

First LakeMacUkestra article published in the **Newcastle Post** of 17 February 2010, p12.  
 Thanks to Michael Blaxland for the article. I'm glad they liked my self-portrait!  
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ARTIST: Malcolm Sands

new suburbs and the development on people before the houses.

hivement. y managing to continue while going through a trician to high school teacher.

**What would be your tip for budding artists?**

Start and don't stop! Enjoy whatever you do for what it is and don't pressure yourself to be something you are not. Only by being persistent and by practicing will you develop your technique. Don't be afraid to experiment!  
**Malcolm Sands' work can be seen online at sites: [google.com/site/sevenartists/home](http://google.com/site/sevenartists/home) or at [sevenpainters.blogspot.com/](http://sevenpainters.blogspot.com/).**

# Uke interest is growing

THERE seems to be a cell of mature want-to-be musicians lurking around the western part of Lake Macquarie.

Late last year, musician Mark Jackson began Newcastle's own ukulele orchestra, with weekly classes and recitals at Wickham.

The phenomenon quickly caught on, with scores of people interested in the easy-to-play instrument.

Mr Jackson's program will next week expand to Teralba because of increased demand.

"We noticed that there were many uke-interested older folk coming along to the classes," he said.

"Many of them were coming from the west of Lake Macquarie, which has prompted us to fly the ukulele flag south of Newcastle.

"All people can learn uke, and then be encouraged to sing along with it (despite many people's initial protests!)."

"It only has 4 strings, they are soft nylon, are far enough apart to accommodate larger fingers and playing in a group really allows for a multitude of musical sins (all of which can be ironed out with time)."

Classes will begin at Teralba Bowling Club next Tuesday, February 23 with a beginners' class at 10.30am and then a LakeMacUkestra rehearsal from 11.30am until 1pm.

Bookings must be made on 0430 434 291 or through [markjackson@iinet.net.au](mailto:markjackson@iinet.net.au), with ukulele information at [thesumoftheparts.com.au](http://thesumoftheparts.com.au).



JUST FOUR STRINGS: Newcastle Ukestra leader Mark Jackson.



# Across the nation

## Cheaper trip

THE toll on Sydney's M4 motorway has been abolished. The last toll was paid just before midnight on Monday when it was handed back to the NSW government.

It will be the first time since the motorway was introduced that commuters using the link that stretches from Concord in Sydney's west, to Lapstone, at the foot of the Blue Mountains, can drive without paying a toll.

## Hanson to immigrate

PAULINE Hanson is bidding farewell to Australia.

The former One Nation leader, who sparked national debate when she first entered politics in 1996, says she is planning to relocate to Britain. Ms Hanson said she was disappointed with the way Australia had changed and she had "really had enough".

## Pow! Right in the kisser

A PUNCH in her attacker's nose may have saved the life of a Sydney woman on holidays in Queensland. The 60-year-old was attacked by a shark while she was swimming with her husband near Dent Island in the Whitsundays. She was bitten on the legs and buttocks.

From her hospital bed she told reporters she wasn't going to let the shark get the better of her

and started punching it on the nose. It is believed the shark was a 1.5-metre reef or bronze whaler shark. Tourism Whitsunday said the attack was the first in 13 years in the area.

## Too fast, too much drink

A 23-year-old P-plate driver was caught doing 172 kmh in a 100 kmh zone in central NSW and had been drinking to boot.

The Hyundai Elantra driver returned a low-range blood alcohol breath test. P-plate drivers should have a zero blood alcohol level.

He will have his day in court.

## And on that subject

A LEADING psychologist has called for mandatory testing of young drivers to ensure only those with "mature" brains are granted licences. Figures show that 19 people have died in NSW this year - three a week - in crashes involving P-plate drivers.

Monash University's John Reid said the only way to reduce the number of P-plate fatalities would be to identify young drivers at risk of behaving irresponsibly.

He said those who failed a test could be put on restricted licences or undergo an expensive brain imaging scan, called diffusion tensor imaging, at their own cost, if they believed they had been unfairly classified.



# Around the world

## Stranded whales die

A NEW Zealand beach has become a graveyard for 28 pilot whales. The whales became stranded on remote Stewart Island. Nine whales were founded dead on Sunday and wild seas and strong winds made rescuing the 19 survivors impossible. They were euthanased to prevent them from suffering.

It was not known how long the whales were stranded.

## Wanna hug?

A 51-year-old US man took Valentine's Day

## Prince a powerhouse

A THREE-LEGGED pitbull mix that played in a game of doggie baseball has won best in show at a talent competition held by one of New York City's largest animal shelters.

Nine dogs competed in the contest at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, but it was Prince who impressed the judging panel the most with his feat of catching three baseballs.

Prince lost one of his legs and had a pin inserted in another after being hit by a car.

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