



Young green fingers

P3



Baeleigh shines on bar

P10



Free ride

P5

TOMORROW



Waiuta theft

Police are investigating the theft of a 270-litre hot water cylinder from the Waiuta Lodge. Constable Brett Simon, of Reefton, said the theft occurred overnight on Tuesday. The thief may have been someone with a grudge against the Department of Conservation. "A lot of people think DOC looks after that area, but they don't. The cylinder would not be easy to move, or easy to know it was even there," he said. It was owned by the Friends of Waiuta Society and would cost them \$2000 to replace.

Brigades busy

The Cobden and Greymouth volunteer fire brigades both responded to a chimney fire in Ward Street, Cobden, at 8.30pm yesterday. Greymouth chief Alan McEnaney said the fire was small and took only a few minutes to put out using one hose reel. The Hokitika brigade was called to the Beachfront Hotel in Revell Street at 9.30pm after a sensor was broken on the sprinkler system. Yesterday morning, the Westport brigade received a call for a house fire, which turned out to be an unauthorised rubbish burn off.

Cars nicked

The theft this week of two cars has prompted Greymouth police to warn motorists to properly secure their vehicles overnight. On Sunday night, a black Mitsubishi Lancer saloon (ZG 8603) was stolen from outside a Shakespeare Street address, and on Tuesday night a 1991 Subaru Legacy (XL2873) disappeared from Pitt Street, Runanga. The Lancer had brand new Avanti alloy wheels. Senior-sergeant Craig Shanahan said the thefts may be unrelated but provided a timely reminder that vehicles parked on the streets were tempting targets for thieves. "In both cases the car owners had the keys in their possession but it goes without saying that all vehicles should be secured overnight and all valuables should be removed from them."

Whatever!

Phoenix, Arizona — Puzzled United States border police have arrested a Mexican smuggler with 40kg of cheese hidden in a special compartment in his truck. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Roger Maier said officers using an x-ray machine saw the outline of 16 bulky packages stashed in a secret compartment behind the seat, which they initially believed were packets containing illicit drugs. "Generally if you see something (with the x-ray machine) you expect it to be narcotics, but this turned out to be cheese," Maier said. — Reuters

Seaview's days numbered

Plans well under way for new Greymouth dementia unit

By TONI GRAHAM

Seaview Hospital in Hokitika will be fully vacated by the end of next year, closing a 141-year association with the town.

The former psychiatric hospital has been emptied and sold off in recent years, to the point where there is now only one villa left and the staff outnumber the patients.

According to the West Coast District Health Board (DHB) today, Seaview has 20 elderly patients and 24 fulltime nursing staff.

The DHB is now well under way with plans to build a new dementia care unit near the mental health unit at Grey Base Hospital, in Greymouth. Once opened late next year, the last vestige of Seaview will close.

Mental health general manager Hecta Williams said it cost \$2.4 million a year to keep Seaview open with the cost of staffing, leasing, maintenance and clinical supplies.

"There are 20 patients and 24 fulltime equivalent positions based at Seaview Hospital site. These staffing positions cover a 24-hour a day seven day a week

roster."

That did not include domestic staff, who were employed by a private contractor to carry out the cleaning and cooking duties.

The DHB sold the Seaview property in 2002 to a Christchurch-based property developer after it had been on the market for several years.

The hospital peaked in 1955, when it had 549 patients at the site. The numbers declined until only 100 patients remained in 1996, just prior to the decision to close it altogether.

The remaining villa has been on a month-by-month lease from the new owners since December 2003.

Two years ago, the DHB had hoped to have building work on the new dementia care unit under way "as quickly as possible" but it only received the "green light" in June this year after the Government agreed to the capital funding.

Ms Williams said the finalisation of building plans for the new unit was considered to be a priority project by the DHB.

"We envisage that we will be in a position to call for tenders for

the project within two to three months' time."

With 24 health professionals still employed at Seaview, she said consultation was guaranteed among the DHB, unions and individuals "regarding the transition to Greymouth".

Public Service Association assistant secretary Warwick Jones said there was a change management process to be followed and that would involve full consultation with the PSA as the union that represented staff at Seaview Hospital.

"The PSA will ensure that the views of our members are heard in this process."

Ms Williams said the development of a purpose-built dementia care unit was an exciting time for the board, which was now moving quickly and working with staff to finalise plans.

"We are looking forward to having a unit that offers dementia patients a safe and homely environment to stay in."

Finalised building plans would be made public once the DHB had completed the tendering process.

Greymouth thief goes global

Shoplifting footage posted on Google viewed by 400,000 people

By TONI GRAHAM

A Greymouth business caught out by a brazen day-time shoplifter has gone global with its attempt to catch the thief.

Since IT@Work had security footage of the theft up-loaded to video.google.com and set to the theme music of the Pink Panther, the website has had almost 400,000 hits worldwide.

The \$1895 Hewlett Package laptop – without battery or charger – was taken from the Mackay Street store around 11.30am on July 28.

While security cameras in the shop caught the theft on film, staff were not aware of it until later in the afternoon.

Branch manager James Graham said a friend put the footage on the internet and when he first saw the two and a half minute film clip with the accompanying sound track, he could only smile.

Since the video has been on the Google site, figures from last night show 395,396 people from around the world have viewed it.

On August 6, it was the second highest downloaded video on the global site – the first was reportedly half-naked girls dancing around.

Mr Graham said a mere 5% of the hits were from within New Zealand, with most interest coming from places such as Brazil, Amsterdam and Canada.

Even though the laptop has not been recovered or the culprit caught, IT@Work stands to make money from the whole shoplifting episode.

A Canadian security company is interested in buying the footage as a sales tool to encourage retailers to buy its anti-theft products.

However, that would not cover the cost of the stolen laptop or the increased security measures now in place in the Greymouth store.

"Cyber trippers" can view the video at video.google.com and search for "laptop theft".

Greymouth police are still investigating the theft and would appreciate any information from the public, especially anyone who may be able to identify the alleged thief.



PICTURE: Toni Graham

IT@Work branch manager James Graham – on the search for an elusive shoplifter who stole a laptop computer from the Greymouth store.



The alleged shoplifter caught on film.

Navy boss back 'home' on Coast

By LAURA MILLS

The son of a Reefton coal miner returned to the West Coast yesterday as the man in charge of New Zealand's navy.

Rear Admiral David Ledson was in Greymouth ahead of the launch of a new ship which will be closely connected to his home region.

His father and a friend left Liverpool, England, for the Reefton mines. Mr Ledson senior finally quit the job in 1965 but his friend was killed underground a few years later.

Rear Admiral Ledson's job now means he spends a lot of time overseas and he rarely gets back to the town he left

41 years ago.

However, the introduction of a new inshore patrol vessel, which will be affiliated with West Coast ports, gave him a good reason to visit yesterday.

The HMNZS Hawea will make its first visit to the region in September or October next year.

"In my two and a half years in the job I've not been down to call on the mayors of the region. It was better to do it prior to the ship arriving."

The Hawea, which will carry 20 officers and will be 55m long, will help the navy support the Government's fisheries, customs and conservation departments. It is one of seven new vessels.



PICTURE: Laura Mills
Lieutenant Karl Arndt, left, Rear Admiral David Ledson and Commander Rex Edwards in Greymouth yesterday.

Sir Howard comes to town

Two of New Zealand's best-loved entertainers, Sir Howard Morrison and Dame Malvina Major, will play in Greymouth this October.

"Since Dame Malvina and Sir Howard's memorable October 2005 concert at the Civic Auckland, and the subsequent TV special, we have been inundated with requests to present the show throughout New Zealand," producer Ian Magan said.

The New Zealand-wide tour will feature a specially assembled group of leading New Zealand musicians, including the 2006 Howard Morrison Quartet featuring Sir Howard, Jerry Merito, Howard Jr, and Temuera Morrison.

Young violinist Ben Morrison and new artist Elizabeth Marvelly will also appear.

Mr Magan said the tour would also mark several special anni-

versaries.

"This we are delighted to do especially as it marks the end of Sir Howard's testimonial year, celebrating 50 years in entertainment, and his 70th year on this year – not to mention Dame Malvina's 50th year also as a professional singer and entertainer," Mr Magan said.

The "Knight with a Dame" tour will visit the Regent Theatre, in Greymouth, on October 3.

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