

Purpose

Journal of the



**Amputees
Federation**
of New Zealand
Incorporated

March 2020

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Climate Change - it's in the news, it's all over social media, it's everywhere, it can't be ignored and shouldn't be, but what I've found is that, as with so many things now, the media coverage is primarily biased towards sensationalism and isn't helping. For example: Greta Thunberg is a 16 year old activist who is everywhere, sharing her anger, frustration and anxiety about the climate with the world. She is neither a scientist, nor an economist. She offers no practical solutions to the economic devastation her ideas would cause. Her passion is admirable, but her theories are scientifically wrong; she is a media darling, a media star. When searched on Google, there are over 175 million results. On the flipside Boyan Slat is a 23 year old inventor who designed the world's first ocean plastic system at 16. He now leads a group developing advanced technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic. His solution involves no economic destruction, his theories are scientifically proven, innovative and practical. Media isn't interested - Google Search 270,000 results. Don't get me wrong, Greta has been great for awareness, but do I think she has the answers? - no. Do I think she is now being exploited by others? - probably. As we know sensationalism sells.

I recently watched a 60 Minutes segment on You Tube about the Australian bushfires. It reported that the Australian Government had ignored reports going back a decade warning that by 2020 there would be an unprecedented amount of bushfires, the veracity of which had never been seen before and the need to prepare. When the politician on the show was asked why, he gave a surprisingly honest answer - preparing for climate change doesn't get votes! And let's be honest, he was right. That's on us the voter, and that needs to change. The conclusion I've come to is Knowledge is Power - I have to educate myself, I have to look closer than the media hype, I need to vote responsibly, know the climate change policies of who I'm voting for, and hold them accountable. Am I going to rush out and replace all my plastic containers with glass? No - I'll use what I have, then as they need to be replaced I will purchase eco-friendly. It's not much, but I figure every little thing I do will help - well it can't hurt, and it's a start.

Justine Mangan-Woods

Executive Member

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Lorraine Peacock
Justine Mangan-
Woods

CONFERENCE & GIVE IT A GO! BLENHEIM 17-19 APRIL 2020

If you are reading this in early March, it may not yet be too late to register. The programme and registration forms are available on our website www.amputee.co.nz

INTRODUCING ROSS MILLICHAMP

(Excerpts reprinted with permission from the C/W Newsletter)

Ross was born in 1964 in Timaru and was the second-born child in the family. He has older and younger sisters who both live in Dunedin and a younger brother who lives in the Far North. He has a close relationship with all his siblings and his parents who live in Merivale. Ross's father was a Presbyterian Minister and Ross recalls living in Timaru, Ashburton, Auckland, Whakatane and Dunedin before finally coming to Christchurch where he attended Quinns Road Primary and Shirley Intermediate before completing his secondary schooling at St Andrews College. Ross said that as a child he was almost obsessed with salmon fishing and that passion has remained with him throughout his adult life. Upon leaving college, Ross attended Canterbury University where he graduated with a science degree in Zoology (animal biology) and obtained his first "real" job working on a salmon farm at Kaitangata, South Otago, for 3 years.

In 1991, Ross moved back to Christchurch where he started work for Fish & Game NZ as a field officer. After 8 years in this role, he

was promoted to manager of Fish & Game North Canterbury but in February 2008 he experienced a life-changing event. Ross and some friends were on Stewart Island on a hunting/fishing trip when he started to feel unwell. This affliction worsened over the next 4-5 days to the point where one day before being due to be leaving on a boat, he had to use the mountain radio to seek medical assistance. He was admitted to Invercargill Hospital where extensive tests were carried out to reveal he was suffering from the bacterial condition, Necrotising Fasciitis (flesh eating disease) due to an infection from a cut sustained whilst fishing. His body went into what is commonly described as "septic shock" where the organs start shutting down and he was rushed into surgery to have the diseased flesh removed. From there, Ross was medically evacuated to ChCh Hospital where he was admitted to ICU and further surgery. When he awoke, it was a real shock to find that both his legs had been amputated below the knee but Ross freely admitted that this had to be done and felt that the medical staff did a great job of removing the dead tissue to keep him alive. He remained in ICU for one month and another 2 months in the ward before being transferred to Burwood Hospital for another 2 months before he was able to return home in August of that year. Up until this point, Ross had been an avid outdoors person and heavily involved in the pursuits of hunting & fishing but a medical professional told him in hospital that because of his disabilities, he should look at doing something different from this point onwards. At first, Ross admitted to some reluctance about the suggestion but he had previously met two WW2 Spitfire pilots and started tinkering with the idea of learning how to fly. So, in 2009, he commenced flying lessons with the Canterbury Aero Club and successfully obtained his pilot's licence in 2010. He admitted that there was some opposition from the medical fraternity to give him a medical clearance but his persistence and flying ability won the day. In 2011, he purchased his



own plane, a Cessna 172 which has now been upgraded to a more powerful Cessna 182. Ross said he has flown all over NZ and although his wife Jinny had only ever been on his jet boat a handful of times, she (and Black Labrador Briar) have accompanied him on Cessna flights from the Far North to Stewart Island. Obviously, Ross had to take a lot of time away from his job at Fish & Game but after returning to his old position, he decided to leave the role

in 2013 as he was suffering badly from fatigue. In 2015, he took on a new role with DOC managing a field office but once again suffered rather badly from fatigue and left the position.

In November last year Ross and Jinny moved into a new home - a 26 acre property at Charing Cross, some 50 kms northwest of Christchurch near Hororata. The new property was very appealing to Ross as it has its own airstrip and expansive hangar. Nowadays, Ross works part-time on a number of working groups with Environment Canterbury. He said this will allow him to come to terms with maintaining a large lifestyle property and of course, to spend more time behind the controls of the Cessna!



15th Annual NZ Amputee and Disability Golf Open



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Have you seen our two publications?

***A New Challenge - Advice for New Amputees
and An Ongoing Challenge***

Both are an interesting read and are available from the National Coordinator or your Regional Society

GETTING BACK ON THE HORSE -

Susan Evans *(Editor of the Manawatu newsletter)*



The crash that almost took my life in July 2015 was described as something from the movies. My three daughters and I were on our way to a pony club event, towing a horse float, when a reckless driver going more than 150km/h hit our car head on. The car and float both rolled and roadside heroes pulled us from the car before it exploded into flames. We were incredibly fortunate to all survive. My injuries were top to toe. Most of them healed, but my ankle was too badly damaged so the decision was made to amputate two years after the accident.

Our family has always been active and enjoyed the outdoors and doing a variety of sports together. In some ways this has made my return to 'normal' living more challenging, but it has also been my main motivation to push myself so I can enjoy these things with my husband and three teenage girls again. I like to make the most of opportunities that come my way. Since the crash I have been striving to live an active lifestyle and as part of that have been quite literally getting back on the horse. The horse I own and ride is Theo. He was my daughter's and was in the crash with us, so he is pretty special to our family.

A couple of years ago I joined Matt Bryson on the Amputee snow trip he organised. It was a fantastic weekend both on and off the mountain with other amputees and I'm planning to ski even more. Soon after my amputation I decided cycling might be good, so I went on a couple of para-cycling camps. Lately it's been great cycling with Parafed to build up my confidence after a wee crash. One of my biggest achievements was at the end of last year when I won a fully funded trip to run 10km of the Queenstown Marathon event with Cigna & Achilles Foundation.

If you would like to see more of my story here's a link to a video

<https://www.acc.co.nz/about-us/news-media/latest-news/susan-evans-getting-back-on-the-horse-after-a-lower-leg-amputation/>

(Nice to "meet" you Susan

- maybe we'll see you at Conference this year!)

TARANAKI SOCIETY WINDS UP

The Amputee Society of Taranaki first came into existence in 1966 as a Sub-Association of the Manawatu & Central Districts Civilian Amputee Association and in 1968 became a Society in its own right, known as the Taranaki CAA. There followed a period of instability: the Society went into recess in 1971, restarted in 1973, was disaffiliated from the national group in 1975, went into recess in 1980, and was reaffiliated in 1983. It eventually became an Incorporated Society in 1989.

At the AGM in February 2019 it was recorded that the President, Secretary and Treasurer would carry on in their roles for one further year to provide an opportunity for their replacements to be found. At the AGM held on Saturday 15 February 2020 there was no interest shown in taking on the key roles and the Society was wound up.

The following report has been provided for *Purpose* by Wally Garrett, President of the Society and Life Member of the Federation.

I would very much like to pay tribute to the people that have, over the years, contributed to the functioning of the Society be it in whatever fashion. I would like to especially acknowledge the late George and Beth Turner who were very much the cornerstone of the Society for many years. My thanks go to the many people who have supported me over the years at both a local and national level.

On a personal level I have gained a tremendous lot during my time with the Society and have appreciated the opportunities that my involvement has provided. In conclusion it is a sad occasion when a group winds up, but as is the case in Taranaki. I believe that we are bearing the brunt of modern technology, improved services from the NZALS, and the implications of being a relatively small, if somewhat isolated, region of New Zealand.

(Taranaki amputees may wish to join one of the neighbouring Societies - Manawatu & Districts, Greater Wellington Region or Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts. To do so, contact the Society direct (page 12) or get in touch with the National Coordinator.)

(A personal note - Although aware for some time that this has been a possibility, I'm sorry that it has indeed happened. Over many years I've been a strong advocate of the need for our Amputee Societies and the valuable roles they fulfil. If at any time in the future there are those of like mind prepared to play a part in re-establishing a Taranaki Society, please get in touch - Lorraine Peacock)

BALANCING EXERCISES

(For the new and/or more “senior” amputee?)

Balance (core stability) is important for everyone, but even more so for amputees. Balance plays a major role in our lives. Every time you turn to close a door, go up or down stairs or even take a simple walk, there’s a chance that something could cause you to lose your balance. In some cases, injuries can occur. Prevention, awareness, building strength and confidence are the keys to success.

All lower limb amputees have one thing in common: the lack of the ability to feel ground surface differences. Even walking through your own backyard can be hazardous, let alone climbing curbs, navigating around toys in the living room, etc.

For your safety, learning how to engage your core muscles and coordinate your mind to help focus and concentrate on balance is paramount. The good thing about learning how to improve your balance is that no equipment is required. However, there are exercises that would be more appropriate for active amputees, just like there are simpler exercises for beginners. Some of these exercises can be done with or without your prosthesis on.

The first exercise targets beginners. Using a chair for safety purposes, beginners should hold on lightly, making sure the chair is secure and cannot tip over. Take in a few good slow inhales and slow exhales, then slowly lift up your prosthetic leg, no higher than 2 inches, by leading with your knee. Try and keep your upper body nice and relaxed. The more tension in your body, the more difficult you will make it on yourself. Once you feel that you can lift up your prosthetic leg from the floor, remove your hands from the chair and count to five, then return it to the floor. If you find that you’re having a difficult time, that’s normal. Don’t get frustrated - just keep trying. Lift each leg five times, holding it up for a five-second count. If you need to put your hands on the back of the chair, that’s ok - the more you practice this, the easier it will become.

If you don’t have a prosthetic leg or you want to try this exercise without your prosthesis, you should begin by sitting in a chair with the back of another chair in front of you. Again, make sure that chair is secure. Stand up on your leg; once you are relaxed try to slowly remove your hand(s) from the chair back. See how long you can stand there without any movement. Once you get good at standing motionless, try to move your leg or limb to the side and hold for a

count of five, then try to move it backwards and hold for another count of five.

The next exercise is considered an intermediate level exercise. You can find a small ball or you can just use your hands. Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, raise one leg (either one) and either touch your hands together or transfer the ball to your other hand underneath your leg when it is in the up position. Then slowly lower your leg down. Alternate your legs; you'll have to balance on your real leg as well as your prosthetic leg. You'll notice that when you lift your prosthetic leg, your real leg will be moving at the ankle - that's what is helping to stabilize you. You can't do that with your prosthetic leg, as it is rigid and can't assist you while trying to balance on it. Doing that in this manner is safe - just take it slow. Let your muscles work and try to avoid using momentum.

Fast motions with exercises won't help to work your muscles or gain balance. Disciplining your mind and body with slow, controlled movements will lead to success.

(More exercises, including "stretching", "strengthening" and "aerobic" are detailed in our publication An Ongoing Challenge)

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Auckland & Northland - We hope to have a good turnout at our AGM on Sunday 1 March at the Auckland Limb Centre when April Hickmott from the Independent Living Charitable Trust will be our speaker. *(Janis Bourne, Secretary)*

Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts - Over the summer our Society helped organize New Zealand's first Summer Amp Camp at Mt Taranaki where we stayed at Konini Lodge. We look forward to helping to plan next year's Summer Amp Camp. Our social gatherings will continue throughout the year, along with our annual snow trip planned for winter. If you would like to take part in any of these events, please get in touch. *(Matthew Bryson, President)*

Hawke's Bay/East Coast - We ended the year with a Christmas Luncheon which was very well attended and enjoyed by everyone who came. It was great to have a chance to catch up with new members and those who have been part of the Society for many years. Like most regions we are planning and fund raising to enable some of our members to attend the upcoming National

Conference in Blenheim as well as preparing for our AGM in late March. *(Diane Walsh, Secretary)*

Manawatu & Districts - There's been plenty of social activity going on in this region, with an evening dinner at the Foxton Beach Boating Club and a function to celebrate the start of 2020 at the Woolshed Cafe in Sanson. It's good also to read that Wanganui members are taking part.

Greater Wellington Region - Our thanks to Jenny & David Thompson for representing the Federation at the Governor General's Waitangi Day Bledisloe Reception at Government House. We wish to acknowledge the many years of commitment and dedication to Para-Olympic Sports by Runner/Cyclist Kate Horan, MNZM, who has recently announced her retirement. We would like offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of our Life Member Don Millward who passed away on Christmas Eve. *(Raewyn Te Tau)* *(Congratulations also to Jenny on her award of MNZM in the New Year's Honours - well deserved! - Ed.)*

Top of the South - No recent report from this Society - they are no doubt busy preparing for the National Conference in Blenheim on 17-19 April.

Canterbury & Westland - We had great fundraising results in 2019 due to a lot of hard work from many members, and have purchased a box lot of stylus gel pens for distribution to our members, as well as raising our profile in the wider community. We hope to have a good turnout of members at our AGM on March 15th when there will be a presentation from a Lifelinks representative. In April, nine of our members will be attending the annual Federation conference in Blenheim and we hope to have some of our youth members attend the GIAG event. Visiting and supporting new amputees remains a focus for our Society in conjunction with the new Peer Support programme and we have made many new contacts since the last issue of Purpose. *(Mark Bruce, President)*

Otago & Southland - A good turnout of members is hoped for at the AGM on 29 February when Wendy Lockhart, the Limb Centre physiotherapist, will be the speaker. Her subject of Pain Management from a Physio Perspective, together with her expertise in acupuncture, is sure to be of interest. *(Lorraine Peacock, Coordinator)*

Newsletters of Regional Societies are available on the Federation's website (www.amputee.co.nz) along with other useful information.

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