

# Chapter One

## 2018 SUMMER CRUISE OF AVANTI

The 28th Voyage Dunedin to Nelson

Bill and Margaret McIndoe

Abbreviations and nautical terms:

**nm**, nautical mile = 1.82km:

**kts** = knots, speed, one nautical mile per hour (1kt =1.8 kph).

**CQR** = play on words - "secure", a type of anchor.

**Rode** = anchor, chain and rope which holds the boat to the seabed to stop it drifting.

**ETA** = Estimated Time of Arrival.

**Sailed** = moved the boat under wind or motor or both.

**Sized crayfish** = measured

### Testing Problems of Age

Expedition in yacht "Avanti" with John Chappell in his motor-sailor 'Kaikoura'  
before Christmas December 2017

#### Should we go Voyaging Again?

Should Margaret and I attempt another 2,600km voyage from Port Chalmers to Nelson and return in our yacht Avanti at our age? At 89 and 87 years old we are, no longer old salts, but really, ancient mariners. The decision-making process took a while and included consideration of many aspects of the condition of the yacht, short test voyages around the Otago Harbour, consideration of our health and our physical and mental standard.

On Thursday the brilliant day promised by the Met Office did not show and we never saw the sun. But "it was a lovely soft gray Dunedin day" to quote Margaret's mother. Avanti moved slowly across the harbour to meet "Kaikoura" coming down from Dunedin, exactly on time between the Islands and I followed her over to Latham Bay. John secured alongside the Portobello pontoon. Needing more depth over a low water I anchored Avanti 50m further out where it was deeper, which necessitated using the dinghy to get ashore.

Margaret and I can no longer leap up and down ladders into the dinghy as we used to. We take it cautiously, one step at a time. The actual rowing is no trouble. Disembarking from the yacht into the inflatable dinghy, then rowing over at the Portobello pontoon went well. To disembark from the dinghy wasn't so easy. With John and Helen holding the dinghy alongside the pontoon we scrambled (crawled is more accurate) up onto the pontoon all ready for the walk around to the Penguin Cafe in Portobello. Our performance makes me think that our days of long coastal cruising are over. OK In the harbour as long as we can disembark from the yacht directly onto a pontoon or wharf. but getting in and out of the skiddy inflatable dinghy is the test.

#### Sam and the Children

John Chappell's 40 yo charming daughter Samantha, with her two daughters, were all aboard Kaikoura. Sam is a (horse) vet in Hokkaido, married to a Japanese (horse) vet. With their two children they live in the forest in Hokkaido, Japan and both work in the nearby "biggest race horse breeding farm in the world". The two girls Niya 11 and Amy 9 are fluent in both languages. Their Australian mother always talks to them in English, their father talks to them in Japanese and Sam and her husband talk to each other in a mixture. The girls have their own ponies of course. Grizzly bears are wild in Hokkaido so watch for the moving shadows in the forest when out riding, my dears!

### **Fascinated Eavesdroppers from Vermont - the mystic of yachting.**

John & Helen kindly showed us lunch at the Penguin Cafe (to reciprocate they said). It was a jolly party of seven, out on the cafe sun-deck talking flat-stick about all sorts of things with cheeky seagulls determined to steal our lunch. As we left I realised there was an 'elderly' couple seated at a table just behind me. As we were leaving I apologized for the noise we were making. "Quite the contrary," they replied. "We were hugely entertained by eavesdropping on your many conversations and your adventuresome lives." - Nice visitors from Vermont.

The tide was out as we weighed anchor and departed Latham Bay. The water was shallow and our keel was scraping across the bottom with the echo-sounder showing only 1.6m to 1.7m. Our draft is 1.7m, but we managed to push over the bottom mud to the deeper channel running close to Portobello Peninsula. Because I then had 100mm (one hand) of water under the keel I stopped worrying that we might come to a sudden gooey halt.

### **Wharf Repairs**

If the barometric pressure is not too high, and with Graham's assistance, we will get Avanti out of the water on our slip sometime between Thursday 30/11/17 and Saturday at Spring high tide, to do the work on the bottom of the boat. Water blast, sand, fill the holes and antifouling as had to be done every year. This afternoon Graham found a half hour to repaired the fresh water hose where it blew apart a fitting half way along the wharf. I had found this terrible leak several days ago.

There was water under high pressure going everywhere so I turned off the toby tap. Because I haven't had water for five days everything has got grubby. The water pipe under the wharf was repaired today and the supply turned back on. Tomorrow I am preparing for a big scrub-down on the wharf and the boat.

### **Limited Strength and stamina**

I spent most of the this afternoon shoveling away a third of a large 'wave' of gravel that had been thrown up under the cradle and on the rails of the slipway during a stormy night when there was a Spring (very high) tide. If I don't manage to remove the 1 cubic meters of gravel off the rails I would not be able to move the cradle down into the water to recover the boat next week. When my energy level returns tomorrow I will remove another third of the gravel in easy stages. It only take persistence. Graham kindly came down and moved the rest.

### **Wharf Maintenance**

While under the wharf I found that many of the plastic saddles holding up the electrical wires were broken or rotten. They were installed 35 years ago in 1982 when we built the wharf, so they haven't done too badly. They all need replacing otherwise the 35m of many wires carrying 240v power for illumination floodlights, the electric winch and 240v plugs will swing in the wind and be damaged.

### **Like a Train in a Tunnel Sailing day Approaches**

Nagging in the back of my mind was all the jobs I still have to do to get Avanti ready by 4th January, now only 6 days away (which includes New Year), to sail on our last ten week penultimate voyage to the Marlborough Sounds and on to Nelson. Craig, being a doctor had taken over and rebuilt the medical kit with modern medicaments. That job is now done.

All this on the eve of Christmas when there are Christmas cards, paper and presents all over the place. The iPads are running red hot with emails to family and friends, arranging our social life in the North of the South. I have booked moorings or marina berths in Akaroa, Picton and Nelson and I am tracking orders placed for the boat but not delivered i.e. the LIFE RAFT, which we must have, is days late and not yet back from being serviced in Christchurch. A real worry!

Phone call: Good news re Life Raft. It will arrive in Dunedin by truck between Christmas and New Year on Wednesday 27/12/17. But the old Worry Wart won't stop worrying until it is delivered right to our door. Even better up-dated news - on Wednesday it did arrive in Dunedin. Weighing in at 42kg in its containing plastic box, it was not a simple task to move it. Using ancient seamen's skills, and our ancient muscle power, Margaret and I moved it from the trucking company's depot in town to the car, to the boat shed, down the wharf on the trolley, hoisted it aboard using our crane, the spinnaker halyard and other cunning tricks. Finally placed it gently in its cradle on the cabin top

of Avanti. In between events, to keep idle hands out of mischief, I spent two days stripping and servicing the electric anchor winch.

Is all this normal for the upcoming holidays, Christmas and New Year period? Of course if you are going cruising in a yacht.

### **The Weather and whether to wait**

Looking ahead at the 10 day forecast to Thursday 4 January, when I planned to sail for Picton, the long range forecast looks good. It is for rain and southerly which is the wind I want. We don't melt in the rain so as long as the southerly is not over 18kts (34kph) that could be reasonable.

However on Saturday 6 January the forecast is for fine weather but no report of the wind. So what to do? Take the southerly, no matter the rain. Or wait for the sunshine on Saturday but what about the wind then? It might turning against us to the north. For the long range forecast it is early days yet. I will be patient; wait and watch.

## **AVANTI CRUISES NORTH**

Written 19th December 2017

Once more we are heading for Akaroa and cruising onward to Nelson in Avanti on our 28th 2500km voyage to Picton, the Marlborough Sounds, Nelson and return. This will be about the 60th time we have visited Akaroa. We plan to sail from Careys Bay on 4th January 2018 and on arrival at Akaroa will pick up a mooring near the Akaroa Yacht Club.

It is surely good news that the highway engineers estimate for the completion of repairs to the Kaikoura road by Christmas is nearly spot on. What a wonderful job they all have done.

Our Dunedin friend Martin Balch's company is responsible for the 800 VHF radios on site. When he is in town and is at the Otago Yacht Club, he keeps us up to date with progress. Very graphic. It is clear that in many places the Kaikoura area ocean floor has risen up to three meters in places. That the Navy charts need much correction for the depth of water must be taken into account when sailing thereabouts. The obvious way around this is to plot a course well off the coast on about the 100m line where any changes in the depth would not matter.

The thought of passaging the open Pacific east coast of Te Waipounamu (South Island) cruising the lovely open spaces of the Marlborough Sounds, Tasman Bay, the National Park and seeing our old sailing friends and relations in the North of the South is a joy.

### **Work on Avanti and new Gear**

Every year the underwater part of the of the bottom of the hull requires to be prepared for the new season. As soon as the 8 ton Avanti is hauled out of the water on the cradle of my slip the hull will be water-blasted to remove the slime and sea creatures that have tried to grow on it. Then it is sandpapered all over and well back with wet-and-dry course 60 grade sandpaper. This exposes places where the antifouling has lifted or there are cracks in the surface. All these holes need be filled and sanded and filled and sanded again back to a smooth surface. Antifouling is not a paint it is a poison barrier to sea creatures and sea weeds growing an the boat and slowing it down. Around the rudder and propellor needs special attention because over the previous year the old antifouling has been damaged by wash from the propellor. When perfection has been attained in the preparation of the underwater section, the white part of the hull above the waterline is masked with plastic sheeting. Two coats of fresh antifouling are sprayed on the bottom using an airless spray gun system which gives little overspray. Then the masking is removed and a thing of beauty

is revealed. Once Avanti is back in the water the beauty of our workmanship will be underwater, not to be seen again until the boat is hauled out next year. Notwithstanding, we know there is perfection down there below. Don't forget to replace the two sacrificial anodes which protect the bronze underwater fittings from corrosion before launching.

### **Back into the Water**

We launched Avanti back into the water of the harbour at 15:00 on Friday. Not a hitch. It has been an expensive refit requiring servicing the life raft, new "Bad Elf" GPS for the iPad, major repairs to the standby Autohelm ST4000 (with new parts made by a 3D Printer and a difficult to obtain toothed belt from specialists in California), new winch handle, additional automatic life jacket for Margaret, 4 new deep cycle 70Ah batteries and a new bilge pump float switch. My old self focusing binoculars had been dropped on the cockpit floor during heavy seas, the prisms misaligned giving two images. I bought a new pair at a greatly reduced price which was nice. But that is what owning a yacht and participating in the cruising life entails.

Not so bad when you realise that everything in a boat self-destructs and wears out in time. With the 4 photovoltaic panels keeping them constantly well charged my batteries last seven years. Car batteries usually last two years. I haven't serviced the life raft for 8 years (naughty), the old plastic winch handle lasted 30 years. Before I lost the tiny GPS plug-in for the iPad, it had become temperamental and obsolescent. The new "Bad Elf GPS Pro" soon demonstrated that it is a wonderful piece of kit, much superior to the tiny GPS set that it replaces. The new one collects the GPS position data from the satellite and transmits it wirelessly (by Blue Tooth) to the iPad navigation chart plotter which then shows as a little blue boat on the chart on the screen with my position accurate to 3m.

### **The Aborted 2017 Cruise**

A year ago in January 2017 Margaret and I set sail from Careys Bay on our Summer cruise bound for Akaroa Harbour and Top of the South. After a four day struggle we anchored in Akaroa Harbour, not even halfway to Picton. Living with the gales was testing. After being hounded on a mooring by the southerly and northerly gales for three weeks we finally aborted the cruise, found a weather window and rode a gale home to Careys Bay. That was not a good cruising year.

### **The 2018 Sailing Season looks better.**

This is a brand new sailing season with new weather and new experiences. We are now a year older, at 89 and 87, (still keen to have another go) but obviously no wiser. If we can get these four ducks in a row we will be away. If the weather behaves, our health is OK, the boat is ready and our crew Gae joins us we hope to again sail for Akaroa and onward to Picton. Herding these ducks is even harder than herding cats. At the moment things are progressing well. However if we only get three ducks lined up - what then? Our health is OK, the major work on the boat is done, and Gae said today that she is thrilled about joining us. That leaves the weather duck. Here good luck and patience meets.

### **Gae as Crew**

This time, on the coastal voyage north we will have a crew to help with the watchkeeping. Although 57yo Gae is not an experienced yachtswoman she is strong physically and mentally, has been to sea commercially in her younger days, an equestrian, has led an adventuresome life and is keen to participate.

Soon after our arrival at Picton she will fly home to Dunedin and we carry on cruising the Sounds. After a spell in Nelson Marina we will head on up to the Abel Tasman National Park to visit all its beautiful spots.

### **Planning Ahead - Homeward Bound**

Returning from Abel Tasman National Park we will spend a week or so enjoying Nelson socialising with old sailing friends. On departure Avanti will cruise to Croisilles Harbour, French Pass and the Marlborough Sounds and so through back to Picton.

Then in late February, when Gae's 70yo GP husband Craig has holidays from his practice, he will meet us in Picton on 28 February to join Avanti as crew for the voyage homeward bound to Port Chalmers.

We are really looking forward to seeing our northern friends and relies again, after not having made it to the North of the South for three years because of Margaret's heart problems and also terrible weather. We do hope that Nelson's New Asia Chinese restaurant is still admitting happy asian, and occidental sailors from the South East of the South, and we can have our annual noisy party with our elderly international yachting friends who are English, Hong Kong Chinese, Singapore Chinese, Dutch, American, Australian and of course three New Zealanders. Bloody noisy lot.

### **Example of Booking Ahead**

This is the email I sent to Bruce Paul, manager of Nelson Marina, requesting a berth for Avanti at very nonspecific days and periods and his reply below it.

Dear Bruce,

May we book a berth in the Visitors Pontoon at Nelson Marina for our 12m yacht "Avanti" from about -

Wednesday 31 January 2018 for about a week until  
Tuesday 6th February

On our return from the Park we will probably need further berthing on  
14, 15, and 16 February.

As always looking this far ahead it is difficult to be exact about our movements under sail.

Accurately plotting our progress during a month's sailing from Port Chalmers up the east coast of Te Waipounamu (South Island) and through the Sounds to Nelson is difficult so I hope you will be patient with all my "abouts" and estimates of dates.

We have berthed in Nelson Marina probably 60 times over the past 45 years so know it from those many visits. Perhaps you and I may continue our discussion about British History on this our 2018 visit - in particular the film about Churchill , "The Darkest Hour".

Regards

Bill and Margaret

### **On this Voyage**

## **REMEMBER THESE LESSONS**

Extracts from Bill McIndoe's Log Book

From previous voyages on Yachts Caravelle, Lenticula and Avanti

- 1) Harbour your strength.
- 2) Never go without sleep, it is precious.
- 3) It should all be *fun*, not hard work
- 4) Know the little anchorages around the coast that may have been used in times past.
- 5) Don't be frightened of a night entry, but do it like hedgehogs making love - very carefully.
- 6) Know how to work the Maritime communication system using VHF and SSB.
  - 1) Fishermen's radios.
  - 2) Contacting Harbour Control and tourist and merchant ships
  - 3) Weather forecasts are more important than food.
  - 4) Practice taking the marine forecast. Know from where and when they are transmitted
- 7) Anchor rodes (anchor chain and/or rope) must be long and anchors heavy. Three anchors with 100m rodes on each. (Two made up ready to use and gear for the third readily available).

- 8) When passage making on the coast carry enough fuel for the whole voyage between refueling facilities.
- 9) When voyaging transocean (i.e. across the Tasman or NZ to Fiji) carry enough fuel for half the passage.
- 10) 60% of passage making will be done while motor-sailing.
- 11) Prepare the complete passage plan on the charts before departure
- 12) Carry all harbour plans for the passage.
- 13) Know your motor:
  - a) fuel consumption per hour.
  - b) exhaust system.
  - c) Stern gland and propellor shaft bearing.
  - d) Changing oil, oil filters, fuel and water filters.
  - e) Watering and testing batteries.
- 14) Read the New Zealand Pilot, the best book since Lady Chatterley's Lover.
- 15) Obtain local knowledge books:
  - a) Cruising Guide to Central New Zealand.
  - b) Aerial views of Banks Peninsula.
  - c) Aerial views of Marlborough Sounds and Tasman Bay.
- 16) Prepare food for the passage i.e. Cut 10,000 sandwiches.
- 17) Cape Campbell is difficult and sorts out the men from the boys. Work out the tides and have a plan.
- 18) Tory Channel tides are strong and the approach can be rough. Is your motor strong enough to enter against the tide? Locate the entry lead marks but keep on the southern side of that line, quite close to the cliffs, to stay out of the path of the ferries. Sight the flat rock close to the cliffs.
- 20) Be ever watchful of the Cook Strait ferries which seem to form a continuous stream of ships from Wellington to Picton. They are silent and take no prisoners - they have absolute right of way in Tory Channel.
- 21) The sheltered bays and anchorages in the Marlborough Sounds are deep. If you lay out the correct amount of chain i.e. three times the depth of water to get a good grip on Mother New Zealand you may end up too close to the shore.
- 22) Use the moorings but you must join one of the three yacht clubs who own them. Then you can use the sixty wonderful moorings throughout the Sounds with no further charge, no booking required and no more anchoring.
- 23) Any bit of wind that has nothing much to do ends up blowing through Cook Strait but there is not too much left over for the inner Marlborough Sounds and nothing left for Tasman Bay.
- 24) The Marlborough Sounds are big and deep.
- 25) Don't neglect to visit Port Underwood before Tory Channel entrance.
- 26) French Pass (Aumiti) is fun. They say that no way can you get through against the tide, and no way can you stop if going with it. Read the history especially Captain Durville's near disaster in the French research vessel Astrolabe
- 27) Torrent Bay and the Forgotten Coast is unbelievable beautiful.
- 28) From Torrent Bay it is an easy trip south to Kaiteriteri, purchase supplies and return in a day. Don't stay the night. Kaiteriteri is a poor anchorage but there is a reasonable small supermarket so food is available.
- 29) Nelson Marina and area has good facilities, socialising, yacht club with restaurant, boat repairs, engineering and spares. However it is 3km walk to town for food and shopping and no transport available. Nelson as a small city has everything a yachty needs. Lovely weather and friendly people. Good shopping and facilities. Highly recommended. If you do not have a car available buy a shopping trundler.
- 30) There are three common ways of dying in a yacht:

- a) Explosion of LPG gas from the gas stove or heater.
  - b) Falling out of the dinghy and drowning.
  - c) Actions disastrously effected by consumption of alcohol.
- 31) If you learn to sail the New Zealand coast you can sail anywhere.

## FUNNIES:

- a) A damaged back is like a diamond and is for ever. Avoid lifting heavy objects, that is young people's work. Bill McIndoe 22/8/2017
- b) The rock you hit is the one ahead. Keep a sharp lookout ahead. Bill McIndoe 12/2/1980
- c) Never "drive" a boat like you drive a car along a road. Always "navigate" a boat using chart, compass course, speed, distance, time and tide. Bill McIndoe 1985
- d) Learn the art of seamanship with an experienced skipper and when you start telling the skipper what to do, *and you are right*, its time you went off and bought your own boat. Bill McIndoe 1990
- e) "Man has lived with his own excreta for a million years - it's other people's that I worry about" Bill said after a very badly timed dive overboard, when unbeknownst to him Alastair was pumping out the marine toilet. Bill McIndoe 1980.
- f) "Will you have your second cup of tea now or wait till you have had your first?" Margaret McIndoe 28/12/77
- g) Yes, I understand that he does, but all brave men fuck a lot. Jack Shacklock
- h) Be bold bloody and resolute (Shakespeare) but also know when to be a prudent seaman. (Bill McIndoe)
- i) The Sea is with Us Always
- j) Yachting is a sport where you stumble into serious danger from which you somehow manage to escape. Bill McIndoe 14/3/15

## QUOTATIONS TO LIVE BY

They that go down to the sea in ships that do business in great waters;  
 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.  
 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.  
 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted  
 because of trouble.  
 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.  
 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.  
 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.  
 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.  
 Psalms, 107:23-3

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Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.  
 — African proverb

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One ship drives east and another drives west  
 With the selfsame winds that blow.  
 'Tis the set of the sails

And not the gales  
Which tells us the way to go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate  
As we voyage along through life.

'Tis the set of a soul that decides its goal,  
And not the calm or the strife.  
— Ella Wheeler Wilcox, 'Winds of Fate'

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No matter how important a man at sea may consider himself,  
unless he is fundamentally worthy the sea will some day find him out.  
Felix Riesenberg

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A ship's pilot's business is with the wind, and with the stars, with night, with sand, with the sea.  
He strives to outwit the forces of nature.  
He stares with expectancy for the coming of the dawn the way a gardener awaits the coming of spring.  
He looks forward to port as a promised land, and truth for him is what lives in the stars.  
Antoine de Saint Exupéry,  
'Wind, Sand, and Stars,' 1939

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## MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS IN A YACHT

Written by Bill McIndoe, November 2014

In various journals and magazines I have recently read much about mindfulness, contemplation and meditation. Scientific American, Mind and Time magazines have all been running articles in their current neurological series. These are methods of controlling the activity of your own brain especially when disturbing runaway thoughts are difficult to control. There is much ancient and modern knowledge to study and to understand how this is done and it's benefits.

On occasions I go down to my yacht to do a job. I finish the work and then sit in the saloon with a cup of tea thinking about the next project. Soon my mind drifts away, from thinking about what needs be done to contemplating the peace and pleasure of just being there. Using mindfulness to control the activities of my brain I am able to move into a form of meditation to seek mental peace.

Lately I have spent time aboard Avanti with the intention of meditating. I go down to the yacht, sit in the saloon and let my mind drift. The ambience of the beautiful space with all its connections of past adventures and dangers hovers in the air like a spirit, embracing me with a feeling of camaraderie. A feeling of understanding between two trusted friends - the yacht and I. What we have done together over a period of 32 years is written down in my logs, but here and now it is an understanding that brings us contentment where written words are unnecessary.

There is no need to retell of the near collisions, the gear breakages, the fear of being embayed in a gale and driven in the rocks or the storm from which there seemed no escape. The injuries from being flung across the cabin, seasickness, the shock of hitting a reef and the awful navigation

errors no longer swirl around the cabin. They are now all in the past; imbedded into the fabric of the boat. Great adventures are now a good laugh between Avanti and myself. No need of retelling.

When I sit here, tucked in the corner, resting my shoulder against the heater, I am the keeper of the memories but Avanti is the spirit, silent and strong. I may be the captain and the navigator but she is the body whose form makes our voyages possible. Together we have sailed a hundred and twenty thousand nautical miles, suffered groundings and knockdowns, frightening night entries and beautiful days at sea.

I need no guide or companion to travel my simple journey of meditation. In this space I sit alone and allow my mind to travel its own course. I do not necessarily think of boat repairs or past voyages. As my gaze wanders I see a plaque commemorating our cruise to Fiji, outside I hear sparrows urging co-habitation and gulls garrulous on the wing. I do not think about implications of these inputs; I just accept them as part of the ambience of the boat and my period of meditation.

If I start to ponder on one of these inputs I try to return to being aware of my own breathing. This awareness cuts off the mind from cycling into other intrusive or even worrying thoughts. The mind can only think of one thing at a time. If I learn to use breathing as that one thought it acts as a block to bar the entry of other uncontrolled thoughts sneaking or racing in to fill the void.

To be aware of breathing is not to think of every breath as being important. The awareness is only a shallow thought, not a deep concentration. It is used to have a constant defense against the mind moving into its usual frenetic activity. I could use a different subject as a defensive thought but the breath is always there and is a simple expedient to hold at bay other runaway thoughts.

I can be anywhere to practice mindfulness and to meditate. If trying to sleep after waking at 2am, then switch from troubled uncontrollable thoughts to being aware of your breathing. With practice it is possible to block the unwanted thoughts which may be keeping you awake and to allowing you to recapture sleep.

Half an hour of mindfulness and meditation eases stress and calms the racing mind. It relaxes the muscles of the body, brings peace to the soul. At night it eases you into sleep so that later you may again burst forth into the wild ride of normal living.

Bill McIndoe  
Careys Bay  
Port Chalmers  
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