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Journal of the



**Amputees
Federation**
of New Zealand
Incorporated

March 2022

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Letters to the Editor
are invited

and welcome

Please post or email
to the

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*The opinions expressed in this
Journal are not necessarily those
of the Amputees Federation of NZ Inc.
unless stated as such.*

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EDITORIAL

As I write this, plans are under way for our 75th Jubilee Conference in Wellington on 8-10 April at which there will be plenty to celebrate, not least of all the fact that, God and Covid willing, the conference will happen after having been cancelled for the last two years. It will be a conference with a difference - the number attending will be limited to 100 and vaccine passes and masks will be required - but it will be a welcome opportunity to meet old friends and make new.

We have much to celebrate in what has been achieved and the changes which have come about since a group of stalwarts met in Wellington in 1947 and decided that civilian amputees shouldn't be treated any differently than war amputees who were provided with free artificial limbs. Their efforts were rewarded in 1964. As a Federation, we have come a long way since those days and I have been privileged to witness many of the changes that have taken place. If asked what I believe to be the most significant in terms of moving forward I would have no hesitation in saying: firstly, the introduction of our new logo which replaced the red triangle in 2014 and, secondly, the decision in 2012 to include a Give it a Go youth event in our national conference weekends.

However, a continuing frustration for the Executive, but more so for Regional Societies, has been the effort to stay afloat despite falling membership numbers. The demise of the Taranaki Society in 2020 was a big disappointment but the revival of Top of the South late last year a great success. Our numbers have steadily declined in recent years in particular and as I complete this, my last editorial, I pose the following question: do Peke Waihangā Artificial Limb Service's peer support volunteers encourage those with whom they come in contact to join their local Regional Society? I firmly believe that our Amputee Societies are a valuable form of peer support and a great resource for any amputee, new or experienced. Whether you, the reader, are a new amputee learning to live with the difference in your life, or an "old hand" who has overcome the hurdles and now just gets on with it, I hope you find it worthwhile to belong to our organisation; we certainly value your support.

With good wishes *Lorraine Peacock*

Search **Amputees New Zealand** on Facebook
and **Like** us (Closed Group also available)



PROFILE - LORRAINE PEACOCK

(It has been suggested many times over the years that I should include my own profile in Purpose so here we go! The following appears in the latest reprint of An Ongoing Challenge.)



When I became a hip disarticulation amputee in 1963 resulting from medical misadventure, the amputee "world" wasn't totally unfamiliar to me; my father was a war amputee and one of my earliest recollections was his ongoing battle with phantom pain. Maybe also his involvement with the War Amputees Association had something to do with the path I would follow.....

A history of the Amputee Society of Otago & Southland* records that in February 1967 the Committee decided that the notice of the Annual Meeting would demand a "full attendance to discuss the future of the Association and unless this was forthcoming it would be wound up". The demand did not have the desired response, with only seven members attending the AGM in March of that year. I did not in fact attend, being heavily pregnant at the time with my second-born. However, this did not deter an approach being made to me soon after; I took on the Secretarial role and as the saying goes "the rest is history".

Attending my first National Conference in 1968 was a start to what has been quite a journey. I have made many good friends and seen many changes in the amputee's world during that time, mostly for the better.

I have always been a strong believer in the importance of the role the Amputees Federation of NZ and its Regional Societies play in the lives of amputees. As amputees, we all have individual hurdles to climb and battles to overcome. They are part and parcel of life as an amputee and affect us in many different ways, depending on the type of amputation we have and not least of all our age! As the only organisation in New Zealand which represents amputees, the Amputees Federation has its own battles - that of attracting and retaining members. Our number comprises just a little more than 10% of the total number of amputees in this country and many Regional Societies struggle to continue. What value do we place

on the support and encouragement we are able to provide? Is it enough that newcomers to our ranks take up the challenge, regain independence, and renew their participation in everyday life? I believe so as, regardless of the path taken, amputees living life to the full is the reason why our Federation was formed 75 years ago.

(Footnotes: Lorraine was appointed to the National Executive in 1983 and was National Coordinator from 1986 until 2022. She is a Life Member of both the Otago/Southland Society and the Federation and was awarded the Queen's Service Medal in 2004.

** "The Amputee Society of Otago & Southland Inc. - The first 60 years" by Lorraine Peacock, was published in March 2004.)*

MEET THE TOP OF THE SOUTH TEAM

New President **Shane Torrance** became a BK amputee 15 years ago due to 37 years living with Type 1 diabetes. He then lost his second leg 2 years after that. Shane has worked as a community volunteer for 10 years and has been an accredited Peke Waihangā Peer Support Volunteer for the past 2 years. Shane's goal is to achieve a positive outcome for all Amputees and says he loves the sun.

Welcomed back as Secretary/Treasurer is **Claire West**. Claire became a BKA 15 years ago after a post-surgical infection. Since becoming an Amputee, Claire has gained a degree in Social Work and now works part-time in Nelson Hospital. Claire says "I have been Secretary in the past but due to a spinal injury three years ago I have been concentrating on my recovery. I am much stronger now and look forward to assisting new amputees."

Carla Taylor is the Blenheim contact. Carla became an Amputee in May 2015 after suffering with mobility and pain issues from a congenital deformity of her foot and ankle. Carla works as a special needs teacher in Marlborough working with amazing and inspiring students.

The Federation appreciates the contribution made by Deborah Green and Max Alty in keeping the Society functioning over recent years and being the driving force behind the change of name in 2019 from the *Amputee Society of Nelson and Marlborough* to the *Amputee Society of Top of the South*.

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- Naomi, BK amputee

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PROFILE - JANIS BOURNE



I was born 5 January 1950 at Waihi Maternity Annexe. My mother wanted a little dark-haired son; instead, she got a blonde daughter with one left foot. I was told that my toes forgot to grow and God forgot to give me toes. How come my toes forgot to grow, and why did God forget to give me toes and no one else? I was classed as crippled. I learnt to walk and a local person made a cork insert for the toes of my right "Boot".

In 1954, my mother read in the New Zealand Woman's Weekly about a man in Auckland who had lost his toes in a bicycle accident and had made himself an artificial foot out of wood from the Avon River in Christchurch. My mother wrote to him with drawings and markings of my stump. He replied and an appointment was made for me to attend a clinic in Auckland. I remember a plaster cast being made. A shoe box had an opening cut out, filled with plaster of Paris, with my stump in the middle. Sometime later, my mother walked to the bus depot in Waihi, a good mile and half, picked up my first ever foot, and walked up the main street, extremely happy with my foot. She called into a chemist she knew. The owner took my foot and painted the toe nails bright red. It was her pride and joy. She bought me brown shoes, black shoes, red sandals, white sandals, slippers. No gumboots - shoes, not boots. I wore white cotton socks with my new shoes to cover up my artificial limb.

At five years of age, I started primary school. There were no footpaths, no tar-sealed roads. The Crippled Children's Society organised for a taxi to take me to and from school. These were paid for half by the society and half by my parents. A separate driver was assigned this position. The beginning of my school days was spent with bandaged knees and hands. I would try to keep up with the other children and end up flat on my face on the asphalt.

About 1963/4, a lady from the Civilian Amputee Association visited Waihi. She was a leg amputee and used a ball point pen to make hairs on her legs to look like the other leg. At an age when hairy legs were not good, I was somewhat appalled at this practice.

I visited the Limb Centre for irregular repairs and new limbs until I received several letters, with different spellings of my first and surname

- the Auckland Limb Centre was closing down and an Australian company was taking over - Rehabilitation Management Limited. How could this happen! I attended one of their clinics at Laura Ferguson Trust, Green Lane. It was decided to give me a new limb; they took the one I had and sent it to Australia. When I eventually got it back, it was too tall for me and too long for my shoes. To counteract the height, they told me to stand with my feet apart. Yeah right - I wasn't at all happy. I was only one of many who had complaints about RML.

At the first Annual General Meeting of the Amputee Society of Auckland that I attended, I was elected as Secretary/Treasurer, a position I held until 2021. I have attended many Federation Conferences and was elected to the Federation Executive for a number of years in the early 2000's, which I found extremely interesting and rewarding. I have met some amazing people along the way; some will be lifelong friendships.

Have you seen our two publications?

A New Challenge - Advice for New Amputees
and **An Ongoing Challenge** (reprinted 2022)

Both are available from the National Coordinator
or your Regional Society

*To laugh often and love much;
To win the respect of intelligent persons
And the affection of children;
To earn the honest approbation of honest critics
And endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty; to find the best in others;
To give one's self; to leave the world a bit better;
Whether by a healthy child, a garden patch,
Or a redeemed social condition;
To have played and laughed with enthusiasm,
And sung with exultion;
To know even one life has breathed easier
Because you have lived
This is to have succeeded.*

SOMETHING TO LAUGH ABOUT

The following extracts are quoted from letters written to the Department of Social Welfare.....

"I want money badly as quick as you can send it. I have been in bed under the doctor for four weeks and he doesn't seem to be doing me any good. If things don't improve, I shall have to get another doctor."

"Milk is needed for the baby. Father is unable to supply it."

"In accordance with your instructions, I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope."

"Please send me the proper form for cheap milk as I am stagnant."

"My son is unable to attend school. He has had diarrhoea through a hole in his shoe."

"I'm glad to state that my husband died yesterday. I will be glad if you get me a pension. If you don't hurry up I will have to get public resistance."

"Re your dental enquiry, the teeth at the top are still alright but the ones in my bottom are hurting me terrible."

"I am forwarding my marriage certificate and six children. I have seven but one died which was baptised on half a sheet of paper;"

"I cannot get sick pay. I have six children. Can you tell me why?"

"This is my eighth child. What are you going to do about it?"

"Please find for certain if my husband is dead. the man I am living with can't eat or do anything till he knows."

"I am very annoyed to find you have branded my son illiterate. This is a dirty lie as I was married a week before he was born."

"Unless I get my husband's money soon, I will be forced to live an immortal life."

"My husband got his project cut off two weeks ago and I haven't had any relief since."

"I have no children as yet. My husband is a truck driver and works day and night."

"You have changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make a difference?"

"Please send me a form for cheap milk. I have a baby two months old and I did not know about it until a neighbour told me."

*As you slide down the bannister of Life may the splinters
never point the wrong way.*

“Gems” from our History

* An amputee was accused of smuggling cocaine inside his wooden leg, in fact 200g was found stuffed in the top of the leg. But after he was arrested, agents decided against inspecting the inside of the entire leg. After the prisoner got to jail, he was able to keep his cell-mates ‘high’ for a month. After a guard became suspicious, officers drilled into the sealed calf area where more drugs were found. Some had already been used for spiking the prisoner’s coffee.

* A man accused of stabbing his wife asked a Court in Cardiff for bail and offered his leg as surety; he said he was prepared to deposit his leg at the local police station which would stop him leaving his house. His lawyer told the Magistrates that the Germans successfully used this procedure with prisoners during World War II. The outcome was that he kept his leg, lost his bid for bail and was remanded in custody for a week.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Auckland & Northland - Mid December saw Auckland move into the Covid 19 orange traffic light restriction after nearly four months at the previous level 4 and level 3 restrictions. Northland stayed at red until mid January, then had three days at orange before all of New Zealand moved into red as the Omicron variant made itself known in the community. The restrictions of the latter part of 2021 has made many members of our communities very cautious about getting out and about. We have been unable to organise any events due to the uncertainties. We are all hoping that 2022 will be a lot less restrictive and that we can revitalise ourselves *(Kathy Palmer, Secretary)*

Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts - Like other Societies, we are keen to schedule activities throughout the year but are waiting for NZ to get over this latest hurdle. *(Matthew Bryson, President)*

Hawke’s Bay/East Coast - After COVID-19 and traffic light restrictions again causing so many disruptions in 2021, it was lovely to hold our Christmas Function on Sunday 5th December at Off The Track in Havelock North. A number of our new members joined us and we had 30 attendees. Our AGM will be held on 6th March 2022 in Napier and we hope to re-elect current committee

members and elect new members. Our President, Jacqui D'Ath had to step down late in 2021 so our Vice President, Jacqui Lumsden, is Acting President. There is still uncertainty around social events due to Omicron creeping towards us but we plan to keep supporting members as best we can. *(Korrin Barrett, Treasurer)*

Manawatu & Districts - No recent news from this Society. We hope to catch up with some of their members at the National Conference.

Greater Wellington Region - Planning is under way to support the upcoming National Conference. Fund-raising events to look out for will be the movie Top Gun, and a sausage sizzle. Our Amputee Awareness week event is parked up awaiting the move out of the red traffic light setting. *(Rob Penhey, Secretary)*

Top of the South - After a difficult few years with Covid, our Society has been quiet; however both Blenheim and Nelson were able to continue their separate monthly café get-togethers. So when the "call to arms" came from the Federation to encourage members not to let the Society dissolve, there was an overwhelming desire to continue helping the amputees in our region. On the 28th of November we held a Special Meeting to discuss the future of the Top of the South Society. There was a unanimous decision from those who attended to carry on and a new committee was formed. In early February our new President, Shane Torrance, organised a Meet and Greet, contacting as many amputees as possible to gather for an information exchange – letting them know what we do, and asking what they would like the Society to offer. It was good to see new members mixing with committee members and bringing some fresh ideas for our society to try.

Canterbury & Westland - We had a successful Christmas Function at the Redwood Hotel on Sunday November 28th - a great turnout and a wonderful meal. Our AGM is to be held at the Hornby Club on Sunday March 13th at 10.15 am, morning tea will be provided after. *(Justine Mangan-Woods, Secretary)*

Otago & Southland - There was a good turnout of members at our Invercargill meeting and dinner and our pre-Christmas dinner in Dunedin. We are looking forward to catching up with members again in 2022. *(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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A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a black top and light blue jeans, is walking on a paved path. She has a prosthetic leg on her right side and is carrying two brown paper shopping bags. The background shows a wooden fence and greenery.

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A man with a prosthetic leg is hiking on a dirt trail through a wooded area. He is wearing a blue jacket, purple leggings, and red sneakers. He has a backpack and is looking down at the ground as he walks.

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