

Tauhara News



Kotahi tonu te Wairua o nga mea katoa ~ There is one Spirit that flows through all



Wwoofers Ahoy!

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Welcome! We send hearty greetings from Trustees and staff to all friends of the Centre both within New Zealand and abroad. After a very extended and mild autumn here on the Volcanic Plateau, when many of our trees, shrubs and plants seemed to be a little confused, suddenly producing more flowers and growth at a time when they traditionally went to bed for the winter, we have now entered the chilly, wet weeks and are cosying up to warm fires. This is a time of introspection, the space in which we await the birthing of new energies and inspirations.

We are a little late with this issue, due to two very busy months at the Centre with group after group coming to do their soul work, groups as diverse as: karate for women; a seminar on mental health for elders for professionals devoted to their care; a craft workshop; training for pre-school and day care centre staff in the care of children; a gathering of mycologists (fungi enthusiasts, scientists and passionate amateurs); Dances of Universal Peace; a yoga and meditation retreat; followers of eastern yogic wisdom meeting with their NZ born swami; Reiki practitioners gathering to honour and nurture one another; a huge conference for those caring for children focusing on the sacred urge to play; an academic writing retreat for women; a seminar on Magnetic Healing; and a gathering to commemorate the creator of Zuvuyaland, a beautiful arboretum and park gifted to Tauhara.

In this issue, we continue our series of introducing you to regular groups that come to Tauhara, this time focusing on *St. Peter's School of Music*, and *Women Writing Away*, and bringing you up to date with news about Tauhara. We hope you will find something here of interest and enjoyment. Namaste!

Eco Project

We are very excited about our eco-conversion project, which got under way this month. We are starting with the kitchen, which will have a wood burning stove installed, heating a large new hot water cylinder also connected to solar arrays on the roof, facing in a northerly direction. The kitchen will become a cosy, hang-out space in winter, a real change from the chilly mornings we have faced for years here in Taupo. We will keep you in touch with progress in the next two newsletters, as the installation progresses. If you would like to donate to this project, please contact the Centre.





Tauhara has a wonderful new thematic map of its grounds and buildings in relation to local landmarks, thanks to Danny, a Canadian Wwoofer whom Catherine and Nasir first met at Mana Retreat Centre in the Coromandel. Copies are being posted in each of our rooms, so that guests and visitors may find their way round the site more assuredly.



St. Peter's School of Music

For a number of years now, Tauhara has been blessed by the annual schools of music brought here by St. Peter's School, a private secondary college located near Cambridge in the Waikato. These young people bring such a vibrant energy to the Centre, which we find very uplifting, and the considerate way that they interact with one another and Centre staff is a testament to the values followed by staff and students at St. Peter's. Each time they come, they invite the staff of the Centre into one of their closing sessions, where they sing to us the pieces they have been practicing. They are consistently - awesome! At their last School of Music held here in June, 2010, we asked the students for some feedback about how Tauhara helps them to achieve the purposes of the Music School. One student, Hamish, summed it all up as follows: "Thank you so much for the past 4 years. Every year I look forward to coming back and I am sad to leave for the last time." The following article was contributed by another student, Andrew Burns. Well done, Andrew!

On the 16th of June 2010, the majority of the students in the year 10 to 13 Music classes travelled to the Tauhara Centre in Acacia Bay, Taupo for the annual Music Retreat. This year we were accompanied by Head of Music and Performing Arts, Ms Brown; HOD Music, Mrs McIntyre; Music teacher, Mr Schroeder; French teacher and valued Performing Arts staff member, Mr Hall; and GAP student, Ms de Podesta. It was going to be four intense days of Music making and fun.



We arrived at Tauhara on the Wednesday evening and unpacked before continuing our tradition of watching a film on the first night. This year we began with a Music Camp favourite – *Mr Holland's Opus*. The following morning we started work on performance, exam preparation and recording and we rotated around these different groups throughout the day. That evening, we had the favourite Music Camp Quiz with several different rounds, including creating a jingle for a men's hair dye, a classical music quiz, a contemporary music quiz and a general knowledge quiz. The evening activity challenges everyone's teamwork skills as well as knowledge.

On Friday, we spent some time as a large group on composition techniques. We worked on our understanding of complex polyrhythm and had a good time attempting to put many different time signatures together at the same time. Whilst the large group were doing that, a smaller group of string players left to rehearse student compositions for work-shopping later in the day. It was fantastic to have the opportunity to have our compositions played by a small group of musicians and to hear them aloud and off the page.



The highlight of every Music Retreat is undoubtedly the fun concert that takes place on the final night. This year three of the Performing Arts Prefects hosted the evening, kicking off the night with a dance to a mix of the world music that year 13 had been studying. Throughout the evening we were treated to dances, songs and talented groups showcasing their amazing Performing Arts talents. Highlights included Emma Carpenter's rendition of "Taylor the Latte Boy," and the SEANdrew (consisting of Sean Watson and Andrew Greed) performing one of their guitar duets.

The Music Retreat 2010 was another fantastic experience for everyone involved. It gave students a chance to spend three days constantly making music and developing their skills as musicians both from an academic perspective and from a performance perspective. It is an incredibly valuable camp and an annual highlight for every music student.

On a more personal note, it has been fantastic to attend this camp at the Tauhara Centre over the past four years. I have appreciated the time and effort that the staff at the Tauhara Centre put into our stay – particularly with their magnificent organic food and dealing with constant noise that we sometimes like to call music. After each camp here, every student leaves with a piece of Tauhara inside them and it has become a very special place to all of us. The Music Retreats have been a highlight of my time at St Peter's and I have very much appreciated the time and effort that goes into organising and hosting them.



A big thank you to Mrs McIntyre, Mrs McMurray, Ms Brown and all the staff from St Peter's and Tauhara that put this together and make the event such a success.

By Andrew Burns

Next year is the centenary of the visit of Dr. Robert Felkin, his wife Harriot and his daughter Ethylwyn to Havelock North in Hawkes Bay, which eventually led to their taking up residence in NZ. Thus began the remarkable story of their work in introducing to that community the esoteric teachings of what was known in those days as the Ageless Wisdom underpinning all spiritual paths. Along with others, they became the Founders of Tauhara Centre long before it manifested on the physical plane in the late 1970's. From March 16 to 18, 2012, there will be a Felkin Centenary Conference in Havelock North. People interested in participating are invited to check out the Centenary website www.felkin.org or to send an email expressing interest to: info@felkin.org



**Robert
Felkin**

**Harriot
Felkin**



**Ethylwyn
Felkin**

Visitors From the Past

From time to time, we receive visits from people who have played a foundational role at Tauhara. One such person was Brian Hannam, who helped to establish the grounds before the Centre opened in 1977. Here is a picture of Brian standing in the grove of eucalyptus trees planted during his time at Tauhara. On behalf of all those who have benefited from their shade and presence, Brian, thank you!



Staff Changes at Tauhara

The Centre has seen some significant changes in staff since January, when our cook, Stan left after nearly 5 years in the job. Stan brought a lot of colour, delicious cuisine and a light touch to the kitchen during his time (see our article about him in the spring/October issue of our newsletter), so he will be missed by staff and regular guests alike. He has returned to one of his other passions, caving, over in Waitomo, where he also does some cooking for groups. He took with him Leah, his lovely Czech partner, who was a tower of strength in the Tauhara kitchen for many a long month. Thank you, Stan, for all that you contributed during your time here.



Keri Ivory

We welcome as our new cook Carola Laraj, who lives not far from Tauhara in a beautiful spot overlooking Lake Taupo and the volcanoes. She first appeared at Tauhara a few years ago as a member of our Wwoofing team, met and fell in love with a local Kiwi, whom she married, and the rest, as they say, is history! Carola brings quite a different, European approach to cuisine, being from Germany, where she grew up with a mother and grandmother passionate about cooking. We welcome you to our team, Carola, and look forward to many delicious meals in the years ahead. We welcome back, also, Keri Ivory as our housekeeper, replacing our consistent and hard-working Gwenda who left to live in Waihi with her new partner, Alan, whom she met here at Tauhara at ChrissieFest. A familiar tale for so many couples! Keri was our housekeeper before Gwenda, so it is great to have her experience, skill and artistic flair back with us.



Carola Laraj



There are many of you who have been associated with Tauhara Centre over the years, and who would have met Vivien Johnson, whose vision, commitment and love of this land brought into existence Zuvuyaland, a beautiful, peaceful tree-clad park just across and down the road from Tauhara. You may remember, also, an article we ran in our May, 2009 issue about Vivien's gifting of this special place to Tauhara Centre Trust. Vivien passed away on March 12th this year, and on June 25-26 a special gathering convened at the Centre to commemorate and celebrate the life of this remarkable woman. The following is a tribute from Vernon and April Smith, friends and fellow-travellers of Vivien, who along with Richard James and countless other volunteers, laboured long and hard over the years to bring Zuvuyaland into manifestation.

Our memory is of a tall, middle aged woman standing at the office counter: "I'm Vivien Johnson from Taradale". Over a cup of tea we soon discovered her reason for coming to Taupo - to acquaint herself with its 'energy fields', and expressing a desire to purchase land on which to allow a 'Garden of Eden' to emerge. The early 1990's were times when groups were developing gathering places and exploring paths of a 'Spiritual' nature. With recently inherited funds, Vivien was keen to bring to fruition a dream that she had held for decades and, at age 68, finally commenced the task of locating that special piece of land, looking in so many places outside Taupo before deciding that this 1.4 hectares of bare, sheep-grazed land just down the road from Tauhara could be transformed into a tree-clad oasis of peace.

Tauhara in 1991 thudded to the bulldozer as great seams of rocks were extracted in the quest to form the new road past the Centre's front gate. Little did anyone know that this 'waste material' was to become the now familiar 'spiral' and 'flow form waterfall' of Zuvuyaland, and terraced gardens at Vivien's 'Silbury Crystal' home. Her mantra for this land was that the energies were of "the NEW".



Tree and shrub planting began in earnest in 1993 and continued for the following 7 years. Her caretaker role she took very seriously, and testament to this are the visitors' books and the world travellers and internationally recognized spiritual teachers' comments within their pages, luminaries such as Jean Houston, Simon Peter Fuller and Hamish Miller. Constant guardianship of Zuvuyaland was taxing and, with the added news of her daughter Faye's illness, she was prompted to sell 'Silbury' and return to

Hawke's Bay . The Zuvuyaland Trust was solidly in place and with the umbrella of the Queen Elizabeth II Trust firmly protecting its status, the land sat quietly, receiving its round of casual visitors and work parties.

But as the trees outgrew their appropriateness and size, it became clear that a maintenance schedule and plan needed to be incorporated. A suggestion was made that the Trust could easily be transferred to a similar body and on Saturday the 7th November 2008, Vivien gifted Zuvuyaland into the Trusteeship of Tauhara Centre. For her, the relief was immense as she had total faith that the spirit in which this land had been developed would be honoured and maintained.



Dancing at Zuvuyaland in honour of Vivien

Vivien was a Visionary, often requiring a still, patient listening ear. She was clearly dedicated to her beloved Earth and resolute that Love was THE power within everything. She left this Planet within 24 hours of the earthquake in Japan.

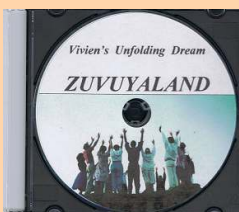
A poem which Vivien wrote was read at the conclusion of her funeral service :-

Now that I have reached the end of my ' long and winding road' -
once again, I am with those that I loved in this last life and many others.

Those whom I have loved and left behind, please know my love is also yours
wherever I go, whatever the time.

Be happy for me to be here at last, where the colours are bright and the scented
air is full of the music of the stars, where laughter and joy herald love to all.
Thankful am I to be home again in the land that I knew when the World was young.

Vivien Stuart Johnson (6th Aug 1922 - 12th March 2011.)"



Please note: Vernon Smith has compiled a DVD featuring a pictorial history of Zuvuyaland, and the recent celebration of Vivien's life. Entitled "Zuvuyaland: Vivien's unfolding dream", it is available from the Centre for \$10 or \$13 posted.

Every year in June and December, we are very fortunate to host for academic women, retreats rejoicing in the wonderful title *Women Writing Away*. We are very blessed to have such a talented organiser as Barbara Grant, who guides the participants through a very productive and rewarding process of work, play and mutual inspiration. A highlight for us as staff is a session at the beginning where all the participants introduce themselves, and describe their area of scholarly interest and endeavour. We never fail to be deeply impressed: what a treasure trove of intelligence, passion and commitment! Most come from within New Zealand, but we have also had participants from Australia and as far away as Canada. We at Tauhara refer to these week-long gatherings as Meditation Retreats where the peace is disturbed only by the scratching of quills [would you believe the tapping of laptop keyboards?!] In this article retreat organiser, Barbara Grant describes the process and content of these writing retreats. [Barbara has also put together a most interesting account entitled *Facilitating "Women Writing Away": a handbook & journal on organising and facilitating academic writing retreats*, published by the University of Auckland in 2007.]



The location was stunning. The beautiful view from my writing window over a mass of greenery and the native birds dropping by to suck the nectar with the misty lake and small mountains in the distance were calming and helped me to focus. ... I appreciated the fact that there was only one compulsory activity. ... The 'women only' gender group was a delicious environment to work in. I felt safe and that I could trust those around me to support me with their feedback as we went about our shared enterprise. (Retreat Participant, 2002)

Bronwyn Labrum (Massey University) at her writing table, 2007

Twice a year since 1997, Tauhara has been the venue for residential Women Writing Away (WWA) retreats. The five-day retreats are designed to foster productivity and enjoyment in academic writing for women who work in tertiary education. Participants mostly come from universities and polytechs across the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand but we also have occasional guests from the south, and also from Australia and even Canada.

The idea for the retreats was born in a conversation between Barbara Grant and Sue Watson after a workshop on academic writing that Barbara ran at Victoria University of Wellington back in 1995. At the time, Sue was a Taupo local and so she scouted Tauhara as a possible venue. It turned out to be ideal not only because of its central position in the North Island but also because of the wonderful facilities and atmosphere it offers. While we struggled to gather together just seven women for that first retreat (we had hoped for 12), by the end of it we knew we were onto a good thing! Over the years, the numbers have grown and nowadays the group is usually 18-20 strong. Across 27 retreats, around 120 women have attended at least once and many have come back regularly – including some from that very first group.

From the outset, Barbara (who works as an academic developer at The University of Auckland) has been responsible for organising the event and planning and facilitating most of the programme. The retreat always opens on a Sunday evening with a shared session (and potluck dinner) that focuses on introductions, goal-setting, and programme planning. It closes the following Friday with a round of plans to keep the writing going beyond the time of the retreat, plus some shared evaluation of personal achievement against goals, and input into changes to the retreat design. We also give Tauhara regular feedback to ensure a good match between the facilities offered and our group's needs.

Between the opening and closing sessions, the days are a mix of mostly dedicated writing time in communal rooms, plus an optional after-lunch workshop on some aspect of writing. In addition, everyone is required to attend and present work-in-progress to a small group for an hour after dinner. We have established a strongly collegial atmosphere: many participants contribute to the workshop offerings and lead other writing exercises designed to improve our skills and enjoyment in writing. (Indeed, on several occasions in Barbara's absence, participants have taken on the entire facilitation of the retreat as well.)

During the week there is quite a lot of fun and relaxation too – one of the strengths of Tauhara as our venue (apart from the marvellous food and the reasonable tariff) is its rural location and proximity to hot pools for evening soaking. Many of us take the chance to enjoy solitude, walking, massage and sleep alongside the writing and communal activities. The retreat is an important restorative, as well as working and social, event for those who attend.

One of the by-products of the retreats (apart from many similar retreats taken by Barbara and other WWA women both here in NZ and overseas) is the publication of a practical handbook for running writing retreats. *Academic Writing Retreats: A Facilitator's Guide* is published by the Higher Education Research Society of Australasia (HERDSA) and is available for A\$25 from http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=35 While the focus of the handbook is academic writing, creative writers have reported using the same model to good effect.

For more information about WWA retreats, feel free to contact Barbara on bm.grant@auckland.ac.nz



Barbara Grant (The University of Auckland) at work in the early days



People who have not visited for a while will notice some real changes, as the Trustees and staff push ahead with ongoing maintenance and improvements. Our kitchen received a complete facelift last year, repainted from top to bottom. Leaky old skylights have been removed, and new roofing installed. The Common Room project, consisting of repainting, re-upholstering of all the chairs and couches and re-carpeting has been completed, with the laying of new carpet earlier this year. The foyer has had the old lino removed, replaced with cork tiles to match the flooring from the Great Hall through to the dining room. We



Kahurangi Wright

wish to acknowledge the generosity of the Southern Trust, which gave us an \$8,000 grant towards the costs of carpet and cork, and to Sylvia Durkin, who left us a \$2,000 bequest in her estate following her death in January, 2010, which covered the balance. While we are on the subject of generosity, which is the life blood of a charitable trust such as ours, we wish to acknowledge Kahurangi Wright, who works in our kitchen preparing



yummy breakfasts for guests, and who has also been producing over the years a wonderful range of preserves (pickles, sauces and jams) under the name Henny Penny. Kahu has donated scores of jars of her delicious products, which guests at the Centre will enjoy for many months ahead. Thank you, Kahu, we doff our hats to you in appreciation!



**Sylvia Durkin
Bequest to Tauhara**

The Hall has just had brand-new curtains installed, and looks very swish. Outdoors, the stormwater soak holes servicing the Hall and dining room which consistent flooding revealed had collapsed, have been replaced, carrying the huge quantities of rain we are increasingly experiencing here in Taupo, down to a depth of 7.5 metres where it leaches away into the mountain of pumice the Centre sits on. We have been blessed



**Carpenters Steve and Dean
work on the camp kitchen
skylight**



Our lovely repainted kitchen!

in recent weeks by the presence of Murray and Gaylene Neverman, who along with our intrepid Wwoofers, have lowered the overgrown vegetation around the Centre, restoring light to the gardens and creating a whole new planter bed near Tui Lodge. We have an ongoing project of restoring roofs and waterproofing windows around the Centre, focusing at the moment on the shared units and camp kitchen.



Drilling new soak holes!

Farewell Fergy!

An indispensable part of the Centre's operations from the early 1970s even before the Centre was opened, Tauhara's mechanical servant known affectionately to us all as Fergy (or UJ for those who came to work at Tauhara in the 80's), has had to lay down the burden of its daily tasks and go into retirement. Manufactured in 1953, Fergy carved out the basic contours of the land around the Centre under the assured guidance of David Morris, and has since then hauled trees from our plantations, carried thousands of loads of wood to our many fireplaces, and trained many an international volunteer in the gentle art of tractor driving. He will be sorely missed, especially by our maintenance man, Kieron, who is already suffering from separation anxiety! Is there a psychotherapist in the house? The Centre is looking for a suitable replacement, and would love to hear from anyone who could help us with this.

