

Roger that Wilco

WITH MARK WILSON



No shortcuts on road to longevity

WHEN you have fallen off the wagon, climbing back on can be daunting, particularly when it comes to health and fitness.

We have all been there, looking up from the bottom of a deep hole trying to work out how to climb out.

Many succumb to the latest fitness craze, throwing themselves obsessively into a cataclysmic lifestyle change. Inevitably, some don't make it through the first few weeks.

Others trawl the internet for quick fixes and miracle cures,

throwing money away like tipping notes at Calendar Girls.

Whatever you do, it needs to be compatible with your lifestyle and sustainable in the long term.

It can be as simple as moving a little more and consuming a little less for a long time. That's where Scoop, the fast-finishing half-marathoner, comes in.

Most of you know Scoop as a non-athletic, mild-mannered reporter by day, a keen socialiser frequenting Queenstown's bars and restaurants by night.

Renowned for getting the scoop, he's got a keen ear, a well-tested liver and a lightning quick trigger

finger on the digital camera (especially if you're blonde).

I inherited Scoop as a training client from a line of other pretty handy trainers. Scoop reckons he wore them out over the years. They got him started – my job was to push on.

Scoop, like the rest of us, preferred the pub to the gym. However, not to be deterred by reputation, physical constraints, age or our mutual love of life's finer things, we built slowly into training like an old diesel engine warming into its work on a cold winter's morning.

I used to tell people I was

taking Scoop for a run. Those who didn't know him asked what type of dog he was. Those that did laughed as if it was some form of code for going to the boozier for a lazy pint. But we carried on.

We only ran twice a week, being careful not to take over Scoop's life. One run on Thursday, originally for as little as 25 minutes, can now be an hour or more. This was followed on Sunday with a longer run, gradually building up to nearly two hours.

We did this for a year before he took on his first half-marathon since he was in his mid-20s.

Recently, Scoop – with his now famous sprint finish – completed a sodden Queenstown half-marathon in 2:21. It's his fourth race in the last 12 months.

He still drinks, but coupling that with a little more movement (running) for a long time (two years) and he's now lining up his next race with excitement and has added a few decades to his life.

No one's too old, too fat, or too far gone; all you have to do is start moving and keep going. If Scoop can, anyone can.

Mark Wilson is a Queenstown-based personal trainer

Chamber on wrong side of bed tax

LOCAL newspapers continue to report the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce's interest in seeking a law change to allow the levying of a bed tax in the town. The Prime Minister should be congratulated for his reported opposition to the proposal.

It is a disgrace that the local chamber of commerce should be arguing for increased taxation without having consulted far more widely.

A bed tax would unfairly apply to only one sector of the Queenstown economy – the accommodation industry. It is highly inequitable that all other sectors of the Queenstown economy which benefit from tourism would be exempt. These businesses span the full range of activity operators, vehicle rentals, retail outlets, food and beverage, trade services, hospitality and catering services, skifields, golf and many more commercial operations that draw in earnings from the growth generated by tourism.

A bed tax would be arduous to administer for established professional enterprises and a nightmare for private holiday home rentals (if included, and unfair if not). Administration costs could exceed revenue. And revenue flows may fall far short of local body needs for additional capital to maintain infrastructure.

Already Queenstown is considered an expensive tourist destination by many travellers. Goods and services command a premium here, partly due to the town's distance from main supply routes and

LettersScene
Box 299 Queenstown
Email: ed@scene.co.nz



partly due to the dynamics of demand and supply. Imposing an even greater price differential relative to other tourism destinations would be damaging to Queenstown's longer term development.

Wake up hoteliers! Oppose the bed tax and rid the chamber and council of this nonsense once and for all.

NIK KIDDLE
General manager, Villa del Lago

Council's vision obscured by dollar signs

So, our council CEO thinks it's perfectly alright to put up to 300 people out on the street on September 30, 2015 (MS, Nov 27), simply because, and I quote: "It's not council's responsibility to provide alternative accommodation."

The expiring land lease on the 168 cabins, where 78 are privately owned and paying the council the annual sum of \$5200 in land rental, plus the 90 cabins that are owned by the council and which are returning up to \$280 weekly in rentals, is indeed a very fine boost to the council coffers.

Yet it is the lives of these 300 or more people, consisting of singles, couples and families of three and four and more, being evicted onto Queenstown streets, who will be totally affected by the loss of this wonderful area of low-cost housing!

Where are they all going to go?

Isn't it strange then that the council, at this very moment, is advertising for areas of land on which to construct low-cost housing!

Why can they not open their collective eyes and see the amount of low-cost housing already up and running in their district?

Or do the \$ signs (and the proposed convention centre) completely obliterate their vision?

DOUG HARRAP
Cabin 109, Lakeview Holiday Park

Keep calm and launch a hate campaign

You have to be a special kind of stupid to create a statement "KEEP CALM AND HATE TOURIST" on so many levels. First and foremost it's grammatically poor. Second, if you live and work in Queenstown, your job relies/survives because of the very thing you've launched a hate campaign on. Third, you have just shown that you are a bigot as well as stupid.

Out of all this, though, and what gets me the most, is that *Mountain Scene* has deemed this worthy of regurgitation! It should have stayed right where it was first created: in the naive mind of the supermarket checkout operator who created it, or at the very least stayed hidden in the fetid bowels of The Queenstown Whinge Page on Facebook so as not to offend the very lifeblood of this town.

Keeping calmer now and carrying on.
DREW HARMER
Owner-manager, Sombreros Mexican Cantina

THIS WEEK IN OUR HISTORY

A LOOK BACK AT MOUNTAIN SCENE ARCHIVES

1976 A group of Japanese travel agents, in the country to familiarise themselves with New Zealand's tourist facilities, spent two days in Queenstown. The visit was a joint venture between the Government Tourist Bureau, Air New Zealand and Japan Airlines designed to show Japanese agents the best tourist spots New Zealand has to offer.

1984 The infamous gold trail, which wends its tortuous way into the depths of Skippers Canyon, is once again becoming clogged with traffic. A century ago it was miners, horses and carts, today it's raft and tourist companies following in their pioneers' footsteps. Operator of Danes Back Country Experiences, Dale Gardiner, says it's "only a matter of time" before a multiple fatality occurs on the

road, and seeks council support to limit the number of licensed operators on Skippers Road.



1989 Queenstown retailer Stuart Bateman (above) got the surprise of his life the other night. His staff Christmas party was in full swing at Nugget Point resort when slinky, saucy Katrina Kallil (otherwise known as Donna Kebab, the owner of Habebes) turned up to deliver him a singing telegram, complete with a bullwhip to keep him in line.

2009 Cops were called to Base Backpackers on Shotover Street after a naked couple nodded off on the steps following an early morning sex session. A senior hostel staffer threw a bucket of iced water over an American woman and an Englishman, both aged 22. Queenstown Constable Sean Drader says the pair were highly embarrassed after they'd broken from their "zone of passion". Base boss Matt Hurst says it happens all the time: "That's the sort of thing backpackers get up to on holiday."



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