

Finally!!!!!!



Our 2025 Benny recipient has been waiting since 1969 for her Award. **The Amazing Dinah Lee** won the first *New Zealand Entertainer of the Year Award* in 1965 and moved to Australia later that year, where she has been domiciled until recently. Dinah now lives in Wellington. Here's a letter from her to the club members.

'You should have seen the look on your face', Glenda said, when I suddenly realised Tom was talking about me. I was so overwhelmed at receiving The Benny Award; I didn't even have a speech prepared. Thank you so much to the Variety Artists Club members who nominated me, and to the previous Benny award winners who voted for me. It's such an honour to be acknowledged and to receive such a prestigious award. I had a great night, thanks again to everyone. It was wonderful to catch up with so many friends I've missed over the years. I feel I've travelled the full circle of my career and now been welcomed back to where it all began. Love from Dinah.

Our special Awards Night newsletter should be out in a few weeks with all the info, speeches, photos and bios. Keep an eye out for it in your email box, and feel free to forward it on to your friends.

Don't forget about **Barbie Davidson's gig** at the *Paraoa Brewing Co* in Whangaparaoa. Starts at 2pm, Sunday 23rd November. That venue is losing its license in December due to excess noise so get there while you can. And sign the [petition](#) that Graeme Jay-Smith has started to help keep the venue open.

Don't forget about **Alan Watson's Star Unveiling** on the *Orewa Walk of Fame*. Sunday 23 November at 4pm. Tickets are still available for the after-party at the *Hibiscus Coast RSA*. It will be a great magical evening.

Membership for 2026

- Your **Orange** membership cards will **expire on 31 December 2025** and the \$45 membership fee for 2026 is due now.
- Please pay your fee online into account 06-0145-0186627-00.
- Add your membership number or give us your name.
- When fees are paid you will receive a new 2026 membership card, expiring in December 2026.



**This year's AGM will be held at the Grey Lynn RSA, 1 Frances Street, Grey Lynn.
Tuesday, 25 November 2025. From 7.00pm-9.30pm.
(Note the earlier start time than previously advised)**

All financial and non-financial members are welcome to attend, but only financial members may vote on any resolutions passed.

Note that the restaurant will not be open on 25 November.

The main agenda items to address are to....

- Verify the minutes of the last AGM.
- Verify the VAC's 30 September 2025 end of year financial accounts.
- Elect a new 2025/26 Executive Committee.
- Discuss any new General Business raised at the meeting.
- All nominations for the committee were to be in the hands of the Secretary no later than 7 days before the meeting (i.e. 18 November 2025). Sufficient nominations have been received to comply with the club's constitution.
- Apologies and proxies must be in the hands of the Secretary or President prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- An information pack, including a copy of the minutes of the last meeting and the September 2025 year end account, will be provided to all attendees at the meeting.



Complaints and Compliments

Email them to your VAC Newsletter editor...

michaelcolonna@yahoo.com





The Variety Artists Presents



A Christmas Entertainment Showcase

Hosted by
Karen & Robyn

Featuring
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**D.T. DAVID THOMAS &
ROBYN ALEXANDER**



**MAGIC SANTA
MICHAEL COLONNA**



DENNIS & DONNA CLARK



DAVID POMEROY

THE WATERWAYS



KAREN DAVY

TOUCAN



**Mon 1st Dec
BIRKENHEAD RSA**

Recreation Dr Birkenhead

Cash Entry - VAC members \$5/ Birkenhead RSA Members \$10 / Public \$15
Standard RSA Entry conditions apply.

Fabulous Restaurant /Bar - Raffles

The Orchante Saga

Part 12. Exotic Islands of the South Seas



'She Wore Red Feathers and A Hooly-Hooly Skirt' is how the old song goes. The only red feathers I observed were the ones on parrots and cockatoos. The grass hula skirts? MM-mmm! I raced out and bought a lawn mower and hedge clippers!!

I got my first passport May 28th 1964. Two weeks previously my agent, the late George Tollerton, had telephoned. 'Tom, I've got a booking for you. New Caledonia, on to Tahiti, then back to Noumea. Want it?' 'YES, PLEASE!' Panic Stations! Two Weeks! Visa and a passport needed. Strings were pulled.

I also needed vaccinations – Typhoid, Hepatitis A, etc. Doctor says 'Good God man, you should've had these at least a month ago'. He 'bangs' them in saying, 'Come back on Monday'. Monday he says, 'I don't think they're going to 'take'.

I'd better give you another shot'. 'Thanks a lot, Doc,' I said.

I arrived in Noumea, the Capital City of New Caledonia, on the 5th June. Now that was really pushing it! The 'Doc' was wrong! Not only did the first batch of inoculations take, so did the second! A full blown fever! Christ, I was so ill! Gilbert Thong, the famous Polynesian entrepreneur/promoter, was a worried man. I should have been hospitalised. At the hotel I couldn't walk, I practically had to crawl up the stairs to my room!

Gilbert owned a night club, the *Cabaret Tahiti*. Situated just off the beach, all on one level, it was designed like a Tahitian beach hut and the atmosphere was fantastic; an entertainer's paradise, in Paradise. There was a small flat attached to the Club, where Marita, the club's manageress (a most beautiful young woman of Chinese/French-Tahitian mix) lived. Gilbert installed me there, with Marita playing nurse. What a nurse – I wanted to be sick for ever! C'mon, I was a virile 20 year old, still feeling his way in life. With a name like Tom (cat), what do you expect?

Thankfully the shows, to be held at the *Au Rex Theatre* in Noumea's main street, were not due to start for a week. Gilbert had brought me over early so that we could rehearse the Hypnotism show. French is the official language, (I can only speak two – English and swearing). I'll expound further later on.

New Caledonia is a French overseas island territory in the South Pacific. It may be different now but back in the '60s very few of the people, a melting pot of Melanesian/Polynesian, European French, Indonesian, and Vietnamese, spoke English. It is in the tropical South Pacific, where the average temperature fluctuates around a balmy 30 degrees Celsius. I was fluctuating between uncontrollable shaking and shivering, to 'burning up' with the seething heat of a fiery furnace! Gilbert was panic stricken. He had brought over, apart from myself, a band who played like the Beatles (wore wigs, etc.), and a New Zealand singer, Joy Yates.

After 4 or 5 days I settled down a bit; still shaking with cold, then breaking out into a steamy sweat. The concerts' programme was much the same as Johnny Cooper's; first half, the band, singer, and me performing the Magic and Yoga acts. Second half all Hypnotism. Gilbert had booked six shows into the *Rex Theatre*, afterwards flying us out to Tahiti for shows in Papeete, the Capital, and then back to New Caledonia for shows at his night club. The show just had to go on!!

In those days my sleight of hand magic show was performed to music with no patter, so language was never an issue. Because I did not speak French there would have been a problem with the Hypnotism show, but after several hours of rehearsing with Gilbert he eventually got the intonation right and a general idea of my 'patter' during the hour and a half of my performance. The end result was, every word I uttered Gilbert repeated in French – so fast it seemed like his words were coming out of my mouth. It was brilliant; must have been a world first. I've never heard of a Hypnotist show being worked this way, via a Translator, before or since.

New Zealand Walk of Fame

"STAR UNVEILING"... ALAN WATSON QSM



SUNDAY 23rd NOV 2025

STAR UNVEILING...OREWA BOULEVARD 4pm

Spectacular magic SHOW at 6pm

HIBISCUS COAST RSA

Tickets \$20 Door charge \$25

Tickets available at the bar

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with the

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Conductor



Morag Atchison
Soprano



Matthias Balzat
Cello



Francesca Fong
Viola



Andrew Beer
Violin



Somi Kim
Piano



Grayson Masefield
Accordion



Kathleen Tomacruz
Guitar



Gordon Hill
Double Bass

7pm Saturday December 13th

Holy Trinity Cathedral

\$40 General Admission - \$30 Concession - Children Free*

Tickets available on Eventfinda

www.aotango.com



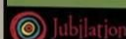
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Crumpy Finds God

Barry Crump

(15 May 1935 – 3 July 1996)



It had never concerned me whether anyone was Maori or not. They were brown-skinned and they'd always been around, and they could be good or bad like anyone else. They often had a better sense of fun than Pakehas and weren't so critical of other people; generally more tolerant. But it was only when I lived in the Urewera Country and got to know the Tuhoe people (the *Children of the Mist*) that I began to realise what a treasure lies in the Maori heart, stifled by the European culture so crudely imposed on it, but still tickin' away there.

When I was young I realised that adults believed that all children needed saving, especially me. When I was about four, a man who was visiting my grandmother's house sprinkled some water on my hair, out of a small bottle, and begged the Lord to forgive me in strange muttering language. I must have done something pretty wicked because I needed a lot of forgiving. It worked all right because I immediately lost all memory of what it was I needed forgiving for. This left me in danger of unknowingly doing the same things again and needing more of that forgiving, so I wasn't terribly impressed.

When I was about nine, an aunt took me to a Christian revival meeting in a hall in Khyber Pass Road. There were a lot of them happening around then. We were going to be saved by a wonderful man who'd been touched by God. The hall was full of strange-looking people, all standing up because there were no seats laid out. All you could hear for a while was shuffling and coughing and then this man in a suit came on the stage and told us that everyone in the hall was wicked and evil and destined to burn in the fires of hell and damnation for all eternity.

Although my mother was always praying for me, I left home and went out into the world quite unforgiven. Over the years I ran into all sorts of people who reckoned they had 'The Answer' and I gave them all a go, or nearly all of them. I flicked through Tarot readings, the I Ching, astrology, Ouija-boards, hypnotism, and micro biotics. I checked them out as I ran into them and couldn't believe that any of them was the answer. Not for me, anyway!



I ran into a talking-in-tongues interpreter and let him talk me into going to one of their meetings. The preacher started praying fervently and soon he became incoherent. Then people around the hall started calling out and raving in a most embarrassing manner. I got up and walked out of there.

When I was in Auckland I ran into this bloke who was right into Scientology. I agreed to visit their headquarters where a bloke sat me in a booth, holding a lie detector, and asked me questions about my family and myself. I answered all his questions as honestly as I could and came out of there with a certificate saying that I was Grade 0 Communications Release. My skepticism was unscathed. It wasn't 'The Answer' I was looking for.

At one stage there was a belief afoot that psychology held the answers. I read Freud and Jung and a few other psychology books and came away with an abiding suspicion of that science. Then there was my journey to find 'The Answer' in India.

One day I dropped a hitch-hiker off at the *Greymouth Youth Hostel* and saw the word BAHAI written across the back of a car parked there; it hit me like a ton of bricks. It wouldn't go out of my head! By this time the spiritual strand of my rope was getting a bit frayed. And now there was this Bali Hai thing to be investigated and chucked on the heap with the rest of them. What the hell, I had nothing else to do anyway.



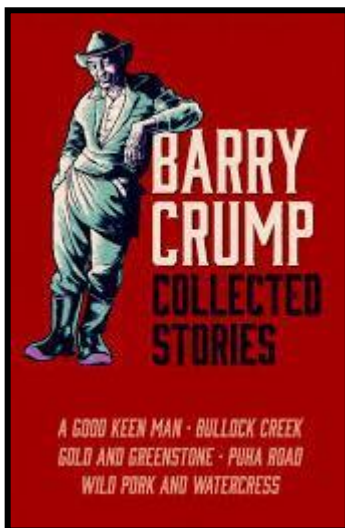
One of my friends was Bahai. I found her in Auckland and borrowed some books, then parked up in the *Parnell Rose Garden* and started reading. One of the first things I ran into was that the *Bahai Faith* was dedicated to the abolishment of extremes of poverty and wealth. That rocked me. This was going to take a bit of looking-into!

The Bahai writings are voluminous and I soaked them up, reading day and night. I had to buy candles because I was flattening the battery in the van. The weeks went by. I got to know the rose gardeners and always had a rose or two in the van. The police on patrol at night

would drop by for a brew of tea and a yarn. As soon as they were gone I'd get back into reading. I was finding answers to questions I'd been asking all my life.

The weeks turned into months. I got two unexpected royalty-payments and paid off the money I owed, which was a great relief, then took off south to have a few adventures and clear my head, driving around with nowhere in particular to go, just enjoying the travel and the people I met.

One morning I was trundling along south and saw this bloke walking along. He looked like a hippy; long hair, leather jacket with strips hanging off it, beads and bracelet. He had a bedroll on a strap over his shoulder and a leather bag on one hip. I stopped and asked him if he needed a lift. He said he was going to the desert so I told him to hop in; it was a few miles up ahead of us.



He was American, had arrived in New Zealand a week before, and said his name was Pat. We drove along in silence with Pat examining everything in the van as though he'd never been in one before, until we came to the desert part of the road. It was winter and there were patches of snow around. Pat made me stop so he could walk in the snow and pick up handfuls and crush it and taste it. He'd never seen snow close up before; he lived in a place where it never happened.

His real name was Patatonga and he was the chief's son of a small tribe of desert Indians. He'd been picked by his grandfather to fulfil a prophecy that had been handed down through the generations. When the tribe reached a stage of utter hopelessness they were to send someone of noble lineage to a green land under the South Star to find the spirit of one of their ancestors who would show them the path out of the wilderness to a world of peace and happiness.

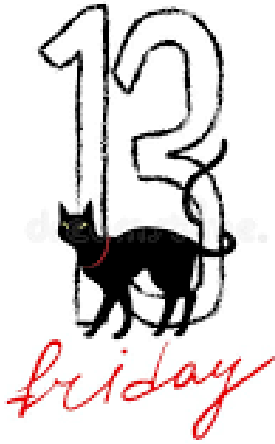
Pat had duly arrived in Auckland and got a bit freaked-out by it all. He'd been told that if he couldn't find his ancestor's spirit he was to go into the desert and wait. He walked nearly all the way from Auckland because he was on the wrong side of the road half the time and never asked for lifts. And now he'd run into me and a Bahai book on the 'Oneness of Mankind', on the Desert Road, in a green land under the South Star.

He was shining with excitement. He was convinced that he'd found what he'd come looking for and I couldn't convincingly disagree with him. I gave him four Bahai books and left him at a hut I knew of in the Kaimanawa Range. He wanted to be alone with what he'd found; so did I.

The man had shaken me. I'd been absorbing the Bahai writings for months, the best part of a year, and this bloke had seen the simple truth of it in a pamphlet out of someone's glovebox. I returned to Auckland, registered myself as a Bahai, and I've been one ever since.

I've heard that there are now a number of Bahai groups among the American Indian tribes and I wonder if Pat and I, meeting on the Desert Road that day, had anything to do with that.

The Reason for Friday 13th



In Christianity the number 13 is considered unlucky; Jesus dined with his 12 disciples at the Last Supper, making 13 at the table, and it is traditionally believed that he was crucified on a Friday.

At the turn of the fourteenth century, the king of France was Philip le Bel, known as 'The Beautiful'. Relations between Paris and Rome had degenerated because of the king's constant financial problems. The Beautiful had exhausted all the usual medieval methods for balancing the books; he had stolen property, arrested all the Jews, devalued his currency, and tried to tax the church.

Pope Boniface VIII issued a dictum forbidding the taxation of the clergy, so The Beautiful closed French borders to the exportation of gold bullion, cutting off Rome's transalpine money supply. To rub it in, the king arrested the Bishop of Pamiers and charged him with blasphemy, sorcery, and fornication.

The Pope issued a bull condemning the arrest and revoked some of The Beautiful's papal privileges. The Beautiful burned his copy in public and issued charges against the Pope, alleging blasphemy, sorcery, and sodomy. The Pope responded by excommunicating The Beautiful and a rumour was leaked that he might well excommunicate the entire country. The Beautiful dispatched an army to where the Pope was staying and placed the eighty-six-year old pontiff under house arrest. A month later Boniface died. Some allege he succumbed to shock at the outrage, other sources say that he beat his head against a wall until he succumbed.

When The Beautiful's wife died in 1305, and since he no longer would have to kiss a woman's lips, he applied for membership in the *Knights Templar* but the knights blackballed him. The following year the grand master of the *Knights* returned to Europe from the Mediterranean, accompanied by sixty knights and a baggage train of mules laden with gold and jewels.

The Beautiful tripled the price of everything in France overnight and open rebellion broke out in the streets. Rioters threatened to kill him so he fled to the Parisian temple and begged the *Knights* for protection, but to no avail.

On 14 September 1307, the king mass-mailed a set of sealed orders to every bailiff, seneschal, deputy, and officer in his kingdom; they were forbidden to open the papers before Thursday night 12 October. The following morning, Friday 13th, armies of officials slipped out of their barracks and by sundown nearly all the *Knights Templar* throughout France were in jails. One estimate puts the arrests at two thousand, another as high as five thousand. Only twenty escaped.

Templar sympathizers cursed the day itself, condemning it as evil — Friday the thirteenth. 127 false charges were levelled against the *Knights Templar*. The Beautiful's men stuffed rags in the mouths of some men and poured water in their nostrils. They threw knights in pits and left them to starve. They tied them to the rack. Not surprisingly, the *Templars* confessed to everything.

The new Pope Clement V ordered the *Templars* to stand trial; 597 *Templars* retracted their confessions. As the French king had no physical evidence, the Pope successfully delayed the trial with papal paper pushing and blue-ribbon commissions until the spring of 1310.

But the Beautiful insisted that smaller, minor trials of the *Templars* be carried out at the local level throughout France. When events began to move in the pope's favour, a Paris judge pronounced the *Knights Templar* before his court guilty and sentenced them to die that afternoon. By sundown, and before anyone could intervene, 54 men were tied to stakes and set on fire. On 20 March 1312 the *Templars* were dissolved and their holdings dispersed.

Music of the Spheres

The Afterlife – Jenny Randles & Peter Hough



Rosemary Brown, a London-based English composer, pianist, and spirit medium, has produced music transcribed to her by dead composers. Her first visitor appeared when she was just seven, and gradually more and more composers contacted her including Brahms, Chopin and Stravinsky. Rosemary alleges that musicians pass on full compositions including some scored orchestral works. As they come, she chats with the spirit (unseen by others) as if it was a normal joint authorship arrangement.

The pieces seem way beyond Rosemary's talents and she believes they are dictated to her by the great composers from their home in the afterlife. As with automatic writing and psychic art, the works are composed at a very fast rate. Her claims have aroused great interest within the orchestral community; when Leonard Bernstein met her he was convinced by her unassuming sincerity and take-it-or-leave-it attitude. He particularly liked a piece that Rachmaninov supposedly wrote for him that day.

British composer Richard Rodney Bennett commented, 'You couldn't fake music like this without years of training. I couldn't have faked some of the Beethoven myself.' Concert pianist Hephzibah Menuhin remarked, 'I look at these manuscripts with immense respect. Each piece is distinctly in the composer's style.'

British concert pianist **John Lill**, winner of the prestigious Tchaikovsky award, believes that his playing is inspired by the ghost of Beethoven. It began when Lill was practising in the *Moscow Conservatoire* for the *Tchaikovsky Piano Competition*. He became aware of someone, dressed in strange clothes, observing him. Lill recognised the man as Beethoven and has since held many conversations with the apparition.

Another musician who believes he is in contact with the dead is **Clifford Enticknap**. Handel, his teacher in a previous incarnation, communicated a four-and-a-half-hour oratorio to Enticknap, parts of which have been recorded by the *London Symphony Orchestra* and the *Handelian Foundation Choir*. The music has been critically acclaimed, but the words have been derided.



American medium **Bill Tenuto** claims to be in touch with John Lennon, who was killed in December 1980. In a voice that is passably similar to Lennon's, he comments on all manner of things about the afterlife. These are parts of a posthumous book the dead singer says he is putting together, entitled *Little Pearls from John Lennon*. He says, 'This is John Lennon, live, coming to you across the airwaves, except of course, I'm dead! But that doesn't matter. I'm still here.'

Lennon's wives Cynthia and Yoko Ono are apparently not happy about such claims. They refuse to listen to recordings or comment on how authentic they appeared. They seemed genuinely concerned about people exploiting John, which is understandable.

In words spoken long before glasnost and perestroika took hold in the old USSR, Tenuto/Lennon told of, 'A lot of turmoil. But there's going to be a lot of miracles too. When everybody gets the message there won't be any bombs. There won't be any battles and everybody will get what they want. There's an infinite supply of everything.'

In 1982 Lennon claimed to be channelling music through his eldest son. Julian Lennon has developed a career based on inspiring music that has a style of its own but in which some commentators clearly see his father's influence. One of his songs *The Left Eye*, written after the Tenuto message, has lyrics that reportedly refer to a possible life-after-death bond with his father.

Jason Fell Goes 'Snap'
VAC November Showcase







1999. The Year as it was

Arthur Spiegelman



1999 was a bad year for couples. Punch and Judy were banned in an English town for promoting domestic violence and a Californian woman was jailed for stabbing her husband after he gave her flowers.

In Petaluma, was sentenced to six months in jail for stabbing her husband with a 32cm knife after he brought her home two bunches of flowers. The husband needed four stitches. 'She didn't think he should have spent that kind of money on flowers,' Jenny's lawyer said. The couple wanted to stay together and would take anger-awareness classes.

In Illinois, a 66 year old Franciscan nun was charged with defacing property after she scrawled racist graffiti on the bathroom walls of the hospital where she was a chaplain. 'Sister Dorothy Toman said she did it to see how the hospital would react,' Joliet Police Sergeant Terry Mazur said. 'She admitted to writing the words *White Supremacy*.'



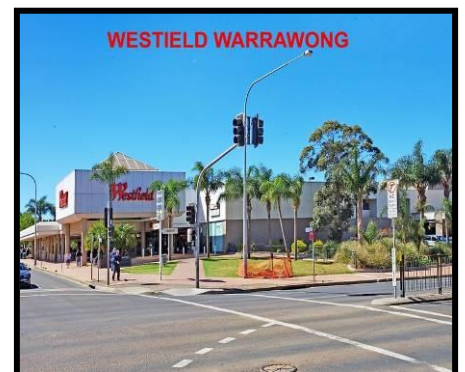
In southern England, the *Colchester Borough Council* was outraged at the way Punch and Judy behaved and banned the puppets because they promoted domestic violence. Punch and Judy shows have occupied a place in Britain since the 17th century, with children gleefully shouting at the hump-backed Mr Punch as he relentlessly wielded a stick on his put-upon wife Judy. But the council said wife-beating was not funny in an era of broken homes and domestic violence. 'Young children are very impressionable,' said councillor Jenny Stephens.

'Mr Punch's weapon is the slapstick,' said Glynn Edwards, coordinator of the *Punch and Judy College of Professors*. 'We are not actually talking about real violence here. We are talking about knockabout comedy. The same comedy that Tom and Jerry engage in.'

Teach a man to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life. Give Nicholas Vitalich, of San Diego, a fish and he will hit his girlfriend with it. 'Vitalich was arrested on charges of assault with a deadly weapon after he allegedly beat his 21-year-old girlfriend with a large tuna in an argument in a supermarket, said San Diego police spokesman Bill Robinson.

London was the scene of the freak accident of the year. Two women were killed by a bolt of lightning in the city's *Hyde Park* when their underwired bras acted as conductors. Coroner Paul Knapman, recording a verdict of death by misadventure, said: 'This is only the second time in my experience of 50,000 deaths where lightning has struck the metal in a bra causing death. The two Thai women had been sheltering under a tree in the park during a thunderstorm.

Officials at the Warrawong Shopping Centre in New South Wales discovered a foolproof method to deter teenage loiterers — play loud Bing Crosby music. The late crooner hit a sour note with youths with his 1938 hit *My Heart is Taking Lessons*, which was being played repeatedly at the centre's entrance.



- What a great read, the magazine this month. Good on you. Cheers. Tom Sharplin
- Sad news about BJ. What a lovely write-up you did on him. Kat Matich
- Excellent! Keep up the good work. Grant Gillanders



Hibiscus Coast Happenings

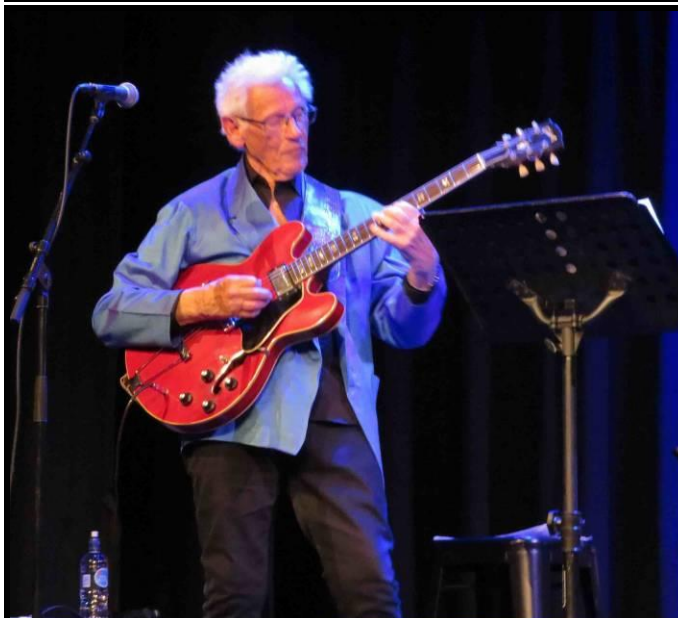
by Suzie Followell

Operatunity Rules



The Highwaymen Concert





If I had not written this novel, another would have done it in my place and would have done it badly.
 Salvador Dali

As we were going down the stairs in the semi-darkness, my little brother Paul, drawing a conclusion from this disaster, said in a level voice: 'When I have children, I will give them away!'
My Mother's Castle: Marcel Pagnol

Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice

In 1887 painter and sculptor George Frederic Watts conceived the idea of a national memorial to heroic men and women, to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In 1900 a wall was dedicated to this cause in the former churchyard of *St Botolph's without Aldersgate* in London. Now called *Postman's Park*, it stands between the *Museum of London* and *St Paul's Cathedral*. Watts died in 1904, and his widow Mary Watts took over the running of the project.



Alice Ayres: 24 April 1885. Daughter of a bricklayer's labourer. Who by intrepid conduct saved 3 children from a burning house in Union Street, Borough, at the cost of her own young life.

David Selves: 12 Sept 1886. Aged 12. Off Woolwich supported his drowning playfellow and sank with him clasped in his arms.

George Stephen Funnell: 22 Dec 1899. Police Constable. In a fire at the *Elephant & Castle*, Hackney Wick, after rescuing two lives went back into the flames, saving a barmaid at the risk of his own life.

John Clinton: 16 July 1894. Aged 10. Who was drowned near London Bridge in trying to save a companion younger than himself.

John Cranmer Cambridge: 8 August 1901. Aged 23. A clerk in the *London County Council* who was drowned near Ostend whilst saving the life of a stranger and a foreigner.

Joseph Andrew Ford: 7 Oct 1871. *Metropolitan Fire Brigade*. Aged 30. Saved six persons from fire in Gray's Inn Road but in his last heroic act he was scorched to death.

Mrs Yarman: 26 March 1900. Wife of George Yarman, Labourer at Bermondsey. Refused to be deterred from making 3 attempts to climb a burning staircase to save her aged mother.

Richard Farris: 20 May 1878. Labourer. Drowned in attempting to save a poor girl who had thrown herself into the canal at Globe Bridge, Peckham.

Mary Rogers: March 30 1899. Stewardess of the *Stella*. Self sacrificed by giving up her life belt and voluntarily going down in the sinking ship.

William Goodrum: 28 Feb 1880. Signalman. Aged 60. Lost his life at Kingsland Road Bridge in saving a workman from death under the approaching train from Kew.

William Fisher: 12 July 1886. Aged 9. Lost his life on Rodney Road Walworth while trying to save his little brother from being run over.

P.C. Percy Edwin Cook: 7 Oct 1927. *Metropolitan Police*. Voluntarily descended a high-tension chamber at Kensington to rescue two workmen overcome by poisonous gas.



P.C. Edward George Brown Greenoff: 19 Jan 1917. Metropolitan Police. Many lives were saved by his devotion to duty at the terrible explosion at Silvertown.

Daniel Pemberton: 17 Jan 1903. Aged 61. Foreman L.S.W.R. Surprised by a train when gauging the line hurled his mate out of the track saving his life at the cost of his own.

Arthur Strange and Mark Tomlinson: 25 Aug 1902. On a desperate venture to save two girls from a quicksand in Lincolnshire were themselves engulfed.

Solomon Galaman: 6 Sept 1901. Aged 11. Died of injuries after saving his little brother from being run over in Commercial Street. 'Mother, I saved him but I could not save myself.'

Ernest Benning: 25 Aug 1883. Compositor aged 22. Upset from a boat one dark night off *Pimlico Pier*. Grasped an oar with one hand supporting a woman with the other but sank as she was rescued.

Frederick Alfred Croft: 11 Jan 1878. Inspector aged 31. Saved a lunatic woman from suicide at *Woolwich Arsenal* station but was himself run over by the train.

Henry James Bristow: 30 Dec 1890. Aged eight. At Walthamstow saved his little sister's life by tearing off her flaming clothes but caught fire himself and died of burns and shock.

Robert Wright: 30 April 1893. Police Constable of Croydon. Entered a burning house to save a woman knowing that there was petroleum stored in the cellar. An explosion took place and he was killed.

Sarah Smith: 24 January 1863. Pantomime artiste at *Prince's Theatre*. Died of injuries received when attempting in her inflammable dress to extinguish the flames which had enveloped her companion.

Elizabeth Boxall: 21 June 1888. Aged 17 of Bethnal Green. Died of injuries received in trying to save a child from a runaway horse.

Harry Sisley: 24 May 1878. Of Kilburn aged 10. Drowned in attempting to save his brother after he himself had just been rescued.

Thomas Griffin: 12 April 1899. Fitters Labourer. In a boiler explosion at a *Battersea Sugar Refinery* was fatally scalded in returning to search for his mate.

Alex Stewart Brown: 9 Oct 1900. Fellow of the *Royal College of Surgeons*. Though suffering from severe spinal injury, the result of a recent accident, died from his brave efforts to rescue a drowning man and to restore his life.

Working the Stage, Naturally

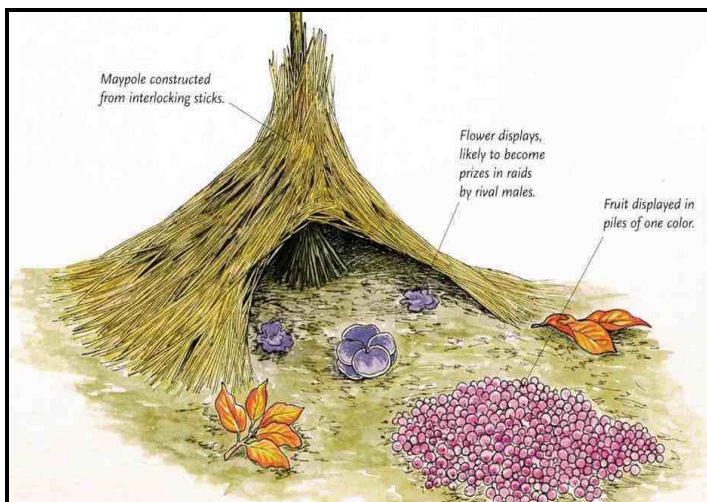
It's not just humans that perform in arenas. Some birds in Australia and New Guinea do as well; they even build their own performance stages.

In Queensland, every September and early October, the male **Tooth-Billed Bowerbird** clears a level site on the forest floor and decorates it with between 20 – 100 fresh leaves, usually from the wild Ginger plant, with the white undersides showing. As the leaves wither he replaces them with fresh ones. He then stands on a singing perch 1 – 3m above the stage and sings against other males in the area, hoping to attract a female. His song is loud, persistent, clear, sweet and melodious.



The **Vogelkop Bowerbird** of Indonesia and New Guinea goes one better than that. He weaves a tower of sticks and orchard stems around one or two saplings stripped of leaves, then creates a 2m high canopy of interlocking sticks. Next he covers the inside and the garden outside with moss, and decorates the area with poles of found objects such as fruit, flowers or animal droppings; all the same colour. He then spends the next 9 months tidying the bower and replacing faded and rotten collections.

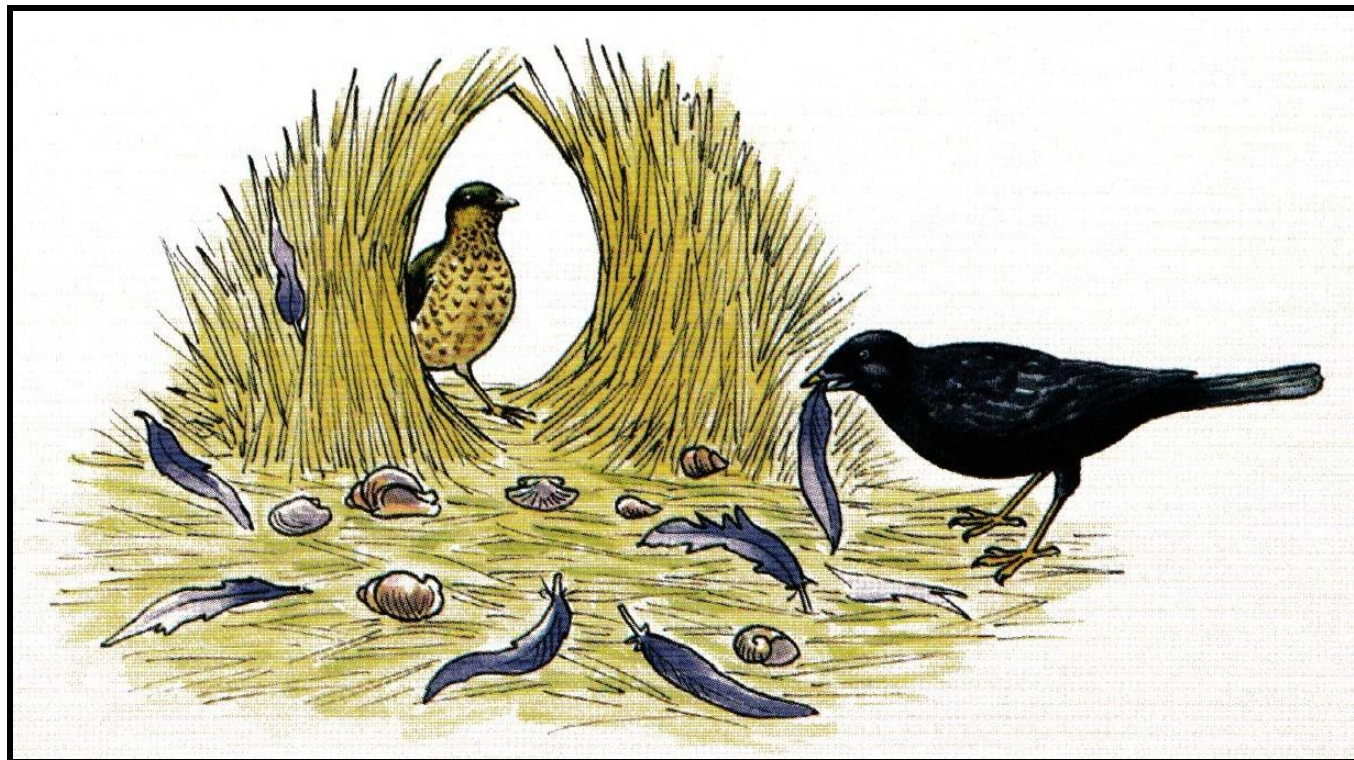
Ornithologists have noted that a male spends 4-7 years practicing bower making and observing the work of older birds before he eventually breeds. Females visit the bower to assess the quality of the male's workmanship and his song repertoire. Courtship is performed hidden behind the maypole and she alone builds a nest and rears the young.



The **Satin Bowerbird** is found only in the forests of Queensland and Victoria where he builds an avenue between two towers of sticks 36cm high and 36cm long. The avenue is aligned North-South with a display platform at the sunny northern end. It is begun in July and abandoned by December.

The platform is decorated with mostly blue objects, sometimes yellow but never red. Snail shells are popular decorations and observers have seen blue paper, drink-bottle tops, glass, plastic, and even a blue toothbrush.

Several bowers may be close together, allowing females to walk between them to choose a particularly well constructed and decorated one and select its builder as a mate. He, in turn, dances for her, picking up and waving a yellow object, leaping to and fro, and singing. Males have been known to mate with dozens of females who then lay their eggs in shallow nests some distance from the bower.



Rockin' Robin

21 weeks on the 1958 *Billboard Hot 100*, peaking at #2

He rocks in the treetop, all the day long.
Hoppin' and a-boppin' and a-singin' his song.
All the little birds on Jay Bird Street,
Love to hear the robin go, 'Tweet-tweet-tweet.'

Rockin' robin! Rockin' robin!
Blow rockin' robin 'cause we're really gonna rock tonight.

Every little swallow, every chickadee,
Every little bird in the tall oak tree.
The wise old owl, the big black crow,
Flap-a their wings, singin', 'Go bird go!'

A pretty little raven at the bird bandstand,
Taught him how to do the bop and it was grand.
They started goin' steady and bless my soul,
He out-bopped the buzzard and the oriole.



<https://www.grumleathercraft.com/magiconz-registration>

We are delighted to invite you all to MAGICONZ, the first Magic and Balloon Convention to be held in Queenstown, 23-26 October 2026. The key details of the Convention are as follows:

Venue: *Queenstown Memorial Centre*. 1 Memorial Street, Queenstown.

Programme:

Friday: Welcome function at 7pm.

Saturday: Convention all day - Gala Dinner and Show in the evening.

Sunday: Convention all day - Public Show in the Evening.

Monday: Optional Master Class or Tourist activity.

Headliners:

Peter Nardi: Magic legend from the UK and Alakazam Magic Shop

Rachel Wax: comedy magician from New York

Pippity Pop: New Zealand's Leading Balloon Artiste

More international headliners will be announced soon.

Accommodation:

There are obviously hundreds of accommodation options available in Queenstown to suit all budgets. Feel free to book anywhere. A discount of 10% off the room rate has been organised with the *Blue Peaks Lodge*, a very short walk from the *Convention Venue*. *Blue Peaks Lodge*: 11 Sydney Street, Queenstown. Phone 03 441 0437.

Registrations:

Registrations are now open! Please register before 31 December 2025 to lock in the early bird discount rate. Our registration form is attached. Please complete and return to Terry von Pein (details are on the Registration Form).

Adults: \$450 (early bird rate is \$350 if you register before 31 December 2025)

Juniors: (under 18) \$350 (early bird rate is \$250 if you register before 31 December 2025)

Partners: \$350 (early bird rate is \$250 if you register before 31 December 2025)

Optional Gala Dinner & Show: \$87 per person - includes dinner and entertainment.

Cash bar will be available.

If you need more information, contact one of the conference committee members:

Jonathan Usher: 021 462 442

Wayne McEwan: 027 436 3322

Terry von Pein: 027 290 3919

Greg Britt: 027 221 3800

Ari Phillips: 027 930 4365

We can't wait to welcome you all to Queenstown in 2026. See you there!

Winston McCarthy

10 March 1908 – 2 Jan 1984

Listen!..... It's a goal!



Winston John McCarthy, the 'Voice of New Zealand Rugby', was born at Wellington on 10 March 1908, the son of salesman Hugh McCarthy and Alice (b. Collins) who died when Winston was six years old. He had six siblings; Eileen, Jim, Eric, Marie and Lloyd.

Winston's grandfather Andrew Collins was the first New Zealand trade union secretary, founding both the *Wellington Operative Bakers' Union* and the *Tailoresses' Union*. He was also President of the *Eight-Hour Day Council* established in 1891.

Both parents had good voices and Alice played piano. Hugh was a brilliant entertainer with a wicked sense of humour. At an early age Winston developed an act imitating Scottish singer Harry Lauder, dressed in a miniature kilt, sporran, with a crooked stick, while his mother accompanied him on the organ.



Before the advent of radio, entertainment was live, on stage. During WW1 everyone put on concerts to raise funds for the troops. In Wellington there were as many as 8 concerts nightly in addition to which the Military camps had to have outside entertainment.

Winston's father had him in a top Wellington concert party, with his older sister Eileen accompanying him on piano after their mother died. By 1918 the 10 year old had performed in over 400 concerts. 1915 was the beginning of the *Wellington Competitions* and Winston performed so well that the judges created a special section for humorous songs to give other serious competitors a chance to win.

Winston was educated at the Marist brothers' schools at Newtown and Thorndon, then at *St Patrick's College* from 1923 to 1925. The young McCarthy excelled as halfback and played rugby league on the West Coast for the *Waiuta Club* in 1936 until a shoulder injury forced his retirement.



During the Depression Winston worked at various jobs, office clerk, farm labourer, trainee ladies' hairdresser, and gold miner – before he found his niche in radio. In 1934 a fellow boarder at his Wellington hostel turned out to be an Assistant Manager of the newly created *NZ Broadcasting Service*. After hearing Winston sing he suggested that he could make a few quid playing character parts in radio plays; three years later McCarthy joined the *NZBS* as a programme organiser for *Radio 2YD*.

In 1942 Winston volunteered but an old foot injury meant that he couldn't be sent overseas and was assigned to the *Army Education and Welfare Service*. On weekends he became a regular rugby commentator at *Athletic Park* in Wellington.

When the *Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force* rugby team of 1945–46, called the *Kiwis*, was selected from soldiers serving in Europe, McCarthy was given the job of broadcasting the *British Tour* matches back to New Zealand. His commentaries were the first live rugby broadcasts to New Zealand from the United Kingdom. Virtually overnight he became a household name; Prime Minister Peter Fraser enjoyed his broadcasts.

There was a strong element of showmanship in his radio style. During his commentaries he would switch roles from play-by-play caller to that of the broadcasting spectator. 'Put it in again, sonny,' he said if the ball came out of a scrum, and 'goodness gracious me' when something untoward happened.

When the *Kiwis* played England at Twickenham, Herbie Cook, the Kiwis' fullback, took his time over a long kick at goal and McCarthy scrambled to fill in the seconds. He ad-libbed, 'If this goes over, you'll hear the roar of the crowd back in New Zealand'. When Cook finally kicked the ball, McCarthy shouted, 'Listen! It's a goal!'

He once said, 'It's all a question of light and shade. You can't yell and scream all the time. In a moment of great tension you relax people with a bit of humour and then you turn the screws again'. As a party trick in the late 1950s, young men narrated the McCarthy commentary of a 1956 test against the Springboks. They memorised it word-for-word from the long-playing record of highlights of the test broadcasts.

Winston broadcast 38 rugby tests, creating vivid, unforgettable word pictures. His last rugby commentary was the fourth on the 1959 Lions tour. He commentated other sports such as cricket and boxing, and covered the 1950 and 1954 *British Empire and Commonwealth Games*, and the 1956 *Olympic Games*. He was also a prolific rugby book writer. He was inducted into the *NZ Sports Hall of Fame* in 1990.



Winston married Jean Winifred McGregor on 4 March 1938. They were to have three children; Christine, Lloyd and Vivian. Viv McCarthy played bass for *Larry's Rebels* from 1964 – 1970, lived his last 20 years in Spain and died on 22 May 2025. *Larry's Rebels* were inducted into the *NZ Music Hall of Fame* in 2020.

Winston and Jean were divorced in 1969 and a year later he married Joan Jackson. Winston McCarthy died on 2 January 1984 at Auckland. His ashes were interred at Purewa, Auckland.

Charity of the Month

Food Rescue



Food rescue is about collecting safe, edible, surplus food from farms, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and the public that would otherwise be discarded, and redistributing it to people in need or selling it. It is a brilliant way of reducing the environmental impact of food waste by diverting it from landfills and alleviating food insecurity by providing nutritious food to families.

Kiwi Harvest: *Kiwi Harvest* is always delighted to accept larger donations of fruit and vegetables from growers and farmers, as well as smaller donations — whether they are canned or frozen goods from an office food drive, or a bag full of goodness from the fruit tree in your backyard.

- hello@kiwi-harvest.org.nz

Everybody Eats: is a charitable restaurant with locations in Onehunga and Glen Innes, where the chefs turn rescued and donated ingredients into daily menus.

Wonky Box and **Misfit Garden** also have rescued fruit and vegetable boxes available for delivery straight to your house.

Kiwi Harvest, *Everybody Eats* and *Love Soup* are all on the lookout for volunteers too, so please get in touch if you are keen to donate your time.

Bobby Hart

18 Feb 1939 – 10 Sept 2025



Bobby Hart, who was a key part of *The Monkees'* multimedia empire, has died. He was 86.

Born Robert Luke Harshman, in Phoenix, Arizona, he was a minister's son. By high school he had learned piano, guitar and the *Hammond B-3* organ and also started his own amateur radio station, eventually adding a console, turntables and microphones. After graduating from high school, and serving in the Army reserves, he settled in Los Angeles in the late 1950s, hoping to become a disc jockey, but soon worked as a songwriter and session musician.

His name, shortened to Bobby Hart, he toured as a member of *Teddy Randazzo and the Dazzlers* and, with Randazzo and Bobby Weinstein, wrote *Hurt So Bad*, a hit for *Little Anthony and the Imperials*, later covered by Linda Ronstadt.

After befriending Tommy Boyce, a singer and songwriter from Charlottesville, Virginia, the two helped write the top 10 hit *Come a Little Bit Closer* for *Jay and the Americans*, and were a strong enough combination that Don Kirshner recruited them for his *Screen Gems* songwriting factory: They were assigned to the *Monkees*. Bobby Hart and Tommy Boyce created such hits as *Last Train to Clarksville*, *I Wanna Be Free*, and *I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone*. They also wrote the *Monkees'* theme song.

Asked to come up with songs for a quartet, openly modelled on the *Beatles*, they devised a twangy guitar line similar to the one for *Paperback Writer* and wrote *Last Train to Clarksville*, a chart topper in 1966. When suggested a song with a girl's name in the title, they turned out *Valleri* and reached # 5.

For the show's theme song, 'Boyce began strumming his guitar and I joined in by snapping my fingers & making noises with my mouth that simulated an open & closed hi-hat cymbal,' Hart wrote in his memoir. 'We had created the perfect recipe for inspiration and started singing about just what we were doing: walkin' down the street.'

The *Monkees'* debut album included six songs from Boyce and Hart, who also served as producers and used their own backing musicians the *Candy Store Prophets* as session players. As the *Monkees* took more control of their work, Boyce and Hart pursued their own careers, releasing the albums *Test Patterns* and *I Wonder What She's Doing Tonight*, and appearing on such sitcoms as *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Bewitched*. They were covered by everyone from Dean Martin (*Little Lovely One*) to the Sex Pistols (*I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone*).

They also were politically active, campaigning for Robert F Kennedy when he ran for president in 1968 and writing the brassy *L.U.V. (Let Us Vote)* in support of the 26th Amendment, which in 1971 lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Hart managed several hits in the 1970s and '80s, with other collaborators, and even contributed material to another TV act, the *Partridge Family*. Their other songs included the theme to the daytime soap opera *Days of Our Lives*.

Hart was married twice, most recently to singer Mary Ann Hart, and had two children from his first marriage.

I'm intelligent. Some people would say I'm very, very, very intelligent. Donald Trump

My fingers are long and beautiful, as, it has been well documented, are various other parts of my body.
Donald Trump

Susan Moller-Okin

19 July 1946 – 3 March 2004

Judith Galtry

She was arguably the most influential feminist political philosopher of her time. She spent her entire life fighting for women's rights and she accomplished a tremendous amount. Justin Okin



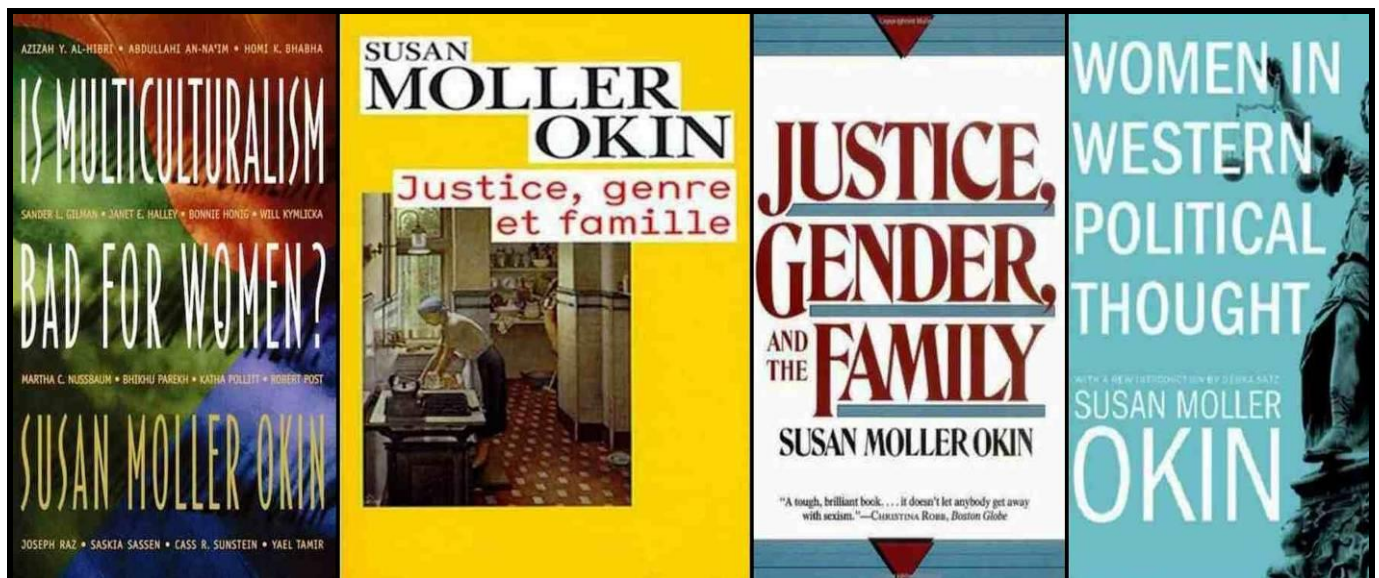
Susan Moller, the youngest of three daughters, was born in 1946 and grew up in a state house in Remuera. Her Danish father worked as an accountant at *Holeproof Woollen Mills*. She attended *Remuera Primary* and *Remuera Intermediate*, and was at *Epsom Girls Grammar* with Helen Clark when Susan was Dux in 1963.

She was awarded a Scholarship to *Auckland University* where she earned a bachelor's degree in 1966, and she received another scholarship in 1966 to *Somerville College* in *Oxford University*. She emerged in 1970 as a *Master of Philosophy*.

Earning her doctorate at *Harvard University* in 1975, she then taught at *Auckland*, *Vassar*, and *Brandeis* Universities. She became the *Marta Sutton Weeks Professor of Ethics in Society* at *Stanford University* in 1990 and held a visiting professorship at *Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study* at the time of her death in 2004.

Susan's first book *Women in Western Political Thought* (1979) analysed the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Mills concerning family and gender roles within society. Susan believed that gender issues should be central to political theory. The *Washington Post* felt that, given the generations of scholars who had ignored the obvious, her views were tantamount to the child declaring the emperor to be without clothes.

Her second book *Justice, Gender and the Family* (1989) was a critique of how mainstream political theory supports the traditional family institution and its reinforcement of sexist values. It earned Susan the *American Political Science Association's Victoria Schuck Award* for the best book on women in politics.



In 1990 Susan moved to California to take up a position as *Professor of Political Science at Stanford University*. Everything was going well until she addressed the uneasy mix between feminism and multiculturalism. She insisted that women's rights should be upheld universally. Susan believed that today's families perpetuated gender inequalities by teaching children sexist values and ideas. Culture should not be used as an excuse for holding back the women's rights movement.

She switched her attention to the economic development of women in poor countries. In January 2004 she travelled to India with the *Global Fund for Women*. While there she visited the slums of Mumbai and Delhi where she expected to encounter only degradation and desperation among the women in India's slums, but instead found vibrancy, community, and resilience.

'My view of Mumbai's and Delhi's slums has been transformed from seeing them as totally destitute and sordid places, where no one could possibly lead a decent or hopeful life, to seeing them as poor, but vibrant, communities where, with well-directed help from the outside, many people can improve their living conditions and hope for a better life for their children.'

Susan was found dead in her home in Lincoln, Massachusetts on 3 March 2004. She was 57. Susan and Robert Okin, a Boston psychiatrist, became parents to a daughter named Laura and a son named Justin. Laura is a psychologist based in Boston and Justin lives in New York.

*** JADE HURLEY * LITTLE PATTIE ***
*** LUCKY STARR * DIGGER REVELL * DINAH LEE ***

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Not a tribute show
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Rock 'n' Roll

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Twin Towns - 2 Wharf St, Tweed Heads, NSW
BOOK NOW: 1800 014 014 or twintowns.com.au/showroom

Scan the QR code for direct link to purchase tickets

Santa School

An Asian at my Table – Raybon Kan



At a shopping mall, parents bring their children to meet a stranger. He is in disguise. His body shape speaks of alcohol abuse. His choice of outfit suggests he is still drunk from last night. The parents have never met this man yet they urge their children to sit on his lap. The child accepts the lollipop he offers. The mother watches with approval. From this position of trust, the stranger asks the child personal questions about its behaviour; its desires. Having received the answers, sometimes in writing, the stranger makes a promise. One night in the future, while everyone is asleep, he will enter their house. No lock will prevent this; no key will be necessary. The children do not suffer nightmares, far from it. For the next week they pester their parents to make sure he'll really be able to get in.

The entire tradition is American. Santa sports a beard which, today, we'd associate with a senior member of al-Qaeda. He quizzes the children on their materialism. Then he vows to come to the family's house. It sounds so ominous, you'd expect the threat to be notified to the FBI. I'm surprised there hasn't already been a spate of American Santa shootings. Yet such is the power of tradition. If you grew up with it, it's fine. It's more than fine – it's the way things should be. This is why in New Zealand nobody questions the fact that Santa dresses for winter even though it's summer here. Talk about cultural cringe. We send each other cards with snowflakes on them. If Santa says it's winter, it must be.

People who talk about assimilation should take a good long look at Santa. Forget about fitting in with the culture — Santa doesn't even know what season it is. Meanwhile, in the North Pole, his sweatshop of elves is undercutting local toy production. And on Christmas Eve he exploits poor animals to smuggle his contraband. Never mind; this is tradition. Therefore, before this tradition disappears I made sure to have a go at it. For half an hour one Friday, at *Botany Town Centre*, I was actually Santa! That way, in decades to come, I can tell children that in my day every man put on the red suit and beard and the world wasn't terrible the way it is now.

Training Day, a mid-November Monday. *Westaff*, the recruitment company that provides Santas for all the shopping malls, has booked the restaurant at the *Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron*. With a view of the Auckland harbour bridge some 30 men have gathered for four hours of training. Ranging in age from 20 to 81 they represent the entire spectrum of white men. I am the only one who isn't white. There are no women, except the two doing the training. One is called Sue, the other is Suzie. What I discover in the next four hours blows the whole Santa myth sky high.

The training session was based on the *Santa Training Manual*, 28 bound pages that cover everything from timesheets and termination, to an entire page devoted to reindeer names. In case you're wondering; Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. Answers are provided to all the tough questions. 'How come I saw a different Santa in the other store?' 'Are you the real Santa?' 'Is there a God?' The manual, brilliantly, tells you how to answer everything. 'Never promise a child anything and never make it sound that if a present doesn't eventuate it is the adult's fault.'

You'd think most of the manual would be about inappropriate touching, but that's dealt with briskly; clinically even. The child is lifted onto the left knee: 'Outstretch your leg and have them sit down. Then bend your knee back into position — this saves having to use your back to lift the children.' In the interests of cultural sensitivity; Santa is not to (1) use his left hand for passing things out, (2) pat a child's head or (3) point his foot at someone. 'If you meet a child from another nationality, do NOT ask loudly, "Is there anyone here who can speak Chinese?"'

There must never be two Santas visible at once to the children. If two Santas is a problem, imagine what kids would make of the 30 doing the training. The child's encounter with Santa, which you or I previously thought of as organic, is highly structured. You don't meet Santa; Santa conducts an interview. In fact, it is a three-part interview. First is the *Invitation* (where he gets you to come over); second is the *Recognition of the Child* (where he makes you think he remembers you like an old friend); and third is the *Question* ('What do you want?') and *Closing* ('Be good, ho, ho, ho', etc). If only every conversation were this structured, you'd sell a lot of stuff.

'Girls may ask for a baby brother. This is strictly NOT your department.' Well, I guess it depends on how attractive the mother is. It could quickly become Santa's department. But the manual is firm: 'Remember Santa is happily married to Mother Christmas, so no flirting!' I have to say it's a good thing this rule was written down. That Santa costume is a chick-magnet. Whether it's the musky velvet of nine reindeer, or just his wealth and generosity, one or two of the mothers I met in the suit certainly seemed worth a visit by night. But maybe that was my interpretation. I managed not to say to any mothers, 'Remind Santa of your phone number again?' That's lucky, because the manual says: 'If Santa wouldn't say it, DON'T SAY IT.' I spotted a loophole there, though. Santa would say, 'Ho, ho, ho', and I can imagine saying that quite lasciviously and leering and winking at the mother.

One mother's child began screaming at me as she approached. In retreat, the mother promised to text me her gift requests. I think she just wanted to give me her number.

The Return of the Dancing Master

Henning Mankell



When he was younger, his father had played the music he himself admired. He had tried in vain to persuade him to listen to and admire King Oliver, the cornet player who had inspired Louis Armstrong. Oliver played with a handkerchief over his fingers so that other trumpeters wouldn't be able to work out how he'd managed to produce his advanced solos. And then there was a clarinetist called Johnny Dodds, and the outstanding Bix Beiderbecke.

Time and time again he had been forced to listen to these scratchy old recordings, and he'd pretended to like what he heard, pretended to be as enthusiastic as his father wanted him to be. If he did that he might stand a better chance of getting a new ice hockey set or something else he badly wanted.

In reality, he preferred to listen to the same music as his sisters; often the Beatles but more usually the Rolling Stones. His father had, that as far as music was concerned, his daughters were a lost cause, but he thought that his son might just be saved.

There was a banjo hanging on the living-room wall. Occasionally his father would take it down and play; just a few chords, no more. It was a *Levin* with a long neck; a real beauty his father had insisted, dating from the 1920s. There was also a picture of his father playing in the *Bourbon Street Band* – drums, base, trumpet, clarinet and trombone; plus his father on the banjo.

Stuck in a Rut

Kevin Downing is a professional guitarist, teacher, and author. His website is www.guitar.co.nz



Jimi Hendrix famously said, 'Sometimes you'll want to give up the guitar. But if you stick with it, you're gonna be rewarded.' I describe a rut as when you feel like you are burned out, have hit a brick wall, or maybe your practice sessions are just dull or completely unproductive. The good news is that it doesn't take much effort to get out of it and here are 11 ways to bust the rut. You only need to find one or two ideas that will work for you.

1. Go back to where you started: What was it that turned you on to playing guitar in the first place? Go back to that song, sound, artist, or genre, turn the music up loud, and get back into it.

2. Take a lesson: Most of the best players in the world have had formal lessons. The quickest way forward in learning anything is to get in the same room with a competent teacher/mentor who

can teach you something that you want to learn about.

3. Try completely new material: One of my favourite ways of learning new material is listening to different instruments, other than guitar. You can learn new back-up guitar parts by listening to and copying piano and organ players. For solo lines and licks, listening to horn players is a great way to go. Transcribe the parts or learn them by memory.

4. Get out and jam with friends: There is no better fun than playing with other instruments. Other musicians will push you along and motivate you to get better at what you do. If not, then maybe it's time to find some new people to play with.

5. Start, or join a band: Being in a band motivates you to learn your parts correctly and generally get things sounding right. Don't start with the more difficult tracks, they can come later once you have a decent song list ready for gigging. Remember the audience doesn't know if you are playing difficult or easy songs.

6. Get out and see and hear live music: There is a lot you can learn and get motivated by in seeing music performed live. A few people have said to me that after watching their favourite artists they feel like giving up, but then remember your favourite artists were at your stage of development at one stage.

7. Listen to new music: Listening to new genres can get you going down paths you never thought possible. Play along with recordings of your favourite, and not so favourite, artists. Many of the top players tell me this is the number one thing that keeps them motivated.

8. Change the routine: Make sure you are practising different things each day.

9. Only practise what you will perform: It's all too easy to practise things you can already play well and are actually sick of. This is a quick way to get into a rut. If you are not a stage performer then get ready to practise things you can use at jam sessions, in your band, or playing at parties.

10. Take a break: Top players often take a few weeks off practising after long tours or recording sessions. Short breaks can work wonders to get that motivation back. I don't listen to much music. Longer breaks of months on end aren't recommended as your physical playing ability can suffer.

11. Keep your gear in good working order: Get all your equipment serviced on a regular basis. There is nothing worse than having a guitar that's dirty, hard to play or tune, an amplifier that is on the blink, dodgy cables or pedals that don't work. The most organised players have a schedule for maintenance and stick to it. If you are a working musician, such a maintenance schedule is a must.

The Rules #4

453. Only acceptable pick-up line: 'Hi, my name is [insert name here], what's yours?'

455. Love does not mean never having to say you're sorry. It means having to say you're sorry over and over again, in new and different ways, every day, every week, every month, every year, until God grants you his mercy and you finally, blissfully die.

457. Women like a man who likes women who like to eat.

467. People who begin sentences by saying, 'With all due respect,' are in fact preparing to impart loads of disrespect.

476. Asking, 'Who had the steak and who had the fish?' is not the manly way to go about paying for dinner.

478. Nobody cares about your dreams!

480. The worst colour for a new car is red.

495. Every dish can be improved with the addition of bacon.

500. Women whose names end with the letter 'i' are more promiscuous.

502. Mexican restaurants have the worst red wine.

503. Three out of every four short-order cooks have served time in prison.

505. The best dog name is Rex!

514. If you are a contestant on a dating reality show, you must keep at least one minority around until the second round to prove that you aren't racist.

515. If you are a homeless man in the movies, you must wear gloves with the tips of the fingers cut off.

524. If you can't make it good, make it big. And if you can't make it big, make it red.

526. Never be the one to start — or finish — a stadium wave.

527. The lower a waiter bends down when he introduces himself, the less he should be trusted.

549. Disc 2 is the best disc in the box set.

554. You don't pay cash at the dentist.

558. The popcorn purchased before the movie on the first date is always an extra large with butter.

565. It's better to get wet than be seen in a plastic poncho.

566. The shortest line will always have the slowest people.

575. The allure of strip clubs drops dramatically when your girlfriend works in one.

576. Always buy your shoes after 2pm, when your feet have swollen to their maximum size.

577. When you die, they will find your porn.



Buttercup in a Field Of Green

Chris Edwards Munroe 1984



Lonely buttercup, swamped in a world of green
Pretty buttercup, left alone in your life,
No other like you.
If you could, would you flock to your own kind?
Or do you prefer to be the stark outsider?
I know how you feel, buttercup,
I know how you feel, lost and alone.
But not bowed down by the strangeness around you,
Standing tall and straight.
The green threatens to envelop you.
This you will not allow.
Though never finding life's fulfilment,
You will survive, you will survive.
Persecuted you feel,
Though near to that which persecutes you.
You take water, need the sun, grow the same,
Yet you are different.
I know how you feel, buttercup,
I know how you feel.
Stay, lovely buttercup,
You yet will win through.



**See you again next month.
Same place, same newsletter!**

