

MARCH 2025

Valley Voice

Te Reo Hapori o Waimapihi – the Aro Valley Community Newsletter



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See us in colour online: You can see this Valley Voice online as a PDF by going to the web page arovalley.org.nz/valley-voice or using the QR code above.

Photos – including old Papers Past clippings – are much clearer in colour!

Valley Voice is published on behalf of the Aro Valley Community Council Inc, 48 Aro St, Wellington.

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and not of the AVCC unless adopted at a General Meeting.

Photographs and text are by the credited authors or the Editor, Brent Efford.

Contributions welcome

Contributions – councillors' comments, poems, articles, letters, photos, historical snippets, news of events, business news, etc – relevant to the Aro Valley community are very welcome. Please email to: brent.efford@me.com

When sending photographs or scans, please attach as separate .jpg, .pdf, .tiff, .png etc files – not as part of .docx or text files.

The deadline for Valley Voice articles and photos is set to enable distribution of paper copies early in the month.

Our next issue is **April 2025**, the deadline for receiving contributions is **Wednesday 19 March**.



The Wellington Carnival Street Band is one of the capital's finest joy-sparking musical ensembles for families! Specialists in bringing rambunctious fun to festivals, parades, and streets. We did a Christmas concert for children in Aro Park last December and we will be doing a set around lunchtime at Aro Fair on **Saturday March 8th**. Dress up in your brightest colours and win spot prizes for outfits and dancing.

Making our Voice heard

Valley Voice is 'published' on the Thursday before the first weekend of the issue month. This means that the coloured PDF goes on the website arovalley.org.nz/valley-voice, subscribers are notified by email, and posters appear at the Community Centre and shop noticeboards.

However, getting printed B&W copies into letterboxes all around the Aro Valley takes a little longer, even with the help of volunteers, has a cost and tends to be 'patchy'. Ways of meeting the cost are discussed on page 4.

Glenn from Argo Trust, one of our volunteers, delivering Valley Voice in Aro St.



Come to the Fair ...

Aro Valley Fair

Saturday 8 March, 10 am,

Aro Park and Aro Valley Community Centre
(Rain day Sunday 9th)

Who are we?

Introducing the AVCC Committee, part 2

We are fortunate to start the year with all Aro Valley Community Council Committee positions filled.

Half the Committee introduced themselves in the February Valley Voice – now two more of the new members say who they are:

Jacqueline Nordon: Kia ora, I'm a performing arts teacher specialising in music. I play in the Wellington Carnival Street Band and the Wellington City Orchestra. I moved from the UK to here in late 90s and have lived in the Valley for about 12 years now. I am keen on environmental projects and love to grow fruit and veges. I'm also interested to discover more about our local bi-cultural history. Ngā mihi nui.

Morgan Clark: I lived here in Aro Valley as a student and a dozen years on have recently purchased my first home on Norway Street. I have always enjoyed the valley because it feels forgotten in a good way and smacks of being an inclusive place that decides it's own future. I'm proud to have joined the AVCC so soon after the pandemic put a lid on things and I feel like we have such a wonderful opportunity to breathe life back into our community. I have been many things in my life but I was probably best suited to life as a chef and a teacher. I look forward to meeting the people who make up our little corner of Wellington.

From our Committee ...

The 18 February meeting of the Aro Valley Community Council Committee covered the following points:

- **The monthly AVCC committee meeting was held on 18 February.** It was fantastic to have so many new faces there.
- Unfortunately, long time committee member **Stu Print has resigned.** This was accepted with regret and acknowledgement of his contribution over several years.
- The semi annual **on-site visit by the WCC Community Centre liaison person** was on Tuesday 18 March. She did not have any concerns about us. The AVCC committee representatives again raised the ongoing concerns that there was **unfinished work from the Hall refurbishment**, and that there are concerns about the quality of some of the completed work. It was agreed we will continue to work together to resolve these.
- Committee members agreed to their volunteer roles for the Fair. **More volunteers for the day would be great.**
- A plea was made for **sponsors for Valley Voice**, so that it can be an 8-page newsletter, which so many people have said they really enjoy. [See page 4.]

Anti-stalking Bill submission

As foreshadowed in the February Valley Voice, the AVCC Committee has put in a submission on the Anti-stalking and Harassment Amendment Bill currently before Parliament. The background to our involvement and the whole ghastly story is covered in The Spinoff: "[I need to make you suffer': My near decade of violent harassment by a man I barely know](#)"

The submission was based on the known experience of people living in Aro Valley, now and in the past. It supported stalking and harassment being included in the Crimes Act 1961, to provide a stronger and clearer criminal justice response. The purpose of the submission was to support:

- Acknowledgement that stalking and harassment behaviour has a serious, ongoing impact on the well-being of individuals, their whanau and their wider communities.
- More effective deterrents are required to reduce the incidence of stalking and harassment.

Most aspects of the Bill were supported. For example, a clearer basis for Police to take action.

However, to improve the well-being outcomes for all the people who are the target of (or impacted by) stalking and harassment, and the communities they belong to, additional recommendations were included. For example, added to the definition of specified act: the addition of implicit or explicit threats, and leaving of unwanted items.

The rationale is to include acts that may not be considered stalking if considered in isolation, can be considered within the context of the other acts of the stalker that are clearly linked to the stalking.

A "husband-beating parasol" and a "sound thrashing"

Meanwhile, the offending outlined in The Spinoff is not the first example of sexually predatory behaviour in the Aro Valley, as per this clipping from 1889:

We are informed that a short thick-set man with a red beard has recently been prowling about Wordsworth-street, Hill-street, and other quiet localities accosting little girls, behaving rudely to them, and endeavouring to make improper appointments with them. Several such cases have been reported to us. On Saturday, the mother of one of the children who had been accosted, had the man pointed out to her by the child who had just been spoken to. The mother followed him into Upper Willis-street and administered what personal chastisement she was able with her husband-beating parasol, which she broke over him. Her son then appeared on the scene, the man trying to escape over the Terrace, but he was overtaken and a sound thrashing administered. A policeman could not be found or the fellow would have been given into custody. Parents should beware of allowing young girls to go out in lonely streets by themselves, and the police should be on the alert.

Evening Post 3/12/1889

Common to this Victorian example and our recent experience was the difficulty in obtaining an adequate response from the constabulary!

Fairs past ...

The Aro Valley Fair has been a community fixture for years. A look at some of the old ones:...



2024 – good causes and good vibes



2018 – stalls on the court



2010 – music always a feature



2009 – sun fun

From our elected reps ...

LTP and a water entity

After such a lousy January, it was a relief to once again enjoy a stunning February. I look forward to another lively discussion on the Constitution (an Aro Valley favourite) as I write this piece and the of course the always brilliant Aro Valley Fair. In a world in some turmoil, it is a relief that there are many great communities like Aro Valley that bring people together rather than tearing them apart.

There has been a lot going on at your council. The biggest thing is our annual budget and Long Term Plan. We have a very long list of issues that we will be talking with the community about. We are talking about setting up a new water entity that would control the city's water assets, selling some of our ground leases to help set up a Disaster Resilience Fund, fencing the waterfront, management options for a new reserve on the Miramar Peninsula and options to save Wellington's beloved Begonia House amongst others.

I am deeply concerned about this new water entity and think there needs to be a lot more public debate about it. Transferring assets to another entity risks privatisation and a loss of democratic accountability. It will not result in lower rates bills too.

More detail will be available soon on how to submit. Please do, it is too important not too.

Contact: Iona 021-227-8509 or iona.pannett@wcc.govt.nz.

Iona Pannett

Jazz under the trees ...



On Saturday 22 February the **Aro Valley Jam Band** performed for residents in Aro Park. The band can also be enjoyed every second Sunday in the Community Centre – see page 4.



Cicadas – who will sing for us in Summer



Female chorus cicada in Aro Valley, photo Anne Niemetz

It's that special time of the year when the chorus cicadas sing, signalling the end of summer. There are many different types of cicadas around the world, and New Zealand is home to dozens of species, the largest of which is the chorus cicada (*amphipsalta zelandica*). Known in Māori as *kihikihi wawā*, *kihikihi* is an onomatopoeic term mimicking the cicada's sound, while *wawā* means 'to make a loud indistinct noise, roar, rumble'.

While this species holds the title of the loudest cicada in New Zealand, the loudest cicada in the world resides in Africa, recognized as the loudest known insect, capable of producing sounds up to 106.7 decibels at a distance of 50 cm.

A recent walk in Aro Valley with a sound level metre revealed that the average noise level amongst just a few cicada-laden trees easily exceeds 70 decibels, which is loud but still considered a safe level to listen to at extended periods of time.

A common misconception is that cicadas produce sound by rubbing their legs together, as crickets do. In reality, cicadas generate sound through the contraction of their tymbal muscles in their abdomen.

On average, male cicadas sing for two to four weeks, mate, and then die. While female cicadas do not sing, they produce sounds by flicking their wings to signal their interest to males. Sir David Attenborough famously teased a male North American cicada by clicking his fingers, which the cicada mistook for the call of a receptive female.

Cicadas are often found basking in sunny treetops, as light influences their activity, triggering faster chirping and louder calls. An extraordinary behaviour observed in male chorus cicadas is their ability to synchronize their songs. Cicadas in close proximity coordinate their calls to amplify their volume, signaling to females: "this is the place

with the most attractive males."

My fascination with the chorus cicada led me to make a participatory electronic art installation titled *Kihikihi*, which was premiered last December at the Thistle Hall gallery. In the *Kihikihi* installation, the audience can activate 'electronic insects' by placing them on 'electronic trees'. The audience is invited to explore the sonic, tactile and visual relationships through play: they can pick up insects, place them on the sculptural plants, explore successful placements, and once contact is made, the insect starts glowing and chirping. Each insect has a unique rhythm. The insects form an insect orchestra, their voices blending and interweaving into a polyrhythmic sound cloud.

While the interaction is playful, this participatory installation provokes contemplation on the deeper interwovenness of our natural environment and the importance of insects to human survival. Robot insects are already being developed to replace natural pollinators in the food industry. If the world-wide insect decline continues at its rapid rate, will artificial insects be our only option? Beyond their functional contributions to the ecosystem, what are we losing culturally and emotionally? Who will sing for us in summer?

You can find more information about the *Kihikihi* installation at <http://kihikihi.info>

Anne Niemetz

Feb 2025

Valley Voice – going a bit more commercial?

You may have noticed that this issue of Valley Voice has only four pages, whereas eight has been usual for most of the last few months. The reason is very simple: although VV, in common with nearly every publication these days, is compiled as a computer file in PDF format, it is printing this file on paper that determines the size of the publication.

Despite most denizens of the Aro Valley being computer-savvy digital natives, there is still a widespread desire for the community newsletter to be distributed on paper before it is considered truly 'published'.

Therein lies the rub – or, rather, the cost. Creating the PDF, which goes on the AVCC website, is a costless, voluntary, labour of love for an old pensioner (me) and the many supporters who contribute text and photos with no expectation of payment (or likelihood of getting any!)

Printing that PDF file onto (a) 1,000 pieces of folded paper, or (b) 2,000 pieces of folded and stapled paper in the case of an eight-pager, clearly comes with a commercial cost. We have just enough money in the AVCC budget to cover (a) but not the doubled cost of (b) on a regular basis.

In this age of austerity, no extra funding for eight pages is likely from City Council or charitable trust sources ... so support from advertising, or commercial sponsors, is the obvious solution.

Most community papers, and all mainstream media rely on advertising revenue in some form. Even earlier iterations of our community newsletter had advertising support. Back in 1990, when I started the Aro Valley News (which only lasted a few years) we had extensive advertising and even had a local sales representative who sold advertising space on commission!

The other advantage of advertising is that it supports local businesses.

Although the Aro Valley Community Council constitutionally includes local business owners as much as residents, few take part in our activities – at least advertising in Valley Voice would support our newsletter while attracting local customers to their businesses.

The total space taken up by advertising should not be excessive, otherwise the benefit of printing more pages will be lost. There are various options:

(a) No advertising and stick to four pages – missing out a lot of good stuff about local history, local environmental action and issues, creative contributions, poetry, etc.

(b) Have four printed pages covering the basic AVCC Committee issues, political comment etc but a supplement, only in the online PDF, covering the 'good stuff' mentioned in (a)

(c) Have eight pages and a single sponsor who has a half-page or full page ad which would be enough to pay for the extra printing each month, or have a whole page divided into smaller ads for as many businesses as want to take part – it could look like the 1911 classified advertising in the February



Regular classes & activities ~ March 2025 ~

Day	Time	Class	Price	CONTACT
Mondays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Mondays	6:30 - 7:30pm	Foreign Language Class	Contact for price	info@foreignlanguages.co.nz
Tuesdays	12am - 12:45pm	Chair yoga with Kristin	\$8/\$10 or koha	022 694 1197 kristingiorgi@gmail.com
Tuesdays	6:00 - 7:00pm	Community free yoga	Free	mark@hotmetal.nz
Tuesdays	6:30 - 7:30pm	Foreign Language Class	Contact for price	info@foreignlanguages.co.nz
Wednesdays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Wednesdays	1 - 2pm	Dance 4 Us With Dance Therapy NZ	Gold coin (If possible)	(09) 636 3029
Wednesdays	6 - 7:30pm	Afro Brazilian Dance	\$132 term or koha	admin@dancetherapy.co.nz afrobrazilian dances.ba@gmail.com
Wednesdays Fortnightly	7:45 - 9:45pm	Argentine Tango	\$10	021 542 7136 irinatangon.z@gmail.com
Thursday	4:30 - 6:30pm	Trash Planet Beat Clinic	Koha	contact@olmecha.com
Fridays	8:30 - 9:30am	Tai Chi with Yi Ching	Koha	community@arovalley.org.nz
Fridays	10:30 - 12pm	Community Singing With Jo Shrigley	\$15/\$100 Per term	jshrigley@gmail.com
Fridays	12:30 - 1:30pm	Handstand Workshop	\$20	021 996 782 nicolas@oni.co.nz
Sundays	4:30 - 5:30pm	Community free yoga	Free	mark@hotmetal.nz
Sunday Fortnightly (2nd, 16th)	2 - 4pm	Aro Valley Jazz Jam with Aro Valley Jam Band	Drop in & play or listen	community@arovalley.org.nz

Community Co-ordinator: Ahmen Mahal 384 8499

48 Aro St, community@arovalley.org.nz

Office hours: Wednesday closed;

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 2pm; Friday 12 – 4pm

Aro Valley Community Centre – managed by the Aro Valley Community Council

issue.

Option (c) and any variant which involves obtaining advertising will require a volunteer to sign up businesses, obtain copy and maybe write stories which could go into the 'news' columns. I can't manage that in addition to current Valley Voice work.

Let me know your thoughts, to brent.afford@me.com. Any business-oriented volunteer to do the work involved in Option (c) would be welcomed – and would make sure that we enjoy eight pages of Valley Voice.

Brent Efford

Aro Valley Fair 8 March

Be part of the fun – stall sites still available!

Contact Ahmen:

04 384 8499 or

community@arovalley.org.nz