

*doing more*  
*with less!*



**Amputee Society**

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## June 2015: Contents

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## Quote of the Month:

You can't have a better tomorrow if you are thinking about yesterday all the time. **Charles F Kettering**

## Fun Fact

What big shoes to fill !!! The Statue of Liberty has US women's size 879 shoes.

## Editor's Message

*(Disclaimer: The information contained in this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of the Amputee Society of Canterbury/Westland)*

Greetings to all members and their families. As I bring to you my first attempt at the bi-monthly newsletter, I sincerely hope that this edition finds you well and in good spirits as we approach the shortest day of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer gratitude and thanks to the previous editor, Sue Lemieux, who has done a sterling job over the last few years. With her and Joanne's invaluable help, they have guided me through this first issue and I am indebted to both of them for their patience and knowledge. I am now most certainly aware that compiling the newsletter is no easy task and it takes a considerable amount of time and effort so once again, I thank Sue for all her hard work for the society. Sue, we wish you well for the future as you make preparations to "emigrate" back to sunny Port St Lucie in Florida and please rest assured, we will be excited to see and spend time with you whenever you come back in NZ.

An issue that irked me recently was the controversy surrounding our Prime Minister's actions with "Ponygate". I do not in any way condone his actions but I was incensed that certain members of our news media chose to dishonour the 100 year Anzac commemorations at Gallipoli by continuing to question John Key about his actions when in my mind, they should have been concentrating on remembering and honouring our brave fallen soldiers. They call it news !!!!!!!!!!!



Affiliated with the Amputee's Federation of New Zealand Inc.

## Society News

### REPORT FROM AMPUTEE FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE WELLINGTON APRIL 2015

It was planned for eight (8) members of the Society to attend the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in Wellington over the weekend of April 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>.

Due to unforeseen circumstances of family related health issues, 2 members were unable to travel and negotiations have been entered into with Air NZ to hold these airfares as credits for future use.



*Life member, Heather Plows & The Governor-General.*

The conference was opened by His Excellency Lieutenant-General the Right Honourable Sir Jerry Mataparae, Governor-General of New Zealand on Friday evening before the AGM of the Federation. All present were extremely impressed with his friendly & engaging personality and he took the time to mingle throughout the room and personally speak to every person present.

A successful AGM was conducted and Canterbury/Westland was awarded the right to host next year's conference over the weekend of April 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

A subcommittee has been established to plan for this event and they will report back to the executive & membership as matters progress. This committee will be seeking funds by way of sponsorship, fundraising & donations to assist with the requirements of the host Society. Due to some greatly appreciated donations already received, a fantastic base has been set to assist in the successful hosting of this important event on the amputee calendar.

Saturday morning provided free time for attendees and after lunch, the conference was addressed by Professor Dirk De Ridder from the Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago on the topic "Why does the brain create phantom sensations and how can they be treated"

This was a very informative presentation and enjoyed by all present. This was then followed by an address from the new CEO of the NZ Artificial Limb Service, Sean Gray. Only having been in this role for (2) months, Sean displayed an incredible degree of understanding to matters surrounding the provision of services to amputees and seems to have a passion for advancing the rights and entitlements of amputees in NZ.

## Conference report cont:

He specifically addressed the burning question of the imbalance of funding for amputees under the MOH as opposed to ACC clients. He has promised to continue working with the funding providers and Government in the year ahead to obtain a fair and equitable funding scenario for all amputees. We look forward to an update on progress surrounding this problem over the next year.

Saturday evening provided an opportunity for all attendees to "let their hair down" at the Dine and Dance and a most enjoyable time was enjoyed by all present.

The weekend was most informative and provided us the wonderful opportunity to network with other amputees from all around New Zealand.

Mark Bruce/President.

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### **Christchurch To Host 2016 Amputee's Federation Annual Conference & AGM. April 15th-17th.**

A booking has been made with The Sudima Airport Hotel, Memorial Avenue.

A sub-committee, Margaret Hunter, Eileen Popplewell, Ed Jones & Mark Bruce, has been formed to organise the weekend and they have already made huge strides in attending to matters surrounding the hosting. Extra income, that has been derived from donations and fundraising, has been set aside to cover some costs and the sub-committee will continue to seek revenue from sponsors & fundraising.

This is a fantastic opportunity for Canterbury/Westland to exhibit our ability to host a successful conference as well as showcasing how far our city has come since the devastating events of 2010 & 2011. Given that it is over 10 years since the conference was held in our city, we are sure that the event will be a resounding success and the executive would urge local members to be involved as we see participation having great benefit both in knowledge and enjoyment. We will keep members informed throughout the year as we make further progress.



## Message from Ava

**Taxis:** Please accept my apology for the "typo" error of the bank account no: for online payments but thanks to those of you that pointed out the error of my ways ! Thank you to those who have paid early but please remember to still keep some paper vouchers on hand as the new electronic system has gone down recently in the main centres. Please call me on 382-1873 if you need any vouchers.

**Subs:** Thanks also to those who have paid their subs for 2015 & a reminder that the close off date is 30th June whereupon membership will not be recognised.

## Profile

### Meet Matthias Blatner-Clinical Prothetist-ChCh Artificial Limb Centre.

For those of you who have not had the pleasure to meet Matthias, this interview should give a great insight into Matthias's story of how he has arrived to be the newest Clinical Prothetist at the Limb Centre.

Matthias was born in the district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, southern Germany in



July 1976. His home town of Murnau am Staffelsee lies on the shores of Lake Staffelsee which is on the edge of the Bavarian Alps, some 70 kms south of Munich. Matthias has a sister and parents who still live in Germany.

When Matthias was 18, he left school and took up an apprenticeship to become an Orthopaedic Technician. His work right from the outset had him carrying out "hands on" work as well as the theory component and he spent some 5 years working in Munich. He completed his master's degree and spent time working in his father's prosthetic business before continuing elsewhere in this field.

In 2008, Matthias and his partner, Andrea, embarked on a planned four month world trip but after arriving in New Zealand, they both liked the country so much, they applied for and received working visas' that allowed them to stay in the country. Andrea was able to obtain work in her chosen profession of nursing but opportunities for Matthias were strictly limited due to the low turnover rate of staff within the NZ Limb Service. Not to be deterred, Matthias obtained employment in various occupations such as, chef, barman, handyman/ builder and servicing ski's. Matthias finally obtained an opportunity at the Christchurch Limb Centre and started at Burwood Rd in December, 2013.

He is thoroughly enjoying working at the Limb Centre and says he feels most happy when on his surfboard, skis and spending time with his family.

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### Energy Advice Service

The Community Energy Action Trust provides free insulation and heating advice, free recycled curtains and earthquake help for consumers.

"Keeping our community warm"

Phone: 03 374 7222 OR 0800 GET WARM (0800 4389276)

Web: [info@cea.co.nz](mailto:info@cea.co.nz)

## Give it a go Ed !



Just over a year ago, I met with Hadleigh Pierson from Paralympics NZ who gave me some contacts & information regarding my desire to start competing in Triathlons. At the time, I was registered with the Sumner Running Club and had competed in some weekend races on a social basis but having a “competitive streak” in me, I wanted to take my participation to a different level. I joined the Canterbury Triathlon Club and started



swimming training with them on a regular basis where I saw my swimming ability improve dramatically. My first competitive race was a Duathlon at Ruapuna which was part of a series and this gave me the confidence to enter my first Triathlon in the Sovereign Tri series at Wanaka. This event was what is called a “sprint distance” where I competed against able-bodied competitors. I thoroughly enjoyed the event and was now “thirsting” for more challenging events so I continued with my training and set my immediate goal to compete in the NZ Paralympic Championships to be held in Wellington in March, 2015. I travelled to Wellington in mid-March this year to give the race my “best shot”. After a good swim leg, I exited the water and put on a running leg to get to the transition area where I then put on my cycle leg which consists of a pole that’s attached to my pedal with a cleat. My bike is normal apart from a slightly shorter crank on the false side. I had a really good cycle leg and at the transition area, I changed onto my running leg again for the run which also went very well. I was thrilled with my performance and won my class event of which I am extremely proud.

My next goal is to travel to the Oceania Championships at Penrith, Sydney in January next year where I will be competing against the world champion in my classification event, PT4. I have embraced the whole issue of competing at this level but know that I will have to train regularly & hard to compete with credibility but I am passionate and committed to doing well. It would be great to have other amputees involved in this wonderful sport and am willing to assist anyone who is interested so feel free to call me on 384-4947. **Ed Jones, committee member.**

## Functions

Hi everyone and I hope you have all been enjoying the beautiful weather we have had in May. For those of you that attended the March function, thank you and I hope you enjoyed it. We have decided not to have a mid-winter lunch in July as the attendance has been down & we need to have 50 attending or else we are required to pay the difference. We will see how the next 2 functions go and review it but if anyone has any suggestions, please ring me on (03) 349-7585.

Take care, stay warm and look after each other. Kind regards, Margaret.

## Wounded, not broken.

A crowd of wounded soldiers recently lined up in front of a registration booth during the U.S. Army Trials at Fort Bliss, Texas. One soldier, wearing a black shirt with the words "Wounded Warrior (some assembly required)" printed in white on his shirt, waited anxiously to pick up his bib number and registration papers. As soon as he wheeled out from behind the registration table, it became clear that he was missing his legs.

As he headed to the pre-staging area for bicycles and hand cycles, the crowd's eyes followed him. He got out of his wheelchair and sat on the ground beside a hand cycle and started checking every part of it. He mounted the hand cycle and began warming up. Sgt Stefan Leroy, a hand cyclist, is a wounded warrior with the Walter Reed Warrior Transition Unit in Bethesda, Maryland. Leroy, a former cavalry scout, lost both his legs at the age of 21. On June 7, 2012, during a patrol in Afghanistan, two of Leroy's friends were hit by two different improvised explosive devices (IEDs). "I was carrying one of them to a helicopter, and I stepped on the third IED of the day," said Leroy. "I lost my left leg from above my knee and my right leg below the knee." Three months later, he started cycling to stay fit and motivated. "It's mainly because I didn't want to be sitting down and not doing anything," said Leroy. "My dad is a big cyclist... He was able to do it with me, and that made me more dedicated than I would have been otherwise."

Cycling with his father led him to take his new sport further. "As a cyclist, this introduces me into something a little different; I've never actually done the time trial," said Leroy. As part of his recovery program at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre, Leroy now cycles long-distance courses ranging from 50 to 90 miles a day. The time trial is Leroy's first time competing on a short-distance course. "I'm pretty good in long distance. I can beat a lot of people, but I've never really taken a short course before," said Leroy. "My shortest course ever was 13 miles, and that was a sprint the whole way through, so this course is six miles total, and it's definitely going to be a sprint." The smaller course posed a new challenge to Leroy, but like the rest of his previous challenges in life, he was eager to take it on. "It will be interesting to see how well I do in this," said Leroy. He then sprinted to third place with a total time of 23 minutes and 53 seconds after the 11-kilometer course. It was a new challenge for Leroy, but not a new excuse. "Keep doing what you can do right now," he said. "If you keep pushing yourself right now and maintaining that fitness level, you'll be able to transition into something more that you'd want to do."

## Smile Awhile



A woman goes out shopping with her husband and spots a pair of boots she loves.

The husband says, "No chance love, they're way too expensive."

Later on in bed, the wife is just falling asleep when the husband tries his luck and places his hand on her hip and then lower on to her thigh.

She turns to him and says, "I don't think so mate. If you're not prepared to shoe the horse then you sure as hell ain't riding it!"

## Web Sites

**Amputee Society of  
Canterbury & Westland Inc.**

[www.amputeeinfo.co.nz](http://www.amputeeinfo.co.nz)

**The Amputee Federation of NZ**

[www.af.org](http://www.af.org)

**Amputee Information**

[www.mossresourcenet.org](http://www.mossresourcenet.org)

**International Diabètes Federation**

[www.idf.org](http://www.idf.org)

**Parafed Canterbury**

[www.parafedcanterbury.co.nz](http://www.parafedcanterbury.co.nz)

**Disability Awareness in Action**

[www.daa.org.uk](http://www.daa.org.uk)

**Amputee News**

[www.amputeenews.com](http://www.amputeenews.com)

**Disability Rights Commission**

[www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

**UN Programme on Disability**

[www.un.org/issues/m-disabl.asp](http://www.un.org/issues/m-disabl.asp)

**WEKA-NZ Disability Info**

[www.weka.govt.nz](http://www.weka.govt.nz)

**Disabilities Information Service**

314 Worcester Street, Christchurch

PO Box 32-074, Christchurch

(03) 366-6189

(03) 379-5939

9.00am - 4.30pm

Email: [admin@aspirecanterbury.org.nz](mailto:admin@aspirecanterbury.org.nz)

Website: [www.aspirecanterbury.org.nz](http://www.aspirecanterbury.org.nz)

**Amputee Coalition (USA)**

[www.amputee-coalition.org](http://www.amputee-coalition.org)

**NZ Limb Service** [www.nzals.govt.nz](http://www.nzals.govt.nz)

**Kipp's Patch** [www.kipps-patch.com](http://www.kipps-patch.com)

**Nation Wide H&D Advocacy**

**Service** – 0800 555050

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