



## Newsletter to Keep the Wheel Turning



**President:** Jeanette Thorne

**Secretary:** Richard Ryan

**Meeting location:** Royal Oak Bowls, 146 Selwyn Street, Onehunga, Auckland

**Time:** Monday evening 5:30pm for 6 p.m. start to 7:30pm, includes \$25 dinner

**Mail:** PO Box 29086 Greenwoods Corner, Epsom

**Web:** <https://www.rotarymaungakiekie.org.nz/>

Rotary

## APRIL ENVIRONMENT

*"We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all"*

*Wangari Maathai*



## Newsletter 167, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Present:** 20

**Apologies:** Phil Aish, George Arulanantham, Alan Bannin, Gwynyth Carr, Bruce Glegg, Hayat Shameen, Robin Hulford, Craig Jones, Rod Kestle, Cat Levine, Duncan Macdonald, Barry Stafford, Jeanette Thorne, George Varghese.

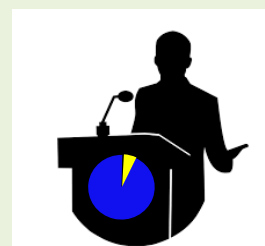
**Sergeant's fines:** \$

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deputy-ring-in-Vice-Vice President **Bill Grayson** greeted Members on behalf of President Jeanette who was unable to attend this evening.

Bill introduced **Joanna Baynes** our 5-Minute Speaker who will talk about her children's book charity, and main Guest Speaker, **Neil Little**, who will talk about Davis Funerals and the changing face of funerals today.

**Barry** sends his apologies as he and Beverly are down in Blenheim greeting their newest grandchild.



*5-minute Speaker*

**Joanna Baynes**, shared her inspiring journey in the distribution of children's books. Having served as a primary school librarian for 35 years before retiring in 2022, Joanna embarked on a new endeavour, founding The [Story Store](#), a registered charitable trust.

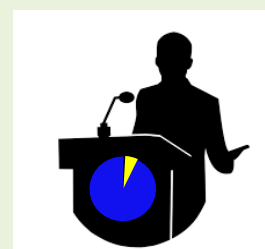
During her tenure at the high decile school she was at, Joanna often received many good quality books from parents, after they'd cleared out their children's bookshelves. Recognising the surplus and the needs of schools with limited book resources, Joanna began redirecting these donations to those in need. The **Story Store** was born out of this initiative.

Based in Raphoe House in the [Hugh Green Foundation](#) HQ, Gloucester Park Rd, Onehunga, Stories Store provide second-hand, excellent-condition children's books, for free, to schools with little or no budget. Books are carefully selected to resonate with the contemporary young reader, ensuring relevance in the 21st century, unlike the old days when 'any book was a good book'.

At the Rotary meeting, Joanna appealed for modest financial support to sustain the organisation's operations. The Stories Store operates with minimal needs and currently are **requiring a computer and a library trolley**. Joanna recognises the impact of support from the community is immeasurable.

The Story Store is aligned with other educational institutions, also co-located in Raphoe House, under the Education Partnership & Innovation Trust ([EPIT](#)) umbrella. The Story Store is committed to providing excellence in education from pre-school to High School. Joanna encouraged members to explore her organisation's [website](#) where more can be learnt about the cause and how to contribute.

In conclusion, Joanna expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share her passion project with the Rotary Club members. She welcomed any questions or further discussions and emphasised the importance of empowering future generations through the magic of storytelling.



*5-minute Speaker*

**Trevor Mosely** opened asking members to cast their minds back to what memorable event occurred toward the end of 2011. Replies ranged from the lingering aftermath of the global financial crisis to John Key's Prime Ministership. In fact, the obvious answer was, the Rugby World Cup 2011.

This led to Trevor introducing the NZ movie titled **Red, White, and Brass**, released in 2023 [see 1993 movie, *Cool Runnings*]. The movie recounts the fictional yet inspiring journey of two Tongan's, Maka & Veni's, quest to secure tickets to attend the Tonga vs France Rugby World Cup match in Wellington - which had already sold out.

So, Maka came up with an idea of forming a traditional Tongan marching band to play at half time, just so they can get into the game. The problem was, the boys knew nothing about marching or how to play a brass instrument in the four weeks to achieve it. A memorable scene from the film depicted the group's innovative use of plastic milk bottles to practice blowing brass instruments, showcasing typical Tongan resourcefulness and dedication.

Despite the obstacles encountered, the group's perseverance ultimately led to a successful performance at half time. As we reflect on the events of 2011, the story highlighted the vision that the young Tongans had in demonstrating the importance of their cultural identity in a modern world.

And for the record Tonga won the game 19 to 14.



[As a side note, **Bill Grayson** followed on by saying, the **PASS** (Pacific Advance Secondary School) school where our members regular assist with remedial reading, have been approached to assist some of the kids **who want to replicate the event** above]

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**NEIL LITTLE**  
**Davis Funerals**

guest  
speaker

Iain introduced Neil Little who is a seasoned professional in the funeral industry, hails from a background rooted in Dominion Rd, Mount Ross School, and Marcellin College. After completing management studies and gaining funeral service experience overseas, Neil returned to New Zealand to join the family business, [Davis Funeral](#). Over the years, he played a pivotal role in the growth of the company, eventually leading to its integration into a wider network of funeral homes under [Propel Funeral Partners NZ \(PFPNZ\)](#). PFPNZ now have funeral homes from Kaitaia to Invercargill, governed by a NZ/Aust Board of 4/2.

Neil's contributions extend beyond business, as he has been actively involved in various community endeavours, including serving as president of Epsom Rotary and chairing Saint Michael's Parish Council. His leadership in the Funeral Directors Association and directorial roles in related organizations highlight his dedication to the industry's advancement.

Neils great-great grandfather and son started Little and Sons in Hobson St in 1875. Originally cabinet (coffin) makers the family moved into the Funeral service sector. In the 1950's Niel's father broke out of the family business and put a 5/- deposit (20-shillings to £1) on Davis Funerals.

While Neil stepped back from his day-to-day responsibilities at Davis Funeral in 2019, his commitment to the profession remains steadfast. He continues to share his expertise and insights, eagerly engaging with audiences to provide valuable perspectives on funeral services in New Zealand.

During COVID-19, funerals weren't permitted, and Neil noted prior to that people were starting to have smaller funerals, possibly due to financial pressures. Societies of all cultures, for thousands of years, have had funerals. *Not* having funerals is not good for society's wellbeing. By just having a private cremation, many would feel a bit 'robbed' not being able to say farewell.

One of the many advantages of funerals are that you get to learn so much more about the person who has passed.

Neil explained five reasons for funerals:

1. Reality: an opportunity to acknowledge the death.
2. Fairwell aspect: brings people together to say goodbye.
3. Support: brings the community together as support.
4. Gives perspective: affords personal time to self-reflect, especially if the funeral is related to an untimely death.
5. Gives hope: Part of the mechanisms that allows one to (or start to) move on.

People who ask not to have a funeral tend to forget its not for them, but for those remaining. There's a 1997 book by Thomas Lynch titled, [The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade](#), who had a saying "the dead don't care."

So it's always good to discuss or write a letter about personal funeral arrangements with the family beforehand - as it may surprise the family to learn the funeral is paid for, already!

It was surprising to learn back in the 1990's many NZ family-owned funeral businesses were approach and acquired by large oversea companies like Stewart Enterprises, U.S. second largest provider of funeral and cemetery services, and PFPNZ. The good thing was the NZ acquired funeral homes would often continue to trade under their own 'family-owned' name and be left to run as before.

Neil recalled two memorable occasions in his career. One being the at the Marist Brothers Training Centre in Tuakau, who after selling their property need to relocate the local cemetery to Waikaraka Cemetery. This involved a big operation in obtaining permission from all the families, and the Health Department, not to mention digging the graves. The other was driving the hearse at Sir Edmond Hillary's funeral, which was an unforgettable experience - the way NZers lined the streets that day. The vehicles were so new into the country, they hadn't had time to register them to be on the road that day.

In times of need, the funeral industry has a Disaster Response Team. Neil was involved with the Christchurch earthquakes and the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque attack. During these times there is much to do in a short space of time. Timeliness is important and even more so with the Muslim community where bodies should be buried as soon as possible after death. Teams of embalmers are set up while others co-ordinate the release of the bodies to groups of Funeral Directors who came to Christchurch to return the bodies home around NZ or to overseas.

It may be surprising to learn, some companies also operate Pet Crematoriums. These can be the loveliest environment for owners to say farewell to their family pet.

## Q&A

### Is there cross-contamination of ashes?

It is inevitable. Cremation chambers are swept out each time. Only one body is cremated at a time. Metal and plastic coffin handles are removed beforehand. Bone fragments are put into a cremulator which grinds any remains to a fine powder. A magnet is used to remove other metals which are recycled.

### Cost of funerals?

Including funeral services, flowers, web streaming, printing, catering for 100 and burial plot, costs can be \$10,000 - \$30,000. Burial plots provide the right to 'use' the plot – not to 'own' it. Plots can be pre-purchased and while the cost of plots go up, cremation costs remain low.

### Is there a way to get around putting caskets on shoulders especially for older folk?

Its actually easier to carry caskets it on the shoulders than by hand. It comes down to good placement of the shortest at the front, tallest at the back, rather than in order of importance to the family.

**Peter Mayow** thanked Neil for providing a rare insight to the funeral business and said he was surprised to learn of the degree of overseas ownerships of NZ Funeral services. Peter also commented on the usefulness of the Davis Funerals "Future Planning" booklet.

Incidentally, Peter mentioned his son, Nick Mayow, Co-Directed/Produced a 2017 multi-award winning short documentary called [After Life](#), which is "an enthralling look inside the hidden world of a New Zealand funeral home."

*Nothing is certain except death and taxes (Benjamin Franklin, 1789).*

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## COMING UP



**Waitangi Copthorne Hotel - Paihia**  
**19th - 21st April 2024**

**Annual District 9910 Conference.**  
**19-21 April 2024.**

### **Rundown:**

- Fri night: Welcome
- Sat: Conf. & all meals
- Sun: Conf. & morning tea

Discounted Copthorne Waitangi Hotel rooms finish on 19TH March, so get in quick.

**FULL CONFERENCE \$220pp.**  
**PARTNER DINNER ONLY \$100pp.**

Registration and Accom see:  
[rotaryconference9910.org.nz](http://rotaryconference9910.org.nz)

**Please note:**

**The ANZAC ceremony at the Epsom War Memorial is CANCELLED THIS YEAR**



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## **THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK** (provided by Ernie Meyer)

My mission in life is not merely to survive but to thrive; and do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style." (*Maya Angelou, US biographer, poet and civil rights activist*).

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# DUTIES

Unable to attend > apologies to Noel: [noelcarey@hotmail.com](mailto:noelcarey@hotmail.com)

Unable for a duty > arrange own replacement & text Noel: Mb: 0274 509 845

<p><b>Meeting: 6pm Mon. 15<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024</b>  <b>President:</b> Jeanette Thorne  <b>Vice President:</b> Barry Stafford  <b>Sergeant:</b> Noel Carey  <b>Attendance:</b> Craig Jones  <b>Hospitality:</b> Iain McCrae  <b>Equipment &amp; Scribe:</b> Tony Rayner  <b>Meals1:</b> Bruce Murdoch  <b>Meals2:</b> Derek Neutze  <b>Host:</b> Peter Mayow  <b>5-Min:</b> [Video] NZ Youth Mentoring Network  <b>Guest:</b> Lloyd Albiston: Adventures in Western Australia  <b>Thanks:</b> Ernie Meyer  <b>Thought:</b> Trevor Mosley</p>	<p><b>Meeting: 6pm Mon. 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2024</b>  <b>President:</b> Jeanette Thorne  <b>Vice President:</b> Barry Stafford  <b>Sergeant:</b> Noel Carey  <b>Attendance:</b> Iain McCrae  <b>Hospitality:</b> Peter Mayow  <b>Equipment &amp; Scribe:</b> Bill Appleton  <b>Meals1:</b> Derek Neutze  <b>Meals2:</b> Barry Stafford  <b>Host:</b> Ernie Meyer  <b>5-Min:</b> Bill Grayson: Reminiscences of an old sailor!  <b>Guest:</b> tbc  <b>Thanks:</b> Rhett Stevens  <b>Thought:</b> Bruce Murdoch</p>
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