



grapevine

GIVING FAMILIES A LIFT SINCE 1981

MAY 2007 UPDATE

please help us with our

Autumn Clean-Up

I'm writing to ask for your special help this month. Grapevine's overdue for an AUTUMN CLEAN-UP – we've got a lot of extra dollars to find – and this urgent call is going out to all our friends. But before I explain further, there's something I need to say ...

At times like this, a letter is too one-sided for my liking – do you know what I mean? Instead of just putting more words on paper, I'd far prefer to invite you to my place, sit you down near our cosy fire, and have a face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball chat over tea or coffee and my wife's hot scones. I'd like to share my heart with you, and let you share yours with me. And I'd like to thank you for your friendship – for 'being there' whenever Grapevine needs you.

Don't you reckon that would be nice?

If you came around today, I'd probably get you to grab a rake, a broom or a wheelbarrow and give me a hand with the leaves that are lying on my driveway and lawn. You see, it's AUTUMN CLEAN-UP time at Cooney's place, too. We've got big trees everywhere – silver birches, flowering cherries, a liquidambar, a golden elm, a Chinese silk, a gleditsia sunburst, and a lovely spreading Indian bead-tree. And this is the time of year they kiss goodbye to their leaves and drop them all over our concrete, deck, gardens, paths, roof, spouting, swimming pool and parked cars.

AARRGGHH!!

No matter how often I sweep them up, there's another layer there the very next day – a yellow-orange-reddish carpet that'll quickly turn brown and mushy if I don't deal with it.

A lot of work? You bet, more than I ever imagined when we planted them 20 years ago. But it's a price I willingly pay ...

You see, these big beautiful leafy trees have given me endless pleasure. I've fed them, watered them, pruned them and watched them grow. They're my FRIENDS! I kind-of know them all by NAME!

And if this annual autumn clean-up is the price I must pay, I'll HAPPILY keep picking-up after them for another 20 years or more ...



Anyway, getting back to GRAPEVINE'S AUTUMN CLEAN-UP ... I've got a big "ask" this month – a lot of extra dollars we need to raise – and I'm counting on some extra-special help from our friends. 2007 is already proving to be a challenging, busy, demanding year at Grapequarters.

Here's why:

1 DVD/VIDEO: We're investing time and money in an exciting new promotional project – designed to drive Grapevine strongly into its second 25 years. This has seen us (Mike especially) producing a short-but-powerful DVD/Video – which you'll soon get to see. Watch this space ...

2 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: I received only yesterday an analysis of how our website has been performing since we launched it last year, and I'm excited. People are not only visiting the site and making use of Grapevine's family-related resources – they're also signing on as Street Sponsors! YEEHAA!

There's a lot of work being done (if you haven't yet checked out our new 'online library' section, it's time you took a look: www.grapevine.org.nz). And there's a lot more still to do, all requiring creative energy and dollars.

It's all good "must-happen" stuff that will ensure Grapevine stays helpful and relevant for years to come. But over the past three months our donation income has been rather sluggish (this usually happens at the start of each year) – and these projects have left us **\$18,000** out of pocket. (Ouch!)

And this coming month we face another big "must-happen" expense ...

3 COMPUTER UPGRADE: None of us could ever have predicted how dependent Grapevine would become on its computers. Our articles are written on them ... our illustrations and layouts are created on them ... our photos are enhanced on them ... and the entire magazine is designed on them. We use those same computers, of course, to email all these bits and pieces to each other ... and to send the final digital version of Grapevine to the printers (in either Auckland or Christchurch).

Equally important are our 'admin' computers that handle Grapevine's database and delivery systems – processing donations, subscriptions, bulk orders ... tracking Street Sponsorship ... and matching all that complex information with the nationwide distribution network we use (which has the whole country mapped and broken down into suburbs, streets and delivery blocks).

It's a remarkable operation (capably overseen by my colleagues Brent and Nora). But if it came unstuck, Grapevine would grind to a halt.

We've known for some time that these 'admin' computers are nearing the end of their lives and in urgent need of upgrading. And we've put it off ... until now ...

\$19,000 is what we must spend to bring Grapevine "in line with industry best practice" – which (forgive all the technical language) will buy us "a new server with five drives, plus a 200 GB tape-drive for backup, plus Anti Virus and Back up Executive, plus firewall/router" – all installed and running sweetly.

So that's \$19,000 to upgrade our computers ... plus \$18,000 for the catch-up I mentioned earlier: a grand total of ...



\$37,000

THAT'S WHAT WE NEED FOR THIS YEAR'S AUTUMN CLEAN-UP
AND I'M HOPING YOU'LL HELP US RAISE IT.

There's a parallel here with my trees – don't you reckon? I can't have that beautiful, blossomy, leafy pleasure each spring and summer unless I'm prepared to pay the price each autumn.

Likewise, 160,000 New Zealand families can't keep receiving Grapevine's fun and hope and practical family help unless we stay well-equipped.

\$37,000 is a lot of money, and I'd rather not have to ask. But then I remind myself: if we want to improve the quality of family life in this country ... it's gonna COST us. If we want more confident parents and fewer-at-risk kids, healthier marriages and happier households ... that can't be achieved without some kind of sacrifice.

So here I am again – inviting you to make a double-sized, overweight, booster-pack, bigger-than-normal, extra-generous May 2007 donation!

**WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO GIVE \$50 or \$100 or \$1000
TOWARDS GRAPEVINE'S AUTUMN CLEAN-UP?**

If that's beyond your budget, don't feel embarrassed, and forgive me for being so bold – and please donate whatever you can. Any help that gets us closer to our \$37,000 target will be a great encouragement to me and my team.

Thanks again for partnering us as we seek to “give families a lift”. I look forward to hearing from you ...



JOHN COONEY (Founder/Editor)

PS: Keep an eye out for the next new edition of Grapevine (due mid-June). It'll tackle two really tricky issues:

1. WHAT TO TEACH YOUR KIDS ABOUT LOVE, SEX & MARRIAGE ... plus
2. MAYBE BABY? (A PAIN CALLED INFERTILITY)

... and it promises to be another winner!



CLICK HERE to make a donation

