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GRAPEVINE MAGAZINE

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UPDATE

one million unlucky homes: TIME FOR A RECOMMITMENT?

EVERY NOW AND THEN, ON OUR ROCK'N'ROLL JOURNEY WITH GRAPEVINE, WE'VE NEEDED to slow down, pull over to the side of the road, check our maps, review where we've come from, and refocus on where we're going. And as we've gone through that exercise again, just recently – taking stock, asking some hard questions – it's been so clarifying that I've decided to write to you ...

A stock-take is important not only for Grapevine, of course. It helps to pull over and check maps on ANY long journey – don't you agree?

I mean, Mrs Cooney and I did it a few weeks ago when we celebrated our 38th wedding anniversary. And, given that we're now both in our second adulthood, it was a milestone worth celebrating. So we did it in style. We did it with friends. And (because you're allowed to on occasions like this) we got a bit nostalgic, wandering off down memory lane.

We recalled the day I proposed (*on bended knee with sweaty palms*) ...

- and the ring I gave her (*which she'd had to pay for, because I was a dirt-poor student*) ...
- and our oh-so-lovely wedding ceremony (*in the little old weatherboard church that got bulldozed down a few weeks later to make room for a petrol station*) ...
- and her coming down the aisle like a teenage vision-in-white (*as the organ played "Here Comes The Bride"*) ...
- and our vows and confetti and speeches (*"On behalf of my wife and myself!"*) ...
- and how we cut the cake and kissed for the camera and drove off afterwards in my Morris Minor (*en route to our very first honeymoon – in Rotorua*).

Needless to say, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since that wedding day in 1969. And, thankfully, after all these years, we're still each other's very best friends. But love can die if it's not attended to, if two people take it for granted. And this recent anniversary also gave us the chance to refocus on our priorities, renew our vows, and make a fresh commitment to each other.

OUR STOCK-TAKE AT GRAPEVINE HAS PROVED EQUALLY THOUGHT-PROVOKING. AND, as we've reviewed where we've come from, we've found plenty to celebrate and lots to be grateful for:

- our colourful, warm-hearted magazine is packed full of good reading and looking better-than-ever – proof that the “excellence” we've always aimed for is being achieved ...
- feedback from readers is almost 100% positive – proof that Grapevine's still “*Giving Families A Lift*” ...
- financially, although we never have any leftover dollars, Grapevine is stable and sustainable long-term – proof that Street Sponsorship is a highly effective strategy ...
- after 27 long years we've still got one of the highest magazine print-runs in the country – and are currently reaching 155,000 families on a regular basis!

But ... (*there's always a “but”, eh ...*) we can't rest on our laurels. And we can't pretend that we've done all that we can/should/need to do.

That 155,000 sounds like a huge number – right? But do you realise it represents only 10% (approx) of New Zealand households? Yes, those lucky households (the 10%) are seeing Grapevine regularly ... **BUT THE REMAINING 90% – MORE THAN A MILLION UNLUCKY KIWI HOMES – ARE MISSING OUT!**

Those unlucky one million homes fall into two categories:

1. many have never seen Grapevine – it's never been delivered in their town/street/rural route – they don't even know we exist;
2. others used to get it (in earlier years, under the old delivery system), but they haven't seen the magazine for years – as far as they're aware, Grapevine's disappeared.

And those one million homes aren't just numbers, of course. They're families with problems, parents with stresses, couples with tensions. They're people going through the whole range of experiences that Grapevine writes about – marriage difficulties, spirited kids, erupting teenagers, self-doubt, substance-abuse, loneliness, ageing, depression, grief, you-name-it.

Could these one million unlucky homes benefit from the valuable insights that each Grapevine shares, and the fun that's part of Grapevine's package? Of course they could. But, at the moment, that's not happening.

Why aren't they getting Grapevine? NOT because they don't like it or aren't interested. No, in most cases it's simply because they don't know it, never see it, and never hear anything about it. They have no idea how to get the magazine ... have never heard of Street Sponsorship ... and have never been invited to sponsor their street.

And our problem is this: while Grapevine's current monthly revenues cover our current monthly costs, we simply don't have the extra promotional dollars to reach those one million homes.

IS THIS MAKING SENSE? CAN YOU SEE WHY I KEEP WRITING THESE NEWSLETTERS AND asking for money and urging you to be ever-more-generous? It's not that you're failing us somehow or your support isn't already generous – because it IS! I'm constantly blown away by your faithfulness and kindness ... and we truly couldn't ask for partners who are more giving or friends who are more loyal.

No, the reason I keep writing and asking and urging is simply because there's still a **HUGE** task ahead of us. Grapevine exists to improve the quality of family life in this country – to help make New Zealand a better place for our kids and grandkids to grow up in. And (although we've been at it for 27 years) we've only just begun!

To put it in a nutshell:

- we've created a unique resource-for-families and a brilliant system for getting it out ...
- but one million unlucky homes still aren't seeing this resource ...
- and I, for one, won't rest until we're reaching them (or, at least, doing a lot better than 10%).

BEFORE I WRAP UP THIS OVERLY-LENGTHY LETTER, I WANT TO REASSURE YOU. THE TASK ahead /S huge ... but we're not short of ideas. In fact, ideas – good ideas, new ideas – are what we specialise in here at Grapevine. And, over the coming months, you'll be hearing about two of our very best ideas:

1. GRAPEVINE HERITAGE FUND:

We've long known that Grapevine is its own best advertisement – the best way to win new readers and new Street Sponsors is to put sample magazines into people's hands. However, it would cost a lot of money to put sample Grapevines into one million homes – not just once, but as an ongoing strategy.

But, wait! We believe there's a way to do it. And, in the very near future, we'll be sending you a complimentary (sponsored) DVD that will explain our hopes and dreams for the 'Grapevine Heritage Fund'.

2. SPONSOR YOUR JUST-ABOUT-EVERYTHING:

Our Street Sponsorship scheme turned out to be a stroke of genius – and it's now helping us reach many thousands of Kiwi families. But not everyone wants to be a Street Sponsor – and the letterbox is not the only way to put Grapevine into the hands of new readers.

We're about to extend the options available to Grapevine enthusiasts – and will be offering just-as-simple ways to get Grapevine "out there" via schools, kindergartens, churches, clubs, workplaces, you-name-it.

We're still fine-tuning this new idea, and I'm not sure what it'll finally be called. But you'll be hearing plenty more about 'Sponsor Your Just-About-Everything'.

So please stay tuned ...

IN THE MEANTIME, WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR STOCK-TAKE ... AND JOIN US as we refocus ... and renew YOUR personal commitment to all that Grapevine can and should and (hopefully, one day) WILL be doing?

Another beautiful little mag has just rolled off the presses. It features '*RAISING GIRLS*' ... carries an interview about '*GRUMPY OLD MEN*' ... includes a '*TAKE-10*' chat with gorgeous, wacky Petra Bagust ... and is crammed from-cover-to-cover with great reading.

Your donation will help us put this new Grapevine into homes that would otherwise miss out. And it'll help us get the creative-juices flowing on the next edition.

Can I be bold? Can I ask you, please, to consider donating \$100 or \$500 or \$1000? That's a lot of money, I know. But if enough Grapevine friends matched your gift with gifts of their own, 2008 would become a very good year.

Please give what you can afford. And please accept my thanks ... on behalf of all those families that are about to have a better month because Grapevine turned up at their place.

God bless you!

Cheers ...



... and the team at Grapequarters!



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