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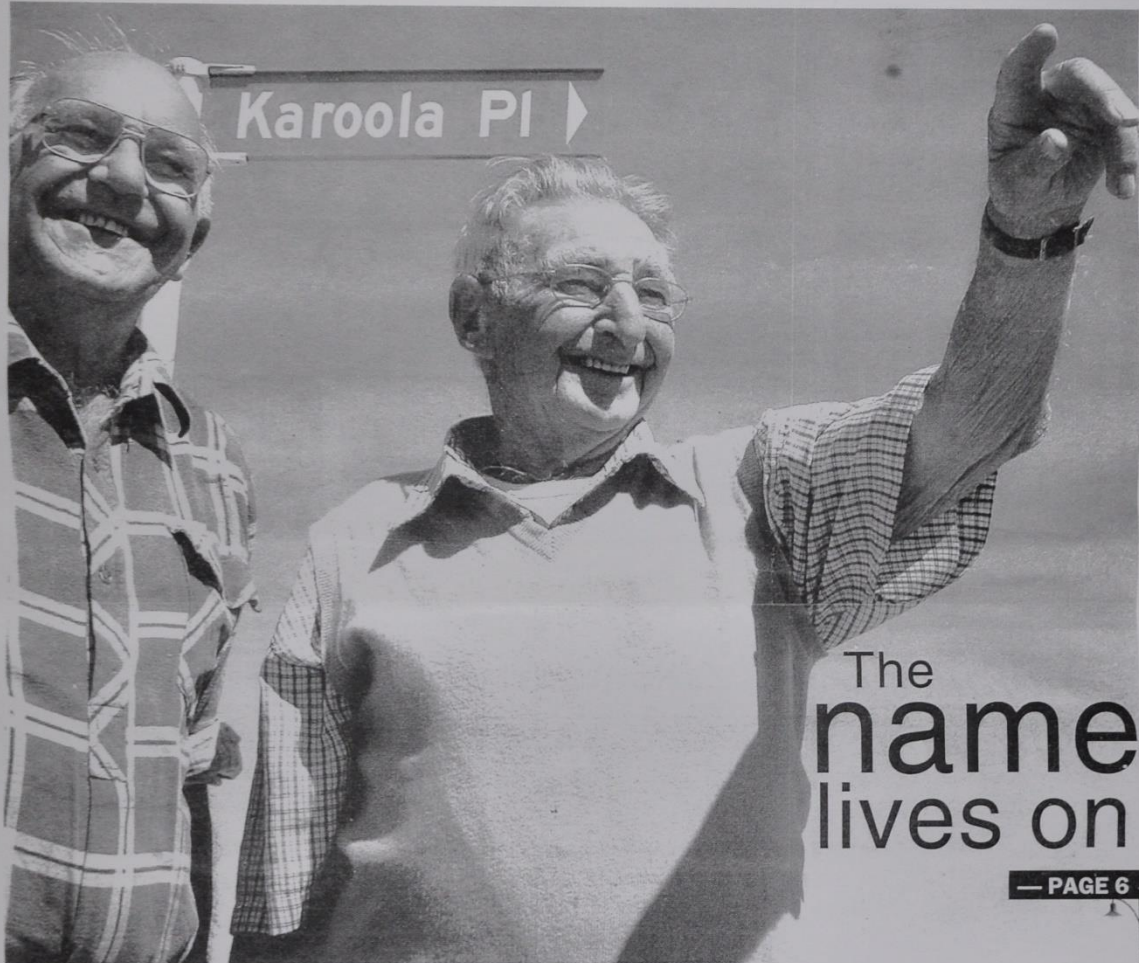
Havelock North



INSIDE

Blokes bond with a good yarn — page 5

Delivered to the greater Havelock North area, Napier Hill, Te Awanga and Haumoana Tuesday, October 17, 2006



The name lives on

— PAGE 6

FRUITS OF THEIR LABOUR: Third generation orchardists Colin Rich (left) and brother David check out their old 31-acre orchard Karoola (in the Arataki area now predominantly subdivision) which the family ran between 1900 and 1981. The two were surprised and pleased to see the place name go up a few months ago.

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REMAINING PAIR: Karoola third (and last) generation orchardists David Rich (left) and brother Colin check out one of the few remaining pear trees on the property near the farm's original homestead.

A Rich picking

Unless you're Australian it's not a name that would necessarily ring any bells. Yet Karoola has a "rich" significance for anyone that knew the Rich family or lived near the family's 12.5ha orchard near Arataki between 1900-1981.

Now largely a subdivision, Karoola's heritage status was

acknowledged by Hastings' District Council which was tipped-off by Wendy Rich (through developer Sam Pepper).

Wendy's great grandfather John Rich planted the orchard in 1900.

"I happened to be walking past one day and got talking to the contractors working on site. We discussed the land's history and I

asked if there were any street names decided — apparently that was up to the developer and Council," Wendy says.

Wendy's uncle and third generation orchardist on the property David Rich drove past the site months later — and much like Saul on the road to Damascus — he literally saw a sign from above.

"I had to look twice.

We stopped, reversed back and couldn't quite believe my eyes, simply fabulous!" David recalls.

Karoola was named after an orchard owned by John in the Central Tasmanian settlement of Karoola (Aboriginal word for "fresh water") in the late 19th Century.

"Here in Havelock North we had just about every fruit tree available, though plums were our primary fruit," David explains.

"My grandfather planted close to 2300 trees — back when it was only 100 trees to an acre. I shifted onto the orchard when I was 16 — and stayed until we sold in 1981."

The Karoola property has had its share of tragedy and media attention over the years. In September 1996 after a 65-day manhunt Terrence Thompson, 43, was shot and killed on the property after a stand-off with police. David also lost a niece after she tragically drowned in the property's creek.

"There's a lot of history here," says David. "My brother Colin and I lived as bachelors in the old homestead and other houses on the property.

"I remember we had

the usual 'discussions' with local beekeepers who accused us of poisoning bees.

"One such day I was asked to have a look at a pile of dead bees, a beekeeper fished through the bees until she found a queen and said — 'this is a dead virgin queen'. I replied — 'well I can see it's a queen, but how do you know it's a virgin'?"


"I don't think that went down too well. Bees were vital to us orchardists too so we tried our best to look after them."

David admits being close to tears after seeing the property's aged stand of pear trees (used as a windbreak) felled.

"I know it's a bit sentimental but my grandfather had those pear trees (Winton Ellis variety) shipped over from America. There was a surplus of 100 which he planted as a windbreak. I was pretty close to tears when I saw them bulldozed and lying in a heap.

"Yet we're really stoked with the idea to name a street after the farm. It's a great acknowledgement and recognition of the family's efforts and the orchard's heritage in the area." David says.

■ See front page photo.



Community Centre
HAVELOCK NORTH

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