



HDC NEWS



Graffiti

Since the cave men (or women) drew pictures on the walls of their caves there seems to have been a strong urge in some people to draw and write on walls. Some wise person once said that you find fools' names written everywhere. It seems of recent times that, among the young of the community, there is still a strong urge to write their name, or for the illiterate ones their sign, on any vertical surface exposed to the public eye. Perhaps it is a little like animals marking their scent around the boundaries of their territories.

To the rest of the community the graffiti is an eyesore and the resulting removal expensive time consuming and of great annoyance. Some communities have spent a large amount of money trying to resolve the issue and some have had reasonable success. Tauranga City has a zero tolerance of graffiti and tries to have all graffiti removed within a very short time frame of its being reported. It matters not whether the writing appears on Council or private property it is painted over, usually within 24 hours. This system has greatly reduced the amount of graffiti appearing around the city and after an initial expense the cost has reduced.

Hauraki has just developed a graffiti management plan after passing the matter to a sub-committee to look at. It has recognised that graffiti produces negative effects within the community - physical damage to property, visual pollution and abuse, increased expenditure, impacting on rates and the creation of ill-feeling within the community. The subcommittee's recommendation is to adopt a zero tolerance of graffiti on Council property with the removal of all graffiti within 24 hours, six days a week. If the Council does not own the asset that the graffiti appears on it will co-ordinate the receipt of complaints and will contact the property owner to encourage removal urgently. Council will also co-ordinate removal of graffiti from other utility owners such as Telecom, the power companies, Transit, DoC and Environment Waikato. Initial responses from those organisations that have been contacted on the issue by Council have been very positive towards the programme.

To get the project underway, there is a planned launch of an initial "Clean and Protect" programme in November, with a budget of \$50,000 taken from the community development discretionary fund. The idea is to go thoroughly through the district and remove all graffiti that is there at present and protect Council assets with approved methods of graffiti guard. Then any graffiti that is reported on Council property will get the 24 hour removal treatment. Property owners whose fences and buildings are attacked will be notified and asked to remove the offending paint within 7 days.

It is hoped that if graffiti is removed promptly those who are responsible will tire of the activity as appears to have happened when this method has been adopted elsewhere.

Seal Extensions

Seal extension projects for the financial year 2003/2004 have been increased by two projects left over from last year. They are Gerand Rd and Waikaka Rd. The approved projects for this year are Corbett Rd, Mathers Rd, Reservoir Rd and Waikumete Rd.

These are all projects which attract a subsidy from Transfund and in addition there are two projects that will be unsubsidised. They are Clarke St and Dillimore Service Lane in Waihi. The budget allocation for these works is just over one million dollars.

Work is expected to proceed with all projects subject to Transfund's approval of the deferred projects.

Does My Dog Need To Be Entertained?

Dogs do get bored if they lack stimulation. Bored dogs often develop unacceptable behaviour problems, (e.g. barking, digging holes, reacting very excitably around people). Dogs that require more "entertainment" include working breeds, collies, terriers.

Every day, all adult dogs should be taken for a walk (off the section) for at least 30 minutes. In addition, they should have 10 minutes play and 10 minutes obedience style play with you per day. Variety is very important. Your walks should vary and ideally the dog should have a chance to be either on a very long lead in some novel place or, if safe, let loose in an area where he/she can be free enough to track smells, chase leaves etc. Running behind the bike may give your dog some exercise, but very little mental stimulation. Back yards can become very boring, so leaving the dog loose there, does not count as a walk. Allowing your dog to visit and play with another dog can be good stimulation.

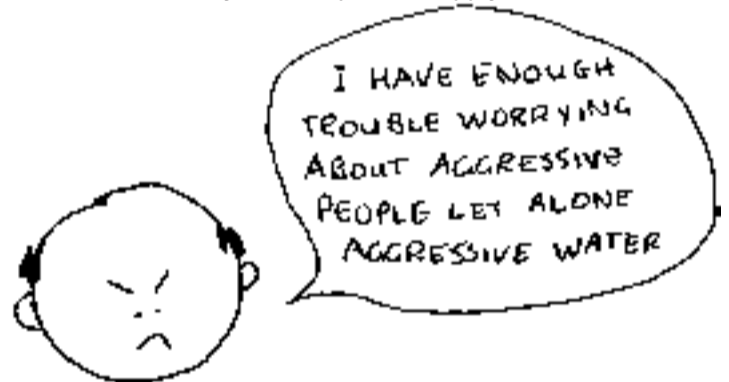
Attending obedience classes is an excellent idea. Your dog is never too old to learn! Old dogs simply take a little longer to learn than a younger dog. A dog under control is a much more enjoyable pet for you and less likely to be of annoyance to others. Also, if you are having behaviour problems with your dog, dealing with these can be made easier.



Heavy Metals

No, not the rock music variety. Apart from rock bands, what the term heavy metal usually refers to is a collection of metals such as lead, cadmium and mercury, all of which are highly toxic to humans because they accumulate in the body and cannot be excreted and which may be present in small dissolved quantities in our drinking water. Don't panic. The water in the Hauraki District water supplies is not high in heavy metals but, when tested from taps in dwellings variable results may be obtained. When the water is tested from the "first flush", that is when you first turn it on, the levels may be quite high, whereas after it has been running for a while they are lower. This is because while the water has been sitting in the pipes it has been gradually dissolving minute amounts of lead and cadmium from the pipes and tap fittings. Nowadays it is uncommon to have lead pipes but they may still be present in older houses and cadmium tap fittings are common. In recent studies it has been established that in most cases of heavy metals in water it has been from the tap fitting. Bush catchment water is the worst for dissolving metals from tap fittings so supplies like Huirau and Ohinemuri are the most likely in our district to cause this problem. This is because the bush stream water is regarded as "aggressive", that is, it is more acidic than water from further downstream and is, therefore, more capable of dissolving metals.

The solution is simple. When you run water for drinking, allow about 500mls to run away first before collecting what you want to drink. That is about two glasses. This is particularly important first thing in the morning after the water has been sitting in the taps all night. This procedure is probably wise whatever water supply you are on, whether it is a Council one or your own private supply.



Elected Members Diary

Meetings for the week of 29th September to the 5th October 2003. A quiet week - no meetings planned.

Waitawheta Camp Signage

Council received a request from the Waitawheta Camp Committee for directional signage to the camp to assist people to find the facility. There is a need for three signs and Transit approval is required for the one on the main state highway/Waitawheta Rd intersection. Council agreed to support the application to Transit for a sign and to pay for the three signs. The camp is regarded as a district facility and is used widely by school groups from throughout the Waikato and Auckland regions. It is run by a Community Committee which includes Council representation and is a non profit making venture.