

U3A DUNEDIN

Newsletter

April 2012
No. 33



The tangled webs we weave?

Trolling through U3A websites is an interesting activity. It immediately raises the question 'Should U3A Dunedin have its own website?' If you have an on-line computer, have a look yourself. Start with www.u3a.org.nz. This immediately gives links to several New Zealand U3A organisations which have websites

Click on the first link and you find the message 'Webpage no longer available'. This points to the first problem. It's one thing to set up a website but another thing to maintain it.

Now click on the second one, Browns Bay. There's a bit more action here but see how different it is to Dunedin U3A. There's a single monthly meeting addressed by a prominent speaker and a number of interest groups, some of which have their own websites. Members are *required* to attend one or more of the special interest groups which meet monthly.

Then click on the third one, Devonport, and you find: 'This site is under development. All contributions welcome.' You are told that the group meets on the second Wednesday of each month for two hours.

Let's move on to the next one, Golden Bay. You find: 'This webpage cannot be found'. The same with Motueka, Ohario, Takapuna. You do get a contact with Wairarapa U3A but there's little information there. Finally Warkworth and you find that the local U3A has six meetings each year with a number of special interest groups.

What I am writing is not meant to demean efforts of other U3A groups but rather to show the difficulties of

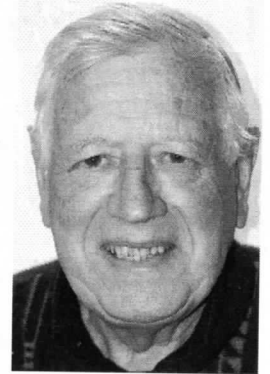
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE CHARITABLE TRUST, DUNEDIN

Address: C/o The Secretary,
PO Box 117, Dunedin 9054
Email: graysinn@clear.net.nz

Chairman: John Burton ph 477-7371
Secretary: Judith Gray ph 471-9913
[Registered Charitable Institution - #CC22345]

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

John Burton,
Chairman, U3A.Dunedin



setting up and maintaining a website. What you can also see is how lucky we are in Dunedin U3A to have our close association with the University of Otago and to have such a wonderful series of programmes on a regular basis.

They don't just happen, though; they're the result of a lot of hard work by individual members of your Board. Incidentally there was a move last year to start a U3A Dunedin website and the Board decided against it.

To end on a sad note:

Members will be aware of the death of Donald Feist recently. Don was Chairman of the Board of U3A Dunedin in 2007-2008. I have a number of emails from Don stored on my computer; they are all positive and helpful.

Don organised a number of courses for us and I'm sure many members will remember him for his courses on *What does it mean to be human?* and *Some Issues with Criminal Justice in New Zealand*. I think the titles say a lot about the man. Vale Don.

Record applications

A total of 360 members applied for the U3A Dunedin courses in the first term this year — a record surpassing the 332 applicants that made a record last year. Chairman John Burton also told the board of U3A Dunedin at its March meeting that membership then stood at 495, five short of the cap, but with some places on offer. The ever-changing waiting list had been reduced to 130 at that stage.

SURF'S UP!

Web surfers: a list of diverse and interesting websites to visit appears on page 4.

Administration



Judith Gray
Secretary to Board

The beginning of the year provided some difficulties as a higher number than usual of our members did not renew their membership by the due date. Some of these were members who had just forgotten, and a few who blamed NZ Post and /or Rodgers Law. Since then the Board has allowed nine members to renew late.

Until these numbers settled down we were unable to offer places to those people at the top of our ever-lengthening waiting list, but this has now been done. Nevertheless, there are still around 130 interested people on the waiting list.

The Course Ballot Process

For the benefit of recent new members to U3A Dunedin it may be useful to outline the method of dealing with course applications.

Completed application forms requesting one, two or three course options in priority order are received by Rodgers Law, opened and sorted roughly into order of first preference.

On the day when applications close, they are sorted by first preference and checked. If the numbers do not exceed the course limit, then second choice applicants will be added, and third if appropriate.

I attend the ballot session, and usually all of us end up sitting on the floor amidst the piles! On very rare occasions I have been

asked to make a decision on who should be offered the last places. I make sure that the Board's policy that any member who missed out entirely on the previous series is guaranteed a place in the next series.

With the total number of applicants for Series 1 for this year at 640 for 420 places, it was inevitable that some members missed out on their first choice. In fact only 366 places were filled, as two courses proved less popular than expected.

Forms with options clearly marked, and completion of the box asking how many options the member wishes to attend if space is available helps tremendously. Late applications are normally not considered unless a course has not been filled.

It is appreciated that some members are disappointed because they miss out on courses of particular interest to them, but as there are often more applicants than places it is neither possible nor appropriate to alter the balloting process to allow for this. Acceptance into a less preferred course may spark a whole new interest.

Annual General Meeting & Luncheon

This meeting will be held on Thursday, 5 July, at Salmond College immediately following the annual lunch. A form for attendance at the luncheon is enclosed with this newsletter for completion and return to Rodgers Law by 15 June.

Looking ahead



Sue Cathro
Programme Co-ordinator

The Programme Committee is pleased to provide an interesting range of courses for the winter series.

In Series 2, 2012 you can look forward to *Africa – Diversity and Development*, an art course entitled *Still Life, Our Southern Seas* presented by the Marine Department, *Entrepreneurs in Otago*, *Radical Religion in Cromwell's England* and a course on *The Divided Voice of Germany: the Writer Christa Wolf (1929 - 2011)*.

Looking ahead to Series 3, the confirmed courses are on *Medical Research*, *C.S. Lewis*, *Another Six Journeys*, *The Philosophy and History of Science*, and a course by Alan Horsman. Work continues

to finalise these and their presenters and to develop one more course. We believe that these will offer some good choices.

The Board always appreciates suggestions and does take note of the ideas in course evaluations. If you have a particular topic you would like to learn more about, please contact a member of the Board so that it can be approved at a meeting. If you are able to, please suggest the name or names of those who could be approached to present such a course.

You do not have to be on the Board to organise a course and you could be the one to run it. There are guidelines available to help you do this. Make us an offer!

History lessons

If you feel deficient in world history visit www.historylearningsite.co.uk run by Chris Trueman BA (Hons), MA as he felt there was no easily accessible and comprehensive website on world history on the Internet. Chris has written all the content for the site from his in-depth knowledge having taught history and politics at a major secondary school in England for the last 26 years.

Christmas banned

Did you know there was a time when it was illegal to celebrate Christmas? When Oliver Cromwell took over Parliament he banned feasting and carolling. Not until the Restoration in 1660, nearly two decades later, were traditional celebrations once again permitted. This period in history is told by England's National Archives: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/news/649.htm>

SAGE

(wisdom of age)

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit.

Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Positive thoughts

A well-known US psychologist Aaron Beck has formulated a theory of cognitive therapy and is helping to promote its use. After recently celebrating his 90th birthday, he is focusing his attention on helping people diagnosed with schizophrenia. Rarely has there been much success treating those suffering from schizophrenia with any form of "talk" therapy, but Prof Beck has written a paper that summarises effects of cognitive therapy on a group of patients. His subjects improved their capacities to function in the world and to reduce delusions that often hindered their lives, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported..

The therapy is based on the assumption that how we think influences how we feel. Good thoughts lead to good feelings, but the reverse is also true.

'90 is the new 70'

To avoid negativity in his own thinking, the psychologist says 'I try to keep things in perspective. I don't get as ruffled as I might because I ask myself: Is it fatal? Is it the end of the world?'

He has some limiting infirmities, but the professor rises at 6 each morning to warm up with stretching and balancing exercises. Later in the day he rides a stationary bike for 30 minutes. In the evenings he often watches movies with his wife, a retired judge.

He enjoys his iPad and iPhone. Reading and listening to books on tape are favourite activities.

His tips for others to live a long and happy life:

1. Keep things in perspective.
2. Try to turn disadvantages into advantages.
3. Don't let work get in the way of relationships.

As for retiring: 'It's not a concept that crosses my mind because I'm happy with what I am doing and there's no need to retire — 90 is the new 70.'

'In vino veritas'

'Wine is bottled poetry.'

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

'Wine gives courage and makes men more apt for passion.' ~ Ovid

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust will be held at Salmond College, Knox St, Dunedin on Thursday, 5 July, 2012, immediately following a luncheon which will commence at 12.15pm.

Nominations for membership of the U3A Board for 2012/2013 will be welcome and nomination forms are available from Judith Gray, Secretary to the Board (P.O. Box 117, Dunedin 9054; email address: graysinn@clear.net.nz). Nominations close Friday, 15 June, 2012.

Copies of the agenda and other papers for the Annual General Meeting will be sent to all members who accept the luncheon invitation, or will be available on request from the Secretary.

Judith Gray, Secretary to the Board

Rooms with views (on our courses)

The U3A Dunedin board is very aware that there have been some questions asked by members about the choice of rooms, especially when popular courses are held in the smaller, 50-person, rooms.

A number of factors are involved in assigning a course to a room; the presenter may have requested a particular one — and the time, or the day, that the presenter preferred may not have been available in the larger venue.

But we aim to have 350 places available in total as a minimum for each series, and there are usually more.

The other fact to keep in mind is that the Committee has to make an educated guess as to members' likely responses, where each course should go and which ones can go into the larger Leith venue. This has to be

Sunken treasures

In the chaotic evacuation of the *Costa Concordia* earlier this year, passengers and crew abandoned almost everything on board the cruise ship: jewels, cash, champagne, antiques, thousands of art objects including 300-year-old woodblock prints by a Japanese master.

This treasure now lies beneath the Italian waters where the luxury liner ran aground in January. There is still much to tempt treasure seekers — just as the *Titanic* and other shipwrecks have lured seekers of gold, armaments and other riches.

decided months ahead — e.g. for the courses in Series 1 which started in March the rooms had been allocated in November the year before. For Series 2, which begins in June, they have been allocated by February/March in time for the venues to be confirmed for the newsletter and brochure preparation.

The numbers who have applied for each course are only known after the brochures and application forms go out, are returned, the ballot taken place and members notified. It is unfortunately not possible at that late stage, to change to another venue.

In the past it has been possible, occasionally, to run a course again for those who missed out the first time within a year or 18 months, but this depends on whether the presenters are willing and able to do this for us.

Sue Cathro,

Surreal thoughts?

'It is not necessary for the public to know whether I am serious or whether I am not serious, just as it is not necessary for me to know it myself.' ~ Salvador Dali.

'I didn't like the play. But I saw it under unfavourable circumstances — the curtains were up.'

~ Groucho Marx

'Your eyes are always bigger than your stomach.' ~ Confucius

SAGE

War does not determine who is right — only who is left.

Internet sites for safe surfing

A single page of hundreds of useful links may be helpful to people or friends who don't know their way easily around the web. Try www.allmyfaves.com. Or if you want good suggestions, look below:

<http://tinyurl.com/8ytkd4n>: Those interested in the article about the world's rapidly growing population (our previous newsletter) should visit this site. It contains 'The world at 7 billion' — a thought-provoking BBC tool to show you where you fit into the big picture.

www.crosswordsolver.org helps the frustrated find missing letters — and what words will fit in a puzzle.

www.seniornet.org/howto/mouseexercises/mousepractice.html Absolute beginners on the computer can have fun learning many ways to handle a mouse.

Artists and seniors link in New York scheme

New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs last year invited artists to join 'Seniors Partnering with Artists Citywide,' an initiative that now links creators and senior citizens in a seven-month residency programme.

Fifty artists were to be placed in senior centres throughout the city's five boroughs. In exchange for participating in public events, artists receive workspace in a centre, a \$1,500 stipend and at least \$500 of supplies from Materials for the Arts, a programme that distributes art supplies to non-profit organisations. Residencies take place between January and July 2012.

The project is a collaboration between the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Department for the Aging and the City's five local arts councils. It comes out of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Age-Friendly New York City, a 2007 initiative that aims to make the city more liveable for seniors.

In 2009 'Space for Art,' 12 artists participated in a pilot. The programme then received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, allowing it to expand fourfold. Some 60 senior centres expressed interest in hosting the project this year.

www.foodtimeline.org tells popular lore and contradictory facts about food through the ages

www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix is another fine BBC website that gives you a dozen or so key words/phrases in 40 languages. Hear how they sound first, then download them to your mobile phone or computer and practice them. 'A table for two' in Portuguese? 'Where is the toilet please' in Turkish? 'Goodbye' in Urdu?

www.iseek.com - alternative search engine to Google, especially if searching for people. It organises results by topic, people, places and organisations

<http://tinyurl.com/6nsgwx7> 'Buzzfeed' gives you 'The 45 Most Powerful Images Of 2011.'

<http://tinyurl.com/7v3qgvq> - David Attenborough demonstrates the problem-solving abilities of the New Zealand Kea - one of the smartest animals on the planet.

www.zamzar.com is a free site that converts a pdf file or other format to Word. Nothing to download and you can work from any Internet connected computer. The converted document is emailed to your computer within minutes.

<http://www.themodernantiquarian.com> is a massive resource for news, information, images, folklore and weblinks on many ancient sites across the UK and Ireland.

Environmental problems

The elderly are disproportionately affected by environmental problems, but their voices are not often heard on these issues. A University of York project aims to change that.

'EnviroSurvey55', which will be distributed by researchers in the UK, Canada and Australia can be taken online from anywhere. It seeks to identify difficulties people over 55 face in personally taking action to reduce their environment footprint. The survey is found at www.envirosurvey55.com.

SAGE

They begin the evening news with 'Good Evening,' then proceed to tell you why it isn't.



Looking for 'classic' sites.

www.patient.co.uk is run by doctors and aims to provide non-medical people with good quality information on health problems.

www.education.noaa.gov NASA is well known, but also important is its sister organisation NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Its website has some excellent education resources free of charge.

www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos - Since opening in 1971, New York's Kennedy Centre, has continued efforts to fulfill a vision: presenting the greatest performers and performances from across America and around the world, nurturing new works and young artists, and serving the nation as a leader in arts education. Great range of videos here.

http://www.byki.com/free_lang_software.pl has downloadable lists of useful phrases in 15 languages, all with spoken examples.

www.wordspy.com records many interesting new words and phrases and their recent origins. Try 'age heaping' or 'familymoon'?

Edited by Geoff Adams

Ph: 467 2278

Email: hgadams@slingshot.co.nz

U3A Dunedin is most grateful for help from Dr Elaine Webster (Director, Summer School and Continuing Education, University of Otago) in producing this publication