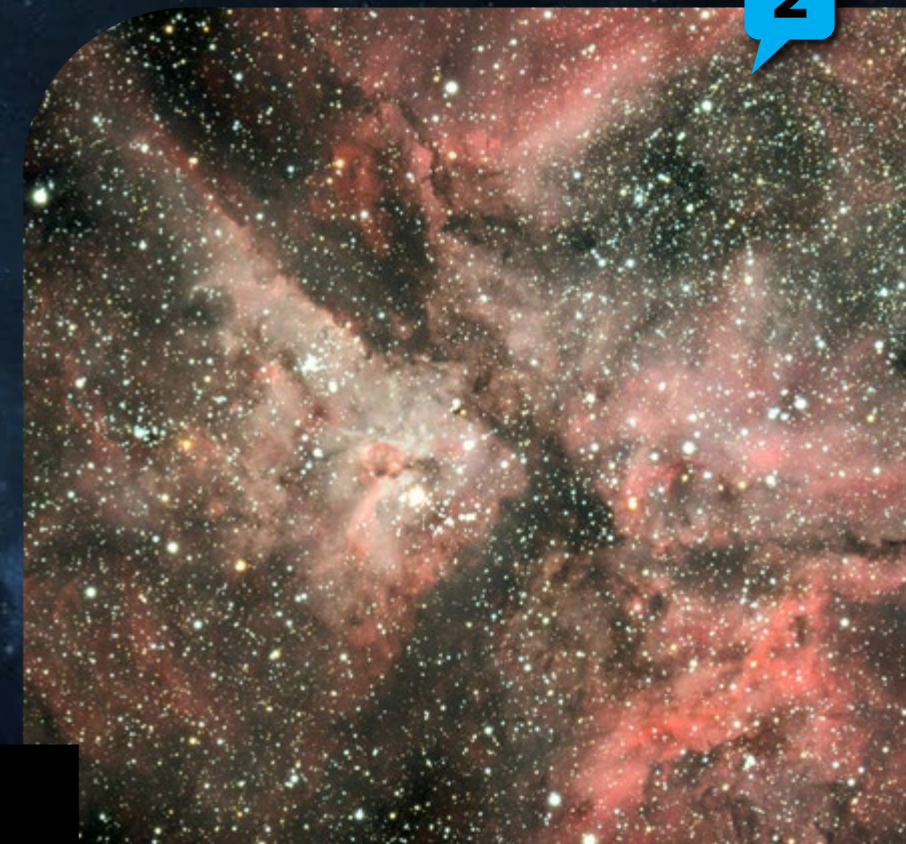
Total exposure: 1 hour

#### **Image 3: Carina Nebula NGC3372**

8500 light years from earth and about 230  
light-years across .

2.5 hours of exposure

 Words & Photos by  
**Rob Spencer**



2



1



**It's never too late to start astronomy and learn our place in the universe.**

”

3

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# PESTS OF NOSTALGIA



What is Acclimatisation? It is the adaptation of animals or plants to an environment or climate they are not normally found in.

Aotearoa New Zealand's first acclimatisers were the Polynesian voyagers that arrived here around 1250-1300 AD. They brought with them kiore (pacific rats), kumara, kuri (dogs), taro and paper mulberry. The taro and paper mulberry did not grow well in this climate, but the kumara grew well on our sub-tropical islands. The kiore and kuri, however, had a different impact on the environment. Many of the endemic birds here in Aotearoa New Zealand were flightless and so hunting was easy. Nests were often on the ground and therefore eggs and chicks were easy prey for these new mammals to our shores. This led to a loss of approximately 39 species, including nine species of moa, in the first 100 years of settlement.

The next wave were seafarers from Europe in the late 1700s, who liberated pigs and introduced potatoes as a new harvest crop.

Although the practice of taking animals and plants on migrations was thousands of years old, the mid-19th century became a time to transport these species to the 'New World'. And so, the acclimatisation movement had begun.

An acclimatisation society was formed in Britain in 1860. This then became an official policy through the British colonies. Immigrants arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand believing in acclimatisation. This new country was an escape from overcrowded and industrial Britain and settlers saw the forests as being empty of game animals and the rivers lacking fish, with an eerie silence when the dawn arose.

These societies were set up around Aotearoa New Zealand; the members saw their role as providing the new settlers with the 'home comforts' of the old country. Farm animals, foods, timber, insect-eating birds, songbirds, pets, decorative plants, and fish and game were all introduced to make them feel more at home.

Some of these introductions have had a very negative impact on Aotearoa New Zealand and to this day we are battling these 'pests' of nostalgia.

In 1861, on one sailing ship came a feathered choir carried in eighty-one cages. The Cashmere cleared St. Katherine's docks in London bound for Aotearoa New Zealand with cages of singing and game birds destined to be domiciled on the farthest side of the globe. These creatures had been collected under the direction of Mr Bartlett of the London Zoological Gardens, at the solicitation of the New Zealand Government. Some of those bird passengers were partridges, pheasants, blackbirds, thrushes, sparrows and Canadian Geese. Of 147 birds shipped, 88 survived the arduous journey.

On board all of the birds were under the care of Mr John James Wilson, whose brother was the superintendent of natural history at the Crystal Palace. The ship set sail on December 9th 1861 and did not reach Auckland until April 8 1862 after a severe buffeting by storms in the Bay of Biscay. On arrival in Auckland the birds were warmly welcomed, and hundreds of people went to the wharf to view them. The birds were liberated on the properties of people who had volunteered to care for them. A pair of sparrows were kept in a cage in a grocer's store on Victoria Road, Devonport for people to admire them.

Most of these birds prospered and became good settlers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Mr John James (J.J) Wilson became a settler himself. He moved to Mahurangi and managed several general stores. In 1868 he married Sarah Louise Cleaver. Their first child, Catherine, was born in 1870 in Auckland, quickly followed by Edward in 1871 in Mahurangi. Their next eight children were Charlotte (1873), Ella (1876), Alfred Lupton (1880), Arthur Edmond (1883), John (1885), Frederick (1888), Louisa (1892) and Alexander George (1894). J.J and Sarah moved to Hikuaia and then to Tairua in 1878 where he was a licensee for a hotel.

Catherine, their eldest child, married William Lee in 1889 and settled in Whitianga.

J.J finally settled into farming life in 1908 at Kaimarama, only to pass away ten years later in 1918. John James was survived by his wife Sarah and seven of his children.

Words by **Becs Cox**  
Artwork by **Berny Bee** | [www.bbart.co.nz](http://www.bbart.co.nz)





# Goodbye Mr Gillette!

## Hairy girls are gorgeous too! ”

Last year, I made the decision to stop shaving my legs. I hadn't necessarily made this choice out of some huge feminist epiphany; it was more the fact that I just couldn't be bothered doing it anymore. The awkward positions in the shower, the little head unclipping itself from the razor spontaneously, the cuts on my legs. Not to mention all the money I was spending on those stupid pink taxed women's razors. Having smooth legs was nice, but it just didn't seem worth it to me anymore.

So these days I usually have hairy legs. This often reminds me of the first time I shaved. I was eleven or twelve and my mum told me that I should start off my leg-shaving journey right, and get them waxed. To this day, I have no idea why she thought that was a good idea. But I trusted her to make proper womanly decisions for me, so I said okay. I didn't really see this as a big deal, but when I was telling my best friend about it, and my childhood crush walked past us and gave me a look, I realised: this was one of those woman things that you keep private.

For a while after that, I didn't talk to boys about my legs; I kept them shaved, and kept quiet. I struggled to keep up with expectations, all while learning about feminism and the unfair expectations that were on me, but not on men. I choose to shave, I'd tell people. Feminism is all about choice, and I choose to shave. I like shaving! It's my personal, unmanipulated choice. But I don't know if this was really true. It's easy to tell off the rude boy at school who commented on your day five legs; it's also easy to go home and tell yourself you were planning on shaving today anyway.

I'm not saying you can't be a feminist with smooth legs. But before you make that choice, it's best to think through why exactly you want to do that. Let's look at a bit of history. Unsurprisingly, it was shaving companies that had a sneaky part in why women shave today, and I think it's safe to say money was a big motivator for them.

The man making this money was King Camp Gillette. Women started shaving their armpits in 1915, just over 100 years

ago. Before this, no one really cared about our body hair, because it was always hidden along with the rest of our body. But in the early 1900s, women began to rid themselves of all the layers that they were expected to wear, and were now wearing sleeveless dresses that made the world aware of the fact that yes, women grew armpit hair. Women had freed themselves of one expectation, and Gillette was there to capitalise on that by creating a new expectation to replace it. One step forward and two steps back, am I right ladies? In 1915, Gillette introduced the Milady Décolleté razor, with advertisements that claimed that 'the underarm must be as smooth as the face' and that to be without embarrassment, a lady must shave her pits. 'It's off because it's out'!

Leg shaving took a little longer to become popular, as women figured it was easier to just wear stockings. But eventually, because of war rationing, stockings became harder to get, and so Gillette got his way. According to the author of *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal*, Rebecca M. Herzig, 'Gillette was very canny about increasing consumption of his products, and targeting women was one part of that strategy'.

I certainly wasn't the first to break the trend. In Herzig's book, she writes about 'arm-pit feminists' in the women's lib movement, and an essay written in 1972 by Harriet Lyons and Rebecca Rosenblatt. Lyons and Rosenblatt wrote about an 'emerging feminist consciousness' that would counter these expectations that women shave their pits and legs. Herzig writes that hair removal was declared by Lyons and Rosenblatt to be 'one more measure of the drudgery to which American women were unjustly subjected'.

I still shave my legs for special occasions, but mostly I'm happy being a hairy gal. And I don't feel any less attractive; in fact I've been dressing up and experimenting with makeup looks even more since I stopped shaving. Hairy gals are gorgeous too. So yeah, I've mostly been leaving my razor to rust. Sorry, not sorry, Gillette!

Words by **Sarah Morcom**

# THE POWER OF MOVIES

Movies have been a major part of our lives for over a century. They have the power to take us on an emotional rollercoaster, transport us to other worlds and help us understand different perspectives and points of view. Movies have always been considered one of the most effective mediums of storytelling. As cinemas are often a focal point for the community, they and the movies they show have become an important vehicle for education.

Movies are an excellent source of storytelling, and they offer a unique way to explore different historical topics. Anyone who has seen *Schindler's List* will have a lasting memory of the little girl in the red coat. Spielberg's masterful tracking shots and use of colour in what was mostly a black and white film meant that the fate of the little girl was burnt into our memories and educated us about the horrors of the Holocaust. Visual storytelling through movies about historical events makes it much easier for us to get a feeling for the time in history and empathise with the people who lived through those events.

One of the most significant benefits of movies as an educational tool is that they can make complex topics more accessible and engaging. For example, movies

like *Interstellar* and *The Martian* (and even *Ant-Man*!) have used visuals and storytelling to make it easier for people to understand complex scientific ideas. While the science in these films may not stand up to peer review, they do provide those of us without a PhD an insight into some pretty clever stuff.

Living in our beautiful part of the world, sometimes cut off by dodgy roads, it can be easy to forget that we all experience our lives differently. Movies offer the opportunity to learn about the places, cultures, traditions, customs and values of different societies. They also offer the chance to better understand the other people and cultures living in our own country. Last year the movies *Whina* and *Muru* gave us the opportunity to reflect on people and events that have shaped our lives in New Zealand. This year *We Are Still Here* was a powerful reminder of colonisation and the ongoing struggle of many indigenous people here in New Zealand and the wider Pacific.

Movies can bring attention to important social issues and raise awareness about them. For instance, movies like *The Color Purple* and *The Help* highlight the issue of racism and discrimination in society. Similarly, movies like *Erin Brockovich* and *The Insider* shed light on corporate

greed and corruption. The animated hit *Inside Out* gave a better understanding of how our emotions affect behaviour – as well as some great parenting tips!

Movies also play an important role in bringing people together. Whether you're watching a movie with your family, friends or significant other, it's an experience that you share together. This can create a shared sense of community, giving us a common bond and something to talk about long after the credits have rolled.

Last but not least, movies have the power to inspire us and push us to pursue our dreams. My travelling 'to-do' list was inspired by the movies I watched as a child and I was not disappointed when I got there in person. Our dream of owning a cinema was inspired by our love of movies and the way they enhance the human experience by either reflecting how our society is or imagining how it could be. And besides all that learning, who doesn't want to spend some time in the dark with an excuse to eat snacks?

Words by **Anne-Maree McDougall**

## 5 THINGS I'VE LEARNED FROM MOVIES

- 1. With the right people, you can achieve just about anything.**
- 2. Don't go into the basement or the abandoned house.**
- 3. There are some really awful people in the world who do really awful things.**
- 4. There are some really amazing people in the world and we should all try harder to be more like them.**
- 5. People that want you to succeed and be your best self are worth their weight in gold.**



# ChatGPT & the Risk to Civilisation

A couple of editions ago I wrote about ChaGPT, the breakthrough AI development and its impact. Due to the rapid further developments of this technology just in the last couple of months, I will return to it again once more.

The speed of evolution of ChatGPT and similar systems is astounding. ChatGPT was already known to be able to generate functioning software at lightning speed. I tried it myself by asking it to write me a statistics function in the R statistics package, which saved me perhaps a couple of hours of work. ChatGPT has now been given the ability to read and improve its own code. Further, it has been connected to a well known mathematics package, Wolfram Alpha, and can now trigger that system to compute solutions to complex problems which feed back into its own repertoire of 'knowledge'. In other words, not only can ChatGPT deliver complex texts based on the recombination of already existing ideas, but it can also now generate new knowledge rapidly using computation. AI has now reached the ability to generate novelty. And that is a significant game changer.

Further, implementations of ChatGPT exist where the system continuously triggers itself to generate rapidly new iterations and permutations of ideas. The speed at which this happens is phenomenal, given the computing power available. And hardware manufacturers such as Nvidia, known for making ultra-fast specialised Bitcoin mining computers, are rapidly rolling out specialised AI computing systems to feed the hunger for computing power that AI can now put to use. The combination of ChatGPT's capabilities with rapid technological developments in other areas will accelerate the dynamics of many developments and it seems that 2023 may be the year when the so-called 'Singularity' that technology visionary Ray Kurzweil wrote about in 2005 could be reached. The implications for civilisation are staggering and possibly not yet widely appreciated.

One of the most obvious risks of ChatGPT for civilisation is its potential to make many jobs obsolete. In capitalist and highly competitive societies, labour productivity is key to survival and growth of the fittest companies. And even the state sector, tasked to save taxpayers' money, won't be exempt. Businesses which learn to use ChatGPT to their advantage, or are newly founded based on the potential of AI, will outcompete those which don't. This will undoubtedly lead to lay-offs in the white-collar workforce. Some estimates say that 50% of current jobs could be at risk. Needless to say, this would collapse entire economies if it was to eventuate. Further, the technology devalues expertise. If you can get an expert answer within seconds from an AI system yourself, why employ an expert? The follow on from this is a potential devaluation of education to become an expert. Who would invest years of their life and six-digit amounts of money in higher education, when at the end of all this an AI system could do the job you might have been aiming for, exponentially faster and perhaps better than yourself? How will we value genuine human ingenuity, capability and expertise, if these qualities are surmounted with ease by an AI in most cases?

Sadly, not only white-collar jobs are on the line; already creative arts are significantly affected. ChatGPT and similar systems can on command compose music in popular styles including song lyrics and even generate a complete soundtrack. And its ability to generate visual compositions that could be passed on as human generated art is already well-known. Recently a German photographer won a competition with an AI generated emotional 'photo' of two women. He was open about his use of the technology and still, his ChatGPT generated image was selected as the winning shot in a prestigious photography competition.

More sinister is the use of this technology in the competition for control of our planet, in other words, for the suppression of people and the conquering of resources and territory, in other words – war. All technological advances have immediate implications for people suppression and war technology. Surveillance and spy technology is a point in case, and so is the possibly war-deciding use of drones witnessed in Ukraine. AI technology is undoubtedly already being rapidly utilised for these ends.

As a consequence of all this, human input may become devalued across a wide range of sectors of society. AI-generated images, videos and audio (highly realistic but fake), using the faces and voices of real people, will increasingly generate an environment where trust in what is real and what is not becomes eroded. The social implications of this technology are yet to be explored. But this is not a matter that will impact society over decades, like previous technological revolutions; the pace at which AI technology suddenly will impact civilisation is stepping ahead in a matter of months. Some high-tech gurus such as Elon Musk have pleaded for a six-month moratorium on the development of this technology in order to assess its implications. But I am not holding my breath for that to happen. The genie is out of the bottle. And nobody will be able to put it back where it came from.

Words by **Thomas Everth**  
Artwork by **Nga Marsters**



## Celebrating a Milestone with Style!



180 live shows!

The ALT BAYS Show hit a milestone of 180 episodes, and they celebrated in style. The host, Leo Magri, welcomed three incredibly talented Kiwi artists to the studio for a chat and some music. Roimata Taimana, visual artist and musician, Fabian Roberts, multi-instrumentalist, CFM broadcaster and Altbays Show co-host, and Stewart Pedley, singer-songwriter, brought an impressive array of instruments, including acoustic guitars, mandolin, resonator, and percussion, for a memorable show.

The quartet talked about everything from the importance of the arts in education to learning to be an adult. There were plenty of laughs too, with some classic character impersonations and on-the-spot tune composition.

The ALT BAYS Show has a reputation for bringing in a diverse range of guests, from established musicians to up-and-coming artists. As a drummer for the punk rock trio Corrosive Moses and the duo Let's Go Descarrego!, Leo is no stranger to the music scene, and his passion for the industry shines through in every episode. Over the past 12 months, the show

has featured a who's who of Kiwi music, including Andrew Fagan from The Mockers/Fagan and The People, Paul 'The Axeman' Martin and Chris Baillie from Devilskin/The Stalkers, NZ hip-hop artist Tipene, and former Katchafire member Hāni Dread. There's also plenty of room for up-and-comers, such as Benji Humphries from Flaxxies, Bella Rafflyn from Coast Arcade, the singer and songwriter Brielle Cottier-Hall, White Noise Mafia drummer Neo Lee, musician and sound healer Taylor Sol, among many others!

You can catch all of these fantastic episodes on the ALT BAYS Show's YouTube channel. Just search for your favourite artist or head to the 'LIVE' section to see all of the show's guests. And if you prefer to listen on-the-go, the podcast version is available on all leading platforms.

Scan the QR Code here to watch all the great Altbays Shows on their Youtube Channel.



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# An Adventure Through

# Aotearoa



A chance encounter with a couple of cyclists at a Kaiaua cafe set in motion a plan to ride the length of the country. The idea took on a sense of romance and I was hooked.

It is a long ride, over 3000 km across two land masses on tracks, trails, roads, both busy and quiet, and wilderness areas.

I questioned myself – besides the romance and physical challenge of it, why this journey and why now?

I have ridden bikes for most of my life, including multi-day road rides with a support vehicle. The idea of cycling with all my gear, 'bikepacking', was both exciting and intimidating.

More than the challenge, I was inspired to see a country I felt I knew but to view it from a different perspective. Familiar places from a new angle and places never seen before. A voyage of discovery, to be open to new things, be surprised and to pause and reflect.

Options to travel have been limited in the last few years, with lockdowns and storms, so flexibility and timing would be key to the experience. As a result I split the trip in two. The North Island in November 2022 and the South Island in February this year.

Through months of web searches, shop visits and conversations I found the gear that wouldn't let me down, stranded in the middle of nowhere. In the North Island, a survival bag for emergencies would suffice; in the South Island, the more remote route demanded a tent as well as a GPS tracker. Waterproof bags were a must, a waterproof outer layer too. Water purification tablets were essential, as drinking straight from streams is not recommended. Bungee cords are invaluable, as is getting your bike saddle properly fitted – a lesson I learned the hard way.

Despite being a photographer, I decided not to be encumbered so I simplified my gear, taking only my iPhone and a GoPro.

And advice? Besides the physical preparation and having the right gear, it's important to be mentally prepared. Know how to push yourself but not too far, as you need to get up and do it over the next day.

The overall journey can be overwhelming, so sometimes you need to focus on the next step. The next town, the next hill and, when progress seems to elude you, the next pedal stroke. Take joy from small steps.

Now at home, I carry a strong perception of New Zealand as a country in transition and contrast.

Areas of pristine forest where trees predate the arrival of man. Landscapes modified for farming and development. Maori communities, artefacts and art displaying a vibrant identity. Pakeha communities with relics of the old farming and extractive industries. Railway tracks and coach trails abandoned as transport systems changed, now repurposed through ecotourism. Modern communities with new architecture, industries, subdivisions and shops. Christchurch, ravaged by earthquakes, rebuilding and establishing itself.

The great forests of Waipoua and Pureora. Expansive harbours of the Hokianga and the Kaipara, the mighty Whanganui River. The broad South Island plains and basins and their endless skies, nestled between craggy snow-topped mountains split by braided rivers, canals and lakes. The isolated beauty of remote passes and rough broken roads.

Art visible throughout the entire country. Collectives, exhibitions, galleries, sculptures and murals all reflecting a deep connection to a country and how it chooses to express itself.

The many people who surprised me with their stories and their kindness. The woman at Kohukohu who fed me rather than have me cycle down and back up a steep hill at the end of the day. The world champion shearer on the station near McKenzie Basin who still used traditional blades to work. The 80-year-old English traveller still cycling the world, who was in the SAS looking for Russian spies in English pubs after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall – who drank a lot of beer and found no spies.

Old friends I visited in Christchurch, Cromwell and Dunedin – I'm grateful I defined my journey to include catching up with them, which was part of the adventure.

And the weather? Lots of it and all the time. Sun, wind, rain, hail, heat and cold. Which tested me and my gear over and over again.

*Ian is currently working on a book of images and thoughts from his adventure through Aotearoa.*

*Ian will also be exhibiting a collection of his astrophotography at Christine Rabarts CR Exhibit Space, 24 Wharf Road, Coromandel Town from Saturday 27th May to Sunday 11th June, 10am to 4pm every day.*

 Words and photos by **Ian Preece**



# Are you Listening?

a sense that they've been listened to, they're just going to keep trying to tell you what you've already heard. And that gets boring, for you and for them! But even more importantly, good listening will help the person you're listening to clarify what they really want to say! Better for them, better for you!

Here is a 3-step process which will help you to listen better. It is a simple, practical and powerful way to hear more of what people are trying to say to you.

**Here are some tips on how do each of these things more effectively. And to give yourself a good starting point, you could ask for some feedback from someone who spoke to you recently. Listen to it carefully!**

Listening is something we all do, all the time, wherever we are. At home we listen to our partners, our families, our friends. At work, we listen to our staff, our colleagues, our bosses. But how well do we listen to them? How well do we really hear what they're trying to tell us?

Most listening specialists (and many of the people we listen to) would say "Not too well!"

But why all the fuss about Listening? Why is it so important? Well, it's important because until people have



## Attend To what the speaker is saying

When someone is talking to you, the first step is simply to pay attention to them as a person. This will create a climate in which they feel valued, safe and respected. In turn the speaker will be able to express himself or herself more confidently and accurately.

### Here are some Attending hints:

- Turn to face the speaker and make some eye contact with them.
- Leave your phone or keyboard alone!
- Show some signs of interest: nod, grunt, mm-hmm, etc.
- Listen for their thoughts, feelings and intentions (we'll talk more about that in a future article).
- Put your own thoughts and reactions aside as best you can.

## Reflect Back what you are hearing

The next step in the process is to let the speaker know you are hearing what's being said. You may not understand what you're hearing but don't worry. Reflecting what you've heard will lead to clarification for both you and the speaker! This stage is often referred to as 'Holding up the mirror'.

### Ways of Reflecting:

- Repeat back some key points that you're hearing:  
"So A happened, then B ..."
- Check your understanding of what's being said:  
"Let me see if I've got this right ..."
- Offer a summary of what you've heard:  
"Sounds to me like you're feeling ..."

## Expand On what is being said

The speaker should by now be feeling positive about being heard and you can start to interact around the topic and expand the conversation. A well-timed open question can help the speaker consider their next step, evaluate an alternative or see their situation from a different point of view. A poorly-timed closed question can end the conversation.

### To Expand effectively:

- Use questions which require more than a yes or no answer:  
"What are your thoughts or feelings about this?"
- Offer suggestions or possibilities in the form of a question:  
"How would it be to..."
- Help the speaker to clarify their goal:  
"What would you like to see happen here?"

Take some time to reflect on how well you operate in each of these areas and make some notes for yourself about what you could Keep, Stop or Start doing as a listener. And remember to ask yourself...

# Are you Listening?

 Words by **Dave Burton**  
Artwork by **Lucas Rocha** | @lucas.rocha\_

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# SPORT PSYCHOLOGY Applied in Daily Life



### PART 1: Key Principles for a Happier more Positive Life

Did you know that your thoughts influence your fate, day by day?

Albert Einstein once said: "A single thought is the smallest entity of energy."

Up to 60% of our body is water. The water content in our brain and muscles is even as much as 75%! So, a thought is like the tiniest movement on a bucket of water and the whole content of the bucket gets moved by this vibration.

And did you know that our mind cannot understand any negation? Meaning: no, don't, without, anti, etc. cannot be processed and are simply deleted?

I can demonstrate this to you in a small test:

Please close your eyes and imagine NOT seeing a red dog.

What happened? How long did it take you to get rid of the red dog?

These two principles are very powerful and they are the first principles I teach an athlete or any other person who comes to see me.

It can be fatal if a gymnast thinks about NOT falling on top of the balancing beam or a marathon runner's goal is to finish WITHOUT pain or a martial artist DOESN'T want to get injured.

Your mind simply ignores the negation and focuses on the rest of your thought. Which is, in the above examples: FALLING, PAIN and GET INJURED.

Most people, athletes included, know what they DON'T want more than what they want. Not just in sports, but also in our daily life it is much harder to find out what we really want. But it's easy to say what we don't want because we have experienced it.

So, for a gymnast it would be wiser to think: I stay sure-footed on the beam and land the back flip with precision. Or the marathon runner could say to themselves: I finish the marathon in good health. And the martial artist could think: I have a strong body and bones made from steel.

Our thoughts influence our body and hence our environment; our mind does not understand any negative commands.

If we apply these two powerful principles to our daily life, we might soon realise the benefit of taking a closer look at our thoughts and what we say to ourselves.

On a personal level we might think: I don't want this experience (job, partner, etc.) again. Or I don't want to get sick. Or I just want this pain to go away.

But what we often get is the same job experience and the same kind of partnership or worse. We often get sick and struggle with pain.

It is much harder to find out what we really want because we might have never experienced it in our life and therefore, we don't really know what to wish for!

#### Here are some examples

**Relationship:** I am loving and I have a loving partner and we share a healthy loving relationship.

**Job:** I do what I love every day and have all my needs met and more.

**Sickness:** I am healthy.

**Pain:** My body gets stronger every day.

Tina Turner who was in an abusive relationship for years turned around her vibration with positive chanting every day and eventually got divorced and is now in a loving relationship. (Read more in her book: *Happiness Becomes You.*)

How about when we delve deeper into sensitive subjects like anti-mining or even breast cancer awareness, and see war and tragedies in the media every day – what do you think we will experience more of, when we focus on breast cancer, mining or war?

Instead, we could focus on healthy bodies/boobs, sacred land, biodiversity, food for everyone and peace.

Mother Teresa was once asked if she would attend an anti-war protest. She declined and said she would attend a peace march but not an anti-war protest. She obviously knew about the principle of negation.

Every one of us has the power to change our thinking and send out a different vibration to our body, to our community and to the world.

Words by **Diana Baer**  
Artwork by **Sebastien Pan**



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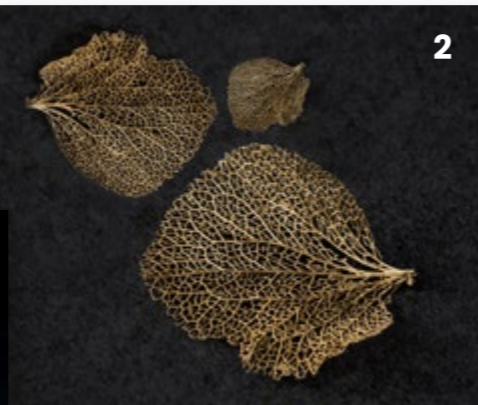
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## The Union

Precipitation falls upon the white cap where each droplet searches for one another

Crevices like magnets attract each bead as they percolate through mossy playgrounds

Phase by phase they join forces building their power building communities

From trickling streams to authoritative rivers the journey flows through chapters of time

These aquatic roads they give and take and are taken from Such beauty exploited

Resilient, the droplets bind and press on serving the remaining communities of life

The rivers of union reach for the sea where finally each droplet is free.

## Thrown to the River

Our facade of joie de vivre Can only ever be a mask. How can we find the light When we're content amongst the dark?

We throw the blame of suffering Everywhere but our own feet, As we pay the piper our own souls And suckle at her teat.

So let the children starve! And let the elders wither! If we cannot fight the bears We are thrown to the river.

Sacrifice the young To our illusion of control. We'd skin the rabbit live As long as power's ours to hold.

Photography is one of my many hobbies, it makes me look at things in a different way; it's a great way for me to relax.

### Photo 1 and 2

'Smokey Koru' was created with incense stick smoke. I love the arty side of photography as well as nature and macro, with the 'Golden Hydrangea Petals' - skeleton petals looking like fine filigree.

### Photo 3

Hoya flowers are so stunning, a delicate but waxy texture with pretty colours.



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**TRUSTED SINCE 1896**

Words by **Elvisa Van Der Leden**

Words by **A.M**

Photos by **Anita Ruggle**

# THE ART OF WATERING YOUR PLANTS

It can be a bit tricky to determine the right amount of water your plants need, but with some observation and attention, you can keep your plants happy and healthy. Here are some tips on how to water your plants properly.

## 1) Check the soil moisture level

One of the best ways to determine whether your plant needs water is to check the soil moisture level. Stick your finger an inch or two into the soil to feel if it's dry or moist. If it's dry, it's time to water your plant. If it's still moist, wait a day or two before checking again. Overwatering can cause waterlogged soil, which can lead to root rot and other plant problems.

## 2) Look for signs of water stress

Plants that are not getting enough water may show signs of water stress. If you notice your plant wilting or dropping

leaves, check the soil moisture level and water your plant as needed.

## 3) Yellowing leaves or mould

Overwatering can also cause yellowing leaves or mould to grow on the soil surface or around the base of your plant. If you notice either of these signs, reduce your watering frequency and allow the soil to dry out before watering again.

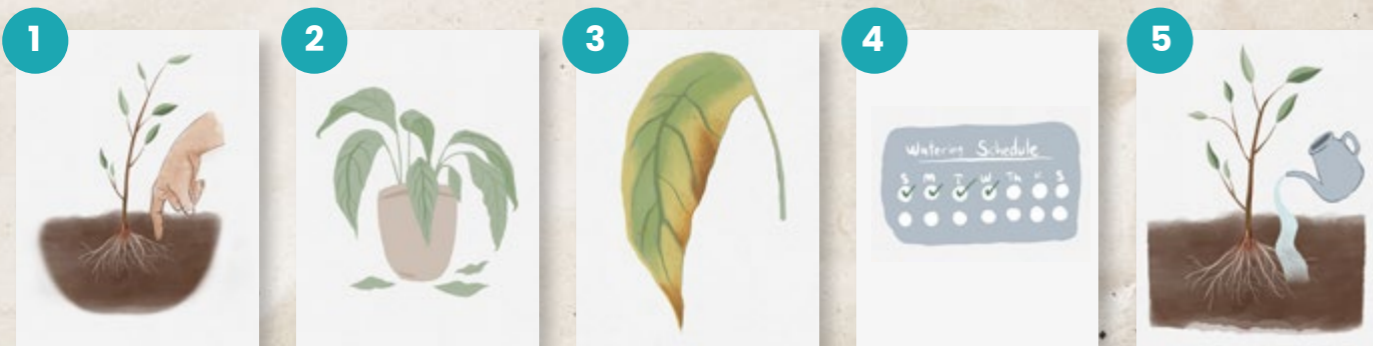
## 4) Water consistently

Consistency is key when it comes to watering your plants. Different plants have different watering needs, but in general, most plants prefer consistent watering – the same amount and frequency each time. Irregular watering can cause stress to your plant and make it more susceptible to pests and diseases.

## 5) Water the soil, not the leaves

When watering your plants, it's best to water the soil directly around the roots rather than the leaves or flowers. This allows the roots to absorb the water and nutrients they need to grow properly. Watering the leaves or flowers can cause water droplets to sit on the surface, leading to fungal or bacterial growth.

Watering your plants properly requires some observation and attention, but it's not difficult! With these tips, you can keep your plants happy and healthy for years to come. And remember, here at Chops, we can help you with a wide range of hard and soft landscaping services. Get in touch if you are after the installation of irrigation systems, and we will guarantee you get the best bang for your buck.



Testing soil moisture with finger

Signs of water stress, plant wilt and leaf drop

Overwatering – yellow leaf

Water consistently

Water the soil, not the leaves

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