

**TERM DATES:**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October  
 No later than Friday 20<sup>th</sup>  
 Dec (yeah right ... snort)

**THEN Contacts**

Coordinator:

- Julia Dirks 824 6021

Treasurer:

- Heather Taylor 859 0303

Membership:

- Julie Wallace-Cooley

[JulieCooley@Gmail.com](mailto:JulieCooley@Gmail.com)

Playcentre:

- Christine Cave 839 5513

To loan:

The telescope:

- Marietta Smith 849 9491

The microscope:

- Lori Silsbee 855 0110

Books from the library:

- Sarah Walsh 850 8545

MOE Liaisons contacts

- Sheena Harris

021 151 1738

- Meredith Connolly

[mereandd@hotmail.com](mailto:mereandd@hotmail.com)

Term Newsletter

- Lisa Piggott (Articles)

[bubbanickels@hotmail.com](mailto:bubbanickels@hotmail.com)

- Denise Styles (Activities)

873 7756

G'day fellow Home educators

Well that's goodbye to term 3 and I have to say I will not miss it. I am a bit of sook where winter is concerned and am so looking forward to the warmer weather and for some time outside, appreciating this beautiful country we live in.

Are you looking forward to term 4 with excitement? Or dread ... worried that you won't finish everything this year that you had planned. Wondering if you have done enough? We all have doubts at times but remember that there is a lot to learn and we simply cannot squish everything there is to learn into these short years we have with our children. They (and we certainly didn't), cannot learn it all. So don't stress over it – sit back and make whatever you are learning fun and enjoyable. It's not too late to throw out the text books for a while (or permanently) and simply do things that make you all happy. Don't let your own and other well-intended people put doubts in your mind that you are not doing a great job homeschooling. Just by being with our children and talking to them and showing them how much they mean to us will be one of the most important lessons that they will ever learn; am sure the MOE won't agree with me there. ;) We can learn at any age if we want to but we only have a short time appreciating and spending quality time with our children. So have a great term with your kids.

Happy educating, Lisa

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**Introducing the new Membership Secretary**

**The Home Educators Network**

[www.thehomeeducatorsnetwork.org.nz](http://www.thehomeeducatorsnetwork.org.nz)

P.O. Box 275, Hamilton

Email inquiries to *thenmail@gmail.com*

## A SAD DAY FOR FAMILY DAY

Over the years Family Day has gone through stages of great attendance to stages at which only the family opening the venue was there. This year we've seen numbers attending Family day drop dramatically again. In term 3 we changed Family Day from a Thursday to a Tuesday to avoid clashing with Thursday's Sport, but that didn't help to improve numbers either.

Unfortunately the numbers at Family Day have dwindled to such an extent that we have decided to only have Family Day on twice a term, instead of every week. The weeks that Family Day will be on will coincide with the admin meetings, as those days were the only days that Family Day was well attended.

The THEN library can still be accessed on a Wednesday and Friday morning as Sarah Walsh will be at Patterson Street Playcentre then. Please ring her on 8508545 beforehand to make sure she's attending that day.

**Dates for Family Day in term 4 are: 29th October and 3rd December**

We know there are a many activities organised in the Waikato and as a home school family you can only do so much. We'll be reviewing this every term, so if the need is there we'll increase the frequency of Family Day. You need to let us know what you would like. That way we can cater for our members.

Julia Dirks  
Coordinator



## VACANCIES

As term 4 approaches it's time to think about our AGM early next term. A number of old hands will be stepping down from the committee and this creates an opportunity for some new input. Many hands make light work, so give it some thought if you would like to help THEN remain a great support network for our homeschool community. Any help is greatly appreciated. Some of these jobs would also be suitable for keen homeschooled teenagers as this would give them great work experience.

So far we will have vacancies for:

- Website maintenance
- Coordinator
- Newsletter editor
- Activities coordinator
- Moderator on Yahoo group

Happy Homeschooling  
Julia Dirks

## RECORD KEEPING

Do you keep records of what you and your children learn together?

Should you keep records of what you do together?

The truth is you have to decide for yourself, if record keeping is important.

For me personally record keeping was a breakthrough in feeling more positive about home educating my children. At the time I was suffering from serious depression and was going to counselling. Home education had proved the most effective way for my children to learn but really we were muddling on and it seemed to me to be going nowhere.

One day I had a "brain wave". It was a day that I had not done much with the children but I could see they had been very well occupied. So I sat down with a piece of paper and wrote down what I had seen them do, including the little bit we had done together. The paper was surprisingly quite full and I could write maths next to a particular activity, science next to the gardening, home economics next to the baking, etc. Really they had done quite a few things that could be considered "school work" just in the normal run of daily life and being themselves. Where appropriate I wrote a particular child's name next to the activities they had been involved in.

Sounds complicated? It wasn't.

This led to my homeschool diary. I did not buy one someone else had prepared as it did not meet my needs. I found that a spiral bound exercise book was best, it was also cheaper. At the start of the week I wrote the date and the week of term at the top of the page. Below this I wrote Monday and sometime during the day on Monday I would write in what the children were doing that could be considered educational; and likewise on Tuesday; and so on through the week. Sometimes if life was too busy I only filled it out from memory later in the week.

The primary purpose of this recording was to help me see that the children were learning, sometimes because of what we'd done together, but just as often on their own. For me it was a vital tool in feeling more confident about home educating my children which in turn helped me feel more confident about life in general.

Here is a sample of a daily record;

Religion: Mass 9.00am

Maths: skip counting by 2's, 5's, 10's, 3's, 4's 6's, 7's, 8's 9's

Music / history: listening to Tschaikovski Discover America.

Early childhood education: looking after / playing with three year old twin girls

Physical: walking to the park and using the play equipment with the girls

Geography: naming capital cities of European countries.

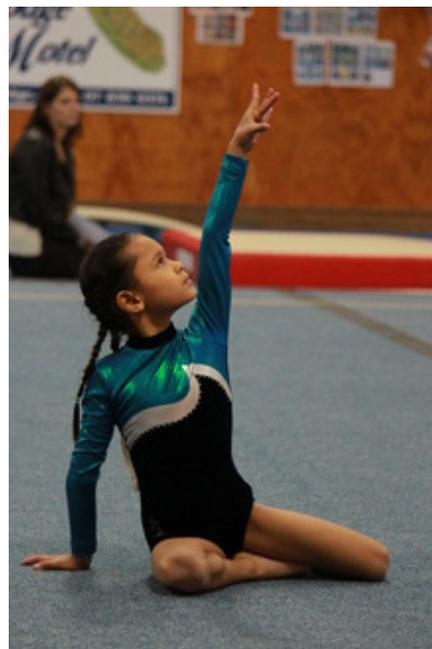
The reality was that we went to visit some friend in Papamoa for the day and these are all the things that could be considered educational that we did on that day while having a really great day out!

In 2004 I had one of those reviews you get when someone complains about you. It was set for a date ten days after I arrived home from a two month holiday in Darwin. We had done no formal schooling in Darwin at all. What was I to do? Well I had my diary from before I went away. So I wrote at the top of a new page - Two Months Holiday in Darwin. Below the title I listed all the interesting things we had done while away. No dates. Just a list of activities, one to a line. No comments about the activities or anything. We managed to fill a page because we had not been idle. Then I went back to keeping the diary the way I had before I went away. The review went very well.

You might think I did a great deal of structured work with my children. The truth is I did not. Much of the time I observed what they were doing and recorded it. My underlying philosophy for home education is that the parents are the facilitators for their children's education not necessarily their teachers. The record keeping helped me to keep track of where we had come from. Through it I could see a forward movement in my children's education which improved the whole education process in our home.

*From Margaret Evans*

Homeschooler, Panit has been competing for the first year at Step 2 Artistic Gymnastics. She had a 2nd place on the beam in New Plymouth and 3rd place at the Hamilton Midlands Champs. At the Tauranga and Rotorua competitions she had a second and third place on the floor.



### **River City Training Academy**

Otherwise known as the Skill Centre. We are pleased to announce that we're organising two subsidised fun days at the skill centre this term. One for the 8-12 year olds and one for the 13-18 age group.

These are days full of rope skills, rock climbing, team work and Canadian canoeing down the river.

The 8-12 age group will be on Friday 8th November.

The 13-18 age group will be on Friday 22nd November.

Both days from 9 till 3.

The cost is \$40 pp, with THEN subsidising \$20 pp. This subsidy will only apply to current THEN members as of June 2013. Minimum numbers are 10, with a maximum of 25. Money has to be paid in full into our account at least one week before the date of the trip. First come first served. Non members can still participate but then at the full price of \$40 pp.

Remember to bring lunch, drink bottle, sunscreen and a change of clothing. Because you'll be going out on the water you're **not allowed to wear jeans**.

We will need some parent help for the day depending on numbers. You can contact either Monique (for 8-12 age group) on 07-8525647 or myself (for 13-18 age group) on 07-8246021.

Looking forward to a fun day.

Julia Dirks

During a 10-pin-bowling 'Learning As Families' outing last term, which was also attended by an expectant mother, preparing to withdraw her 3 young children from school 2014, we were inundated with numerous questions regarding our current home education practises. The series of questions the potential new home educator posed, prompted me to consider our current approach and what if anything, has changed for us along our journey.

Interestingly I found myself reluctant to share the intricacies of our Home Education practices. While our happy, homeschooled children fired off bowling balls, we were queried about our views on television watching, practises regarding schooling timetables, specifics regarding curriculum, resource materials used and our children's current activities. I was challenged about my ability to fulfil my children's progressive needs and our recent inclusion of on-line learning, while she pondered the possibility of afternoon bookwork for hers.

I concluded, that while **I clearly know** what we do regarding our home education and how we do it, I could not **possibly say** what would work for any other homeschooling family. One wise woman at the outing suggested "trial your ideas, you'll know soon enough if that works for you and your family".

It was quite some time after we had begun homeschooling and through attending groups like FAST and Family Day at Paterson St, that I met others whose approach varied uniquely from mine. Homeschool families create their own vision, identify their focus areas and radiate their own style. What is so obviously the same and remains so, is that irrespective of style and content, every family I have met earnestly wants what is best for their fortunate homeschooled children and are tirelessly dedicated to achieving this.

Some skill areas may be non-negotiable for a family. Our family focus has always been reading, writing, math and science. We have used various curriculum books over the years and changed as we've discovered ones better suited to our needs. Alongside this, the boys are expected to contribute to the maintenance of our household by sharing in daily cleaning tasks, food preparation and by helping outdoors.

We recently adopted on-line learning and view it as another fascinating tool to compliment our bookwork. For those interested, you might want to check out Khan Academy, a brilliant and beautiful concept which is to make on-line education free and available, in maths, science, economics, computer science, history and art history, to children all over the world. Tutorials are clear, great for visual and auditory learners and delivered in tones /accent my boys probably find refreshingly different from mine. Not for every family but 'take what you want and leave the rest'.

As Craig Smith very clearly pointed out at one of the Home Educators Conferences, 'never underestimate the value of reading aloud to your children' find biographies. This gem resurfaced recently through THEN emails and now thankfully we can all feel virtuous because what we already knew has been 'backed by research'. Currently we are enjoying George's Key to The Universe by Lucy & Stephen Hawking (science) and the My Story series (history), written in the form of children's diary entries through the ages. Long car journeys take on another dimension when accompanied by talking CDs and biographies & autobiographies especially riveting. We relish films & documentaries and in particular marvel at David Attenborough's wildlife series. With the boys maturing, there are some remarkable historic and classical movies to select from and like everything, we are open-minded but discerning.

I love the sharing that springs from our reading. 'Mum, now I understand how gravity keeps planes in the earth's atmosphere and why they don't just float off'. While non-fiction book reading 'for pleasure', is not my eldest's natural inclination, he is encouraged to endure a ½ hour stint each day. My delight is that while he insists on setting a timer, he often goes overtime. 'Mum did you know that dolphins have the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest brain of any mammal relative to its size?'. My own 'breakfast reading' is often farming related, so the boys get to hear about bio-security hazards like the scmallenberg virus causing birth defects in sheep throughout Europe, concerns over the feeding of potentially infected palm-kernal to cows thereby generating a foot & mouth outbreak or the dreadful inflammation of pigs digestive systems when fed genetically modified maize. No wonder the pigs also display increased aggression! As I strive to provide our children with enriching activities, I also help them to identify and develop their areas of personal interest or passion. They need to feel trusting, to be free to express their changing needs and to be listened to. My responsibility is to really know my children, their strengths, challenges, desires and dreams and how can I tailor our learning and activities around these.

Our family works best with structure, we are fresh in the morning, so tackle what's challenging at this time. We are however flexible enough to allow for spontaneous detours in learning and by following up random thought-

provoking 'Google' questions, are lead to some unexpected and fascinating places. However like all home educators we too naturally experience the 'other home-school days' so cleverly depicted in past THEN newsletters, because that is the nature of life and of learning at home.

I am constantly watching, listening and guiding my children to master what I believe are the necessary life skills and virtues that will help them move from the security of home to become happy, independent, productive and contributing members of society. I am all for exposing children to a raft of experiences which may unleash natural gifts and provoke curiosity. However, there are only so many homeschool activities one can commit to and I've found as my children mature, they are fine-tuning their interests, clearer about what excites and inspires them and it's important to consider their thoughts and feelings. As most activities involve a financial as well as a time factor, we follow obvious leanings. My dearest hope is their future career paths embrace what they are most captivated by.

The boys have participated in screeds of short term activities and pursued for longer periods involvement in sports, music, art classes and horse riding. What they are committed to now, they thrive on. One is a very enthusiastic swimmer attending 3 or 4 sessions per week and he delights in creative writing, cartooning and acting. The other excels at storytelling, loves literature, is artist and attends swimming, speech & drama and judo classes regularly. Regular physical exercise is important for all our family members. I find it both mentally recharging yet energy draining which is especially desirable with growing children.

Recently I was asked by someone who knew I homeschooled, "Do you work?" I had to giggle and hope I didn't snort. Yes, I work. Firstly, I am a home educating parent and that in itself is constant. We also live on a farm, own numerous animals and with family support I run a small sheep business of around 250 ewes pre-lambing. Life can get busy. Home education is my priority but seasons dictate energy expenditure in other areas. I'm learning to pace myself.

Like most farming families, my boys have gained skills, sometimes under duress. They are now adept at mustering, tackling troublesome lambs, help with drafting, docking, vaccinating, drenching and as rousies at shearing time. Lambing season they have helped rear orphans. They have planted trees and help erect fences so sheep don't eat trees. They are employed to build and burn bon-fires and there's nothing like watching a home-kill to understand something of anatomy and physiology.

After a busy day of learning, arriving home in the dark of winter and tired from evening classes, when the boys willingly leap from the car to tackle gates in the mud and rain, then without prompting tend to the animals, lug into the house bags and books, light the fire, help unpack groceries and begin preparing food for dinner, I feel like we're doing a whole lot of something right.

Speculation from those with homeschool experience, was that we would find ourselves modifying our practises over time. Our expectations are certainly more realistic. My children have abilities and developed interests very different to my own. Letting-go of my desires and practising flexibility is a much more important tool than I realised. My eldest has become a more independent learner and his growing need is to now be involved in purposeful, team-building, external activities, which we are currently exploring.

To conclude, are my children learning and progressing? Absolutely, consistently and delightfully so. They are articulate, engaging, enquiring, insightful and communicative when they choose to be. Proud relatives often comment about the empathy and mindfulness they show relating to people of all ages.

My heartfelt thanks to all the women who've shared their wisdom and home education experience with me over the years. Your warmth and inclusion may have been the inspiration I needed to re-new my strength, to persevere and continue to affirm our home education stance. My simple suggestion to any new home educator is to find other families whose company you relish, who lift your spirits and who feed your soul - both for yourself and your children and enjoy the journey. Kia kaha.

Zara Walsh mother of Rivan and Nivek

## **News from Ministry of Education Liaison:**

We haven't met, in person, with Candida and the team at the MoE since April as our July meeting was cancelled due to work pressures at the Ministry end. We have however had "phone meetings" to Candida to discuss any issues that have arisen in the meantime.

Further delays happened when Rachel Fox left the ministry to take up a position at the university and there was a long process in appointing a new team manager. This has now happened and Charles Rolleston is due to start on the 16th of September. We are hoping for a meeting as soon as he has had time to put his pen and a photo of his family on his desk! ;-) We are looking forward to seeing what his contribution to the Home Education community will bring.

Meredith: [community\\_dance@hotmail.com](mailto:community_dance@hotmail.com)  
Sheena: [sheenaharris.cm@btinternet.com](mailto:sheenaharris.cm@btinternet.com)

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with either of us if you are having exemption issues, being asked for 'more information' or an ERO review. We don't necessarily have all the answers, but we usually have contacts with those who do. A recent post from a Home Educator in Northland recently outlined the need to prepare well and research carefully before undergoing an ERO review. Although ERO are a different department to the MoE, there are obviously overlaps, and we are able to ask questions in regards to such issues that Home Educators can face. We are here to represent YOU, as best as we can, with questions or issues that can effect us all.

All the best  
Meredith and Sheena

## **PODCASTS**

<http://savvyhomeschoolmoms.com/about/> – The Savvy Homeschool Moms is a podcast by homeschooling moms for homeschooling moms. "In the trenches as we're going through it!" (Secular)

<http://www.unpluggedmom.com/about-2/> – The shows focus is centered around the various unhealthy issues with modern compulsory education and encouraged parents to "unplug" from conventional schooling to enjoy home-based, independent education. (secular)

Homeschooling Netcast Network – The Homeschooling Buzz – There is a treasure trove of interviews with big names in homeschooling (Christian)

<http://www.thewiredhomeschool.com> – Helping homeschoolers with technology, social media and the internet

<http://www.homeschool.com/podcasts/> -- This site has a link to a load of podcasts pertaining to homeschooling and grouped them into appropriate packages (free)

<http://www.thesociablehomeschooler.com/> -- Each week I encourage like-minded parents, from all walks of life, to consider homeschooling as an heroic and viable way to educate their children.

There are PODCASTS on EVERYTHING these days. Simply look on Pinterest or search the itunes store for "homeschool" or "education" and you'll get a decent list of homeschooling podcasts. There are even loads for your children to listen to or have them make their own!

Thank you Lori for help with your podcast suggestions. ☺

## Information Evening

Our THEN event to host guests who were either interested or new to Home Education back in June went really well. We had 12 participants and a wonderful team of 6 helpers on the night. There were even a few turned down as we didn't want to 'swamp' the event. They are now keen to join our next event. The information was well received and I think very helpful to those who came. Although time was tight, they were able to hear about different home education approaches, how to prepare an exemption, hear first hand from 'post home ed students' and ask questions in an open forum. It was a very worthwhile evening.

And so, as promised, we are putting together another event in **November**. Leanne Davidson is kindly going to co-ordinate it. The idea is to use a similar format to last time to reduce the workload in preparation. Please spread the word to anyone you know who is interested in home education or asks you 'those questions' about what it's like etc. There is no obligation to commit to home education. :-) Also, PLEASE post the flier in libraries, shops, car window etc. when the date is confirmed to help spread the word. If we all do a little, then it makes a huge difference.

We are always happy for new team members to help out with hosting the event - the larger the team, the less often individuals need to help out! And you don't need to stand up and speak if you are not comfortable, the kettle needs to go on and a smile and listening ear is VERY valuable!

Please let Sheena know if you want more information on email [sheenaharris.cm@btinternet.com](mailto:sheenaharris.cm@btinternet.com) or ph. 07 981 1343 or contact Leanne on email [jacj davidson@gmail.com](mailto:jacj davidson@gmail.com)

Many thanks for your support. Sheena Harris

## **NEW MICROSCOPES AVAILABLE TO THEN MEMBERS!**



THEN has upgraded the microscope kit available for loan to THEN members. We now have two microscopes, a set of 100 x prepared biology slides, and two Usborne books containing microscope facts, usage tips, suggested projects, applicable internet sites, etc. It is possible to view all items on either microscope, although each microscope has its own unique benefits. The original THEN microscope (shown in the photo with the books and slides) will magnify at 20 or 40 times what can be seen with a human eye. The large viewing plate on this microscope is especially good for looking at 3D objects (i.e. rocks, flowers, bugs, etc.) The second microscope (shown in the additional photo) is a high school level student microscope and will magnify at 40, 100 and 400 times what can be seen with a human eye. The higher magnification creates the requirement for a smaller viewing area, and this microscope is better suited for viewing slides, such as the ones now available for loan (including such things as honey bee parts, human blood, plant parts and a wide variety of other interesting items).

Because the original microscope accessories were gradually lost over the years of loaning, and also due to the recent financial investment in the new equipment, there are now a few requirements to preserve the kit in a good condition. The kit can be loaned for up to 4 weeks at one time, with an option to renew your loan for an additional four weeks if no other family is waiting to use the microscope kit. Maximum loan time is a 10-week school term. A \$20 cash bond is required when the kit is collected. If the kit is returned complete with all 100 slides and no missing equipment, the \$20 cash bond will be returned. If anything is lost or damaged during the loan, the \$20 bond will be retained by THEN towards the cost of replacing lost or damaged pieces.

With some forward planning to ensure availability, this set of microscope equipment can be a great asset to any biology unit study or even as a one-off fun science study to just explore the many things that can be seen in new ways with a microscope. If you wish to prepare your own slides, you will need to purchase your own kit of dyes and blank slides for that purpose.

To hire the microscope kit, please email the custodian, Lori Silsbee: [s.l.silsbee@clear.net.nz](mailto:s.l.silsbee@clear.net.nz)  
Pickup/drop off is Fairview Downs area of Hamilton.

## LARA'S LINKS

High School Helps, Lessons, etc:

- A free financial literacy program for high schoolers.  
<http://www.actuarialfoundation.org/programs/youth/BuildingYourFuture.shtml>
- Free Video Lectures: Subjects include computer science, web design, psychology, etc.  
<http://freevidelectures.com/>
- Math dot com helpful information for Geometry Algebra and even Pre-Calculus/Trigonometry.  
<http://www.math.com/>
- Fact Monster: Research skills great tips and guidelines  
<http://www.factmonster.com/homework/researchskills1.html>
- High School Lesson Plans  
[http://teachers.net/lessonplans/grades/high\\_school/](http://teachers.net/lessonplans/grades/high_school/)
- Hippo Campus - Homework and Study Help - Free help with your algebra, biology, environmental science, physics and religion homework  
<http://www.hippocampus.org/>
- High School Art Lessons  
<http://www.incredibleart.org/lessons/high/highlessons.html>
- Teach with Movies: Interesting resource for older kids`  
<http://www.teachwithmovies.org/index.html>
- Khan Academy 800+ videos on YouTube covering everything from basic arithmetic and algebra to differential equations, physics, and finance  
<https://www.khanacademy.org/>
- How to Study; tips and articles  
<http://www.howtostudy.org/>

Natural Disasters & General Safety (some are foreign but can easily be adapted)

- Let's Get Ready: Are you ready to help your family get prepared for the unexpected?  
<http://www.ready.gov/kids>
- Crucial Crew - E-learning game for children: great interactive safety games (aged 8-11)  
<http://www.crucial-crew.org/>
- Sparky the Fire Dog Activities, games, cartoons and more  
<http://www.sparky.org/>
- Tales of the Road: road safety  
<http://talesoftheroad.direct.gov.uk/>
- Be prepared Natural disasters can strike at any time – and often without warning. Know what to do before you have to do it.  
<http://www.eq-iq.co.nz/be-prepared>
- Kids Safety Topics from knives to bullies to meeting the bus  
<http://www.ou.edu/oupd/kidsafe/kidmenu.htm>
- Survival Guide, natural disasters, survival gear | Outdoor Life | Outdoor Life Survival  
<http://survival.outdoorlife.com/>
- Wild, Wild Weather  
<http://www.wildwildweather.com/>
- Earthquake Topics for Education: Information on a variety of earthquake topics, educational resources.  
<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learn/?source=sitenav>
- Safe Kids: a unique reference point on child safety advice and more  
<http://www.safekids.co.uk/>

*“It busts any preconceptions about limits on what people with dyslexia can achieve.”*

*– The New York Times*

# Could it be Dyslexia?

***It is the most common learning difference (1 in 5 kids) yet the most publicly misunderstood.***

Dyslexics are bright yet struggle with reading. Please join us for a discussion after we screen the documentary.

## **The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia**

***Directed by James Redford***

***Produced by Windy Borman and James Redford***

***Executive Producer Karen Pritzker***

52 minutes / 2012 / USA

***As Seen  
on HBO***



**Wednesday, 20 November, 7:30 p.m.**

**Hosted by Lori Silsbee**

**10 Ada Place, Fairview Downs, Hamilton**

**RSVP 855 -0110 or [s.l.silsbee@clear.net.nz](mailto:s.l.silsbee@clear.net.nz)**

**Limit 10** - If you are not able to attend this particular evening, we may schedule a second duplicate event if there is enough interest. Please register your intentions.

**TheBigPictureMovie.com**