

Bluey part of family to ease couple's pain

DI BARTOK

AS her husband was cavorting around Parramatta Park dressed as a giant leprechaun, Kylie Raftery was talking about the darkest day of their lives – when their daughter was “born sleeping”.

Despite a trouble-free pregnancy, Mrs Raftery, 35, experienced every potential parent's worst nightmare – a stillbirth – at 32 weeks in December when her uterus burst and her own life was in danger.

Mrs Raftery had earlier suffered a miscarriage but the couple had no doubt they were on their way to being parents as this pregnancy progressed.

But, despite their mourning for the baby they named Sophie Cleo, the Rafterys are looking to help others who have the same experience. Hence the dancing leprechaun.

Mr Raftery, a marathon runner, will compete in the Sydney Marathon on September 20 to raise funds for the Bears of Hope, the organisation which helps parents of stillbirths.

He will dress in the leprechaun suit he bought in Ireland – his parents' homeland – to raise his profile.

A 198cm tall leprechaun is bound to be noticed,

especially one with the Raftery sense of fun. Both are remaining hopeful of the future when they plan to investigate surrogacy. In the meantime, they have become more involved with the Bears of Hope which gives stuffed bears to grieving parents as well as much-needed support. The Rafterys' bear, called Bluey, has become part of the family.

“We take him everywhere – to the pub and on holidays,” Mrs Raftery said. She said she was improving every day.

“A couple of months ago I could not have sat down to talk about our experience,” she said.

“When something like this happens, it makes you look at where you are headed in life.” Mrs Raftery gave up her high-powered human resources job to work in her husband's accountancy business.

The experience has also changed how she relates to other people.

“I used to worry about what other people thought, I didn't ever want to offend anyone. But life's too short to take on those restrictions. If I am not comfortable with something, it is all right for me to say so.”

● To offer support to Adrian Raftery's cause call 1800 829 626.



Kylie and Adrian Raftery are looking forward after suffering the trauma of a stillbirth. Picture: JOHN APPLEYARD

BRIEFLY

Stabbing charges

POLICE have arrested and charged two men after a man was stabbed five times during a home invasion at Merrylands on Thursday. Holroyd police said at 10pm on Thursday a woman opened the door to a group of men. Soon after she argued from the balcony of her unit with the men, who had moved to the street. A 25-year-old male occupant was stabbed five times at the scene. He is in a stable condition at hospital. Police said they used CCTV footage and local knowledge to identify four male offenders. A search warrant was executed on one of their homes. Police have charged two of the four with entering a dwelling with intent in circumstances of special aggravation. Bail has been refused.

Sales pitch

HOLROYD City Council is inviting all Parramatta Advertiser readers to attend the Annual Brekkie Before Business. Guest speaker David Pengalesewill talk about the ethics of selling on Wednesday, September 2 at 7am. The function will be on at the Holroyd Centre, 17 Miller St, Merrylands. RSVP by August 19 and for more information contact Di Tulloch on 9840 98 71 or email di.tulloch@holroyd.nsw.gov.au.

Keeping it local

AUBURN Council is celebrating Local Government Week August 3-9 with a number of events ranging from tree planting, an art exhibition to a welcome event for new residents. On Sunday, August 2, at 10am, tree planting at Duck River; Wednesday, August 5, 10am-2pm, Auburn Town Hall, information on council services; and Thursday, August 6, 6pm-8pm, council atrium, mayoral art and photographic exhibition opening.

Rail link running

TRAINS started running from Central to Hornsby using the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link from Monday as part of the process to integrate the new line with the rest of the CityRail network, Transport Minister David Campbell said. Mr Campbell said the \$2.3 billion Epping to Chatswood Rail Link – which started life as the Parramatta to Chatswood Rail Link until it was deferred after the 2005 NSW State Election – would be integrated into the rest of the network with the introduction of the new CityRail timetable on Sunday, October 11.

Community wins city of Auburn

AFTER an overwhelming “yes” from the community, Auburn has become a city.

The State Government announced the community's wishes had been granted this week.

In a poll on September 13, 2008, residents voting overwhelmingly to have Auburn Council change its name to Auburn City Council.

Mayor Irene Simms said she was pleased the requested name change had been granted by NSW Governor Prof Marie Bashir.

“The 2000 Olympics was the start of a big change to the Auburn local government area and placed Auburn on the map of Sydney as home to the successful 2000 Olympics,” she said.

“As a result the area, particularly around Homebush Bay, has seen a significant concentration of development.”

She said the proclamation as a city would help Auburn develop more in an economic and cultural sense, which is important for the residents and businesses.

The name changes on signs and the council's corporate and promotional material will occur over time to minimise costs.

In the Sydney metropolitan area, areas such as Ryde, Holroyd, Canada Bay, Willoughby, Rockdale, Randwick and Hurstville are already classified as cities.

50
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- Vegetarian Stir Fry** Select Asian vegetables with choy sum & oyster mushrooms tossed in soy sauce served with jasmine rice
- Supreme Pizza** Salami, ham, pepperoni, kalamata olives, mushrooms & capsicum with Napoli sauce topped with mozzarella cheese

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