

Cycling shortlist out today

By Anne-Marie Emerson
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Wanganui will know today whether it is on the shortlist to host the New Zealand Cycling Centre of Excellence (CCOE).

Sport and Recreation New Zealand [SPARC], the government agency which administers funding for sport, will today announce which of the seven tenders will be considered to host the centre.

While it is not known how many of the tenders will make the shortlist, SPARC has received tenders from Wanganui, Auckland, Waikato/Bay Of Plenty, Taupo, Hawke's Bay, Palmerston North and Christchurch.

The CCOE will include a world-class indoor velodrome as well as community facilities.

The successful tender would attract \$7 million of government funding, and the Wanganui District Council would have to borrow more than \$14 million to complete the project.

Wanganui Mayor Annette Main said she would be surprised if Wanganui was not on the shortlist.

She said she was confident Wanganui had put in a "very strong bid".

"We already have a multi-million dollar investment in a world-class velodrome; we have a demonstrated ability to hold events which meet international standards; the design of the velodrome roof structure is outstanding; and our central location are all factors I believe in our favour."

Councillor Philippa Baker-Hogan, a long-time supporter of the Wanganui bid, said she was reasonably confident Wanganui would move forward to the next stage.

"A lot of people have put a lot of time into this bid, and I don't want

P North's boost to cycle centre bid

A mystery donor has given a \$1 million boost to Palmerston North's bid to become New Zealand's cycling centre of excellence ahead of Wanganui and several others. Sport and Recreation New Zealand (Sparc) is expected to announce today which of the seven bids have been shortlisted to win its \$7 million contribution to the facility. "This is an incredibly generous donation," Palmerston North Mayor Jono Naylor was reported as saying in response. "I don't know who the person or people are, but it's very exciting to have that level of support for a project like this come out of the blue." Bike Manawatu chairman Paul van Velthooven said the \$1 million injection into the proposal to create the centre at Massey University was "a tremendous gesture". Being able to demonstrate support and sponsorship would play an important role in convincing Sparc that Palmerston North should be the cycling centre, he said.

to raise their hopes. But I believe we have a good case."

Councillor Michael Laws, who opposes the city's bid, said Wanganui was up against some "impressive" bids from the other six centres.

"Frankly, for Wanganui to win the cycling centre against that company would be strange, given that the SPARC criteria seems to set hurdles that the council's bid is unlikely to surmount," he said.

Wanganui-based elite cycling coach Ron Cheatley declined to comment until after the shortlist announcement had been made.

Meanwhile, on the eve of the announcement, Palmerston North's bid for the CCOE has been boosted by a \$1 million donation from a mystery benefactor.



RANGITIKEI EXPERIENCE: Kobe Yamate Girls' High School students spent yesterday morning at Kylie and Andrew Stewart's farm on Makuhou Rd. From left are Risako Tai, Hugh Stewart, Kylie Stewart and Mari Kawata with members of their group and Wanganui Girls' College hosts. PHOTO/TRACEY GRANT 090311WCTGMARTON06

Japanese girls enjoy rural Kiwi sights

By Merania Karauria
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A vista stretching to the sea in the west, Mt Taranaki in the north-west and Ruapehu to the north greeted Kobe Yamate Girls' High School students when they trekked to the highest point on the Stewart farm near Marton yesterday.

The students arrived in Wanganui on Saturday and are guests of Wanganui Girls' College.

Kobe Yamate Girls' High School translator Eiko Miyanishi and English sensei (teacher)

"They packed summer clothes, but arrived as a cold snap blanketed New Zealand. However, after a long trek uphill, the girls were glad they wore only light summer clothing."

Atsushi Shimada said the trip was a cultural experience for the 16-year-old students, who had never seen such a vast expanse of countryside.

Yesterday, they watched a

black sheep being shorn, then trekked to the top of the highest ridge on Kylie and Andrew Stewart's farm to take in the 360-degree views.

Ms Miyanishi said the group

left Japan in unusually cold weather when it should have been the start of spring, and thought they were coming to a hot climate.

So they packed summer clothes, but arrived as a cold snap blanketed New Zealand.

However, after a long trek uphill, the girls were glad they wore only light summer clothing. The annual exchange between the two schools began in 1993.

On Saturday, the Kobe Yamate Girls' High School students will leave for Waitomo, then spend two nights in Auckland before heading home.

We're going to miss Robbie

By Glenn Watson

To New World World shoppers in Wanganui, he was Robbie.

To his father, Noel, he was "the best hail man I've ever had".

To people who got to know him well, he was the charming chap who helped you load your groceries into the boot of your car and then took your trolley to its parking space. That was his job for the past 30 years — 25 with Write Price, which made way for New World five years ago.

He never grumbled, despite the weather.

Instead, he would tell you of his trip to New York with his Dad and talk fondly about Japan — his mother is Japanese.

He was intellectually disabled but his mind and memory were sharp as a tack.

He would greet you enthusiastically as you pulled into a New World carpark.

First there would be the friendly



ROBBIE . . . supermarket shoppers will miss his smile

"giddyay" followed by the sales pitch. "Your tyres are getting worn. Better pop down and see dad at Beaurepaires," he once said to me.

Dad, as I discovered later when my tyres had run low on tread, was

the boss at Beaurepaires.

Dad said Robbie was great for business. A lot of the elderly took Robbie's advice and did pop in to see Dad.

"He was the best hail man I've ever had," said Dad.

But something was missing last Saturday, when I dropped by New World for a few supplies.

Robbie's broad smile was missing in action. Might be sick, having a day off.

But, as it turned out, Robbie had died suddenly that morning. He was 52, but looked much younger.

New World boss Brendon Jones described Robbie as a "very loyal individual who will be greatly missed by customers and his workmates".

"He was an icon of this town who was recognised everywhere he went."

A funeral service for Robert "Robbie" Gembitsky will held today at 11am at the Church of the Holy Family, Tawhero St, Gonville.

Legend Briggs in Wanganui

By Glenn Watson
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Kiwi speedway legend Barry Briggs, the man who taught Hollywood heart-throb Steve McQueen a thing or two about motorcycling, will be in Wanganui today pushing his book *Wembley and Beyond*.

Briggs packed out Wanganui's Oceanview a few times, but it was his triumphs on the world stage that him earned him legendary status.

He won the world crown four times and appeared in 17 consecutive world finals, still a record.

Now aged 76, Briggs lives in California, where he bought a house 22 years ago, and Britain, where he still follows the speedway stars.

He invented the Dirt Reflector, which shields riders from materials coming off the track.

Briggs was delighted to hear his



GOOD MATES: Film star Steve McQueen (left) and Barry Briggs.

old New Zealand adversary Ivan Mauger was training aspiring Kiwi riders for professional careers.

"It's about time we had another Kiwi on the pro circuit," he said.

Briggs was born in Christchurch and it was with a heavy heart he

watched the aftermath of the earthquake, which tore apart his hometown two weeks ago.

"I was in LA and when I saw the telly I thought I was looking at a Third World country. I didn't recognise Cashell St or the other streets. It was terrible.

"Ronnie Moore's daughter was rescued from one of the buildings."

From diamond-mining in Africa, to looking down the barrel of an AK-47, Briggs has experienced remarkable adventures that have often eclipsed his daring exploits on the race track.

These adventures have earned and lost him \$43 million in 24 hours, and included a son who faced paralysis, and the agonising experience of a wife dying of cancer.

His life has crossed paths with entertainment legends Evel Knievel and Steve McQueen, who he taught to slide a motorbike and included a special relationship with motor-racing supremo Bernie Ecclestone.

Petrol woes

Petrol prices have increased 16 cents since the beginning of March. A litre of 91 now costs about \$2.16, diesel is \$1.61 and prices are set to rise even further. The *Wanganui Chronicle* took to the streets to find out what impact rising prices are having on Wanganui residents.



Te Rina Perry
090311WCSMVOX-1



Nicholas Jones
090311WCSMVOX-2



Trisha Atkins
090311WCSMVOX-3



Stephen and Denise Burrows
090311WCSMVOX-4



Charlotte Melser
090311WCSMVOX-5



Julia Flavel
090311WCSMVOX-6

I am concerned about petrol prices, but we still have to get to work and take the kids to school. We are planning to sell the truck and buy a car, though.

The petrol prices don't worry me too much, because I ride a scooter, and that takes about \$10 petrol a week.

Petrol is very expensive now. It doesn't worry me too much, but it must be hard for young families with kids.

Petrol prices here are low compared to England, where we're from, so they don't seem too bad to us.

We haven't changed our driving habits, although we should probably start thinking about it. People will always buy petrol, no matter how high the prices are.

We're thinking a lot more about how we're using the car. We have family in Palmerston North and we don't just drive over there whenever we want, like we used to.

Farm death leads to call for education

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a number of areas "but how you educate people is a different story".

"The suggestion has been made that we start a lot younger because you're probably not going to make a lot of headway with someone aged 50 or 60.

"I would have trouble going and telling a 60-year-old dairy farmer that he learns to ride his quad or drive his tractor properly," Mr Doughty said.

He said there were a number of programmes running in secondary schools, along with other private organisations running farm courses.

Mr Doughty said the industry could look at funding and supporting courses that taught farm staff how to

ride ATVs and tractors properly, "maybe something running alongside drivers' licences".

"I think ACC would welcome the idea of being able to get people to train to handle animals properly too. There is information available about that sort of thing but again not everyone is bothering to read it."

Mr Doughty said he always thought that if farmers continued to show ACC that they were following safe farm practices, the payoff would be reduced ACC levies.

"For those who didn't show those safe practices and continued to have accidents, they would be penalised through increased levies.

"If they were a higher risk then they would pay more."

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

SPEAKER



Dr Jon Simcock
Neurologist and Medical Adviser to the Neurological Foundation

Wednesday 16 March 2011
10.00am for 10.30am start

Central Baptist Church
285 Wicksteed Street
Wanganui

The Neurological Foundation of New Zealand presents

BRAIN DISORDERS: PROGRESS & PROSPECTS

There are more than 1,100 known neurological disorders. Your nervous system is made up of the brain, spinal cord and nerves throughout your body: together they control all the workings of the body.

When something goes wrong with a part of your nervous system, you can experience difficulty moving, speaking, swallowing, breathing or learning. You can also have problems with your memory, senses or mood. In this lecture, the Neurological Foundation's Medical Adviser, neurologist Dr Jon Simcock, will speak about the latest progress in the understanding of brain disorders. He will also discuss how the 21st century has introduced exciting new neurological investigation techniques, paving the way for enhanced diagnosis and treatment.

PHOTO/ASA

No bookings required to attend this lecture — please arrive early to secure seating. Morning tea provided.
This free public lecture is part of Brain Awareness Week. For the full programme of the week's events, go to www.brainweek.co.nz or phone 0508 BRAINS (272 467).

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Body - Hugger under /
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