

Pay out on prize, say art winners

By Lauren Bartlett

A group of disgruntled glass-artists want Rotary to come up with thousands of dollars in prize money they say was promised as part of an art exhibition held at the Hilton Hotel in Auckland this month.

When the award was announced in February the artists were told there would be \$10,000, \$5000 and \$3000 prizes, but when the winners were announced, all they received were certificates.

The *Luminous Art of Glass Award* was sponsored by Cavalier Bremworth and judged by Australian artist Warren Langley.

Leanne Williams and Jim Dennison, who jointly received second place, expected \$5000.

"It just seems so absurd to have a great judge and no prize, like a bloody school assembly," says Williams.

The artists say they were told of the awards and the prizes by the past president, Wayne Whitaker, during a New Zealand Society of Artists in Glass (NZSAG) conference in February.

This announcement was followed by an email outlining the prizes.

After the event the entrants received a letter thanking the participants for helping to raise \$300,000 for Rotary's charities.

"It really rubbed salt into the wound," said Williams.

The NZSAG did not wish to comment on the issue, but the artists understand the society was told by Rotary that the prize money was available.

However when it became apparent that there were no prizes, nobody informed the entrants.

Williams and Dennison say they believe they weren't told about the prize being withdrawn because the organiser would have been aware the artists would pull-out.

"It would have tipped us out," says Dennison.

Ruth Allen, a NZ glass artist who now lives in Melbourne, won first prize.

She was unable to attend the prize giving, but wasn't even informed of her win.

Her father, Jim Allen, who has been dealing with the involved members on her behalf ever since, says she probably wouldn't have entered if she had known there was no prize.

"It's really costly to get the works here, and store them," he says.

David Phillippe, a representative from the sponsor, Cavalier Bremworth, said they were in discussions with the Rotary Club who organised the Mazda Artworks show and had no further comment.

John Wren, of the Rotary Club of Ellerslie Sunrise Inc. says the lack of prizes was a failure in communication at the NZSAG.



PHOTO: JUSTINE GLUCINA

WRAPPED UP TIGHT: Dr Jim Sprott says mattress wrapping is the key to preventing cot death.

Baby safe under wraps

By Justine Glucina

A lack of advice from the Ministry of Health has cost 830 New Zealand babies their lives, says a leading cot death specialist.

Dr Jim Sprott, a consulting chemist and forensic scientist from the Eastern Bays, says the New Zealand cot death rate has fallen by 70 per cent since manufacturers started producing wrapped mattresses in 1995.

He says there is conclusive evidence that wrapped mattresses have a 100 per cent success rate in preventing cot death.

But Sprott says the Ministry of Health is refusing to acknowledge he is right.

As a result, parents are not being given advice about mattress-wrapping by Plunket staff, who follow Ministry of Health advice, he says.

"Plunket has lost its way. A baby sleeping on a wrapped mattress can't become exposed to the gases which cause cot death. The ministry could stop cot

death tomorrow if Plunket told parents to wrap babies' mattresses," he says.

But Dr Pat Tuohy, the ministry's chief adviser on child and youth health, says there is no agreed cause of cot death, making it difficult to attribute it to a single factor like unwrapped mattresses.

A Plunket spokesperson says parents are directed to *Thriving Under Five*, a book which outlines how to protect babies from sudden infant death syndrome.

Advice includes making sure the baby is smoke-free (from conception), making sure the baby sleeps on his or her back with a clear face and head, and is breastfed.

But Sprott says there is only one cause of cot death and that is poisoning by toxic nerve gases generated from fungi in mattresses and other bedding used in babies' cots.

"Nothing else causes it," he says.

"It's not smoking, it's not bed sharing, and it's not sleeping the baby at the foot of the cot."

He says many babies have died after parents followed orthodox cot death prevention advice.

Before the introduction of mattress wrapping in 1995, New Zealand had the highest rate of cot death in the world (2.1 deaths per 1000 live births), according to the Cotlife2000 website.

Sprott says the statistics speak for themselves. He wants to add mattress wrapping to the advice Plunket gives parents.

"But I have been adamantly refused by the Ministry of Health," he says.

"I would like to make New Zealand the first country in the world to eliminate cot death.

"With the co-operation of a few disaffected paediatricians, the Cot Death Association and the Ministry of Health, if they swallow their pride, could make New Zealand the first country in the world to eliminate cot death."

Sprott, who was awarded an Order of the British Empire for services to forensic science and the community, has also written a book, *The Cot Death Cover-up*.

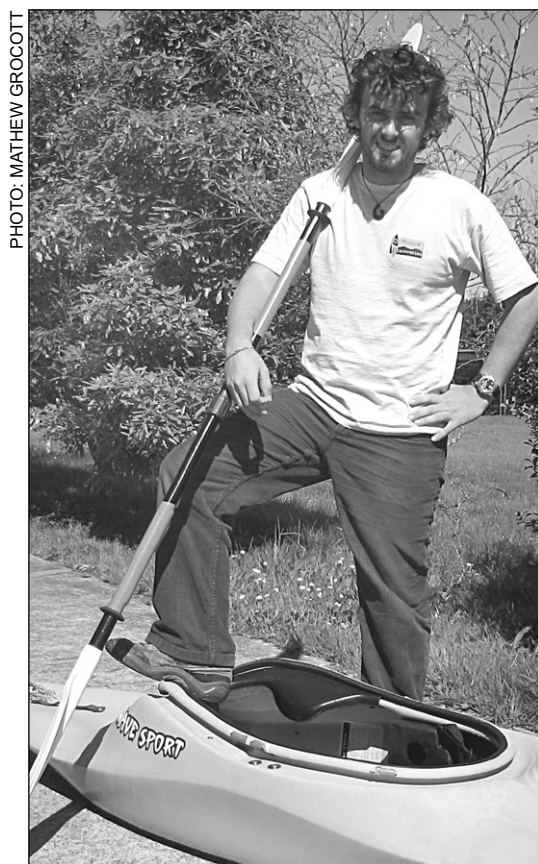


PHOTO: MATHEW GROCCOTT

KAYAK KING: Jack Finn hopes to inspire.

Bad blood behind kayak adventure

By Mathew Grocott

"Bloody can do it" is more than just a motto for adventurer Jack Finn. It's a way of life.

Finn, a haemophiliac since birth, requires regular blood transfusions. At the age of nine he contracted hepatitis C from tainted blood products.

Now 23, he is planning the world's first circumnavigation of the sub-Antarctic islands by kayak to raise awareness of his afflictions.

His illnesses are not the only challenges he needs to overcome. The islands have an average temperature of six degrees and encounter 27 days of rain a month.

Finn hopes the trip will not just raise awareness but be an inspiration to both fellow haemophiliacs and non-sufferers alike.

Finn says no one has attempted the trip before due to the cost involved and its difficulty but he intends to make the most of the journey.

He says the Auckland Islands have got great opportunities for wildlife watching.

"Colonies of southern right whales, yellow-eyed penguins, sea lions and albatross as well as 10 historic shipwrecks."

Finn expects the trip to take 10 to 14 days depending on the weather conditions. He hopes to kayak an average of 10 hours a day.

The kayak voyage is not the first adventure Finn has undertaken.

In 2004 he cycled from Cape Reinga to Bluff, a distance of over 2100kms including a crossing of Lake Taupo and Cook Strait by kayak to raise awareness of haemophiliacs who had contracted hepatitis C from bad blood.

"I thought I would do it in winter as it kind of reflects my condition."

Finn says he may appear fine outwardly but be suffering from internal bleeds.

While he is an outgoing, optimistic character, he keeps the illness to himself.

"I don't want to be treated differently."

He says his medical conditions are what makes him unique and is more determined because of them.

Finn completed a diploma in outdoor recreation leadership at AUT University in 2004 and now works as a kayak guide

and instructor.

"It's a great travelling job," he says.

Finn plans to lead kayak trips in Alaska and Mexico in the new year.

While a number of sponsors are supporting his expedition, he is still seeking additional funds. The trip will cost an estimated \$40,000 of which he has raised about a quarter.

Finn is also selling limited edition t-shirts to raise funds for the expedition.

The Auckland Islands lie 500kms south of New Zealand. Discovered in 1806 by whalers, they were named after the first Baron of Auckland, William Eden.

Governed by New Zealand, the Auckland Islands are designated as a marine reserve and access to them is strictly controlled by the Department of Conservation. They are important breeding areas for the yellow-eyed penguin and New Zealand sea lion.

Finn hopes a DoC worker will accompany him on his voyage to help minimise the environmental impact his expedition has on the area.

For more information on Finn's expedition, contact jacksjourneys@gmail.com.