



A&P Show looks to future

While many head to the beach in summer, one Katikati farmer will be at home preparing his stud cattle for the annual round of A&P shows. John Howard — also president of the Katikati A&P Association — tells Merle Foster about the plans for the February 6 show after the Axemen's Association pulled out.

“We're well aware we have to fill that gap,” Mr Howard said of the loss of the Axemen's Carnival. “We've outlaid capital on getting extra attractions to the show for 2011.”

Mr Howard says the Axemen's Carnival was a lively attraction on show day for “nearly 100 years” and it was sad it was not able to carry on in 2011.

Helping fill the gap will be Non-Stop Adventure Trail Riders who will display their extreme trail riding skills.

A more farm-theme set of visitors will be the former DB Clydesdales from their home at the Pirongia Clydesdales working-horse museum.

“There will be a display and judging of clydesdales at the show, with many entries coming from Waikato,” Mr Howard said.

The Katikati Cricket Club — which also uses Uretara Domain on a regular basis — will showcase the sport with demonstrations, there will be a bucking bull ride and local teen Beth Scarrow will shave her head

to fundraise for CanTeen.

Returning favourites include strongmen demonstrations led by Katikati's Mick Cottrell, a cow milking competition for all ages, carnival rides, horse events, calf club judging, Highland dancing, vintage tractors, and a photographic competition.

One feature not widely publicised is the free courtesy bus that loops Katikati township ferrying crowds to the showgrounds.

Mr Howard said a site meeting would take place soon to work out how to capitalise on the extra space left by the Axemen.

He believes A&P Shows are a New Zealand tradition — but reckons they've had a bit of abuse in the last 10 years.

“A lot of shows haven't accepted that many other activities are on during the A&P season and that they've got to make their shows popular to families as a reasonable day out, cost-wise.

“You've got to put on a programme that people will

enjoy.”

When growing up in Whakatane, Mr Howard said the annual A&P Show and Christmas Parade were the only two big events in town.

“It was where ladies wore their best hats” he said of the show, adding that today many activities and events were competing for the same punters and the same dollar.

“Locally, we've got to ensure we [summer events] fit in together and support each other as much as possible.”

Eves Realty staff will again be on the domain gates, providing a free service and Katikati St John Ambulance is sponsoring the event by providing staff attendance for free.

Mr Howard, who 20 years ago quit being a bank manager to become a hereford breeder, will show cattle in the beef section which, along with the dairy section, is always popular.

“We run a hereford stud with 140 head. From that, I select animals for two to three shows



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each year," he said.

He believes Katikati puts on one of the strongest beef sections around with a variety of breeds. "And the dairy section run by Alan Williams is strong too with the Lancaster family sponsoring some great prizes every year."

He says this traditional side of the show pulls the townies too. "What you find is that people come to the showgrounds and stop for 20 minutes outside the gate to watch the cattle — it is an attraction in its own right."

But showing cattle is a time-consuming hobby. "I started training my entries to lead back in October," says Mr Howard.

He's planning to show a three-

year-old bull, a two-year-old cow and her calf, and three July-born calves — all of which require daily leading and grooming.

"I've got a radio playing for them to get used to the sounds of a show because until then they have a quiet life here."

After Katikati, he has shows in Auckland, Rotorua, Te Puke and Morrinsville on his list.

■ Katikati A&P Show is on Sunday, February 6, from 9am, Uretara Domain. Gate tickets \$5/adult, \$2/children. Free bus runs: Library-showgrounds-Beach Rd-Park Rd-Levley Lane-Polley Crescent-Beach Rd-Wills Rd-Alexander Rd-Fairview Rd-library-showgrounds. Inquiries to 549-3238.



ABOVE: President of the Katikati A&P Association John Howard with some of his stud hereford cattle.
RIGHT: Mick Cottrell in action at a previous Katikati A&P Show.



Cancer is an experience, not an illness: Survivor

by Nathan Crombie

CANCER survivor Hayden O'Keeffe is relishing the New Year ahead and the sealing of a stage in his life that almost killed him.

Hayden, 17, will complete his time at Wairarapa College next year and begin his "very determined" study towards a career in tourism.

But his journey through college was interrupted in May 2008, when he was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma — a rare form of bone or soft-tissue cancer — in his hip.

He said his greatest difficulty was not the disease but the dislocation from his social circles that came in the wake of his 10-month treatment and chemotherapy, which "was more likely to kill me at the time than the cancer".

"All I wanted to do was be back at school on the first day of term last year and back in the hostel

where I was when I first started getting sore and stuff — that meant everything to me.

"I was cleared and have been clear ever since, but it was still rocky going into '09 and the hardest part, really, was fitting back in again at school."

Hayden is now the Wairarapa representative of CanTeen, the national support group for teenage cancer survivors and their families, and described the disease as "an experience, not an illness" that can bolster sufferers' world views and attitudes.

"Next year is the beginning of my working life and one of the things my experience with cancer gave me is dedication to my goals and an ability to live for today while planning for the future.

"And I'd tell any other teenager going through it today to treat cancer as an experience, not a sickness or illness, and to just go

with it."

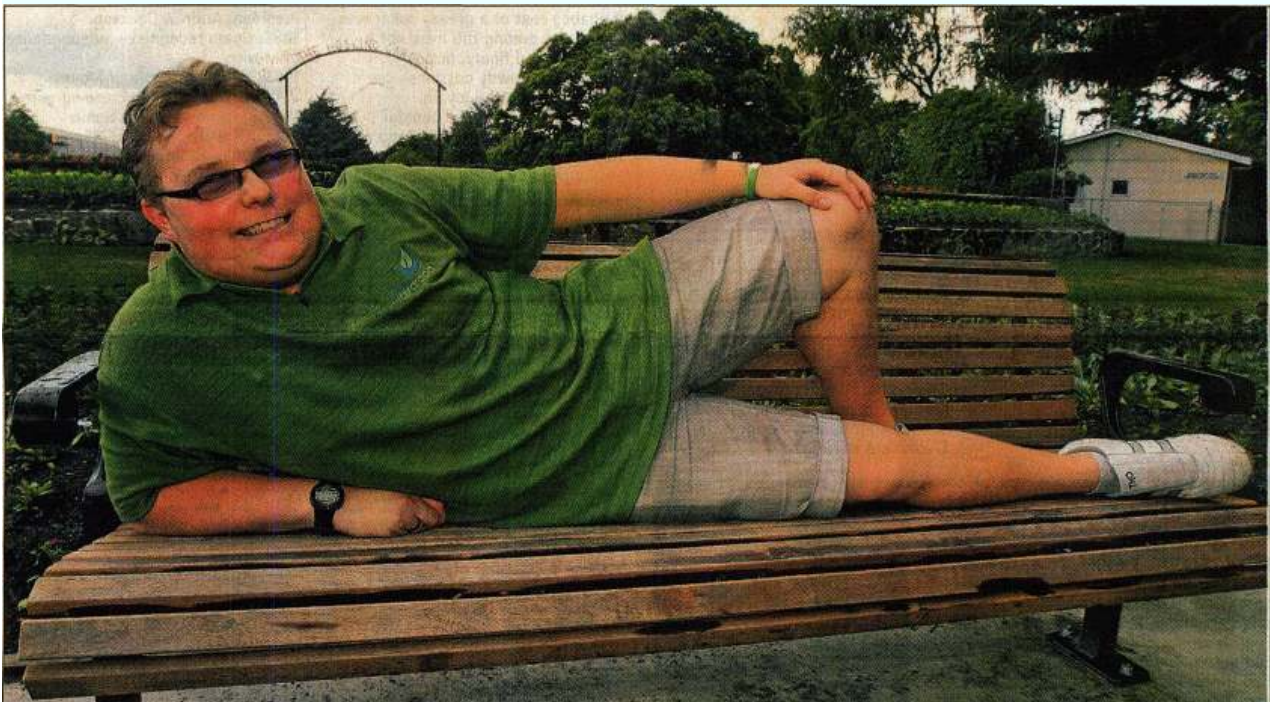
"I shared a lot of laughs and good times with the little kids and I've kept in contact with the ones that made it. But eight out of 10 died and that's the really hard stuff, you know — that's when it really hurts."

Hayden says there are now

He said during his months of treatment he had befriended teenagers and children as young as 3 and 4 who were also battling cancer. He described himself as the "in-room entertainment" for the younger patients, a role he is proud to have played.

three patient members of the CanTeen Wairarapa group and three sibling members.

He is working at the Masterton i-Site over the holidays and is also working as a part-time forecourt attendant at a Chapel St service station.



SEIZING THE DAY: Masterton teenage cancer survivor Hayden O'Keeffe is dedicated to his goals and relishing each day.

PICTURE / LYNDA FERINGA



CanTeen gifted a Wii after mean theft

CHRISTMAS came early for East Coast CanTeen members when they were gifted a brand new Nintendo Wii to replace the one stolen from them last week.

An anonymous businessman came forward yesterday to gift the new game console to the not-for-profit organisation that supports teenagers affected by cancer.

The console was stolen on Sunday last week when the group had their Christmas function.

They were swimming at the beach when an opportunistic thief sneaked in and pinched the Wii, said branch manager Lianne Jenkins.

"We just want to publicly thank the anonymous man who made our day," she said.

Branch president Courtney Fairbank said it was horrible when they discovered the Wii was missing.

"To know someone stole from our not-for-profit group, that does good things for teenagers, is so sad. But to have a Wii gifted to us it so generously, we are really happy."

Ms Jenkins said the branch raised \$15,000 in their annual bandanna appeal, \$5000 more than their goal.

"It is overwhelming how supportive the Gisborne community has been. People have given so generously and then to have this happen just before Christmas is great."

The insurance excess would have cost the same as a new console and CanTeen could not afford to replace it, she said.



Gifts for those who give

by Jolene Williams

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Christmas has come early for Shalom Haenga's family in Hastings, and given the tragic events in the family over the past 12 months, the good fortune was well overdue.

Miss Haenga opened the front door on Monday morning to find radio breakfast host Brent Mio, "B-Rocka", dressed as Father Christmas, his elf sidekick and vans loaded with Christmas presents backing into her driveway.

Miss Haenga had won \$5000 worth of goodies through a radio competition that rewarded 15 families or community groups from throughout the North Island, who continually put other people's needs before their own.

Miss Haenga had nominated someone else for the Easy Shop and Mai FM competition, and was blown away when the unexpected guests arrived.

She said her 4-year-old son was "dumbfounded" when the presents were being unloaded.

"He was just absolutely stunned. He'd never seen so many presents in his life."

Miss Haenga got teary-eyed watching the unwrapping.

"We've never had anything like this before. It was everything we don't have, or was broken. We're quite a humble family."

She said the gifts would help relieve some of the financial pressure of Christmas, not only for herself, but her parents too who were unable to work due to ill-health.

The bounty would be shared among the 10 family members at their Hastings home. "We thought we better sit down before we started arguing," she said. "We decided nothing belonged to anybody." The new flat screen TV belonged in the lounge where everybody could watch, she said.

Miss Haenga was nominated by her fiance Liu Elia-Siloata, who worked 12-hour days and four jobs to help support the family.

Miss Haenga had been involved in community volunteer work like Safer Streets, for about 10 years and was

renowned for taking in down-and-out teenagers who had been kicked out of home.

More recently she had become involved in helping charity organisations like CanTeen, Child Cancer and Make A Wish, after losing her younger sister to cancer in October, just 18 days after diagnosis.

"We used to put in our coins [in street appeals], but since my sister passed away we wanted to do something more," she said.

That commitment was taking shape in upcoming fundraisers and cancer awareness campaigns like the inaugural I Scream For CanTeen that would kick off in the Bay next March.

Miss Haenga was a full-time mother and looking after her elderly grandparents who suffered ill-health. "My parents are quite sick as well," she said. "My dad almost had a heart attack before Christmas last year and at the beginning of the year we almost lost my mum who had a clot in her leg that ended up in her chest. We've had a pretty rough year."



WELL-DESERVED: Sulu Naacia, Eddie Haenga, Nevaeh Haenga, Lui Elia-Siloata, Shalom Haenga, Alexia Haenga (back) and Halo-Rapha Elia-Siloata surrounded by some of the gifts awarded through a radio promotion. PICTURE / WARREN BUCKLAND HBT106154-01



Mean theft at Christmas for CanTeen

MEAN-spirited burglars stole a video game system from the office of CanTeen New Zealand as members of the society for teenagers with cancer held their Christmas function on Sunday.

Senior Sergeant Mick Lander said the teenagers were walking along the beach between 1.15pm and 2.15pm when intruders broke into their office in Salisbury Road and stole a Nintendo Wii console.

"These are people who are fighting cancer. To have someone come in and do this is abhorrent," said Mr Lander.

"We would obviously like to hear from anyone with knowledge or suspicion of this offence, or have been offered a cheap Nintendo Wii console for sale.

"I am sure there must even be members of the criminal fraternity outraged by such immoral offending against young, vulnerable and sick teenagers who come from all strata of society," he said.