

THE MAORI LAW SOCIETY -How it all began

In the beginning was ...the desire?

The idea of setting up a national association of Maori lawyers has probably always been around ever since our first batch of graduates entered the workforce. Certainly it was mooted in the sixties and seventies when the numbers of Maori graduating in law began to surge. It was an idea that always came up in the korero whenever university graduates and undergraduates got together and held their reunions and the like.

As far back as 1977 an attempt was made to set up a **Brown Bar** in Auckland (by Hemi Rua Ropata, (Judge) James Rota and Manu Rogers) but that withered on the vine. A national body was also discussed by a group of Maori lawyers who attended the NZ Law Conference at Rotorua in 1983. A lot of energy on that topic was generated there but it must have been all hot air (which is no big surprise in Rotorua) because no one kick-started the initiative to make it happen.

The idea was revisited again at the NZ Law Society Conference in Christchurch in 1987 during a dawn-breaking session in a pub. The line-up featured John Paki, Hemi-Rua Rapata, John Tamihere, Judge Hoeroa Bailey Marumaru and me. We talked long and hard on the subject and we made a firm commitment to fulfill the fantasy. At that time everyone except me was working for the Government - I was the only one actually practicing law. I returned to Rotorua with a mission to make it happen.

First Things First ...

There was a general consensus that our first hui should be held in Wellington simply because it was central. But when I secured the promise of funding from Tamati Reedy, the then CEO of the Department of Maori Affairs, the venue switched to Rotorua. A date was set, Tunohopu Marae was booked and I embarked on a telephone/letter-writing campaign to summons the troops and see

who was interested. I quickly found that there was enough interest and numbers to justify designing, printing and sending out an invitation 10 days out from the beginning of the hui.

The Planning ...

This is the sequence of the steps that were taken to set up the hui:

- ✓ Finance was sought, promised and secured.
- ✓ A Rotorua-based organising committee was formed which set the budget, the enrolment fee, the agenda and whatever else needed dealing to.
- ✓ The date and venue for the hui were confirmed.
- ✓ Letters of invitation were sent out. An arrangement was made with the Maori Trustee (Timi Wi Rutene) at Rotorua to do this and post out invitations and handle the registration fees.
- ✓ Rawiri Rangitauira took control of organisation at the marae.
- ✓ As new names continued to come in, invitations continued to go out.
- ✓ Telephone lobbying continued as the hui weekend approached.

Te Agenda ...

It would be fair to say that we were fired up, hot to trot and ready to rumble. There was not a topic under the sun that was going to escape our scrutiny but in the end we realised we had to be ruthless in order to be realistic.

Given that the time-lapse between the promise of funding and holding the hui was four weeks we had no keynote speakers because we didn't have enough time to organise them. We thought of promoting workshops for selected areas of interest but felt that this would detract from the primary need for us to all get together and network in one place which was our highest priority. The numbers who promised to attend remained elusive (*"yeah mate, I'll be there"*) so we booked the Maori Land Court as insurance in case a bigger alternative venue would be needed. In the end we came to the only sensible solution – we set up a

Clayton's agenda and it worked perfectly. Broadly speaking the business of the hui was divided into three topics which were debated with a vigor that one would expect of Maori lawyers good at walking the talk but yet to prove they could put their money where their mouth was. Those topics were:

- 1 Should we form a national body?
- 2 Lets look at current Court systems.
- 3 Lets have a discussion of land issues.

Then came the dawn – Friday 25 July 1988

The powhiri took place at Tunohopu Marae, Ohinemutu at 5.30pm. Throughout the afternoon and into the evening they came, they saw and we conquered. The procedure was simple. Roll up, tena koe, what's your name, fill in the registration form, lay your money down, pick up your name-tag, have a bickie, name your poison etc etc.

Unofficial Awards:

To Tony Tapsell (ex Rotorua and now a JAFFA) went the Gilded Pikopiko award for meritorious performance – he was the first to arrive and register. Arapeta Orme (ex Rotorua, ex JAFFA and now a Rotorua immigrant) scored the leftover steam pudding for being the last to arrive and the last to register.

Number Crunching ...

The registration fee was set at \$25.00 for lawyers and \$10.00 for students. Given the short notice, of the 43 who enrolled 42 actually turned up, five students and others slipped in under the cover of darkness. There were two Judges (Ken Hingston and Hoe Marumaru), five Judges in waiting (Joe Williams, Jim Rota, Caren Wickcliffe, Stephen Clark and Denise Clark), a future MP (Georgina Te HeuHeu), two Barristers Sole (Wiremu Puriri and Charl Hirshfeld) and 10 apologies (who included Judge Mick Brown, John Tamihere, Denise Henare and Winston Peters MP. This is apparently the only apology from Winston ever

recorded). After paying the bills we ended up with a surplus of \$1,744.30. The rest is history.

A National Body?

The answer was a unanimous “yes”. I had already secured the approval of the name “The Maori Law Society Incorporated” from the Registrar and during the hui 15 attendees signed an Application for Incorporation. The Certificate of Incorporation issued on 4 August 1988.

Because this historic first hui had been organised from Rotorua and was deemed to be a roaring success, it was decided that the administration should be centred in Rotorua - as a result the following were elected to office:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| President: | John Te Manihera Chadwick (Rotorua) |
| Treasurer: | Gary (“Mr Fiscals”) Dyall (Wellington) |
| Secretary: | Denise Clark (Rotorua) |
| Committee Member: | Rawiri Rangitauira (Rotorua) |
| Committee Member: | Sarah Reeves (Auckland) |

During the lead-in to the hui John Tamihere sent down a draft Constitution which literally suffered the cut and paste treatment as we debated over definitions of membership, objectives and the like. The most intense debate revolved around the issue of who could be a member (*Do you have to be Maori? Do you have to have a LLB?*). One of the clauses provided that no person shall be the President for more than two consecutive years and that foreshadowed the intention of moving the administration around the regions. There is also a curious clause that stated “a substantial compliance with these Rules shall be sufficient compliance notwithstanding that it may not be exact compliance”.

In the main, the Constitution has served us well and it remained unchanged for over 10 years until Hamilton came up with the idea of having two Co-Presidents,

a male and a female. Our original Constitution eventually lapsed in 1993 and we were subsequently re-incorporated in 1994 under a new name – “Te Hunga Roia Maori O Aotearoa /The New Zealand Maori Law Society Incorporated”. To which I can only say that the first part is terrific but the second not as sexy as the name I originally chose “The Maori Law Society” – OK?

Other Issues...

Given that we had a Clayton’s Agenda our korero unleashed something of a Pandora’s Box. From the files I see that some of our korero revolved around:

- ✓ Concerns about environmental law.
- ✓ Concern at the calibre of legal representation in the Maori Land Court.
- ✓ A recommendation for a Maori Land Court litigation skills workshop.
- ✓ A response to the NZ Law Society concern at “the developing fragmentation within the legal profession” and a plea from them to us (not to break away but) to become a section within the Law Society structure.

Guitar Boogie

The best way to focus on time at a hui is to ensure that there is an All Black Test on TV in the early evening. And so it proved. In the late afternoon we trudged up the hill to the Lake House Hotel and made our presence felt with the punters gathered there who were not sure whether to be blessed or damned by the presence of so many feisty young Maori lawyers. The All Black second test against Australia was on the telly and we hung in and watched them win before trudging back down to the Marae afterwards full of good cheer and bonhomie to a delayed dinner. Then came the frothy after-match post mortems which were held at my home in Koutu. There we continued with our celebrations in the style that was to become our trademark over the years. The Rev Hone Kaa crashed the party that night. He knew we were onto something good.

The Aftermath

I issued a press statement that garnered nationwide coverage of the hui. I was interviewed on radio by Maggie Barry which had an interesting repercussion. An Auckland Barrister took umbrage that I was introduced as the President of the Maori Law Society and he wrote to me pointing out that there was only one Law Society and one President (he probably also wanted to remind me that there was only one God too with all this talk of Tangaroa and Tawhirimatea and Tane floating around). He had a few other things to say as well but in particular he believed that I had made an incorrect and misleading statement. As insurance, he apologised in advance if in fact he was factually incorrect. I replied that he was correct in what he had heard and wrong in what he had presumed. I then received a response from him asking if he could join up. I issued him with a warning that his CV and whakapapa might not be up to scratch when held against the light and might not survive the dreaded wringer test - as had been the miserable fate of some other wannabes. I never heard from him again.

I received a raft of congratulatory letters from all sorts of people, Judges, politicians etc. The arrival of our Waka on the national scene was well received and from then on the media had a target for comments to be made on the issues of the day. We were on our way.

20 years down the track

What was it all about?

What follows is a collection of memories of Hui-A-Tau that came and went over the last 20 years. This is less a critique or overview of the papers presented but more a recall of random observations about the people who presented them or listened to them or who just turned up because it was the place to be at the time. That is to be expected because it is the networking, the mentoring, the proximity of role-models, the sharing of life skills and experiences, the relevance of who we

are and the way we have grown in stature that ultimately marks the place and growth of the Maori Law Society in Aotearoa

You will note that some names keep cropping up at regular intervals. That is because they were trail-blazers or had recognised expertise or were at the top of their game or were simply shoulder-tapped because they had most of those attributes. When we started out there were not all that many of us and so we relied on each other to make a contribution.

So take a bow Moana Jackson, our champion of Maori jurisprudence and legal tikanga; likewise Annette Sykes, who has never deviated from her mission to challenge and question the status quo at every opportunity. They are shining examples but there are many others as you will see.

Because there were relatively few of us we were always going to be the target for promotion to the Bench, Boards, Commissions and a plethora of Committees. and quite rightly so. That is why there are now several Judges among us. I have bracketed their office whenever I mention them.

You might also note that we were not slow to debate the “Maori” issues of the day. Examples are the Fisheries saga, the Hirangi Hui and the Fiscal Envelope, the *new* Te Ture Whenua Maori Act of 1993, the judicial activism era of Sir Robin Cooke and the Maori Council Cases over section 9 of the State Owned Enterprises Act, the Court of Appeal decision in Ngati Apa and the subsequent enactment of the Foreshore and Seabed legislation. Underlying it all was the spirit and reality of the Treaty of Waitangi which was never far from our thoughts.

Whoever thought that when Whina Cooper set out for Wellington from Te Hapua in the north in 1975 that this landmark hikoi to protest against the ongoing alienation of Maori land (“*Not one acre more*”) would be the trigger that encouraged Matiu Rata and a Labour government to introduce the Waitangi

Tribunal into our lives later that year and thereby change the legal and cultural landscape forever.

Because of the effort and expense and the diverse and widespread nature of our membership it was decided from the start that the Hui-a-Tau would be held every second year. This would also accord nicely with the provision in the Constitution that provided that “no person could be President for more than two consecutive years”.

It didn't always work out that way. Sometimes the whim of the current administration was to host hui in consecutive years and at other times there was none for two years. For instance we should have held our next hui in 1990 but we didn't and this is why.

In 1989 the planning had begun for a major conference to be held in Rotorua “*for tribal leaders to meet North American and Maori lawyers involved with indigenous peoples claims*”. This conference started out as a promotion by the Waitangi Tribunal in partnership with The Maori Law Society in conjunction with the NZ Law Society and the 1990 Commission. We were one year old and we were already sitting at the top table.

Due to conflicting personalities (no names but I'll give a fiver to the first who can name the guilty) the partnership between The Maori Law Society and the Waitangi Tribunal was severed but the conference still went ahead in 1990.

This was the *Manawhenua Conference*. It was prestigious and huge and it attracted people from all around the world. This is why THRMOA did not hold its own hui that year.

In December 1990 one (Judge) Caren Wickliffe of Nga Kaiwhakamarama I Nga Ture at Wellington wrote to me asking if THRMOA still had a heartbeat and if so,

could a hui be convened? I agreed and rewarded her initiative by asking them to organise it at Wellington in 1991. And that's what they did.

1991

This hui was held at Takapuwahia Marae in Porirua on 26-28 April. Yes the hui was held earlier in the year back in those days.

Wira Gardner was the Saturday night pre-rage speaker, he being the current CEO of Iwi Transition Agency who was a hui sponsor together with the Maori Development Corporation – we let him get some bang for his bucks..

I will never forget that evening because earlier on a kaumatua had turned up from Mangere and he gave us some aggro – he thought this was his hui which was a worry because we thought it was ours. So we had a Maori version of a *voir dire* – a hui within a hui where he was placated by being appointed the official kaumatua for the hui (a typically Ngati Kahungunu trick donated by Moana Jackson).

After Wira had fired us up with his korero (and he delivered a well-crafted speech) our kaumatua rose to close the session with a karakia - in doing so he revealed his catholic leanings. It was the end of a long day and we were ready to rage and dead keen to get out of there. Our kaumatua however had no such urgency on his mind, so he held us there captive in his thrall while he set about piously invoking the deity. We all stood there like stupid sheep, heads bowed, patiently waiting him out while he held the high moral ground and enjoyed his revenge.

Hapi Winiata from Rotorua was always good for a least five prayers when he was winding down. That enabled you to count him down, but this fellow was an unknown quantity. Suddenly he launched into an “*Ave Maria*” to be followed by three more. When he got up to six I got a bit twitchy and when he was heading up to the 10th I looked up. Many noticed my sudden head movement. Hemi Rua

Rapata, on the other side of the wharenuī certainly did and we eye-balled one another.

I signalled 15 to him by flashing my hand three times at my side then pointed my thumb at the door – the message? I was that I would walk out if the kaumatua got to 15. Hemi nodded back. Several had seen the movement of my hands because it was the only discernible movement among the battalion of penguins, in a room full of heads bowed in solemn prayer.

Our kaumatua may have sensed the rising anxieties in the room because he stopped at 13. When the word of my intention to walk got out I was asked, *“Would you have walked if he got to 15?”* – to which my stock reply was, *“Would you have followed me?”*

At the 1991 hui it was decided that Auckland would take up the administration and Whaimutu Dewes was elected President and (Mr Justice) Joe Williams was appointed his Vice President.

1993

The hui was held at Waipapa Marae at Auckland University. Whaimutu remained in office until the end of this hui on 1 August 1993 where::

- There was a feeling that THRMOA had been hijacked by corporate lawyers.
- The Mana Wahine group (Annette, Caren and Ani) flexed their pecs and ensured the election of Gina Rudland as the new President (Presidentress??).
- It was decided to shift the administration back to Wellington.

Gina was “picked” because she had no partner and no children and therefore had plenty of time and energy to devote to THRMOA – at least that was the conventional wisdom of the time. There were other reasons of course but those were the best ones. One of the speakers at the hui was Donna Awatere Huata

(the original V8 model, not the svelte Porsche makeover one) who blasted us on Economic & Commercial Development.

The cost had risen to \$100 for waged and Judges and \$35 for students.. The news came in that Shane Solomon had been appointed a junior lecturer at Waikato University

The administration remained in Wellington for the next four years from 1993 until 1997. There were good reasons for this because it was central, it was the seat of Government and there were exciting developments for Maori on several fronts which a Wellington-based Executive could easily tap into, lobby and pedal influence. In that time they held two hui.

1994

This hui was held on 1 October at Te Herenga Waka Marae at Victoria University. Annette Sykes opened the session with Dame Miria Szaszy. Andrea Tunks had just been appointed a lecturer in Maori Law at Auckland and the word came in that (Judge) Eddie Paul had just hung out his shingle in Whakatane.

The fiscal envelope came in for intense scrutiny and was found to be wanting. (Coroner) Gordon Matenga moved a motion rejecting it and the vote was unanimous. Our Kaiwhakahaere was Jennifer Blaylock and Moana Jackson gave an excellent paper on a Maori Justice system – a tika alternative. (Judge) Stephen Clark and Gordon Matenga talk about current issues in the Criminal Justice System, Gina Rudland and Mark Gray presented on Iwi Personification, Prue Crosson and Paul Majurey facilitated a Resource Management Act session and Marama Henare and Kathy Ertel talked about the Tribunal Claims process.

It was a busy hui for me too. I presented a paper called it “Milk trucks and Maori land”. Yes you guessed it, it was *not* about cow cockies. Judge Mick Brown was

unable to give the dinner speech so I stepped into the breach. I have no idea what I spoke about but whatever it was, it certainly went down well..

1997

This hui was held at Takapuwahia Marae in Porirua in September. It was around the same time that both Lady Di and Mother Theresa had died within 5 days of each other. It seemed somewhat incongruous to me that while they had garnered world media attention, a fierce mana wahine session was going down in the wharenuui to celebrate the end of Regina's reign. Gina was a focused, vivacious Ngati Porou Pwoman and our first woman President. Sadly she was not long for this world and she passed away in December 2006.

Some hardier souls converged on the Titahi Bay Golf Course for a windy and hilly round on the same course where Michael Campbell had learnt his trade.. we ended up socializing there for the evening. I think we outsang them.

Waikato then stepped up to the plate to take over the administration and instead of selecting the new incoming President on the final day as we traditionally did, they decided to take it back to their rohe for further discussion. There they did something innovative - they changed the Constitution to provide for Co-Presidents, a man and a woman. On 17 September 1997 Ani Mikaere and (Judge) Craig Coxhead were selected as the first Co-Presidents.

1998

Waikato held their hui at Kirikiriroa Marae and the University – it was our 10th birthday. The price had risen to \$150 waged and \$85 for students.

This hui featured our first international presenter, Patricia Monture-Angus, a Mohawk legal academic from Canada. Mason Durie talked to us about the Quigley Bill designed to end all Treaty settlement processes by 2010. How odd

to know that the last claims would be filed on 1 September in the year of our 20th birthday.

Other presenters were Tui Aranui, Buddy Te Whare, Victoria Kingi, Catherine Davis, Moana Sinclair, Prue Kapua, Karleen Broughton, Joe Williams (who had recently been appointed Chief Judge of the Maori Land Court), Troy Wano and Professor Wharehuia Milroy – take your pick.

This was the year Awhina Matthews and I forged the first link between the Family Law Section of the NZ Law Society and THRMOA which resulted in them agreeing to the appointment of a Maori representative on their executive who was selected (not by the family law practitioners but) by the THRMOA AGM. I see I was also the Master of Ceremonies at the dinner.

A tribute was paid to the late Tony Hemara who drowned off the Whangamata coast this year. Tony was one of our senior Maori lawyers, actually the oldest one still in practice.

1999

Waikato hosted another hui in August at Te Whare Wananga O Waikato. Waged for Saturday was \$70.00 and \$100.00 for the full 3 days, students were \$70.00

The speakers were Justice Eddie Durie, Naneko Minhinnick, Russell Karu and Kathy Ertel.

The conference dinner was held at Bryant Hall. The reason why I have no recall of this hui lies in the fact that it was the first one I missed. But I did write a letter to Ani Mikaere explaining that for me it was either this hui or the school reunion of Te Hauke Maori Primary School in Hawkes Bay. I chose the latter because I was its first graduate and lawyer and, more important, there were no other lawyers around to contradict me. Further up the road from Te Hauke is Te Aute where THRMOA was to hold its Hui-a-Tau seven years later.

In my letter I warn Ani not to let the AGM succumb to the perennial temptation of wanting to change my beloved constitution. This activity had become a feature of recent AGMs and each time I would rise up and stare down those who dared cross the line in the sand.

From this hui the administration shifted to Auckland under the Co-Presidency of Tavake Afeaki and La-Verne King.

2001

Auckland hosted the hui at Waipapa Marae again in September. La-Verne stood down as Co-President and was replaced by Metiria Turei (now MP for the Green Party).

The first guest speaker came with the impressive name of Kahungunu Barron-Afeaki who spoke on “Constructive Uses for the Law” ...I always thought it was a handy device to use to make buckets of money.

The moot final was held in Courtroom One of the Auckland High Court, the same one that frog-marched Arthur Allan Thomas off to the hinaki for life. The judges were (Chief Judge) Joe Williams, Judge Caren Wickliffe (now Fox) and the third was a lawyer who had seen several of his own clients frog-marched off to the hinaki over the years and was expected to know something about the wily arts of advocacy. Yes, you guessed it, it was me. The standard was very high and it was quite exciting to watch the proceedings unfold from the judicial bench on high.

Joe presented on the Waitangi Tribunal and I presented on the impact of Family and Youth law at this hui. Other speakers were Charl Hirshfeld on prisons, Shane Solomon on Iwi/Lawyer relationships, the late (Judge) Karina Williams, (Judge) lane Harvey and Prue Kapua

2002

The administration had shifted from Auckland to Wellington. The new Co-Presidents were Mataanuku Mahuika and Mereana Hond who used the experience to put in some training when she later became a reporter on TV3.

The Wellington-based executive thought outside the square and decided to hold the hui in Dunedin at St Margarets College which we occupied during the August/September vacation. It was a first for Te Waipounamu. The theme was – *The Legal Recognition of Maori Custom and Values*. Fittingly, the principal sponsor was Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu. We all had a ball.

There were the usual wide selection of topics on the menu with the odd new one like Genetically Modified Organisms Law facilitated by Edward Ellison, the Ngai Tahu Deputy Chairman.

I presented a session on the Property (Relationships) Act at the same time Andrew Eruiti was doing one on the Personal Property Securities Act (an exceedingly dry subject if ever you saw one). He didn't have many at his session so I invited them all to mine and Andrew and I somehow combined to present a joint presentation in which the common denominator was property. If you fancied Sports Law then there was something here for you. If your tastes ran to Tax Law and Maori Organisations then you were welcome to it. It was just great to be on another island.

As usual, Hana O'Regan did not disappoint. When she opened up with her gatling gun and sprayed words everywhere on the cultural, spiritual and historical significance of Otepoti there was no place to hide, such was her passion.

Ah yes, another highlight. One of the lesser sponsors was an institution called The Captain Cook Tavern. It was there that we converged on Saturday night and

took over the garden bar lock stock and barrel. Tavake Afeaki conducted a riotous quiz and anyone who gave him the lip was ordered to skull. Nobody could beat my quickfire answer to the question – *When did the Wahine go down?* We were told that the Captain Cook was a legend: all I can say is that our presence simply enhanced it.

The Warden of St Margarets took a close interest in our presence. He had never seen so many Maori lawyers and students gathered in one place before. I think he was keen to sign a few of them up to keep the numbers up.

2003

Mataanuku Mahuika and Mereana Hond were still the Co-Presidents when this hui was held in Wellington in September. Their secretary was the redoubtable Liana Poutu. Their executive put on a cracker of a hui in the Old Government Buildings which had become the Victoria University Law School. The theme? – *Maori lawyers, more than Courtroom Warriors*. This hui seemed to cover every topic under the sun. I particularly remember Tamarapa Lloyd from Te Oku Kaimoana presenting a session on the Court of Appeal Ngati Apa decision which quickly morphed into the Foreshore & Seabed Act.

The puku was put to the test at Pipitea Marae which was used as a dormitory and dining room. Your intellectual prowess was put to the test in the Trivial Pursuits Challenge where we were bussed out to the Petone Workingmens Club to strut our stuff. The competition was unbelievably fierce (as was the regional kapa haka performances the next night) and the evening was hugely entertaining.

The dinner the next night was held in the 10th floor ballroom at the Duxton hotel and it has to be said that we turned out a very impressive looking bunch of onto-it young in-your-face Maori professionals. There was the odd older one there too.

The girls were frocked up to the nines and the guys looked sharp and superfly-flash in tuxedos.

I remember going up on stage to give an off-the-cuff eulogy to my old friend Martin Dawson who had recently passed away. Martin was a significant player in the development of Treaty jurisprudence in Aotearoa. He had set up the Maori Treaty Issues Unit at Russell McVeigh. We were both at Victoria University together and believe it or not, we both ended up practicing law in London in 1974. We maintained our friendship up until he passed away.

Here's an interesting list of people who were involved in the organization of this hui. Liana Poutu, Precious Clark, Ana Bidois, Mereana Hond, Mary-Jane Waru, Mataanuku Mahuika, Pierre Tohe, Craig Coxhead, Belinda Allen, Frank Hippolite, Lani Matahaere, Harete Hipango, Louise Whaanga, Darren Beatty and...er...me. Waged members \$450.00, unwaged \$150.00, students \$100.00 with significant discounts for the early bird registrations. What does the price increase tell you?

2004

The Hui--a-Tau came home to Rotorua after 17 years on the road. It was organized by remote control from Auckland. I was on the organizing committee. The team was very efficient and very professional in its approach. The conference theme was *Working Towards Regional, Hapu and Iwi development*.

We used teleconferences to maintain the information flow. So who is going to be our dinner speaker then? How about Eric Rush? What's his bottom line? Why, it's only a measly three grand plus disbursements, that's all it takes to loosen up the vocal chords bro. Too dear? No problem. You can have Frano Botica for \$2,000.00 plus d's. I intervened, here's a cell-phone number, I said, phone it up and ask the guy on the other end to do the job as a favour to me.

That's how we came to have Temuera Morrison as our "entertainer" and his outrageous demand was a cheque for \$200.00 payable to an offshore company called Morihana Mansions Ltd. He was the complete entertainer and a gut-buster with his stories about his acting career. Yeah, me and Pamela Anderson were up on this cliff eh, and I had to give her a kiss eh....

There were 16 seminars presented at this hui and everyone who was anyone in Maoridom presented or attended. Moana Numanga and Stormie (as in, *It was a dark and stormy night*) Waapu dead-headed for the moot prize and Tahu Potiki from Ngai Tahu set us on our way with a dissertation on how to profitably spend \$170 million while Steve Murray, the CEO for Tainui spoke about how to lose millions and then claw it back before the aunties intervened and sacked everyone. Ururoa Flavell and David Tapsell spoke of local Ngati Rangiwewehi and Ngati Whakaue initiatives and retired Judge Ken Hingston talked about the advantages of a unicameral chamber – no, that's not a new digital camera.

A panel discussion on resolving family disputes was described as novel and innovative. It was about section 59 of the Crimes Act which gave the smackers a statutory defence to whacking their child. Should it be abolished? Thumping the table and yelling 'too bloody right' was La Verne King and me. On the other side screeching "no bloody way in the wide world" was (Judge) Greg Hikaka and Justine Davies. Judge Annis Sommerville sat in the middle and tried hard to maintain order. Who won? Lets not go there.

The dinner was held in the Skyline restaurant up on Mount Ngongotaha. The only way up was by gondola. Mereana Hond (Past Co-President and TV3 star reporter) and Pierre Tohe, a Star Wars fan, did a great job as Masters of Ceremony. Staying with te reo Maori all night. A real surprise was the awarding to me of life membership in THRMOA. I was uncharacteristically stuck for words when the presentation was made and Precious Clark reported it like this. *If we*

had known that this is what it took to silence John, we would have adopted this strategy at our executive meetings. Yeah right. A night (and hui) to remember.

2006

Aiden Warren, Rachel Hall and Jolene Patuawa and their team from Hamilton did a great job with the Rotorua hui and they carried their form into the next which was held at Te Aute College. I must say that it came as a shock to us all to witness the rundown shabbiness of the dormitories and facilities of this famous school which had clearly seen better days.

I drove down with Terena Wara and Zalene Douglas and took them to my brother-in-law, Dick Frizzell's, studio in Haumoana. Dick is a famous painter and as he is whanau it is always a good way to return to the Bay.

There was a great panel discussion between Shane Jones, Annette Sykes, Geogina Te Heuheu, Moana Jackson and Pita Sharples. This was matched by the famous Hunga Roia Idol competition which was judged by Judge Carrie Wainwright, Ngahiwi Tomoana (from Ngati Kahungunu) and Andrea Tunks. They reckoned that Te Kani Williams, a soul crooner extraordinaire from Auckland, had star quality written all over him when he performed and he walked off with the prize. As a penance for publicly showing off his skills he was selected as the next Co-President to be joined by Ngaroma Tahana (who I understand is no crooner but is known to practice her rapping techniques when staring into a mirror).

Marae TV had a camera crew on site and filmed the hui which went to air nationwide. The aforesaid Mr Kani Williams was captured in all his glory. Aiden fronted the interviews as he gradually lost his voice and the result was good positive exposure for THRMOA. Those who participated in the sports said the competition was staunch and fierce as they limped off for a cold shower..

I met an infamous character who was giving law a crack at Waikato. He once famously and publicly got offside with another infamous character who did a law degree at Wellington for a second career. Both were Maori and I won't reveal their names, but in the context of their earlier lives, both were much larger than life itself and they played out a gripping confrontation in the full glare of the media. They are older now and I think they have made up and left the past to look after itself. One day I'm going to turn their story into a film.

If Hunga Roia Idol has become a fixture at our Hui-a-Tau then so too has the venue for the conference dinner. We have dined in some posh places over the years, from the Duxton Ballroom to a West Auckland vineyard. This time we were bussed over to Taradale to the famous Mission vineyard. It felt real good being part of a group of young Maori lawyers and students all jumping out of their skins at a world class location where the view was incomparable and the wine flowed all night. Some jumped the bus in Napier to sample the nightlife while others (like me) slept all the way back to Te Aute.

Coming to this hui was like coming home for me. The next village before Te Aute is Te Hauke where my mother and my great great grandfather Te Hapuku are buried in the Kahuranaki urupa. I went to primary school there where the late Sir John Bennett was my teacher and I was his dux and the hapu's first university graduate and lawyer. Now we have Maori lawyers by the busload going past the gate. That's what I call progress.

A group of us called in at the Te Aute pub just down the road and I met Tutu Hawea there who was at school with me. If it wasn't for the lure of the Mission vineyard later that evening I would probably still be there with him chewing the fat about the good old days when the world was a much smaller place and life was much simpler.

2008

And so here we are, back in Rotorua again on our 20th birthday. Lets make it another winner.

.John Te Manihera Chadwick