

greypower

NORTH SHORE

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SUMMER ISSUE | FEBRUARY 2024

POST:

P.O. Box 32-635, Devonport 0744

EMAIL: greypowerns@gmail.com

PHONE: President: Bill Rayner
(09) 445 3370

Membership: Ron Wilson
(09) 478 2490

COMMITTEE 2023/24:

President: Bill Rayner

Vice President: Trish Deans

Secretary: (vacant)

Treasurer: Ron Wilson

Membership: Ron Wilson

Editor: Bill Rayner

Committee:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Letters to the Editor on matters relevant to our senior community are welcome. They must include the writer's name, address and phone number, and should not exceed 130 words.

Remember that courtesy is our watchword.

We may not always print all letters we receive and they may be edited for length and clarity.

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PRESIDENT'S WORD

The new year heralds interesting times

The tail end of the holiday season and high summer is upon us and it is hard to focus on anything other than the next trip to the beach, the garden centre café, a rollicking time with the grandchildren, or a quiet roll up to the bowls club and a quiet beer with old mates.

As I mentioned last time we are so privileged to be living on the North Shore. We do need to count our blessings.

I spent a couple of weeks with family, initially in Carterton, and then travelled up to Wairoa for a few days. It is interesting how the various areas of New Zealand vary and the central Wairarapa shut off from the coast on its broad plain feels quite odd to a Shore-ite.

It was established much the same time as the Shore, but spared the population and development pressures of Auckland, and has retained the major part of its 19th century heritage character and buildings, and spaciousness. Blended with the vineyard environment, it is very pleasant – with Greytown in particular standing out, the whole town essentially restored.

And the housing prices! A temptation of their own.

Driving north to Wairoa through the Hawkes Bay, the damage to the roads and countryside is still very evident north of Hastings. The bleak, devastated orchard areas and damaged properties of Esk Valley were very evident, with great piles of silt and debris still waiting to be taken away.

The road to Wairoa had a number of one-way only stop/go lights, replaced bridges, and slip repairs –

BILL RAYNER

PRESIDENT
GreyPower North Shore



but was functioning remarkably well. Recovery is well on the way, but there are curious side effects with the silt and flooding.

One was that there are areas with no bees or worms, as they were destroyed in the storms and flooding. The caking of the silt will affect soil fertility for some time to come.

Our family were still living in a half-repaired home, but large areas were unaffected by the flooding and life is pretty well back to normal for most people. But many are still suffering as we have in Auckland.

The downside is that the longest day, December 22nd, is behind us. We are heading into interesting times.

The election has delivered a three-way Coalition under Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and – in a first ever – two Deputy PMs, Winston Peters and David Seymour. We have a whole new team of Ministers and MPs to engage with and build relationships, and a number of key issues to be dealt with. Not much in the campaign specifically for seniors, but as I write Parliament opens in a few days, and we wish them all well.

Similarly Auckland Council has come up with their 10-Year Budget, which is now on the table for public consultation. Mayor Wayne Brown's initial indication of a 13% rate rise has been modified to 'only' 7.5% this year, 3.5% in 2025, and 8% in 2026 – to cope with the cost increases of the City Rail Link – and rates near the rate

Continued on p4

Council focus needed on heritage funding

A year ago my article read: 'A New Year present from Council for Auckland has to be a "Museum for Auckland", currently sadly lacking, that tells our history and heritage stories from the earliest days of Maori settlement to recent times. Our heritage must not be lost in the back wash of the current development frenzy. We have a new Mayor and Council facing up to a \$295 million shortfall in their upcoming Budget, and the terrible impact of last month's disastrous storm damage and flooding. The need for pro-active preservation of our community heritage is greater than ever.'

A year on the situation for Council is even worse.

The impact of major infrastructure budget blowouts, inflationary cost increases, increasing population development demands, and loss of the special fuel tax revenues have created an extremely difficult upcoming 2024/25 budget discussion with large rates increases, and asset sales on the table.

We have new Government intent on making major changes in many national policy directions.

The need for an awareness of the need for proactive preservation of our community heritage is indeed greater than ever. The other critical issue is that the post-war generation, us, is dying off, and many of the stories and background information to our city's and community development are being lost.

Auckland is in a curious 'black hole' as far as cultural and heritage funding is concerned.

Current Government policies and Treaty settlements have given a great boost to Maori culture and heritage across the country.

The \$3 billion Provincial Growth Fund of the 2018 Government provided welcome support for a large number of provincial heritage and cultural organisations and projects. The new Government's \$1.2 million Regional Infrastructure Fund promises a continuation of this.

The preservation and presentation of our city's history and heritage is a major concern and cultural requirement for our older Aucklanders.

It is the story and corner stone of our lives and community built by our ancestor families and ourselves over the years.

New Zealand history, with a focus on local, is now part if the school curriculum. Support must be given to the

community museums etc to help with this.

With the major population growth and ethnicity changes, cultural balances in the city are changing. It is critical that our historic background and stories are part of our new migrants blending into the Auckland community.

Auckland has two major museums: The Auckland War Memorial Museum, established 170 years ago, the current building being built in 1929, and MOTAT, founded in 1964.

Both operate under their own Acts of Parliament with their own 'targeted' rate directly levied on Auckland ratepayers, charged to, and collected by, Auckland Council.

For 2024/25 Auckland Museum is asking Council for a levy of \$33.26 million, and MOTAT \$19.02 million. In 2020/21 Auckland Museum received \$32.29 million, a minimal increase in four years, with MOTAT receiving \$14.89 million, a \$4.13 million increase.

For diverse reasons, neither museum has an adequate display or outline of the history of Auckland as set out in the core objectives of their founding Acts, with MOTAT moving into a sci-tech and future innovation direction away from the traditional transport museum model.

MOTAT has a more direct responsibility for this social history element.

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PRESIDENT'S WORD

From page 3

of inflation after that. Watercare have flagged water bills rising by 30 percent from \$1340 to \$1742 on average.

Better news is that airline travel levels are back to normal, and fares, particularly international ones, are down. Many of us enjoyed long overdue reunions with family over the holiday period, a very special joy.

As mentioned, interesting times. Thank you all for your continuing support.

From page 3

In our submission to their Draft Annual Plan MOTAT has been asked to support the many smaller community and technical heritage groups who play a major role in preserving and presenting our history, many of whom are struggling. This would include funding assistance with a budget of \$500,000.

A current example is the historic Auckland Harbour Board steam tug WC Daldy. It's maintained in operating condition by a group of enthusiastic volunteer maritime experts, and which is a vibrant feature of the City of Sails harbour environment and our maritime heritage. It's now at risk of being laid up and scrapped though a lack of funding support. This must not happen.

It is critical that the heritage heart and soul, and core character of our city, is not lost in the difficult current circumstances our Council faces.

MOTAT in particular must step up.

Further submissions will be made to the upcoming Council Budget hearings. Please support this - contact your local Councillor now.

By Bill Rayner

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Our financial year has changed to 31 December



MEMBERS MEETING FRIDAY 1 MARCH 1PM-3PM

NETBALL NORTH HARBOUR
44 Northcote Rd

MINISTER FOR SENIORS HON CASEY COSTELLO

We're delighted to welcome the Hon. Casey Costello - the new Minister for Seniors, Minister of Customs, and Associate Minister of Health, Police and Immigration. She is an Auckland NZ First MP, based in Pokeno, and a former police officer. She's a very accomplished and interesting lady in interesting times.



Bring your friends and neighbours

We invite you and your friends to stay for our usual post-match cuppa.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

2024 SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

In our last newsletter we advised that the Association financial year was changed to 31 December, and so the membership this year would be for the 2024 calendar year.

Unfortunately the Grey Power Federation although they also have a 31 December 31 financial year, have a March 31st membership year. Their data base is unable to record a 31 December membership..

A trifle confusing but we ask members to bear with us.

Our 2024 subscription will be for the 2024 calendar year as advised.

Subscriptions will remain the same, at \$20 single and \$30 a couple for 2024. However, as mentioned previously with the Grey Power Federation levy now \$7.50, and much higher newsletter postage costs they may have to reviewed for 2025. An alternative may be a small surcharge to cover the postage cost.

To key to keeping our costs down is to minimise our newsletter postage and processing costs which are by far our major expense and ask our members with email and/or digital computer access to use the digital newsletter options where possible.

EMAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE

We do have to face up to the fact that the digital world is the modern norm, and we have to be part of it.

The costs of producing newsletters etc in hard copy and posting them are constantly rising. The ease and speed of doing the same on computers is clearly a preference.

We are aware that many of our members have email but are not on are database.

If you have not yet advised us please sent your email address to: greypowers@gmail.com.

We would ask that members with email do sign up for receiving the newsletter by email.

The Grey Power Federation are also asking members to receive the national magazine by email as their postage costs are now close to \$200,000 a year.

We plan to continue printed copies of the newsletter for those of us who do not have email or computer access, but need to maximise email/digital delivery.

BAYS CLUB LUNCH GROUP MEETINGS

Our Bays Club Lunch Group has been very successful, meeting for five months now at the Bays Club on the beachfront in Browns Bay on the third Wednesday of the month.

The next will be on Wednesday 21 February, and Wednesday 20 March.

The luncheon gatherings are loosely restricted to 12 members a time to keep it cosy, purely for friendly fellowship and an outing for those of us living alone. You do not need to be a Bays Club member and will attend as a guest of one of our committee who are. The meals are good quality, and reasonable, with a Super Gold \$15 selection available, and you pay your own way.

The Club has a Veteran membership category for over 60s of \$35. The idea is that if you enjoy the Club you can join and come anytime you like with friends. This is especially attractive for our members living in the upper Bays.

To book for February and March lunches, phone /e-mail Bill Rayner (09) 445 3370 or brayner@xtra.co.nz.

The Bays Club is at 6 Anzac Rd. Browns Bay, right on the beach. Check the website at www.baysclub.co.nz

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

From page 5

WELCOME MINISTER FOR SENIORS HON CASEY COSTELLO AT MARCH MEETING

We are very fortunate to have the Hon. Casey Costello, Minister for Seniors in the new Coalition Government speaking at our March meeting. She is also the Associate Minister for Health and an Auckland MP living in Pokeno.

Grey Power North Shore has had a special relationship with the two previous Ministers for Seniors Tracey Martin and Ayesha Verrall and anticipate this continuing with Minister Casey Costello.

Minister Costello has made a special arrangement to be with us so early in the Parliamentary term.

Please make a special effort to come to the meeting and bring your friends.



Rules for teachers New Zealand 1915

I picked up this snippet from the Greytown Early Settlers Museum during the holidays, setting out the employment conditions of the teacher at the town school in 1915. No protest marches to parliament in those days. Times have indeed changed.

- You will be home between the hours 8 pm and 6 am unless attending school functions
- You must not loiter downtown in ice cream stores.
- You may not travel beyond town limits unless you have the permission of the Chairman of the Board.
- You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man other than your father or brother.
- You may not smoke cigarettes.
- You may not dress in bright colours.
- You may under no circumstances dye your hair.
- Your dresses may not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.
- To keep the school room neat and clean you must sweep the floor at least once daily, scrub the floor at least once a week with soapy water, clean the blackboards at least once a day, and start the fire at 7 am so the room will be warm by 8 am.

Would cause a chuckle or two in the staff rooms today.

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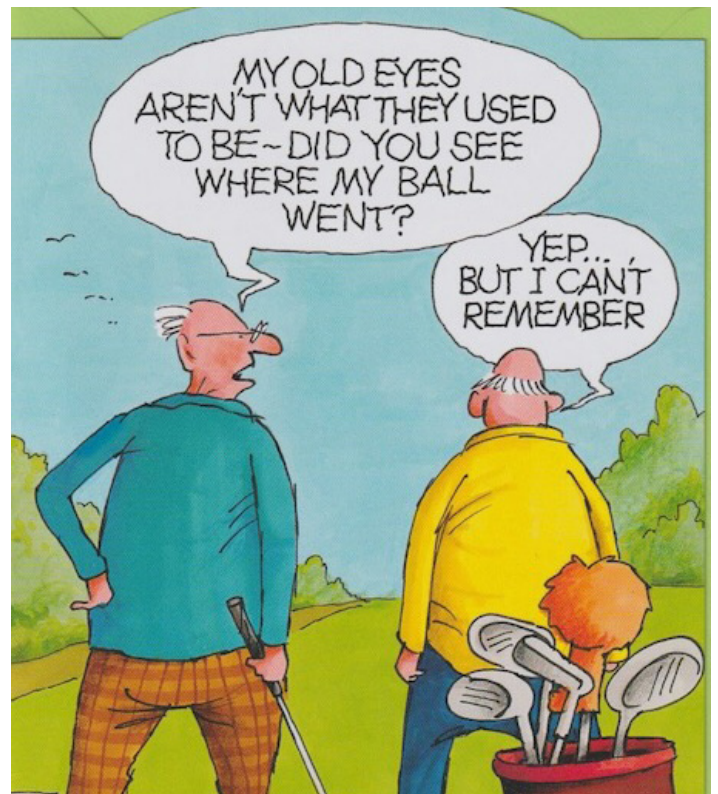
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NORTH SHORE



Local Board asked to approach developers to fund Milford walkway access

GreyPower has asked the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board and Auckland Council to approach major local developers in the Takapuna area to help fund the purchase of the Firth land at Black Rock on Kitchener Rd in Milford, to re-establish permanent public access to the long standing popular Takapuna to Milford beachfront walkway, part of the Te Araroa national trail.

There are a number of issues, and inconclusive negotiations have been taking place over two decades since a storm destroyed the Council-built boardwalk on the sea edge of the property and the Firths allowed public access through their land (which they had also generously done for decades before the boardwalk was constructed).

A key issue was the lack of Council budget for the project. GreyPower proposed that the Board take a dynamic, pro-active approach to retaining the Firth property with a joint Council/developer funding project, and approach developers for contributions.

The Shore has a long history of community benefactors going back into the 19th century, diminished in recent times with major corporatisation and internationalisation of the business world, and the advent of the Super City.

Also, Panuku/Council have sold off a significant number of Council properties in our area, with multi-million dollar proceeds going into the Council general funds, with no direct benefit to the local community, or recognition that they have been funded by previous generations of Shore ratepayers. These include major development sites like the Takapuna Car Park and the Gasometer site in Takapuna's business district.

With Takapuna being designated a Metro Centre, the intensification legislation has allowed for major capital gains for major property developers, with relaxation of the original size and height restrictions of buildings in the Board area.

Recent decisions by commissioners allow further major variations from Unitary Plan basic rules. Similarly, major corporates such as Ryman, Kainga Ora, and Ngati Whatua for lower level development have made major gains as well.

There are already four major high-rise developments for central Takapuna being announced with forward plans for the Car Park area and Smales Farm still unknown.

Also it is understood that current development levies only apply to core infrastructure provision, and do not contribute to wider community facilities.

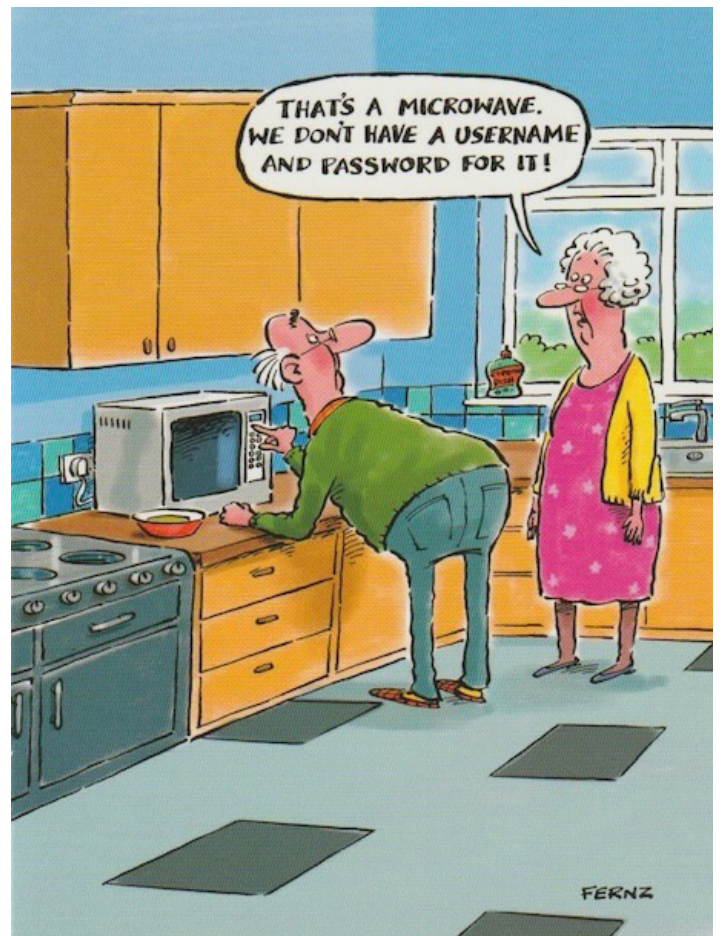
The proposal was included in a presentation to the



Council Planning, Environment and Parks Committee in late November, in conjunction with Trish Deans, Devonport Heritage, and Geoff Chapple, Te Araroa Trail.

After considerable debate, the Committee asked the Council officers to re-establish contact with the Firth family to continue the discussion to seek a solution.

Mayor Brown is proposing an Auckland Future Fund in the Council 10 Year Budget. Could be a guide for a similar North Shore copy.



ShoreCare emergency medical services celebrates its 50th anniversary

Shorecare, our 24-hour medical centre, has celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was established in 1973 as the North Shore Emergency Medical Services Society in response to a need that still exists today: how to care for patients after hours, maintain a work-life balance for doctors that is sustainable, and keep the emergency departments of our hospitals for the most acute cases.

North Shore Hospital was opened in July 1958, known at the time as the North Shore Obstetric Hospital, primarily a maternity hospital with 44 maternity beds and only 6 casualty beds. While there was technically an accident and emergency department, it was often closed, and patients either needed to contact their GP, travel over the bridge to Auckland Public Hospital or call an ambulance if they needed assistance.

In 1973, services at the North Shore Hospital expanded, but many patients needed to be moved to Auckland or Middlemore. Even with the new tower block in 1982, the Accident and Emergency department was of 'limited scope.' It was not until the early 1990s that that more comprehensive services were provided.

The population of the North Shore in the 1991 Census was 175,900 people – up from 53,200 in the 1956 Census when the hospital was established.

GPs were historically on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – and did house calls. The delivery of babies was largely a GP role – and as young parents, many of us will remember those times well, along with the wonderful Plunket nurses who were part of the process.

To help solve the problem, 32 GPs joined together to form the North Shore Emergency Medical Services (NSEMS) in October 1973 – covering the area from

Devonport to Forrest Hill. The service initially operated on Fridays 6-10 pm and on Saturdays Sundays and public holidays from 8.30am to 8 pm from rooms near the Police Station in Takapuna.

Participating GPs were rostered on – initially two doctors at any one time, with one doing home visits and one in the rooms.

By 1977 this had increased, with four doctors rostered each weekend, one or two in the surgery, one on house calls, and one on standby – and with a registered nurse assisting as well.

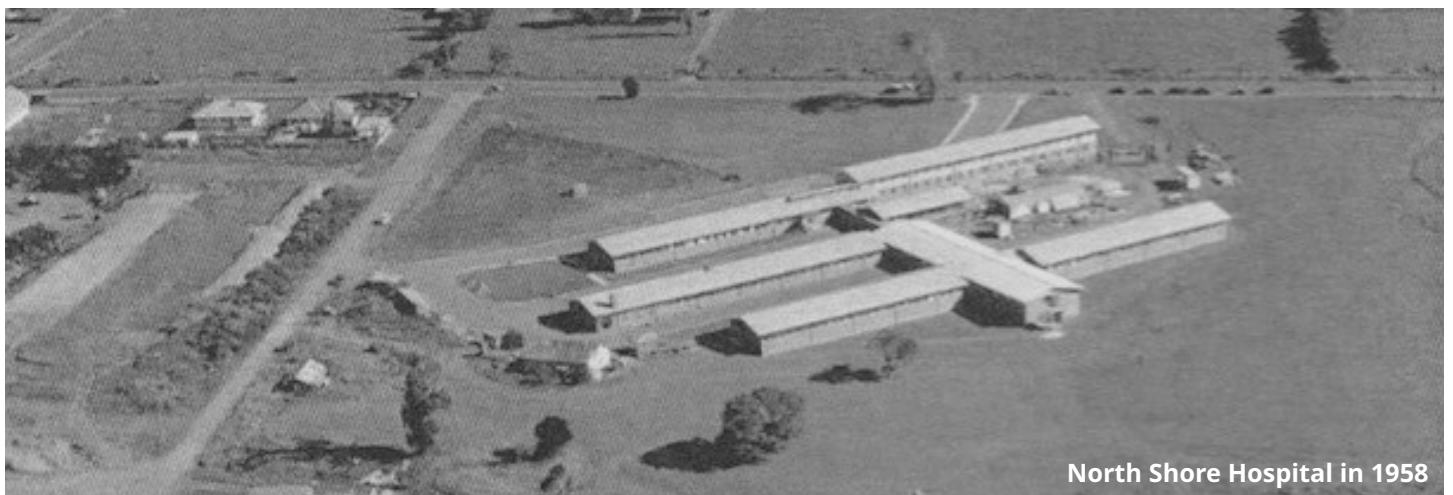
Two further groups had also been established – one in the East Coast Bays and one in Northcote/Birkenhead – and in 1978 the three merged to provide Shore-wide coverage based at the Lister Hospital in Takapuna.

In 1989, the name was changed to Shorecare Medical Services, and satellite services run in Browns Bay and Glenfield, and in 1991 they moved to a purpose-built 24-hour medical centre in Shakespeare Rd, adjacent to North Shore Hospital.

The final move, in 2010, was to Shorecare Smales Farm, to a purpose-built state of the art facility, with a comprehensive range of services including x-ray and ultrasound service, and a related pharmacy. The expectation was to handle 75-85,000 patients a year.

Many of us have shared this journey, from being young parents in the 60s and 70s with new babies, to the geriatrics of today.

Our congratulations and grateful thanks to Shorecare for the excellent quality services they provide, not the least being the assurance that medical care is always available. Long may that be so.



North Shore Hospital in 1958

Meeting with Mayor Brown and Deputy Simpson coming up

Grey Power, together with Age Concern, initiated quarterly meetings with the senior community with Mayor Len Brown at the start of the Super City, which continued with Mayor Goff.

Covid and the storms delayed the restart of the meetings with Mayor Wayne Brown, and the first meeting planned for November was also pushed back to February.

The meeting is with the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor Desley Simpson, involves all five Auckland Grey Power Associations, and covers key issues that have been part of the Grey Power submissions to previous Council Annual Budgets. A full submission will be made to the 2024/25 Budget as well.

The meetings are informal and friendly, and will cover six key issues, with the relevant points outlined below.

1. Cost of Living Costs – Impact of rate increases on seniors.

The city faces a major increase in population and housing density, with major Council cost increases associated with this. Council is asked to recognise that the senior community has 'paid its dues' and should not be burdened with the costs associated with future growth.

Council is asked to introduce a 'grandfathering' of rates scheme where the rates level is frozen at the level paid when a ratepayer reaches 65, SuperGold time. This is common overseas. And also to get the Government to improve the Rates Rebate scheme.

2. Council Senior Rental Housing Support and Development

Rental housing for seniors is a major Auckland social issue and the Council is asked to maintain and increase the senior housing stock managed by Haumaru and, in particular, not sell of any the land currently held when redeveloping a site. The full site must be used for the addition of modern units for seniors. Haumaru have already done some excellent work with redevelopment, but some land is still being sold.

3. Improved funding for the Senior Advisory Panel and Age Friendly Cities programme.

Both the Senior Advisory Panel and the associated Age Friendly Cities programme adopted by the city have a minimal budget and it is critical for this to be increased for the objectives of the Age Friendly Cities programme to be met.

4. Clarification of the Mayors plan for the amalgamation of the 21 Local Boards to 5.



The Mayor is asked to outline the purpose and the benefits/disadvantages of his proposal to reduce the number of Local Boards.

5. Heritage preservation and presentation support and policy.

Heritage support and presentation is a soft target in the Budget debate, but important to the senior community as in many respects it is the story of our lives.

The initial Super City budget provided for a Built Heritage fund of \$14 million, with annual top ups aimed at restoring and protecting Auckland's heritage buildings. That has now been eroded to nothing in subsequent budget cuts. It needs to be reviewed as the massive intensification development process is destroying much of the character and heritage of the city, particularly on the Shore.

Also there are serious issues with our key Museums, particularly MOTAT, which need to be addressed, a particular focus for Grey Power North Shore.

6. Public Transport

The key issue is the continuation of the SuperGold all day travel concession, which is unique to Auckland.

Also the realisation and appreciation of the special needs for seniors in the provision of public transport as set out in the Age Friendly City programme, and recognition that for many seniors using a car is a critical need with a requirement of appropriate access and parking particularly in town centres and community facilities.

This is an abbreviated outline of major and complex issues, which are important to the senior community – and which are a drop in the bucket of the overall expenditure of Auckland Council.

They will not be easy to achieve with the City's dire financial situation, but we proceed in hope in line with the old adage: 'Constant dripping wears away a stone.'

By Bill Rayner

2023 rates rebates now available

Applications close 30 June 2024

Please note that applications for the Council Rates Rebate for the year ended 30 June 2023 are now open.

The rebate scheme is administered by the Dept of Internal Affairs and is available to occupiers of residential properties, and most retirement village residents are eligible to apply.

The scheme is means tested with a scale of rebates linked to income and rates paid. The base maximum rebate is \$750, reducing as income increases to being zero at an income of \$56,000.

With an income of \$36,000 and a rates bill of \$2,500, the rebate is the maximum of \$750. With an income of \$40,000 and a rates level of \$3,500, the maximum is again \$750.

The rebate reduces progressively as your income goes up. At a rates level of \$4,000, the rebate starts reducing at an income \$44,000.

The rates figure includes water rates.

It's a bit hard to see without the chart on the rebate application form, but it's clear that many members would be in the higher rates level and a medium income where the rebate would be several hundred dollars. Not insignificant in the current cost of living crisis.

It would be worth checking – the application forms and Information are available from Council and libraries, and on the Government website: www.govt.nz/rates-rebates.

Curiously, the rebate fund has been significantly under-claimed in the past. Grey Power had a joint campaign with Auckland Council in Len Brown's day to increase participation by ratepayers. It backfired, the campaign created the perception it was just for seniors not any low income ratepayers, and overall applications dropped.

An increase in the level of the rebate is a current GreyPower advocacy point with the Council and Government.

Full steam ahead for Takapuna in 1904

In 1904 the Takapuna Bus Company purchased three steam buses, a Gardner-Serpollet and two Chelmsfords based in Devonport. The Chelmsfords seated 16 people and ran the service between Devonport and the Lake, while the Gardner-Serpollet was used for services off the main route. The vehicles had a 30hp steam engine and two more were bought in 1905. The steam buses were not a great success and the company folded in 1907. In 1913 the Devonport acquired three 28hp Dennis buses to run between Devonport and Milford.

Before our time – just. The North Shore Vintage Car Club are restoring a 1823 Dennis bus, a more modern follow on.



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Renting in retirement – a growing challenge for older people

A growing number of retirees are facing the challenge of renting as they age. Suitable affordable properties are rare, and often only offer short term tenancies resulting in uncertainty and stress.

For those retirees with limited financial resources trying to survive on the single NZ superannuation weekly payment of \$477.52, rental payments can easily exceed 60% of their income. This leaves very little for energy, food, and other basics. Our older citizens deserve to live in dignity when they can no longer work, and for a growing number this is no longer the case in New Zealand.

At Last Home Renters, director Vanessa Pate constructs a portrait of her 76-year-old father, a Maori fisherman. It is narrated through a series of intimate but understated interviews with Rodney, who is in the position an increased number of us will face as the housing crisis continues. Watch Rodney's story on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cpv7XboCrg>

Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumatua 2019 to 2034 strategy document, 2019 to 2034 strategy document, from the Office for Seniors, acknowledged that for some retirees in New Zealand Super is no longer sufficient to live in dignity in retirement:-

'As our population continues to age and numbers of older people increase, central government will need to spend more on New Zealand Super and healthcare costs. We also inspect to see an increased numbers of financially

vulnerable older people needing extra support, including housing support.'

Grey Power advocates strenuously on behalf of retirees struggling to meet their accommodation needs. Grey Power urges Government to increase the Accommodation Supplement asset level, and the maximum payments, which have not increased for five years, to provide urgent relief for our seniors in rental accommodation currently unable to live in dignity.

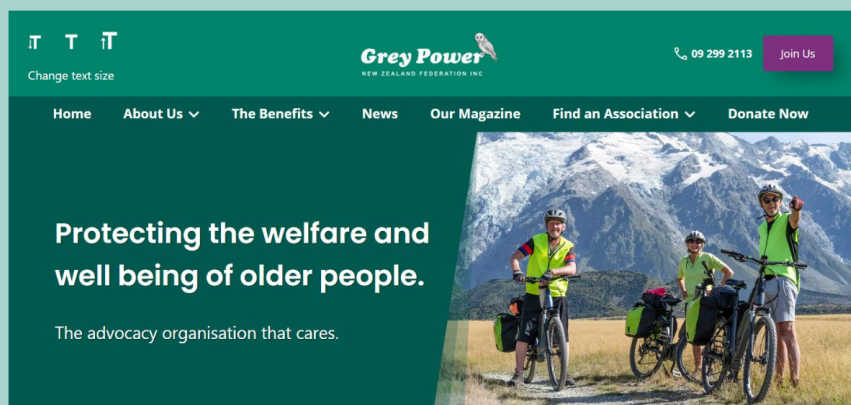
By David Marshall

Vice President GreyPower NZ Federation



NEW GREYPOWER NZ FEDERATION WEBSITE

www.greypower.co.nz



The new Federation Website was launched in August, and can be accessed at www.greypower.co.nz

There is much to explore, so please take a look at the website and share it with friends and family to promote the important advocacy work we are all involved in supporting.

David Marshall

Vice-President

Grey Power NZ Federation Inc

- my favourite playlist
- classic story
- my pallbearers
- the ideal spot
- crazy touches
- food

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so much
to talk about.*



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Devonport Rotary seniors help with Cyclone Gabrielle cleanup

A team of thirteen enthusiastic senior Devonport Rotarians and their friends left their comfortable homes in September to help the people so severely affected by Cyclone Gabrielle in Napier. It was part of a Rotary project to support local Hawkes Bay Clean Up Team organisation.

They were allotted work with the residents of Esk Valley, the most devastated area of the storm damage.

'We did not know what to expect in terms of the work to be done, but willingly attacked whatever we were tasked with. Age was no barrier and given most of the team were over 70 we proved we could punch above our weight, and clocked up 455 volunteer hours across five days,' said Libby Boyd.

The work included clearing silt from gardens, trimming trees, collecting loose and scrap metal for recycling, and removing supporting wire from grapevines. Every day a Hawkes Bay Clean Up Team van arrived with all the gear needed, and portaloos on a trailer. A digger was on hand, operated by the grandson of the HBCUT volunteer coordinator Martha Taonui, who had helped in the clean-up of over 100 homes.

'Coming into Napier from Taupo, the damage by slips and slash that had gouged the surrounding landscape was shocking, but for us it was the impact on people and properties that left the deepest impressions. For the three homeowners we met, it was the first help they had experience since the cyclone. There were emotional

moments when we packed up to say goodbyes, especially as there is still so much work to be done to make their homes habitable.'

Rotary has made major contributions to the North Shore community over many years, and continues to do so. Thank you Rotary, well done.



Sailors threaten to wreck newspaper office!

An interesting snippet on protest action in Auckland in the 1840s from Ian Grant's book *Lasting Impressions: The Story of New Zealand's Newspapers 1840-1920*.

Auckland's early newspaper *The New Zealander* reports that the Bay of Islands conflict sufficiently aroused the ire of a group of sailors from the north for them to talk positive protest action.

'An article on Heke's war gave great offence to the naval men, who considered their honour considerably tarnished thereby,' the paper said. 'Accordingly, armed with a hawser, a large number

of sailors belonging to the warships in Auckland Harbour appeared at the door of *The New Zealander* office in Shortland Crescent, through which they passed their rope to the back and then over the roof. A full retraction was demanded, failing which the building would be overturned. The beleaguered inmates ... yielded the point.'

It is unlikely a 'letter to the editor' would have achieved the same result.

A forerunner to the modern marches on Parliament.

Lasting Impressions

The story of New Zealand's newspapers, 1840-1920

Ian F. Grant

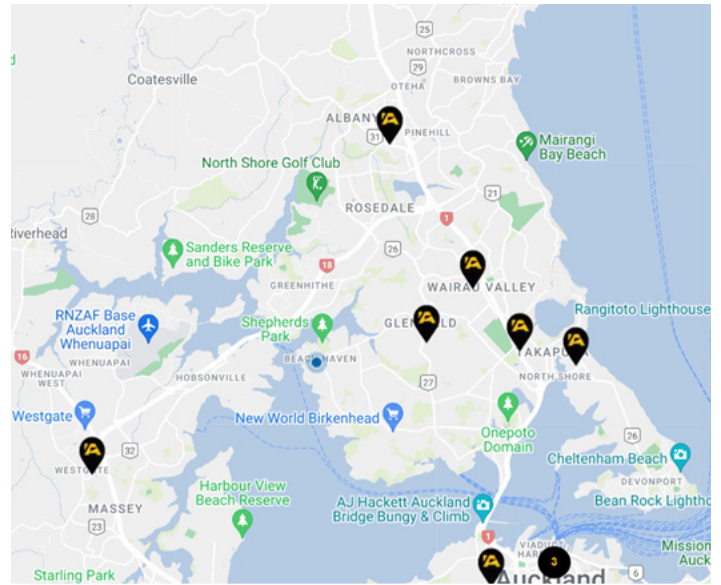


ASB Milford closing

The ASB Bank is closing its Milford branch at the end of February, citing a decline in customers using the branch. It's the latest loss for in-person banking across the North Shore.

That will leave five ASB branches across the North Shore – Takapuna, Smales Farm, Link Drive (Wairau Park), Glenfield Mall, and Westfield Albany. There are also branches at Silverdale and Orewa.

In more positive news – the ASB has a priority help line for seniors. Customers aged 55+ can call **0800 272 119** for priority service by phone.



St John medical alarms can help you maintain your independence

Hato Hone St John is at the frontline of medical response, providing ambulance services throughout New Zealand. However, they also play an increasing role in meeting the broader health care of New Zealand communities, through their provision of first aid training, event medical services, AEDs (defibrillators), first aid kits and supplies, medical alarms, youth groups and a wide range of community programmes such as Caring caller.

Caring Caller is a valuable service offered by Hato Hone St John that is led by volunteers who offer friendship to individuals with various health and wellbeing needs. The volunteers aim to help people in a way that suits them best. It's nice to have someone check on you, especially if you don't know many people, or your whānau and friends can't visit often.

At the Grey Power November 2023 meeting our guest speaker was Leanne Havill, a representative from Hato Hone St John, who spoke about the benefits of a St John Medical Alarm.

A St John Medical Alarm enables people to have the confidence to keep living an independent life, whether it is at home or when out and about. Leanne assured the Grey Power audience that the medical alarms are easy to use. Help is never far away - simply press the button they are connected directly to Hato Hone St John.

Leanne explained that there are different options available with home and mobile alarms, and the team works with you to determine the best solution that meets your needs. They will even come to your home and install



it for you. Government funding may be available for those who qualify.

Leanne demonstrated the passion and the concern that this organisation takes to deliver a service that addresses the needs of the wearer while giving themselves and their family peace of mind knowing that Hato Hone St John is there 24/7. If you want to find out more about how St John medical alarms can help you maintain your independence give the team a call on 0800 50 23 23 and they will be happy to help.

by Trish Deans

Volunteers offer digital help to seniors

Technology has changed our world and is very helpful, but it can be tricky and expensive too. Where can you go for help? Have you heard about the new Digital Seniors charity that has come to the North Shore? Digital Seniors is a free, trusted, one-on-one coaching service helping over 65s with tech issues and interests.

The concept underpinning this service is that community volunteers will help seniors with developing their understanding of digital technology, people can drop in or make a booking to receive help from one of the friendly volunteer coaches over a cuppa. There are seven hubs across the North Shore, each holding a weekly session, the times are on the Digital Seniors website <https://digitalseniors.co.nz/hub/> or advertised in posters in local libraries. See the hours and locations attached below.

We no longer have a choice about using mobile phones and electronic banking, and most of us need support to learn some new skills to adapt to these challenges. On the flip side, learning to use new technology and taking small steps to come to terms with new devices does make a difference to the quality of our lives.

Cathy Hardinge, Founder and CEO of Digital Seniors, developed this charity after completing her Masters of Technology degree, as she recognised that there was a knowledge gap developing. Cathy, with 30 years in learning, leadership and change management careers wanted to address New Zealand's problem with leaving older people behind our society's technological transformation.

'I believe communities need to get behind older people and help them with technology otherwise they can't participate in society like other generations who have this support in their schools and workplaces.'

Ten years ago, people didn't use i-pads or i-phones, and maybe had a computer at home. We didn't watch television using the internet or have access to alternative apps (Netflix, Apple TV etc). Let alone pay the bills and have access to our bank accounts through an online service.

The Digital Seniors' volunteers are kind, friendly people from our community that give a little of their time each week to help older people with their tech concerns or curiosities. They get a huge range of queries from keeping safe from scams, to using mobile phones and computers, digital photos, emails, to using digital services and applications.



Sarah Thorne, the Auckland North Community Collaboration Leader, works with the volunteers and stresses, 'the volunteers aren't necessarily technical experts, but they are technology users, and as a team they work together'. Sarah is passionate about empowering people and removing the some of the barriers that can create a very real and understandable fear of technology.

Digital Seniors originated in the Wairarapa in 2018 and Jacinda Ardern gave her full support. The charity was brought to the North Shore in 2023, and since its inception volunteers have given 1700 hours of their time to assist 854 seniors.

There is always a need for new coaches. If you can spare a couple of hours per week and would like to volunteer and join the coaching team please contact the Auckland North Community Service Leader, Maddy Ball – madeline.ball@digitalseniors.co.nz. The coaches are of various ages, backgrounds and have different digital skills levels – you don't need advanced skills.

Come along to a hub and learn about the basics, or advance the skills you have already acquired. The support you will receive from the coaches will be invaluable to you.

by Trish Deans

Digital Seniors North Shore hubs

Albany Library, 30 Kell Drive

Wednesday 1-3pm

Browns Bay Library, 8 Bute Rd

Tuesday 10am-12pm

Takapuna Library, 9 The Strand

Saturday 10am-12pm

Devonport Community House, 32 Clarence St

Friday 10am-12pm

Glenfield Library, 90 Bentley Ave

Wednesday 10am-12pm

Birkenhead Library – cnr Rawene Rd & Hinemoa St

Thursday 1-3pm

Council sale of stake in senior villages not quite a done deal

The residents of the 14 'Own Your Own' senior housing villages are facing a nervous wait over the next few months, following news that Auckland Council has found an as-yet-unnamed buyer for its 20% stake in the villages.

Just before Christmas, residents were advised that a buyer had been found, but had requested extra time until the end of March 2024 to complete their due diligence before finalising the purchase.

In an earlier story in GreyPower's November 2023 issue, residents voiced concerns that the villages would not remain 'seniors only'. Both then and now they've said that assurances from Council and Eke Panuku had not, in fact, allayed their fears.

Another common theme was that residents did not feel fully informed, and want a much greater level of transparency, so GreyPower submitted a request for further information under The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA).

The emails and documents received reveal that the proposal to sell goes back much earlier than we had previously known – and that the Council's Finance & Performance Committee had approved a staff proposal to investigate options, including a sale, back in November 2020.

In February 2022, Council and Eke Panuku agreed a statement to be given to anyone expressing interest in buying a unit, saying that further sales were 'on hold'. But in the interim, we're aware of at least one unit that was sold, to a buyer who says they were unaware that council was considering quitting its stake in the villages.

Also in February 2022, a few residents contacted Eke Panuku about rumours of a possible sale. The replies assure unit owners they have nothing to worry about, and that they would be 'contacted as soon as concrete decisions were made'. It was not until June 2022 that unit owners were officially informed of Council's divestment programme for these villages. Residents have now been informed that they will be notified during April 2024 of the new arrangements for the 'Own Your Own' equity scheme.

In these emails received it is apparent Council has assumed that the purchaser would agree to the 'binding management obligations' in which the conditions outlined in the unit owners' contracts – particularly 'seniors only' – would be upheld. The homeowners voice a common concern, however, about how Council will be able to enforce that commitment and ensure that it is honoured.

A Radio New Zealand article, in January, reports that



residents in the Sandringham village are worried. As in many of the villages, units that had been vacated and sold back to Council, hadn't been maintained and were falling into disrepair. Residents report water leakages and general signs of deterioration, and this affects the market value of the properties occupied by unit owners.

Continued on p17

About the Own-Your-Own Home scheme

Auckland Council's Own-Your-Own-Home scheme, set up in the 1970s, offers seniors aged 65 years and over one and two-bedroom units on sites spread across Auckland, at 80% of the market value. If the owner no longer requires the unit, or passes away, they must sell back to the council at an agreed portion of the original purchase price. The council then refurbishes the unit and sells it to another eligible buyer.

There are 150 one and two-bedroom units in the 14 own-your-own villages across Auckland, including three on the North Shore – at John Bracken Way in Beach Haven, Bardia Street in Belmont, and Bayswater Ave in Bayswater.

In mid-2022, residents were shocked to learn that Auckland Council had decided to sell its 20% stake in the villages. Many opposed the proposal – concerned that the villages would no longer be seniors-only.

From page 16

Council's Public Law Team have provided advice to Council and Eke Panuku, but this advice has not been made available to the unit owners. These residents don't have legal representation, as most feel overwhelmed and are reliant on Council to honour their contracts of ownership.

We sincerely hope that April brings good news – and that the new buyer will step seamlessly into Auckland Council's

role, undertaking and upholding all the conditions and obligations of the agreement between Council and the homeowners, and refurbishing empty units for sale to seniors.

In the meantime, we'll continue to seek more information and answers which may bring the certainty and assurance the residents seek.

by Trish Deans

Retirement Village Act review update

Well the end of 2023 has seen the wheels in process toward a review of the Retirement Village Act 2003. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) called for submissions on a review of the Act and, to supplement this, in November it conducted a series of workshops at which the various parties could express their various opinions.

The issues have been well ventilated publicly in media comment throughout the year. MHUD will prepare a paper on a review to be put to Government then onto the process of Select Committee hearings and ultimately, a Bill before Parliament. This could well take 12 to 18 months, but the die forward is cast.

RV Residents' concern was well supported in a submission of petitions of over 11,000 residents delivered to Parliament late in the year.

There is no doubt that retirement village living is here to stay; it offers comfortable community living with the enjoyment of facilities and activities offered and no concerns about maintenance.

Not all villages are equal in size. The terms and conditions of occupation can differ. In considering such living it pays to shop around. I am well satisfied with the village that I live in, although a deferred management fee of 20% rather than 30% would have been better. However, at the time there was not a village offering this in the locality of where I wanted to be living.

My key concern in a review of the Act is 'when do you get your money back?' The fact that this is not until your unit is resold is too open ended. As a resident but not an owner and with no say or input on the sale and refurbishment process, or capital gain AND having paid the monthly fees for living here, plus the 30% deferred management

fee, a prompt defined return of my residual capital is not unreasonable. So here is looking forward to whatever 2024 offers.

by Joe Grieg

A resident of Knightsbridge Village for 12 years
Committee member, Retirement Village Residents' Association North Shore and Grey Power North Shore



SENIOR FOCUS



Planetfm 104.6

SUNDAYS 5.25pm

A radio show reflecting the diversity of our senior community, preparing seniors for a changing future.
Hosted by Anne-Marie Coury.

We welcome your input on ideas and guests. Please contact greypowers@gmail.com or call/text Anne-Marie on 027 301 6202

 OR LISTEN ONLINE 24/7 AT www.planetaudio.org.nz/programmes/seniorfocus

Civic Trust champions heritage

Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) was founded in 1968 by citizens concerned about both environmental and heritage issues. Its aims include the protection of natural landforms and biodiversity, the preservation of heritage, and the encouragement of good planning.

The trust's early work saw the restoration of the historic 1870s Scott Homestead at Mahurangi East, and the saving and restoring of the 1850s timber dwelling still located on its original site in Alten Road in the city centre.

In the 21st century, CTA's regular activities have included a series of "winter lectures," held in a range of buildings of architectural interest around the city that are not usually open to the public, and participation in the annual Auckland Heritage Festival. This year, our festival event "For Love of the St James" attracted 160 people to register their interest in a tour of the theatre.

CTA is included on Auckland Council's list of regional stakeholders and submits on many Auckland Council plans and sometimes on resource consent applications. Trust also responds to government consultations relevant to our aims. Their most recent submission were on Auckland Councils Draft Local Board Plans and their Future Development Strategy.

The trust supports other Auckland heritage and environmental groups, joining them, donating to them, advising our members of petitions, attending protests, public meetings or hearings, writing to Council to support other groups' causes, and advertising their activities. They have joined in as a party to several Environment Court cases involving heritage buildings. To celebrate our 50 year anniversary, we planted 50 native trees in August 2018 in Harbutt Reserve, part of a new cycle/walkway linking up green spaces from Mt Albert to Avondale.

Their current concerns include climate change, the ongoing loss of trees and open space across Auckland, the increasing threat to character and heritage, and the forthcoming replacement of the Resource Management Act with three acts separately addressing climate change, development and the environment.

We encourage Grey Power members who share any of our concerns to consider becoming a paid-up member or an interested party of CTA, whereby you would receive our emails and be invited to our events and those of the groups with which we are associated.

More about us at www.civictrustauckland.org.nz

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Crossword

Across

- 1. Container weight
- 5. Reprimand, with "out"
- 9. Swallows water eagerly
- 14. Didn't have enough
- 15. Deep purple, edible berry
- 16. Wagner work
- 17. Refusal to interfere
- 20. Boston newspaper
- 21. Dorm room staple
- 22. Sign of summer
- 24. A British gentleman (Archaic)
- 28. Snowman prop
- 31. Diarist Samuel
- 34. Maple genus
- 35. Trick taker, often
- 36. Abysmal test score
- 37. Ancient city NW of Carthage
- 38. Private property
- 42. Leisurely walk
- 43. Send to the canvas
- 44. Drink from a dish
- 45. Impulse transmitter
- 46. Physics particle
- 48. Half a matched set
- 49. Lampoons
- 51. Australian runner
- 53. Inflammation of the ear
- 56. Cremona artisan
- 60. Conceited
- 64. Unfit for Jewish consumption
- 65. Bubbly drink
- 66. Season to be jolly
- 67. Bakery supply
- 68. Bow

69. Prize since 1949

Down

- 1. Chinese dynasty
- 2. Gone wrong?
- 3. Ashcroft's predecessor
- 4. Like some mushrooms
- 5. Dracula, at times
- 6. Air force heroes
- 7. Dermal development
- 8. Vivacious
- 9. Dead duck
- 10. Current
- 11. Floral necklace
- 12. Adept
- 13. Gabriel, for one
- 18. Formerly known as
- 19. "Aeneid" figure
- 23. Airy

25. Tapered, frozen formation

- 26. Fruit juice
- 27. Understands
- 28. Greek surname
- 29. Mountaineering tool for frigid conditions
- 30. Being
- 32. Big time
- 33. Lively Bohemian dance
- 36. Animal house
- 37. Amateur video subject, maybe
- 39. Well wishes before a vacation
- 40. Listening device
- 41. A bag-shaped fish trap
- 46. Bon mot

47. Improved selling price

- 48. Caring
- 50. Brown ermine
- 52. Fortify
- 54. Knowing, as a secret
- 55. Fodder holder
- 57. Bit
- 58. Abound
- 59. One way to stand by
- 60. Dump
- 61. "... ___ he drove out of sight"
- 62. Grassy area
- 63. ___ grass

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