



West Auckland Men's Rebus Club

<http://www.rebuswestauckland.nz/>
 Affiliated to Rebus New Zealand Incorporated
<https://www.rebus.nz/>

Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2022

The next meeting will be at 10:00 am Friday 9 September at the New Lynn Friendship Hall, 3063 Great North Road, New Lynn

COMMITTEE

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CLUB BUSINESS



A few minutes before the start of the meeting on 12 August 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(aka PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE)

Bill Mutch



A brace of Bills. Bill Mutch in the grey shirt with Bill Fairs at the January 2022 meeting

Spring is here; that nasty winter has passed.

Thank you for the nice get-well card and all the phone calls. I am feeling much better, not 100% but 99%.

In October, there will be several steam trains operating around Auckland. To find details in the Google search put GVR, that's Glenbrook Vintage Railway, to book and see details. But book early; it will be popular. Pay on booking.

On a smiley note, my son planted 75 tulip bulbs for me and only 3 came to life. I found the other 72 were planted upside down. Good help is hard to find nowadays haha.

I heard that the two guest speakers at our last meeting were both excellent. I was disappointed I was not there, however that's life.

Te Huia, the Auckland to Hamilton train, which we got our bright yellow Bee cards for, is proving very popular and trials of increased services are being looked at. It's free, try it.

Australia has now done away with having to wear a mask, except at old folks' villages, so it looks like we will follow soon.

See you all at our spring meeting.

CLAUDIA'S CORNER

A cement truck and a prison bus have crashed on a busy highway.

Police have issued a warning to be on the lookout for hardened criminals!!!

What should you do if you are attacked by a group of clowns?

Go straight for the juggler.

NEXT COFFEE MORNING

The next coffee morning is at Huckleberry Cafe, 34 Portage Road New Lynn. The date is Friday 16 September. Time is 10:00 am.



A combined Waitakere and West Auckland coffee morning at Huckleberry before Covid-19 and mask mandates

MEETING REPORT AUGUST 2022
Vince Middeldorp



Bill Fairs on the microphone in place of Bill Mutch who had a hospital appointment.

Bill Fairs, substituting for Bill Mutch, welcomed 18 members and four visitors to the meeting. This number was an improvement on last month when there were 16 members and no visitors.

Apologies were recorded for Mensto De Roos and Bill Mutch.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July, were confirmed and signed by Bill Fairs. There were no matters arising from the meeting.

There were some items of correspondence: an issue of the Rebus Chronicles; an email from Nelson Coelho saying he would come to the next meeting; and an email from Catherine Brown saying her father would come to the next meeting.

Treasurer Charles Nicholls JP spoke to his financial report which was displayed on the projector screen. At 31 July the cash balance in the current account was \$671.22 and money in the cash box was \$83.70. There was also \$1,220.53 on term deposit.

Trips organiser Ian Smith reminded members about the coffee morning at Humbug Café in Glen Eden on Thursday 18 August and invited members to the Waitakere Rebus bus trip to Howick Village on 28 September. Costs are bus fare \$15 and Village entry \$12.

Bill Fairs said he had phoned Roger Laloli at Sommerset Retirement Village in Hobsonville and he sounded quite good. Roger is no longer able to drive but has been able to attend the Hobsonville Probus Club courtesy of one of the other residents who takes Roger to the meetings.



Roger Laloli holding a yellow flower at a Falls Bistro Coffee morning in May of last year.

Members were asked to sign a get well card for Bill Mutch. The Club bought Bill a small present to give with the card: a woollen beanie cap with W.A.M.R.C (West Auckland Men's Rebus Club) embroidered on it in large gold coloured letters.

Noel Rose said the speaker for next month would be MOTAT's James Duncan - if we can get him.

The next meeting date is Friday 9 September 2022 at 10.00 am.

John Mihaljevic invited members to the Senior Net meeting in the Red Poppy Room at Henderson RSA next Tuesday at 10:00 am. Grant Stevens from Eden Computers is the guest speaker.

After the morning tea break there were two guest speakers: retired Senior Sergeant Bob Barrett and St John Health shuttle team leader Lindsay Roberts.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

GUEST SPEAKER SENIOR SERGEANT BOB BARRETT

AUGUST MEETING
Vince Middeldorp



Noel Rose welcomes first guest speaker retired Senior Sergeant Bob Barrett

After spending three months at the police training school, Bob Barrett was posted to Auckland's Downtown Wharf Police Station. On his first night on the beat, he came across a Mr Puru Anderson attempting to steal a truck from Turners and Growers. A violent scuffle took place, which ended when a CIB car with two detectives arrived on the scene. The detectives told Bob that he had apprehended a notorious criminal and offered to do all the paperwork. Bob was not mentioned anywhere in the arrest report. It taught him never to trust "bloody" detectives.

Before going out on their designated beats, all the constables stood in a line-up. One of things the sergeant checked was that they had two pennies. The idea was that after making an arrest, a constable would pacify the offender enough to enable a phone call to be made from a public telephone box to the police station. The station car would then be sent out to bring the offender in. Bob's comment was, "Well, it never worked."

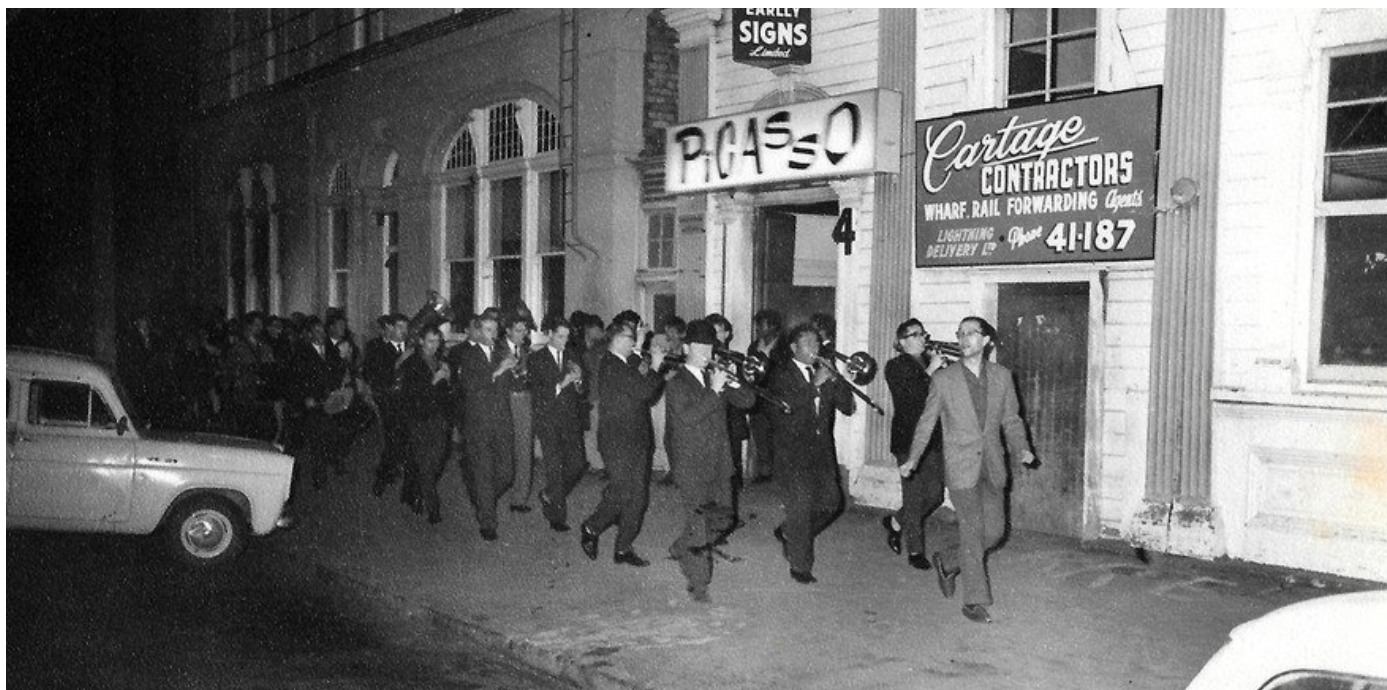


The Wharf Police Station in Quay Street East

The sergeant at the Wharf Police Station had a "bit of a thing" for ship-girls. They would live on the ships in port and drink with the crew at Gleeson's Hotel. The police station had books with photographs of the ship-girls. The sergeant was obsessed with raiding the ships to search for ship-girls. As a twenty-year-old Bob was going onto ships, searching cabins, opening lockers, finding nude women, taking them to the station and locking them up.

On his 21st birthday, Bob was out on lower Queen Street when a big American car pulled up and the driver asked him to get in because he really needed help. The driver was the owner of the Picaso Nightclub in Grey's Avenue. When he got there, Bob told Colin James Lucas, who had a long history of offending, that he was trespassing and had to leave. Lucas then punched Bob in the face and the fight was on. The "rats" in the Nightclub joined in the fight, punching Bob from behind and it wasn't looking good. The manager rang the Central Police and said, "The cop's going to get killed here." A posse arrived, people scattered, and Colin James Lucas was taken to the police station in O'Rourke Street.

At the police station, the sergeant demanded that Bob come into his office straight away. That enabled Lucas to escape in Bob's handcuffs. Shortly afterwards, the CIB recaptured Lucas at his house. A week later, a Senior Sergeant handed Bob a 258 which was a serious bit of paper, asking him to explain



The Auckland Jazz Club band escorts Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen past the Picasso Nightclub on Grey's Avenue

how he had allowed the prisoner to escape and what he had been doing out of his area. Bob's sergeant referred him to the Police General Instruction book. He found an instruction which said that any superior who gives an order to a subordinate must be obeyed and the superior is responsible for the consequences. For being out of his area, Bob said a member of public needed his help; what was he supposed to do? The paper disappeared, and he heard no more about it.



O'Rourke Street Central Police Station Auckland

Bob was given a nickname, which was Basher. He said Basher Barrett has a bit of a ring about it. The nickname resulted from a ship, the Ruahine. On the ship were three big Liverpool louts who were avoiding national service. One day when out on his beat in Queen Street, Bob heard a woman scream. The louts were harassing the woman and trying to grab her pram. One had pulled his slipper off and was beating her around the head. Bob rushed over and at full pelt knocked one of louts to the ground. A taxi driver saw the commotion and came back with another policeman. The two policemen subdued the offenders and managed to get them into the holding room at the station. It was a hell of a fight.



The MS Ruahine which operated in combined passenger and cargo trade from London to Auckland and Wellington

The brawl made headlines in both the NZ Herald and the Auckland Star. The headlines read, “Brawl Blocks Queen Street.”

At the station, the watch-keeper let one of louts go. He promptly hit Bob with a coward’s punch on the back of the head, chipping his tooth. Bob turned round and the lout ended up with a completely closed black eye. The coward’s punch resulted in Bob being concussed and spending the night in Auckland Hospital. When he came back to the station, someone had written “Basher” across his locker and the nickname stuck.

Bob’s best mate in the police was also keen on cleaning up the bottom of town. All the police carried torches. The issue ones the department gave out were just crap and everyone went and bought a Winchester. Bob’s mate got a five cell Winchester which no one had ever seen before. He got into a scrap with a big bunch of guys and managed to bend the torch around some guy’s head. After that, his nickname was Torchy. It came from a children’s TV series, “Torchy the Battery Boy.”



Winchester hi-power searchlight torch 2,200ft beam

After a couple of years, Bob was marched up to the Assistant Commissioner’s office. The Assistant Commissioner talked to him like no one had ever talked to him before. He was accused of racing to make arrests and told he would be very lucky to be appointed as a permanent constable. Bob took no notice and carried on after learning that the Head of Prosecutions had a message from the Stipendiary Magistrate in the Court, which was to tell Constable Barrett he was glad someone was cleaning up the cesspit, which was the bottom of town.

Bob spent his first four years in the Police walking the beat. If he found a vagrant who had no lawful means of support, it was into the hoosegow. If you didn’t work and were drinking meths and stealing bread, you went inside. If you were drunk several times, the Judge had a good cure, which was being shipped to Rotoroa Island. It was run by the Salvation Army and those sent there spent the next six months drying out.

Also in those days, the mentally ill were not left out to wander around and kill someone. They would be picked up, interviewed by the Police Surgeon and, if found to be mentally deranged, put into Oakley. Problem done and dusted. It was all over in an hour or two.

One of the sergeants decided he was going to fix Bob because he was making all these arrests and gave him a desk job on night-shift. Bob was an active crime-fighter. Instead of sitting in the watch-house would put his chair out on Quay Street. He could hear the drunks coming back to their ships and trying to steal the lights off the pedestrian crossings. It was easy to make some arrests while you were the watch-house keeper.

One day, a taxi-driver came in and told Bob there were about twenty vagrants drinking meths in a vacant house. Bob rang Central and asked if they would like to send a big van around and make some arrests. Some keen young guys from Central came round and between them they made the arrests. Bob arrested six because he knew he could do the paperwork for that number. When the sergeant, who was out drinking on the ships, came in and asked, “Anything to report,” Bob said, “Yes sir, six arrests sergeant.” Bob didn’t last long under that sergeant.

The wharfies were the biggest bunch of thieves who couldn’t be caught. If you wanted an electric razor you found a cargo worker because they were pilfering everything. When there was Cutty Sark Whiskey in the cargo, the wharfies would all get drunk. Bob could never catch them stealing the whiskey. After he left the force, he learned from a seagull (non-union wharfie) that what they would do is drop a carton of whiskey on the deck to break the bottles inside, cut a little hole in the corner and then drain the whiskey out into their thermos flasks. They would then report that they had accidentally dropped the carton to the Harbour Board inspector. He would open the carton and see all the broken bottles inside. All would have their caps on and none would be missing.



The Wharfies would get drunk on Cutty Sark Whiskey

Bob ended his talk with what happened on his first day at Avondale Police Station. He was sent out with a taxi-driver who was taking a drunk home and being abused. Bob was sitting in the front seat and the drunk was spitting at him from the back seat. When he got to the drunk’s home, it was pouring with

rain and the drunk punched Bob as he was getting back into the car. Bob hit him back, and the drunk fell into a drain. The drunk's nose was bleeding profusely, and he was taken back to the station. The station sergeant was lost for words and repeatedly exclaimed, "Oh my God." Bob had been told he was doing community policing and was there to assist members of the public. Instead of doing what he had been told, Bob was living up to his reputation.



Bob's talk in its entirety is up on the Club's website. You can listen to it by clicking on this link

<https://rebuswestauckland.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Bob-Barrett-2.mp3>.

GUEST SPEAKER LINDSAY ROBERTS

AUGUST MEETING

Vince Middeldorp



Noel Rose welcomes second guest speaker St John Health shuttle team leader Lindsay Roberts

Lindsay began by saying how he normally gave a talk on the history of St John, but after hearing Bob Barrett, we would all be bored to death listening about that. So he gave an impromptu talk on his time working for St John.

On his 10th birthday in 1957, Lindsay joined the St John Ambulance Brigade as a cadet. He spent the next few years in uniform, running around on football fields at places such as Cornwall Park and providing first aid at the Epsom Showgrounds. He also spent time as a young cadet in the first aid huts on Rangitoto Island. These huts are now all gone.

Lindsay went to Auckland Grammar School and had a classmate who was the son of a senior officer in the St John Ambulance Association. That connection enabled him as a sixteen-year-old to go out on the ambulances during his school holidays when the minimum age for being on the ambulance was eighteen. He thought he looked crash hot in his uniform, but was sure everyone could see they were dealing with a kid.

When Lindsay left school, he joined the St John Ambulance Association. It is not the same as the St John Ambulance Brigade. The St John Ambulance Association are the full-time guys and volunteers that go out on the ambulances.

In those days, the 1960s, St John were operating the grey and white Dodge F100 ambulances. They were wonderful vehicles and were equipped with Tait radio-telephones. However, they had one silly red light on the roof and a pathetic siren on the bumper. You would turn the siren on and it would start to wind up like an old fire station alarm. At maximum noise, they couldn't be heard more than a few yards away.



Grey and white Dodge ambulances were being used the 1960s

Ambulance drivers worked eight-hour shifts and Lindsay started on the 8:00 am to 4:00 pm shift. On his first day, he went to a collapse on a bus at the Victoria Street flyover. The passenger was dead and had to be taken to the mortuary.

The ambulance driver was good to Lindsay and said, "You don't have to go into the morgue if you don't want to." Lindsay replied, "It's part of the job; you have to learn how to do it," and went inside where he met the head mortician, Dr Death. He was a strange character with strong glasses, which made his eyes look weird and he would wear a white apron with blood all over it. Lindsay thought he wore the blood-soaked apron to scare new ambulance drivers and young policemen.

His next job was at Queen's Wharf, where a steel hawser (a large rope for towing, mooring, or securing a ship) had snapped and cut through the legs of two men working on the ship. That was his introduction as an eighteen-year-old working for St John.

Lindsay said it was often scary driving at speed down a road with someone who thinks they own the road and thinks everyone knows they are coming. The law requires drivers to pull over but it doesn't always happen. Some drivers, who do pull over, drive down the middle of the road. Other drivers are in the middle of the road because they are unaware of the ambulance. They then panic and pull sharp to the left just as the ambulance is going though at 80 km/hr.

When Lindsay started, there were only two ambulances on the night shift for the whole of Auckland. One would be at the Pitt Street station in the City and the other at the Matai Street station in Ellerslie. However, there were other ambulance drivers designated as the third call who lived in the Pitt Street station at reduced rent. They could be called to get out of bed, get dressed and take an ambulance out to a job.

One night Lindsay went from the Matai Road Station to an accident out the back of Papakura, near Clevedon, which was a car into a bridge. On his way to the hospital, he was called to another accident in Helensville, which was a car that had driven into a creek. It was a lot of fun, but sometimes a bit scary.

One such scary occasion was when Lindsay went to a motorcycle accident with another officer who was lightly built and five foot nine inches tall. The accident was on Great South Road, just past Dilworth School. When they arrived on the scene, there were about 20 motorcyclists wearing leather jackets on one side of the road from one gang and another 20 motorcyclists wearing leather jackets on the other side of the road from another gang. There was also one police car with two cops.

Lindsay said, "Back in those days, the uniform was respected by just about everyone. We thought we were invincible because pretty well we were. We would go into a bar at the six o'clock swill and if the fight was over with someone injured and if anyone started to abuse us or push us, someone would say, It's St John you silly bugger, leave them alone." These days there is an assault on an ambulance driver in Auckland about once a week.

The gang members on Great South Road had been yelling abuse at one another because the motorcyclist who had knocked the injured motorcyclist off his motorbike was from the rival gang. One of the cops came over and said in a loud voice, "The only thing wrong with this guy is that the motorcyclist that hit him didn't come back and drive over him." Lindsay and his fellow ambulance officer thought the situation was a loaded gun and couldn't get the injured gang member on the stretcher and out of there fast enough.

Another incident Lindsay vividly recalls happened because he had Higher First Aid and Advanced First Aid qualifications. He went out to Herne Bay, where a Samoan lady was in labour. His colleague looked at Lindsay and said, "You know what you're doing, don't you? I'll go out in the cab and do the paperwork. You can deliver the baby." At eighteen years old, Lindsay delivered his first baby. Subsequently he has delivered about a dozen including his own daughter, which was very special.

Lindsay remained an ambulance driver for three years, but there was no money in it. Winstone truck drivers earned more money than ambulance drivers. To make ends meet, ambulance drivers were moonlighting as taxi drivers at nights and on weekends.

Lindsay decided he owed it to himself to resign, but he remained a volunteer for the next nineteen years doing shifts in the evenings and weekends.

In today's world where everyone is bogged down with Health and Safety protocols, if someone rings and reports a heart attack, the controller will try to send two ambulances and a rapid response car. Failing that an ambulance and fire crew might be sent out. Back in the day when Lindsay started on the ambulances, you were it. If you wanted help, you walked out on the street and flagged down the first truckie that came past. All truckies would stop and then

you would say, “Mate, I just need a lift to get this guy in the back of the ambulance.” The answer would always be, “Sure, no problem.” Try that today and you will probably get run over.



George Wilder’s three escapes from prison in the 1960s made him a national sensation

Lindsay finished his talk with a story about his being involved in the capture of Mt Eden prison escaper George Wilder. It was 4.00 o’clock and Lindsay was heading down Dominion Road back to Matai Road. He was called on the radio telephone and told that he had to go to a side road off Dominion Road, where police were in attendance and might need an ambulance. He went up the side street and was told George Wilder was baled up in a house. This was before the days of the armed offender’s squad. The police thought George Wilder, who was normally a fairly friendly sort of guy, was under pressure and armed. Lindsay was told he was there in case George Wilder decided to shoot someone. When they had half a dozen men on hand, the police decided to go in and get George Wilder. Lindsay was told, “You can come with us as well. Just keep your head down below the hedge and be there in case anything happens.” George Wilder gave himself up without any hassle.

Lindsay went back to St John about nine years ago as the team leader for the Auckland Health Shuttle Service, which takes people to their medical and hospital appointments. He also re-qualified as an ambulance driver so that now when he wants to so, he can take an ambulance out to an event.



Lindsay is the team leader for the Auckland Health Shuttle Service

At the end of his talk Lindsay said the following about the St John Shuttle Service:

In west Auckland we have two wheel chair capable health shuttles on the road Monday to Friday. We will take you to any West Auckland Health appointment. Most of our people go to Waitakere Hospital, but we will take you to your doctor or GP, dentist for an X-ray, to physiotherapy, for a blood test whatever. There is an 0800 number to call (0800 925 2672). As soon as you know you have an appointment phone and provide your name and address. The night before the appointment you will get a phone call from one of our drivers, they are all volunteers and you will be told what time you will be picked up and about an hour later come back and take you home (most appointments take about an hour). Free Service, wheel chair hoist at the back, the drivers are all first aid trained, we carry a defibrillator. Never had to use it but it is there. It certainly beats paying for a taxi. There is a donation box on the wall and if you want to give us a five us a \$5 or \$10 note that would be appreciated.

A leaflet on this service provides the following additional information.

The shuttle service runs Monday through Friday for appointments between 9:30 am and 1:15 pm. We will take you to any West Auckland medical or dental facility. NB Return journeys not available after 2:30 pm. Our free service covers: Blockhouse Bay (West of Blockhouse Bay Road), Avondale, Kelston, New Lynn, Glendene, Green Bay, Te Atatu South, Titirangi, Te Atatu Peninsula, South Titirangi, Henderson, Western Heights, Woodlands Park, Ranui, Laingholm, Massey, Glen Eden, Royal Heights, Oratia, West Harbour, Sunnyvale, Hobsonville.

RECENT EVENTS

COFFEE MORNING

Vince Middeldorp



Coffee morning at Humbug Cafe in Glen Eden on 18 August

Humbug Cafe in Glen Eden is not the place to take your friends or family if you want to impress them. The coffee is certainly better than I can make in my Breville at home, but the furniture looks as if it has come from some second-hand shop. Trevor Pollard assured me that where we were sitting was not part of the original cafe but was added to it by bashing a hole through the wall to the shop next door to create a doorway. An extension lead running up the wall and over the doorway suggested he was right.

When Peter Cox and I walked in, we were told a booking had been made for ten people, but they didn't know the name of the group. We told them it was for Rebus and a folded piece of paper with Rebus scribbled on it was hurriedly placed on the table with the bunks along the wall. Eventually, eleven of us were seated around the table. Ten members turning up had been a very good estimate. I assume it was made in a phone call from Ian Smith.

The weather was gloomy and raining, which made for poor lighting in the cafe. It resulted in fuzzy photographs from John Mihaljevic's phone and photos from mine, which were complete garbage.

Sadly for the proprietors of the cafes that we go to, they never do any good out of me. I buy a large flat white and am in there for the next two hours. I feel like a bludger most times.

The only other people in the annex to the cafe were some students working on a group assignment. They looked like they might be regulars. They also did not look like the clientele the cafe operator needed to pay the rent and staff wages. I looked at them and thought there are more people like me here.

Don't think that I didn't enjoy the coffee morning. Coffee mornings are always good because of the conversation and the company. In that regard, the coffee morning at Humbug was as good as the other ones I have been to with the club.

UPCOMING EVENT

TRIP TO HOWICK VILLAGE

Vince Middeldorp

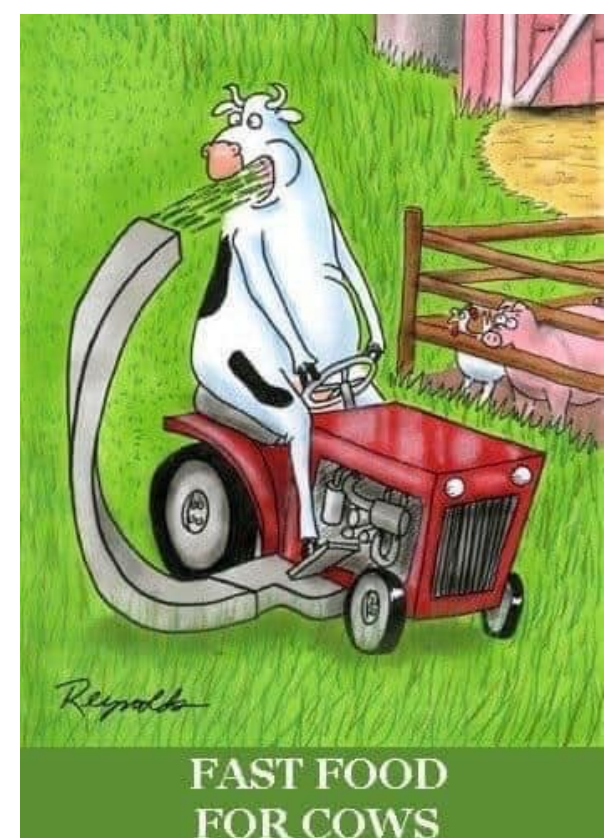
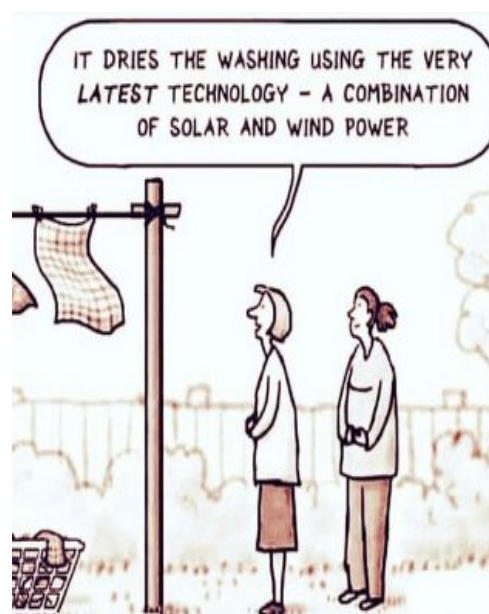
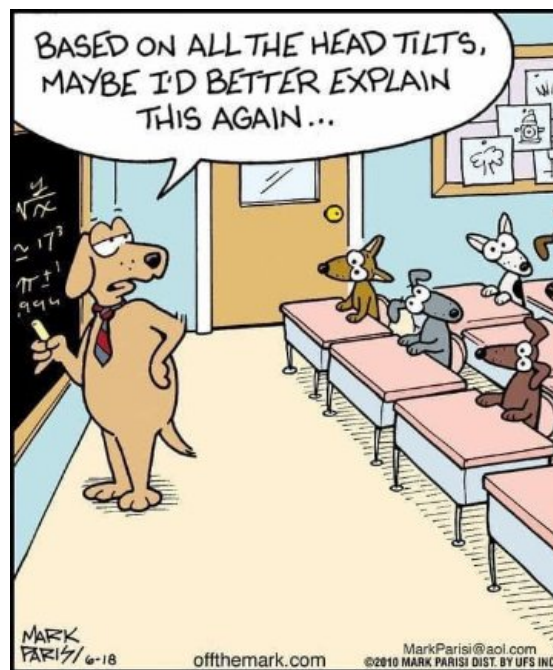
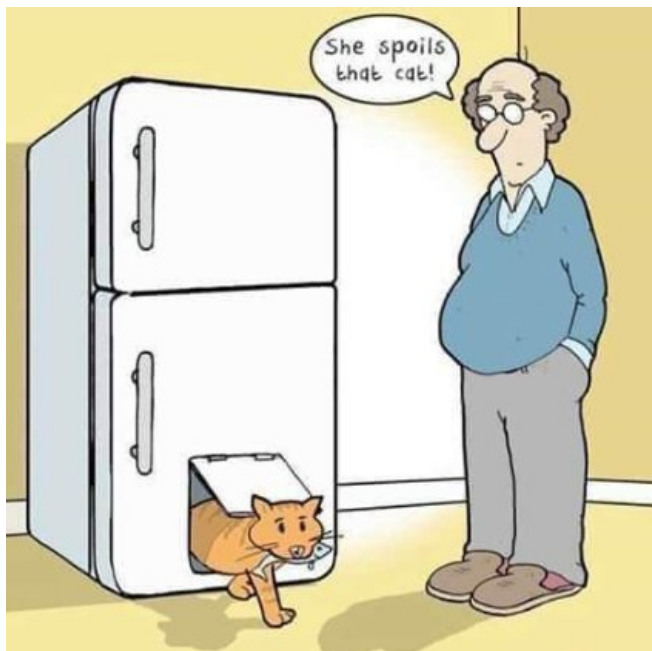
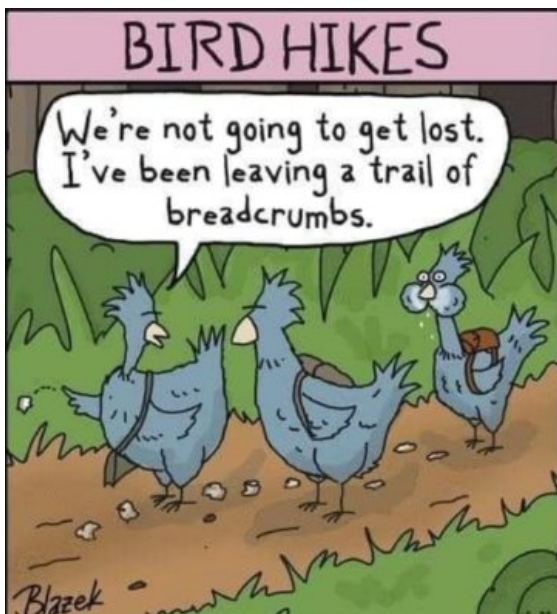
Ian Smith is organising a bus trip to Howick Village on Wednesday 28 September. The cost is \$15 for the bus and \$12 entry fee to the village. Bring your Gold Card because \$12 is the Gold Card price. According to Ian Smith the village is quite nice (John Mihaljevic says the Club went there in 2017 or 2018) and the website for the Village tends to bear this out. Ian would like those going to pay him the bus fare at the meeting on Friday 9 September or pay online into the Waitakere Rebus Bank account 12 3232 0318628 00 one week prior to the trip. The bus will leave from the usual place behind the St John Ambulance Station in Edmonton Road at 10:00 am and arrives back at 2:30 pm.



Howick Historical Village has a website <https://www.historicalvillage.org.nz>

The village website enables you to take a virtual tour of places such as Private John Briody's Fencible Cottage, Howick Arms Hotel, Puhi Nui Homestead, Ararimu Valley School, Wesleyan Methodist Church, Howick Court House, and James White's General Store and Post Office. These are all located in the historical village.

CARTOONS



OTHER

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Charles Nicholls is a JP, and has offered fellow members his services as such, as per:

I am available to assist members with any documents that need a JP to sign. Our services are free. I can be contacted on this email cdnich300@gmail.com or on my landline 09 6293816 or as a last resort on my cell phone 02102551937.

If members cannot get to my house, I will visit people in their homes or meet them at one of our meetings.

Services are free. If members want a JP and for some reason I am not available they can access the following website <https://justiceofthepeace.org.nz/>.

While all JPs can act, I recommend that clients go to one that has the word accredited by his/her name as that means she/he has kept up with recent training.

SOS EYEWEAR MT ROSKILL

Vince Middeldorp

If you don't know about this place and wear glasses you need to. It is a little factory unit at Unit 3A/157 Stoddard Road, and is full of people repairing glasses nearly all which come in on the courier from opticians around the country.

They provide an incredibly good service. For example I broke my metal framed glasses and they needed to be welded back together. I walked in and was told it would cost \$5 and if I came back in ten minutes they would be ready for me. I then said the anti-reflective coating was bubbling off the plastic lenses, resulting in a splotchy surface and asked if they could they fix that. They told they could strip the anti-reflective coating off but I would have to leave them overnight. When I picked them up next day, my glasses looked like new.



Titanium weld on the inside of my metal glasses frame done by SOS Eyewear

SUPPORTERS

West Auckland Mens Rebus gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance of:



The Society is always there for us, with help, advice and encouragement.



We are all grateful for their support.

***Our meetings are held on the second Friday of the month
at the New Lynn Friendship Hall 3063 Great North Road***

The October Meeting date is Friday 14 October 2022

If anyone has any views, opinions, information, requests or questions they want to share with members, please do not hesitate to send them to vince@rebuswestauckland.nz, so that they can be included in the Newsletter. Remember, it is YOUR Newsletter: feel free to contribute to it as you will.