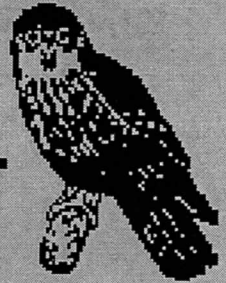


U3A**DUNEDIN**
newsletter

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Issue No 14
August 2007

Board ponders solutions for problems

MEMBERSHIP CAPPED AT 500

The U3A Dunedin Board is currently considering possible solutions to its problem of fast growth. In her annual report, Honor Anderson said: 'We are always concerned when we hear of members' disappointment after not being accepted for their chosen courses.'

'Over-subscribed courses are already being repeated whenever possible, although we should avoid overburdening busy speakers. Another possibility is to find larger class venues.'

'Perhaps we should encourage some younger members to establish a second U3A branch in Dunedin. This could take some pressure off U3A Dunedin Charitable Trust, which now has 473 members. In the meantime we have capped our membership at 500 (too large a number in my opinion.)'

'Time and energy' given to U3A

In a 'farewell message' to members, as she vacates the big chair, Honor Anderson penned these words for the newsletter:

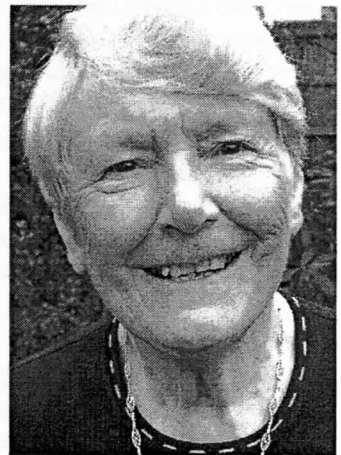
My year as Chairman is almost over. By the time this newsletter reaches you a new Chairman should, in all probability, have been appointed, together with three new Board members, all of whom have agreed to nomination.

It is encouraging that such talented and experienced people are willing to give their time and energy to U3A, bringing with them new ideas from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds. I have always been a strong supporter of rotating the Chair annually, and of encouraging a healthy smallish annual turnover of Board members.

However, those who are currently retiring from the Board will be sadly missed. Both Jenny Laws and Wilson Daniel have made outstanding contributions to U3A.

Jenny, a Board member for the past 9 years, has also worked constantly behind the scenes since 2003 in the essential key-role of Programme Co-ordinator. Wilson Daniel, currently visiting his family in the USA, has also served on the Board for the past 5 years. He was an effective and well-liked Chairman from 2005-06. We also regret the resignation of Ted McCoy (more recently appointed), who finds he is unable to fit Board

membership into his very busy present schedule. Aside from these regrets, my year in the Chair has given me many pleasant experiences. I have enjoyed our monthly Board meetings, which have always been friendly and constructive.



Honor Anderson

I am glad that we now have a more efficient means of informing members of the outcome of the ballot — which I continue to believe is the fairest way to allocate course places. I welcome the formation of a new Policy Working Party, which will explore possible additional course venues and consider (again) the need to cap our membership numbers.

But perhaps the highlight of my year was a comment from one of our most senior members after the final session of a recent course. As we all filed slowly, perhaps even reluctantly, out of Salmond College lecture room, she turned to me with a smile and said how much she had enjoyed the lectures. 'They make such a difference to my life. I wish there was one every day. Long live U3A!'

ADMINISTRATION

Applying for more courses may help

By Judith Gray, Secretary

Hopefully by the time this next series of courses begins in September there will be signs of spring to cheer us after a cold winter. The Board hopes that the mix of topics finds appeal for all



Judith Gray

of you. Membership numbers and limits on space mean that inevitably some members miss out on their first course preferences for a series and some miss out entirely. The Board is very conscious of this and tries to ensure that within the limits of the ballot system no-one is totally unsuccessful for more than one series. If, however, you have only applied for a single course, there is a greater likelihood of disappointment. Of the 23 applicants who were unsuccessful with their applications for Series 2, 15 of those had only given one choice preference.

You may certainly apply for three courses, even if you only want to attend one. There is no need to send money for more than one if that is all you wish to attend. The great majority of members only want to attend one course. Very few members are now accepted for two courses in any one series. The exceptions are cases where the requested courses are not filled. There were just four people in Series 2 who were successful in being accepted for two courses.

The new format for course applications is working well and has made life easier for me and for the staff at Rodgers and Associates. Please make sure that your choices are clearly marked.

After serving on the U3A Board and as Programme Co-ordinator for a number of years Jenny Laws has decided to retire from the Board. Her work in keeping track of course proposals and checking dates and venues has been of great value to the Board, and especially to me. We appreciate greatly all she has done. Jenny has also acted on many occasions as a course organiser and has been a source of suggestions for new courses. Sue Cathro (telephone 467 5474) is the new Programme Co-ordinator.

A word about parking. We are aware of the difficulties of parking at Knox and Salmond Colleges. Both Colleges ask however that access for staff, students, and particularly service vehicles not be impeded through inconsiderate parking.

Quick Quote

The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.

~ Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple

LOOKING AHEAD

By Jenny Laws, Programme Co-ordinator

Looking ahead to 2008 when we are only half-way through 2007 is bound to be a little problematic, for much can happen in the next few months. Nevertheless we have several strong possibilities; among them are science topics, including climate change and neurology, and arts courses, including Mozart's operas and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

We always aim for a balance of different interests, but of course this has to be worked out in conjunction with the availability of speakers.

As this will be my last "Looking Ahead", I would like to wish Sue Cathro all the very best as she takes up the position of Programme Co-ordinator, and to all of you — happy learning!

International conference

A U3A International Conference titled 'The World Ahead — From Here to Where?' is to be held in Christchurch from November 19 to 21 next. The venue is the Canterbury Horticultural Centre. South Hagley Park.

Registration brochures containing all details of speakers, sessions, social programme, etc were available at our AGM and annual lunch. Others will be available at some of our courses or from our Secretary for any members interested in attending. Registration fee is \$140.

Phony quality time

According to Britain's *Oldie* magazine, modern technology may not be fuelling the breakdown of family life, exacerbating lack of communication between generations. Its report: 'Apparently 37% of children questioned in a recent survey have spent quality time with a grandparent — teaching them how to make calls on a mobile phone.'

One answer?

Not long ago a number of our members devoted 12 hours to the question 'What does it mean to be human?' The well-known biologist and writer Edward O. Wilson has offered his estimate of Homo Sapiens in fewer than a dozen words: '... a mix of Stone Age emotion, medieval self-image and godlike technology.' [*The Creation*, p.10]

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
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Gremlins and House-elves in our electronic picture equipment?

Feedback from members via course evaluation reports included a few snide remarks about the picture projector snags that occasionally hit lectures. There've been annoying delays or difficulties at the start.

One person commented on 'Every Picture Tells A Story' that Powerpoint problems (lecture 1) 'should have been sorted at the beginning, once and for all.' Another, re the 'Living on a Plate Boundary' course, urged better liaison between presenter and U3A 'to enable visuals to have worked in the first session.'

Problems may occur with the way computer and projector are connected and methods of operation. Contrary to general belief, computers and projectors don't have minds of their own; they do not respond to a good kick! It's crucial they are properly connected to communicate. (Users of Apple Mac computers, for instance, need their special plug on the cord that connects to most data projectors.) Some new picture programs aren't understood by an older computer.

Our Secretary sends letters to presenters asking them to set check our equipment, or set up their own, well before the session starts. We don't have our own technicians.

Course organisers, too, do their utmost to see everything's working. Glitches might still sometimes occur; if so be patient. Help is normally close at hand. Treasurer Bill George, a technical guru, is also willing to be called in an emergency to banish house-elves and gremlins. Please don't shoot the piano players!

How unique is your name?

Have you ever wondered how many people share your name or if you are unique? There is a website that will tease you on this premise. It deals with names of people over 18 in the UK and has had 7.5 million searches on it in the last four years.

For example, it tells you that there are 11,782 John Smiths in the UK but only 710 Helen Clarks. I also found that there is a www.helenclark.com website, but was warned that its content might contain material that was adult or offensive. I found it does not feature our PM, but a real estate agent in Flagstaff, Arizona!

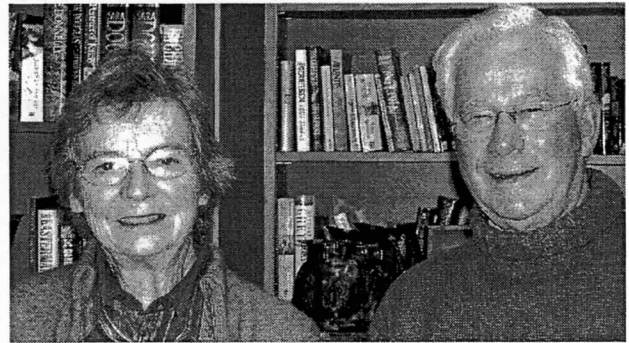
Visit the site <http://www.yournotme.com> to start your own research. (But can you overlook that gram-mar-cum-spelling atrocity in its name?)

New emphasis

Scarborough Council in England could have had a bestseller when it titled a guide to available state benefits for seniors as *Are You Getting It?* The pamphlet flew off the shelves, stopping only when its title was altered to *Extra Money — Could You Get It?*

Testy Testimomial

I have lived some 30 years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. ~ Henry David Thoreau



Jenny Laws and Wilson Daniel have retired from their duties on the U3A Board.

Members elected to Board

<i>Honor Anderson</i>	<i>Graham Batts</i>
<i>Gary Blackman</i>	<i>John Burton</i>
<i>Susan Cathro</i>	<i>Judith Cowley</i>
<i>Mayford Dawson</i>	<i>Donald Feist</i>
<i>Bill George</i>	<i>Judith Gray</i>
<i>Sue Harvey</i>	<i>Graham Mortimer</i>
<i>Elizabeth Timms</i>	<i>Antony Wood</i>

[The board was to elect its new Chairman at its first meeting on 10 July. after we had gone to press with the newsletter.]

U3A abundant in Christchurch

Christchurch now has 10 branches of the U3A, members were told at the AGM. The latest is Godley U3A that started 15 months ago, is capped at 100 members and has a waiting list of 40, said Honor Anderson. To help cope with our numbers and pressure on some courses, a committee will report soon to the Board on a number of larger venues being checked.

Gifts to University

U3A Dunedin may make two more donations to the University of Otago in the next few months, Honor Anderson said at the AGM. This follows two previous \$5,000 donations earlier in the year to departments helpful to us. After discussion about the source and asking for ideas, members seemed content — apart from a voice that cried 'Not for the Stadium!'

Diplomatic nightmares?

Some members have been seen with eyes shut at times during classes, but we can accept that they may be deep in concentration. Wilhelm Schonfelder, German Ambassador to the EU, declared at a weekly meeting of member state ambassadors that it is quite acceptable for them to sleep, but not to snore. A baffled Brussels correspondent told *The Times* (London) : 'Nobody knows if it is a joke — even the Germans.'



The Mosquito wins an IgNoble Prize! (Teen buzz)

You will know of the Nobel Prizes, but have you caught up with its parody awards: the IgNoble Prizes?

They are being run by a scientific humour magazine, *Annals of Improbable Research*. Each October a group of Harvard scientists gives out the IgNoble Prizes for science that makes you laugh and then makes you think.

A major winner last year was the Mosquito, a gadget invented by Howard Stapleton, of Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, that emits an unpleasant, high-pitched screech only able to be heard by those under the age of 25. The device is intended to deter unwelcome youths from congregating around places where they are not wanted.

The inventor has not just rested on his laurels. He has gone on to invent something that will appeal to both parties: the Mosquitotone (also known as the Teen Buzz) which is a mobile ringtone for cellphones that the young can hear while their parents and teachers usually can't.

Other 2006 awards went to American scientists for exploring and explaining why woodpeckers don't get headaches, and to Australian CSIRO staff who calculated the number of photos you need to take to ensure (almost) that nobody in a group will have their eyes closed.

In 2003 an IgNoble went to the inventor of 'Murphy's Law' 50 years earlier! Edward A. Murphy Jr had grumbled something like his immortal law ('if anything can go wrong, it will') when among three engineers doing rocket sled experiments at an Air Force Base in California.

Thoughts on learning

I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think. ~ Socrates

It's all to do with the training: you can do a lot if you're properly trained. ~ Queen Elizabeth II. TV documentary, BBC1, 1992

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt. ~ Abraham Lincoln

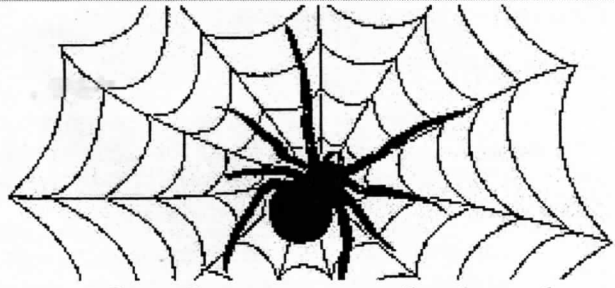
Write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought for are commonly the most valuable. ~ Francis Bacon

I am always doing that which I can not do, in order that I may learn how to do it. ~ Pablo Picasso

It is impossible to begin to learn that which one thinks one already knows. ~ Epictetus (c.55 ~ c.135)

I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow. ~ Woodrow Wilson

If I keep an open mind, will my brain fall out? ~Anon



Oh what a tangled web

Some more websites for our Internet explorers:

<http://www.meettheauthor.co.uk> Bibliophiles may find that the author of their current or recently-read book has recorded a short video-clip about it. There are many hundreds, possibly thousands, of entries. 'Curiously addictive,' said the British *Sunday Times*.

<http://ocw.mit.edu/ocwweb> — The Massachusetts Institute of Technology OpenCourseWare provides free downloadable courses and course materials on an astonishing range of subjects.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday — The domesday book online, at last. Free searching for the main details, but then you pay for a facsimile of the entry you want.

www.digbig.com/4mgwx — The Gerard Hoffnung webpage, endorsed by the cartoonist's widow.

<http://www.whatscookinggrandma.net> — a highly original British website whose mission is 'to create a cookbook of the grandmothers of the world sharing their special recipes.'

www.phrases.org.uk/ for quizzes on origins of phrases — also on Shakespeare quotations, plus a glossary of minced oaths and other word-mongering.

www.florilegium.org for a quirky and fascinating look at history.

www.bbc.co.uk/antiques/expert_tips/ "One of the strange things about getting older is seeing objects from one's past appearing in antique shops," says the BBC website.

earthtrends.wri.org is a comprehensive online database, maintained by the World Resources Institute, that focuses on the environmental, social, and economic trends that shape our world. See also the UN Economic and Social Affairs website at esa.un.org/unpp/

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