

APRIL DOCUMENT 2006

FROM THE COMMITTEE

The summer series/school series has again been a success, with some spectacular numbers attending (at Logan Park all 100 maps were used). The committee also feels that the level of difficulty has been about right this year. Probably more people are needed at the caravan at busy times, and also to help newcomers get started and select a suitable course. The school series ends with the Sunday event at Allans Beach, after which points will be calculated. Making the transition from Wednesday evening to Sunday events seems to be a bit trickier, and some ideas were discussed to help with this.

President Myles has made a list of all the jobs which need to be done to keep the club running. It's quite a long list and some people have indicated that they don't want to do the job again that they have been doing. So if you would like to help with something, don't be shy, volunteer! And if not you may well be tapped on the shoulder and asked.

NEWS OF PAST MEMBER

Wayne Patrick married his American girlfriend Monica at Danseys Pass in March.

FROM OTHER CLUBS NEWSLETTERS

PAPO report that they had 920+ people at their CCC Family Day event in February! They knew it would be big, as previous years have seen over 600 entrants, but promotion by the City Council saw the numbers soar to new heights. White course 280+, Yellow course 280+, Long Yellow 100+, Orange 100+, MTBO 140+. The event was organised by Andrew McGowan, with over 40 PAPO members involved in the running of the event. It will be interesting to see how many new participants they get out of the exercise!

Compass Points, magazine of the Hawkes Bay club, has "Volunteer of the Month". In January it was Paul Smith and in February Geoff Morrison. Their president Hamish Goodwin gashed his head in the Tararua 24 Rogaine but fortunately his running partner patched him up in time for them to gain second place. Quite a lot of their magazine is about this rogaine and the Kaweka Challenge, giving the impression they are a very strong bunch of people. Their club also helps to run the Kaweka Challenge.

The Wellington magazine Punch has a photo of me (Jane F) on the cover! It is from the back and only I would know it was me – but can this be fame at last? Also in this magazine, accounts of some of the after-work rogaine series (2 and 3 hour events, numbers of entrants in the 50-60 range). These events must be a great preparation for longer rogaines.

HERE AND THERE

Jane Forsyth

Well I've been having lots of fun so far this year! A spell in Te Anau encouraged me to get down to Invercargill for a couple of events with the friendly Southland club. What a contrast they were! At the end of January the event was at Bluff Hill, on farmland on the back side of the bushy hill you drive up to get the view over Foveaux Strait. The map has an excellent view of the strait too and I suppose it can be pretty grim in a howling southerly or westerly. However on the day I was there it was nearly 30 degrees (I'm not making this up, it really can get hot down there) and I finished up pretty well boiled alive. The other feature of the map is rocks – lots of them – and they are magnetic! Yes they do affect your compass as the rock type has a lot of iron in it. Fortunately the

planner warned me about this, otherwise I could have got even more bamboozled than I did. That's what I mean about them being friendly in Southland! Or maybe it was more that they didn't want to wait till midnight for me to finish.

The second event I did with SOC could not have been more different. This time it was a squally southerly with strong winds, pelting rain showers, you name it. This event was at Fosbender, and was partly in pine forest. At one stage it got so dark under one of those big black clouds I could hardly see the map. And once out in the open the rain just about flattened me. However none of those things excuse me for making just about every mistake in the book! Orienteers need to be able to concentrate no matter what the elements throw at them, and I still have a way to go on that score.

For both events I chose the long red course, thinking I would get my money's worth having come such a long way. So I ended up last both times – but it is fun to run on different maps and I enjoyed the experience.

Next highlight on the calendar was the Tararua 24 national rogaine champs. As soon as I heard about this event I just had to enter – I wasted most of my youth in the Tararuas, so to combine my new sport of orienteering with my old one of tramping was too good to miss. I posted a “partner wanted” on a couple of websites and got a lot of very fit-sounding men replying! But in the end I teamed up with Kathrin Mueller from PAPO whom I had run with before in my only other 24 hour race. (The one where I said “never again”.)

There has obviously been a lot of tectonic activity since I left Wellington, as the hills are much higher and steeper. Also the deer have been slacking and the undergrowth has got very bad. And they don't make lace-up rubber gumboots (known in my old tramping club as Tararua slippers) like they used to either, cos the pair I bought turned my toenails black. So quite a lot of things seem to have changed, and not for the better!

Not being able to rely on my usual rogaine partner's strategic savvy, I had to make the decisions myself. My game plan was based on tracks, as cross-country travel is slow and difficult in this terrain. We planned a good-sized loop for the first 12 hours, planning on coming back to the base for a kip and then a smaller loop in the morning. This proved to be a good choice to start with, but at dusk we happened to be on a really manky section of track (a cutty-grass slip area) and lost quite a bit of time there finding the route again.

Boulder-hopping up stream beds in the dark was not too good either, with several crashes, and around midnight I called “Enough” (plus some other less printable words) and stopped at a hut for a rest. I would have said sleep but we didn't have enough gear to be really comfortable and it was more of a 6-hour long shiver. But by daylight it was all go again and we made it round the rest of the first loop and a little of the second one before time was up. We gained enough points to win (narrowly) the Womens Vet class and a very ugly brass boot trophy.

Even before my toenails had fallen off, it was time for another rogaine, the 13-hour Bakers Dozen on Rocklands Station near Middlemarch. Kathrin asked me to join her again (she is a very forgiving person and had apparently forgotten my bad language in the Tararuas), but I had already entered with Myles, in the 6-hour which is his preferred length. So this time we were a Mixed Vet team, with our main opposition in that class being the Footes from Southland and the Hudsons. We were first to the first control but after that no-one followed us on our route to the second one, which Myles remarked on at the time and with hindsight it was a bit ominous. However we persevered with our game plan, and in fact Myles's planning was so good that we did complete the whole large loop we had hoped for. The clues were cryptic but posed no difficulty for us, although I hear a few people got to the site and could not find the control, which would be a real bummer. I

must say I do prefer a proper flag! These controls were a word on a piece of plastic wired on to the control feature.

Right at the end we tried for a final 20 points but due to brain fatigue Myles misread the clue. I didn't pick up the mistake either, and we spent some time in fast-fading light looking for the wrong feature before deciding to run for home. We made it with 5 minutes to spare, much better than our previous effort where we finished with less than a minute which is too close for comfort. However a final surprise was in store, as after finishing we were quizzed on the control words and had to remember as many as possible. Having not read the instructions properly we weren't expecting this and flunked the test. Lesson: next time read the instructions! Oh, and the Footes beat us (again).