Mary says she has changed her party each time she's voted. In King Country she effectively had a narrow choice — either the National incumbent (Jim Bolger currently) or someone completely inexperienced, untried. If you were not aligned to National, Mary says, it was "a pig in a poke" as far as voting was concerned. Now the Barbours are in the Hamilton East electorate — but Mary is still unsure who she'll vote for in 1993.

"It's quite conceivable I won't be voting National. I don't have strong opinions about the Alliance. I'm just wondering if they're out to do the same thing as Bob Jones, which is just to get rid of the government at all cost."

Mary, who belongs to a Hamilton naturalist society, says the issues that will decide her will be any to do with conservation — forestry, power, ozone — and, because of her professional interest, education. The welfare issue confuses her more than decides her — since losing their family benefit, it's not been easy paying for three teenage girl spenders plus a child, but "we did it, and if we could manage, then it is not a critical issue for us."

One thing she would like to see is parliamentary debate rise above farce and potshotting to become worthwhile listening again.

Her general impressions are that the Labour government achieved more positive social impact, although she remembers not voting for them.

"They considered underlying philosophies. They made such an impact over nuclear power, pulling out of Anzus. To me it showed how much determination New Zealanders have to do what they think is right morally."

Having grown up alongside one of Canada's first nuclear power reactors, Mary says she "will always vote against having nuclear power."

CLAIRE STEWART, 51

New Plymouth Mayor

"I knock my knees on it," is Claire Stewart's only comment on the giant polished aluminium sphere which bears the weight of her mayoral desk in New Plymouth's district council offices in Liardet Street.

The gleaming ball is a design feature echoed elsewhere on the exterior of the $14.2 million building, a fiercely contemporary structure of black granite and white marble which looks too sleek amid the city's lived-in, faded streets and buildings. Inside, polished aluminium ceilings reflect rich rhododendron tonings of plum and purple and council clerical staff loom over shiny black counters like hotel receptionists.

Stewart's remark is entirely in keeping with her down-to-earth pragmatism. Mayor for three weeks and three days when *North & South* came to talk to her about the state of the nation, she seems not yet wholly at ease with the opulence of her surroundings: "It's a really beautiful office but you could easily isolate yourself from the grass roots."

Stewart is, however, entirely secure about her rightness for this job, at this time in her life, at this period in the development of her region — almost as though first woman mayor of New Plymouth was where her personal path was always leading. "I love this job," she says simply.

Claire Lois Stewart was born in the New Plymouth suburb of Fitzroy and "grew up on the beach". She went to New Plymouth Girls' High, trained as a teacher at Palmerston North and then returned to her home town to teach at Devon intermediate and Woodleigh primary schools. She married 70s' All Black coach John Joseph Stewart, then a teacher at New



Grant dropped in, and we just lost sight of the time.

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Plymouth Boys' High, had five children (Richard, Campbell, Terry, Chas and Sarah — all now in their 20s) and while at home raising them played representative hockey and golf.

The family lived at Bulls for 14 years while John Stewart was principal of Flock House farm education centre, and when they returned to New Plymouth in 1983, Claire began working in real estate, becoming in 1986 one of the original members of Tourism Taranaki. In 1988 she started working full time for Tourism Taranaki, running customer KiwiHost seminars, a job she continued until she won the mayoralty.

It was while the Stewarts lived in Bulls that Claire became involved in education. In 1975 she became the first woman on the committee of Parewanui School. Later she chaired New Plymouth Girls' board of governors and then the board of trustees for nine years. She has been a member of the Board Of Studies, a policy advisory body to then education minister David Lange, was on the national executive of the Secondary School Boards Association, was a member of the School Trustees Interim Advisory Group and was on the National Qualifications Authority.

Her work in education reform has been says Stewart "a time of rapid personal growth and an excellent grounding for being a mayor".

"It's really been a natural progression. I had five children, my husband was often away and I had to cope on my own. You get to know when things are important and when things aren't and you learn when to stand firm and when to let the less important things flow over you. Budgeting for a large family on a single income is a really good grounding for working on a local authority." Stewart was elected to the New Plymouth district council in October 1989.

At 51, with hazel eyes, short-cut tawny hair and a serious air, she makes a small, compact, competent figure — sweeping from the room to the next-door office to consult general manager Kinsley Sampson on figures, or finding her glasses so she can kneel down and peer at the vast town map I've spread out on the carpet.

The job is, she says, "seven days a week and the days aren't long enough." There isn't time for sport and she is, she confesses, no gardener but she is a friend of the famed Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and walks her two Jack Russell terriers near the region's talisman, Mount Taranaki, every day.

John Stewart, now retired, is her helpmate and supporter but he's pretty busy too with work for the New Zealand Rugby Foundation and selecting and coaching for women's rugby in Taranaki.

Claire beat sitting mayor David (affectionately known as "Daisy") Lean in a three-candidate race at the October 10 elections by 13,790 votes to 12,966.

Popular wisdom has it that Lean, mayor since 1980 when he got in on the city's sewage-treatment issue, had stopped listening to the people, especially the older, fixed-income ratepayers who were concerned at council expenditure on capital works including the council offices, the stadium (opened by Governor General, Dame Catherine Tizard on November 4) and the indoor swimming pool on which work began on October 1.

Ironically, Stewart, who won, she feels, because "there was a mood for change for a more consultative style", inherits the fruits of Lean's administration: "I see myself coming in when the major infrastructural asset work has been done. I'm able to change emphasis towards economic development, employment and the social development of the district.

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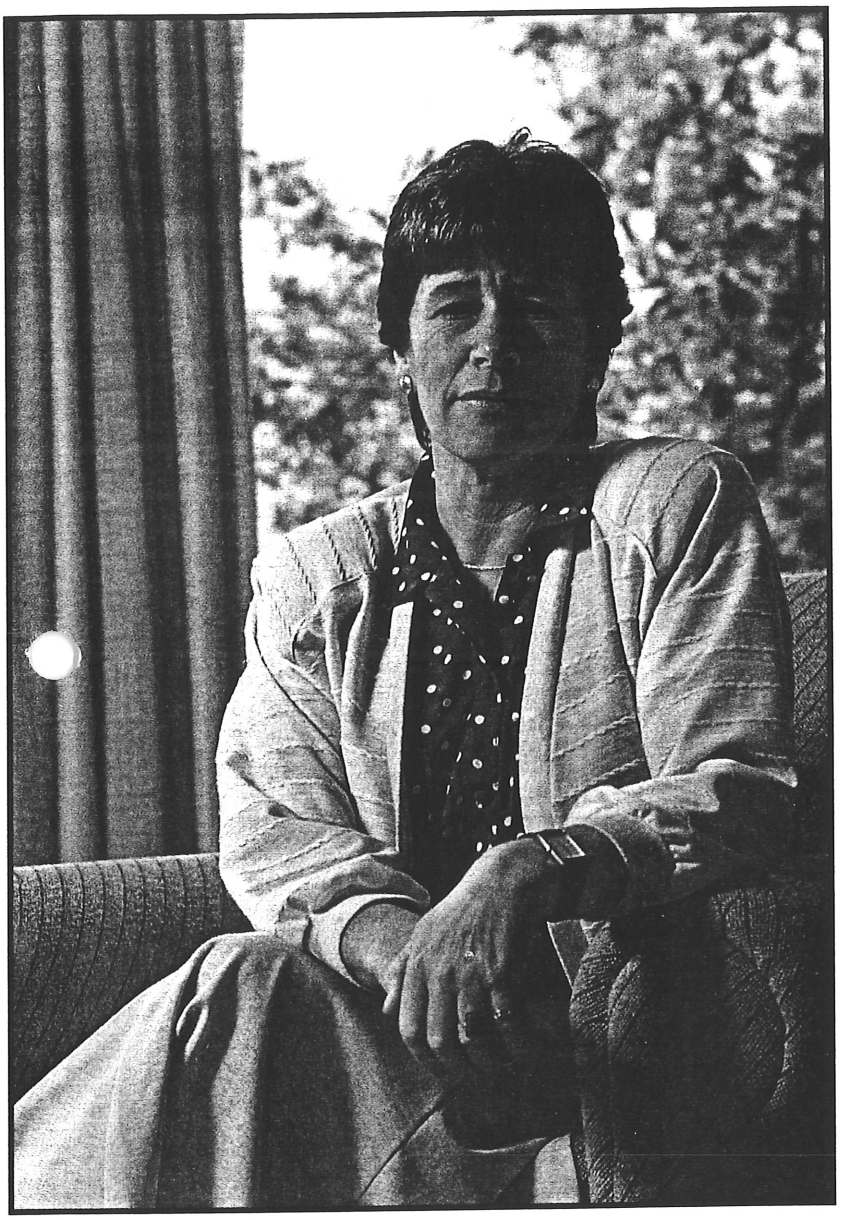


RALLPH TALMONT

Cl Stewart: "I think there are a lot of enterprising New Zealanders, and if central government saw its role more as a facilitator and co-ordinator it may be that in 1993 we could be on the edge of something really exciting as a country."

"A lot of people in our local community felt that the council had been spending up large at a time when the people were having to tighten their belts. If we'd consulted more we'd have had a show of taking the community with us. They want to be consulted and genuinely want to be well informed."

Stewart has a clear, even passionate belief in the future of her region. Local and national fortunes are, she says, closely linked. She is optimistic about investment in New Plymouth and says petrol stations and two large new supermarkets are opening. A third retail chain, K Mart, is currently negotiating with council and a $5 million retail development is going in in 1993 at the top end of town (locally known as "The Flat"): "There have been a lot of empty shops up there but they've got together as a group and started to promote themselves."

The time of lavish spending, with its attendant heavy borrowing, is over. The new council is reducing public debt and is in the early stages of forming a new economic development policy for New Plymouth. The district fluctuates between having the third or fourth highest unemployment in the country (at 11 per cent) after Gisborne and Northland. That's why, Stewart says, support for new and existing business enterprise and aggressive marketing of the district with more financial resources put into tourism are the new targets. She says hopes in tourism are "well-founded. It's a very exciting industry in Taranaki. There has been a 30 per cent increase in visitor numbers in the last year [up to 448,000] and it is the quickest, most effective way of lifting the spending in a community."

Her experience in education reform has shaped Stewart's view of social change: "I think as far as Tomorrow's Schools is concerned the time was right for an administrative change and the schools I've been associated with have responded well. However, throughout that process there was very solid resistance from teachers to the philosophies behind change and I think the teaching profession got out of kilter. It was a shame. It is important to take everyone with you. That's why I want to put the emphasis on community development. People are just fed up with the pace of rapid change and we have to recognise it. The 'people things' are important."

The future now lies, says Stewart in "more open, more accountable, consultative and more listening local government. At the national level that's appropriate too. There is a volatility at the national level which I felt was reflected locally at the election. People are absolutely tired of the way politicians have acted, the old confrontational style — it's pathetic.

"For 1993, I think, regionally, New Plymouth is very well placed. We benefit from the wealth of our rural hinterland and from oil, gas, tourism and real estate. Property sales are bouyant. There's definitely more than just a gentle optimism. People tell me we look more bouyant than Auckland.

"I'm not a National supporter. I have had former involvement with Labour when my husband stood for Rangitikei in the early 80s and an involvement with the Labour Party branch locally. But [at the election] I'm going to keep an open mind. I'll look at the candidates. I'm very interested in Alliance and I think the future is with coalition. I voted STV in the referendum because I feel with MMP there is still a group of politicians not directly accountable to one area.

"I'll be looking and listening and I'll be looking for individual qualities. New Zealand is such a small country that while I'm naturally particularly interested in this region we're still very much part of New Zealand and our performance overseas in terms of exports is going to affect our area here. We're all part of a global economy. Think globally, act locally.

"I'm a great believer in people being our most valuable resource. It's the enterprise of people both locally and nationally that will energise our global influence.

"Nationally I feel a bit depressed. Money isn't buying single-income earners what it used to. People are struggling to cope and there's a real gap developing between lower and higher income earners.

"I think in rapid change, with health in particular, people see the emphasis on money not people and are fed up with the business philosophy. There's a big difference between being a business and being *businesslike.*

"The traditional view of council is rates, rubbish and roading. We're operating at a time when central government has let go some of their responsibilities and the exciting challenge to local government is in the way they pick that up. I see our role as a co-ordinator, not a direct funder.

"I think there are a lot of enterprising New Zealanders, and if central government saw its role more as a facilitator and co-ordinator it may be that in 1993 we could be on the edge of something really exciting as a country."

For herself, Stewart is taking it three years at a time: "I'm here because people want me to be but I don't see myself as owning the position. I've got to perform. I'm here to give the ownership of council back to the community. If I haven't achieved that in six years I will consider myself a real failure."

NICHOLAS McBRYDE, 35

Dunedin Music Administrator

Nicholas McBryde's job as general manager of the Dunedin Sinfonia, the smallest of New Zealand's four regional orchestras, is something of a hot seat. In fact his office under the glass roof on the top floor of the old Carnegie library building in Moray Place gets so warm he's obliged to have an electric fan going most days — a source of wonderment to anyone familiar with Dunedin's fresh climate.

But in all other respects when the heat's on, McBryde, 35, keeps a cool head, particularly where Dunedin's orchestral music is concerned.

When he came to the job five years ago, the Sinfonia had a deficit of $70,000 which McBryde cleared in 18 months. He now has 25 per cent of his $500,000 annual turnover in reserve all the time, "twice what the Arts Council requires. By being frugal I've managed to play this band, clear the debt and not cut our activities. If we fall flat it won't be the end of the orchestra or my job. I feel we're doing OK, especially when I look at my colleagues in the industry and see them pissing into the wind."

McBryde's varied "infamous career" prepared him well for running a tight musical operation in the lean, mean 90s. He was born in Mosgiel, spent his early childhood in the Cook Islands where his father was a meteorologist and then moved to Christchurch where he studied violin. It was there he decided he wanted to be "a rank and file fiddler in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. All my high-school study was geared to that. I finished seventh form and had all my Trinity College exams up to grade eight, I was shutting doors along the way. Then I spent one and a half years of a three-year bachelor of music degree at Canterbury and hated it. My teachers told me I had many technical faults which needed to be rectified. I chucked it in. Going to university finished my fiddle career."

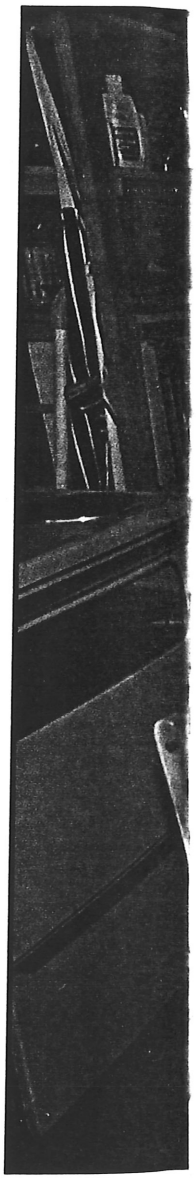
McBryde tried broadcasting, then at 19 found himself acting manager of the Avon Motor Lodge in Christchurch with "five suits and 45 staff, most of whom were old enough to be my parents. I was getting up at 7am and going to bed at 2am — oh, how I worked my youth away."

McBryde spent two years overseas and came back to work at various jobs in the performing arts: actor, dancer, tour manager and administrator. In mid-1986 he became an administrator for the Canterbury Opera Company where he met Rosemary (then assistant manager of the Christchurch Arts Centre and now his wife) "in the back row of the chorus". The couple, who were married after McBryde took the Sinfonia job, have two boys, Angus, two and a half, and Brendan, who is one.

Though McBryde had his "faith restored" in violin playing by veteran teacher Ruth Pearl while he was in Christchurch, he rarely plays now: "Rosemary has seen my violin twice and we've been married four and a half years."

Now McBryde's energies in music are devoted to the survival and success of the "little pool of players" which is the Sinfonia. None of the 80 musicians are full-time professionals and McBryde never uses more than 55 of them at a time. They range from "shop assistants, university students and lecturers in every imaginable discipline to music teachers, motor mechanics and a lot of medics. If someone were to ask 'is there a doctor in the house?' half the orchestra would get up."

McBryde knows them all, plus their spouses and children, and provides a "listening shoulder" for personal problems, "domestics" and grievances. "I've only had three industrial problems in the last five years and they were all solved very amicably and quickly on a one-to-one basis. It's a family atmosphere and one of the reasons for its success is that I can empathise: I know what it is to be an orchestral musician."



McBryde says music is a full-time, uphill battle in this country. "As a nation we don't cherish it. There's a loyal gaggle out there but you're still labelled a woofter if you play a violin at school instead of kicking a ball around. Dunedin has three or four choirs, including two male-voice choirs, a very large Saturday morning music school, competition societies and an opera company. There is a lot happening. But it's very hard selling music, especially in a depressed climate. Theatre, on the other hand, tends to flourish when times are depressed. Call it escapism, call it what you like, people are prepared to pay to live in a fantasy world for a couple of hours.

"But with music there are no visuals you can market and no new experience to experience. With music you've only got what you hope people already know."

Despite that, McBryde is optimistic about the Sinfonia in 1993. "I'm confident for this orchestra because I've got some new little schemes and money earmarked for a 'sales rep' to help me increase my audiences. I've already got all the audience who are going to come, the ones who are interested. Four and a half thousand people come to our exclusive product each year. Now I've got to go and lobby those who don't know they're interested and I've got a lovely programme for next year — the city choir and I are going to bed together.

"Personally I can't see or feel the economic recovery in this city, or anywhere, though I'm being told that there is a recovery. I do see a lot of very tiny shops with not much in them and staff standing around with nothing happening.

"My personal income has gone down because now I have to pay accident compensation, I was pissed off about that, and Rosemary and I are spending about $15 a week more at the supermarket and the two boys are not old enough yet to cause that. They may say this recovery is happening, but if you look into my back pocket it's not. But I'm OK. My bank account has never been in the red.